



Great Western Society



TAUNTON GROUP JOURNAL



2022



Edition

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GROUP COMMITTEE FOR 2022 as elected at the GROUP ANNUAL MEETING 2022

Francis Lewis	Chairman
David Hartland	Secretary
David Brabner	Treasurer
David Whatley	Assistant Treasurer
Peter Triggs	Programme and Welfare Officer
Philip Izzard	Audio Visual Aids & Catering
Roger Hagley	Publicity Stand and Membership
David Barge	Co-opted Member
Carl Honor	Senior Committee Member

Data Protection Act

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EDITORIAL

Just a brief editorial this issue, as we have a very full edition this year! Lots of interest I hope for all the membership and friends, with something to suit everyone. Many thanks to all our contributors, and keep the articles coming—I can take them throughout the year, you do not have to wait until the last minute. If you can, please send me the contributions by Email or give them to me on a memory stick, as it helps me to lay out the pages neatly.

David Hartland.

Cover Photograph:

Castle Class locomotive 7029 *Clun Castle* being prepared at Worcester Shed. This is believed to be the Ian Allan Lickey & Midlands Railtour on 27th March 1965 which ran from Paddington to Nottingham via Worcester and the Lickey incline. *John Gulliver.*

Chairman's Report

of the Group activities in 2021.

Can you believe that it was over two years ago that we held our last GAM? Last year, in view of the Covid restrictions, your committee agreed to continue for another year without the usual formalities associated with an Annual Meeting. Well, that year is now past and only one month late we are able to hold our GAM in person and with no Covid restrictions. Most of us here are in the more vulnerable group so we would encourage you wear a mask if you so wish and to spread out as much as possible.

So what has happened since February last year? Well nothing until August when we restarted our monthly meetings.

These are my diary notes from February 2021 until a Committee meeting on 14th January 2022 when we decided to restart our meetings in March 2022 with the GAM.

"Well last it did *the Lockdown*, for I am now writing this in February (10th) 2021 and other than a well spaced committee meeting back in September (12th 2020) we have not met. The pandemic goes on but at least we have had our first job (well most of us) with the second scheduled for April. So there is hope for meetings to recommence later in the year with August being pencilled in.

A Committee meeting in July (after a postponement) enabled us to confirm a restart date for our meetings of Friday 20th August 2021 and using the program already circulated (or as near to it as possible).

Friday 20th August 2021

This was the first general meeting of the Group since the GAM in February 2020. With Covid reminders in place, masks, chairs spread out and plenty of fresh air some 23 members and friends were very pleased to meet together again. Masks were removed when sitting and tea and coffee was available during the break, curtesy of Phillip.

The meeting was scheduled as a members evening and was therefore introduced by Francis. There were two speakers, Peter Darke and Peter Triggs both sharing the title 'Two or more in a frame'. There were plenty of very good photographs of double headers on the WSR and main line bringing back so many memories. There were also some non railway slides that gave rise to much discussion!! Following an appeal for help with the finances of the Group now that our main source of larger income was not available (model rail shows where many books were sold) those present responded very well and David B went home a happy treasurer.

Friday 17th September 2021

Our second meeting was again well attended when Simon Foote brought us sounds and sights of trains around the country with his presentation 'Echoes of Steam'. The meeting was very well received.

Friday 16th October 2021

There were a few absences for this evenings presentation but some 23 attended to watch David Brabner's 'Railway Video Highlights for 2017'. The scheduled meeting had to be changed as Ashley Thorne 'Exploits of a Retired Anorak' was unable to come as a result of Covid. Also the meeting scheduled for 5th November at Wellington was cancelled as it was decided that the room would not meet our requirements for Covid safety. David's video brought back many many memories of places and events we too attended but included many more that was new. The evening was very well received.

Friday 19th November 2021

Peter was the speaker at Stoke where over 25 attended to hear/see 'From Bridgwater to Blue Anchor'. I am told it was very well received by all those present

Saturday 11 December 2021

Phone call from Peter who is very concerned over the spread of the new Covid variant Omicron and asks whether we should cancel our next meeting. Having emailed this to committee members

likely to attend and speaking to the presenter Francis I decided on Monday 13th to cancel and for members to be informed. Peter then contacted all those who usually attend our meetings with this decision.

This decision would have an impact on the Group finances as David Hartland has completed 83B, had it printed and now it has to be posted rather than handed out at an additional cost.

Friday 14th January 2022 Committee Meeting

It was agreed to cancel the February meeting and restart in March.”

Friday 18th March 2022

We have returned with a full program of meetings for the remainder of the year commencing this evening with the GAM.

There are two positive points that have come out of the Lockdowns and that is the publication of 83B and the four page spread in the Autumn issue of the Great Western ECHO devoted to the 50th Anniversary of the Taunton Group. In both publications there is a plethora of evocative photographs reminding us of how ‘time flies’. These publications were prepared and written by our Secretary David and ,on your behalf, I would like to express our sincere thanks for all the work and effort put into such memorable and excellent publications.

I would also say thank you to you for your continued support of this Group both financially and by your presence at the meetings, please continue to come and if you have the opportunity please bring a friend. My final thanks is to the committee who through their efforts in getting speakers, making sure the hall is available and with the appropriate equipment for presentations, refreshments, finance, newspaper reports, the draw - the list goes on but without that help the Group would not. Thank you Committee. For me this is this is my last meeting as Chairman so I would like to say thank you for your support and that includes all the committee members and for letting me represent this Group on a number of important occasions during my tenure of 15 years.

Stuart Trott (Chairman).

Treasurer’s Report

of Group finances for the year ending 31st January 2022.

Last year’s report explained that the pandemic that arose soon after our donation of £1,000 towards the erection of the Heyford building at Didcot’s Oxford Road platform site left us with no further income in the 2020/21 financial year. This situation was to continue until monthly meetings resumed in August 2021 and for four months the generosity of our members and friends was sufficient to pay for the publication of the 50th Special Anniversary edition of 83B and also for the expense of both monthly and committee meetings – the latter are shown in the accounts as ‘Sundry Expenses’.

The end result is that our Bank Balance at the end of January 2022 was almost identical to that at the beginning of the financial year but still below the £500 that I consider should be the absolute minimum for the Group’s continued success. We shall probably need to continue holding committee meetings away from private homes and keep a careful check on the costs of speakers so please continue with your generosity. There are now only two other local Great Western Society groups still in existence – let us hope that no more fall by the wayside!

Finally, may I once again thank Norman Hannaford for auditing the Group’s accounts.

David Brabner, Hon. Treasurer

GWS Taunton Group Accounts 12 months to 31st January 2022

<u>Income</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
Sales	0.00	0.00	Sales Purchases	0.00	0.00
Donations (Sundry)	0.00	0.00	Meetings Expenses	124.00	42.00
Donations (Video Evenings)	0.00	0.00	Printing, Stationery, Postage etc	0.00	0.00
Donations (Sale of Donated Books)	0.00	0.00	83B Journal – Printing, Distribution	213.32	179.48
Donations (Tours and Events)	0.00	0.00	Donation to Didcot Projects	0.00	1000.00
Meetings (Collections)	347.67	60.45	V.A.T. paid (to G.W.S. Treasurer)	0.00	0.00
Meetings (Raffle Profit)	56.00	18.00	Sundry Expenses	63.00	20.00
V.A.T. Collected	0.00	0.00			
	<u>£ 403.67</u>	<u>£ 78.45</u>		<u>£400.32</u>	<u>£1241.48</u>

Balance Sheet

Brought forward January 2021	£469.99	Expenditure 2021/22	£400.32
Income 2021/22	£403.67	Lloyds Bank Balance January 2022	£473.34
		Cash in Hand	£0.00
	£873.66		£873.66

David Brabner, Hon. Treasurer Norman Hanniford, Hon Auditor

Last Fireman to Chard *by Melvin Baker*

The photograph below is of the 4.30pm Taunton to Chard Central on 8th September 1962—the last passenger train to Chard. I was rostered as Fireman on that train with driver Roy Anstice and pannier tank 8783 still with GWR on the side tanks. The working also included two return trips to Chard Junction and returning to Taunton with the last all-stations on the Branch.

The tables overleaf show my rostered duties as Fireman in September and October 1962. The following month I was made redundant and returned back to the grade of Passed Cleaner.



41 After a mile long climb from Ilminster, 0-6-0PT 8783 bursts into view under the road bridge and pulls into Donyatt Halt. This train is the last 4.30pm from Taunton to Chard Central on September 8th 1962. (S.P.J.A. Derek)

MELVYN BAKER FIREMAN DUTIES TAUNTON 83B

Sep-62

DATE	DAY	LOCO	DRIVER	DUTY
2AND SEPT 1962	SUNDAY		NORMAN PENNY	8.30 ENGINE PREP SECOND MAN TO BRISTOL D853 PLY-BRADFORD
3RD SEPTEMBER	MONDAY		E ROWE	10/00PM LOCO RELIEF
4TH SEPTEMBER	TUESDAY	D7017	LIONEL COX	6/00 PM LOCO RELIEF (WORKED THE 3/05PM HACKNEY BRISTOL GOODS)
5TH SEPTEMBER	WEDNESDAY	7436	NORMAN PENNY	6PM LOCO RELIEF 7436 LIGHT ENGINE TO CHARD WORK 7/40 8783 FAILED
6TH SEPTEMBER	THURSDAY			REST DAY
7TH SEPTEMBER	FRIDAY	8783	NORMAN PENNY	2/15PM ON 3/15 AND 6/45 CHARD PASSENGER
8TH SEPTEMBER	SATURDAY	8783	ROY ANSTICE	2/30PM EAST COACHES THEN THE LAST 4/30 CHARD PASSENGER WORK
				TWO TRIPS TO CHARD JUNC AND BACK TO CENTRAL 5/30 AND 6/09 THEN
				THE LAST 7/26 ALL STATIONS TO TAUNTON ARR 8/21 (4663 THE LAST 9/30
10TH SEPTEMBER	MONDAY	82042	H SAMPSON	6.15 ON DUTY 6.45 YEOVIL PASSENGER
11TH SEPTEMBER	TUESDAY		NO DRIVER	8.00 AM LOCO RELIEF
12TH SEPTEMBER	WEDNESDAY		NO DRIVER	6.00 AM LOCO RELIEF
13TH SEPTEMBER	THURSDAY		A CHUDLIEGH	6.00 AM TOP POINTS
14TH SEPTEMBER	FRIDAY		BILL HOLCOMBE	6.00 AM LOCO RELIEF 9663 TO BRISTOL PASS HOME ON D804
15TH SEPTEMBER	SATURDAY		ERN DINGLE	6.00AM TURNING
17TH SEPTEMBER	MONDAY			REST DAY
18TH SEPTEMBER	TUESDAY		NO DRIVER	10/00 PM LOCO RELIEF
19 TH SEPTEMBER	WEDNESDAY		NO DRIVER	10/00 PM LOCO RELIEF
20TH SEPTEMBER	THURSDAY		NO DRIVER	10/00 PM LOCO RELIEF
21ST SEPTEMBER	FRIDAY		NO DRIVER	10/00 PM LOCO RELIEF
22AND SEPTEMBER	SATURDAY		NO DRIVER	10/00 PM LOCO RELIEF
24TH SEPTEMBER	MONDAY		R HUNT	2/00PM TURNING
25TH SEPTEMBER	TUESDAY			REST DAY
26TH SEPTEMBER	WEDNESDAY		NORMAN PENNEY	2/00PM TURNING
27TH SEPTEMBER	THURSDAY	6148	REG YARD	2/00 PM ON WORK THE 5/57 PM YEOVIL PASSENGER
28THSEPTEMBER	FRIDAY		NO DRIVER	2/00 PM LOCO RELIEF
29TH SEPTEMBER	SATURDAY	8783	BERT SLADE	4/30PM EAST COACHES

MELVYN BAKER FIREMAN DUTIES TAUNTON 83B

Oct-62

DATE	DAY	LOCO	DRIVER	DUTY
1ST OCTOBER 1962	MONDAY	2882	BOB WOOD	5.55 AM PREPARE LOCO 7.00 AM COLLUPTON P/WORK
2AND OCTOBER	TUESDAY		NO DRIVER	6.00 AM LOCO RELIEF
3RD OCTOBER	WEDNESDAY		REG CHUDLIEGH	6.00AM LOCO RELIEF
4TH OCTOBER	THURSDAY	D2142	JOE HOOPER	6.10AM DUNBALL GOODS
5TH OCTOBER	FRIDAY			6.00 AM LOCO RELIEF
6TH OCTOBER	SATURDAY			MADE REDUNDANT FROM FIREMAN TO PASSED CLEANER
				AS SENIOR PASSED CLEANER YOU GOT THE FIST FIRING TURN OF THE DAY
8TH OCTOBER	MONDAY	7436	T V SAMPSON	5.45 AM PREPARE LOCO WORK 6.20 YEOVIL GOODS
9TH OCTOBER	TUESDAY		ERN DINGLE P/F	4.00 AM LOCO RELIEF WITH PASSED FIREMAN E DINGLE DRIVER PUT BACK
10TH OCTOBER	WEDNESDAY	6148	TISIL THOMAS	1.00 AM PERPARE LOCO 1.45 AM WELLINGTON BANKER
11TH OCTOBER	THURSDAY			REST DAY
12TH OCTOBER	FRIDAY	3787	BILL SELWAY	6.30 AM PREPARE LOCO 7.30 WATCHET SPECIAL GOODS (ESPARTO GRASS
13TH OCTOBER	SATURDAY		ERN DINGLE	6.00 AM TURNING
15TH OCTOBER	MONDAY	4955	ARCHY BAKER (UNCLE)	8.35 AM WEST COACHES (PLASPOWER HALL) POSS FOR AILING DIESELS
16TH OCTOBER	TUESDAY		NO DRIVER	6.00 AM TURNING
17TH OCTOBER	WEDNESDAY		NORMAN PENNY	2.00 AM ENGINE PREP
18TH OCTOBER	THURSDAY		NORMAN PENNY	2.00 AM ENGINE PREP
19TH OCTOBER	FRIDAY		NORMAN PENNY	2.00 AM ENGINE PREP
20TH OCTOBER	SATURDAY			REST DAY LONG WEEK-END
22AND OCTOBER	MONDAY			REST DAY LONG WEEK-END
23RD OCTOBER	TUESDAY		JIM HOLMAN	2.00 AM ENGINE PREP
24TH OCTOBER	WEDNESDAY		JIM HOLMAN	2.00 AM ENGINE PREP
25TH OCTOBER	THURSDAY		JIM HOLMAN	2.00 AM ENGINE PREP
26TH OCTOBER	FRIDAY		JIM HOLMAN	10.00 AM LOCO RELIEF
27TH OCTOBER	SATURDAY		FRED MACE P/F	10.00 AM LOCO RELIEF
29TH OCTOBER	MONDAY	2871	TED COOK P/F	5.55 AM PREPARE LOCO 7.00 AM KEINTON MANDEVILLE P/WORK
30TH OCTOBER	TUESDAY	3736	A JONES	8.45 AM PREPARE LOCO 9.20 AM MINEHEAD GOODS
31ST OCTOBER	WEDNSDAY	4992	TED COOK P/F	6.15 AM DUNBALL P/W CAPPED 4992 (CROSBY HALL) LIGHT TO EXETER

A Day Out in South Wales *by John Sparkes*

For my next article I have looked at my notes for 7th November 1964. This was a time of transition, when diesels had taken over the passenger trains in South Wales, but steam continued on some freights (mainly in the valleys). No-one envisaged the extinction of the diesel hydraulics in such a short time or the closure of Landore shed. In addition to the usual steam there were locos on one – way journeys to the scrapyards.

The day began on the 7.04 am train from Trowbridge (a Derby suburban dmu) to Bristol T.M. with D1021 on 1A00 7.15 Bristol – Paddington and D6353 LE at Bath then at Bristol T.M. D4017, 44838 (8A) on parcels from Derby, 48444 (82F), D847 49 mixed freight for South Wales, D862 on 2B96 from Weston, 45224 (16F) on the 8.40 to Sheffield, D869, D7020, D1725, D1720, 4630, D1002, D7018, D7043, a 3 car dmu on the 8.36 to Severn Beach, 92248 & D857 on a class 6 freight.

I then continued to Severn Tunnel Junction on the 8.35 to Milford Haven & Pembroke Dock (2x 3 car Cross-Country dmus).

En route 5935 & D7000 were noted at Dr Day's Bridge Junction, D7004 on wagons at Stapleton Road, a Hymek with a down freight at Horfield, D35 with a south – bound freight at Filton Junction, 7205 with track panels from South Wales and 4157 banker in siding at Patchway, and D847 in loop at Pilning and D10xx on 7.20 Swansea – Paddington.

At Severn tunnel Junction D4107, D1598 & D1588 were noted before going to the shed, where many withdrawn locos were present – 34062, 31846, 2836, 4128, 31797, 31864, 7817, 2201, 6909, 7825, 7308, 31854, 34083, 7339, 2839, 6345, 5336, 2822, 4985 & 41210. Other locos were 6812, 4160, 6993, 6850, 7226, D1586, D6922, 92003 (88A), 48180 (15C), 3802, 92250, 9616, 6984, 48109 (2E), 6114, 4137, 6115, 6860, D6888, 92243(88A). Some of the latter may have been withdrawn also, because the information I have used was based on October 12 1964 in the Locoshed book (this applies to my later visit to Radyr shed as well).

Back at the station the following were noted – D1757 1A24 8.20 Swansea – Paddington, D7083 1C46 9.35 Cardiff – Plymouth,

My journey then continued to Newport on the 9.40 Bristol – Manchester (D1033) and en route D1058, D3104, 6116, & 4252 & 5208 On up freights were noted.

At Newport D1605 took over the 9.40 Bristol & 5285, D9515, 9649, D6851, D6936, D6849 & D4180 were noted.

I then travelled to Cardiff on the 8.00 Paddington – Swansea (D1052). Spending about an hour there I noted D6829 was on 7K40 to Aberbeeg or Dowlais, D3607 , 7923(88A) with a freight from West Wales, D1738 on 6F04 mainly bolsters down at 10.57, several valleys dmus (in 2x3 car formations), D1755, D6913 on 22 grampus wagons, down at 11.01,

3402(88B), H20 on wagons up the valleys at 11.10, D1691 up LE at 11.11,, D6834 LE from Canton at 11.12, W52096/86 Intercity set !M77 to Derby at 11.13, D6830 LE from Canton at 11.14, D1615 6M88 heavy freight to the Midlands, 11.18, D1007 1A58 10.20 Swansea – Paddington at 11.20, W50690 set from Birmingham Snow Hill at 11.27 & D7005 LE from Canton.

The next leg of the journey was to Swansea on the 9.00 from Paddington ‘Capitals United Express’ (D1073). Passing Canton shed yard D3749 D3399, D1694 & D6831 were noted, D1597 on up freight at Bridgend at 12.04 , D3806, D1729, D1724 & D6920 & D1732 On 5M freight at Margam, D6872 & 4604? at Port Talbot, and D1697, 2 EE type 3s & 6 0-6-0PTs at Neath Shed yard.

I then visited Landore shed, where D2087, D2190, D2181, D1057, D1067, D3744, D3365, D6909, D6858, D1054, D3360, D3743, D3808, D1028, D6926, D3987, D1047, D6915, D6837, D6898, D1028, D3825, D1025 & D6927 were present.

It was then on to East Dock shed, where the only steam was en route to scrap yards (Morrison?) – 41535, 45682, 31812, 31913, 6867, 31849, 2886, 31856, 7213 & 6140. The other locos were D3826, D3556, D6907, D6932, D2118, & D6833.

Back at the station 4612 (87A), now happily preserved at the Bodmin & Wenford Railway, was station pilot, also D1696 & D3365.

I left for Cardiff on the 14.20 to Paddington (D1073 again), noting D3824 at Port Talbot, D1748 On 11.00 Paddington – Swansea & 4 E-E type 3s and 2 0-6-0PTS at Neath.

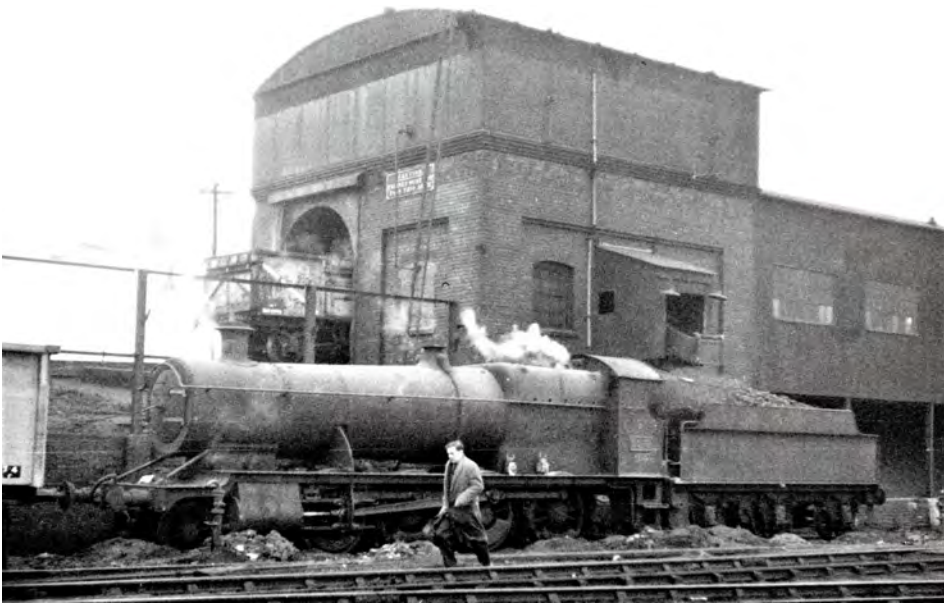
Back at Cardiff I visited Canton shed yard, noting D6863, D6931, D1694, D1603, D1753, D1730, D6942, D6910, D6841, 8416, 3754, D1585, D7005, D1693, D6944, D1048, D1694, D7030, D7084 & D7030.

At the station 5640 was on freight from the valleys at 3.48 pm, D6856 on iron ore to Llanwern at 3.51 pm, D1691 on 5F03 35 down coal at 3.56pm, D1723 on up freight at 3.58 pm, A Hymek on the 8.20 am from Newcastle at 3.58pm, various dmus on valleys lines trains, D6822 & D1744 LE to Canton, at 4.03 pm, D3267, 3686 BV to the valleys at 4.10 pm, 5692 down LE, D6917 –Z56 to Bromsgrove, at 4.14 pm, D7024 on 1065 4.20 pm Cardiff – Portsmouth, D6822 6F86 54 wagons, down at 4.24 pm, & D1587 on the 3.20 pm Swansea – Paddington ‘Capitals United Express’.

Going on to Radyr the following withdrawn locos were noted- 6624, 4263, 9798, 3736 & 3403. Others present were 6648, 5694, 4177, 6626, 5226, 6654, 1641, 6116, 1612, 9622, 6614, D6944, 4621, 4662, 5691, D6834, 3402, 3405, 6672, 5689, 5673, 9461, 5660, 3409, 5648, 5669, 8475, 4623, 6692, 3406, 8495, 8479, 3730, 3784, 9488, 9480, 9679, 6684, 3400, 6650, 5633, D3510, 6657, 3738, 9466, 9602, 5676, 3401 & 3403.

Locomotive 2862 without number-plates at Severn Tunnel Shed 6th December 1963

John Sparkes



Of interest to me was long –time resident of Westbury shed 5689, which, with 6625 was used mainly for banking duties to Upton Scudamore.

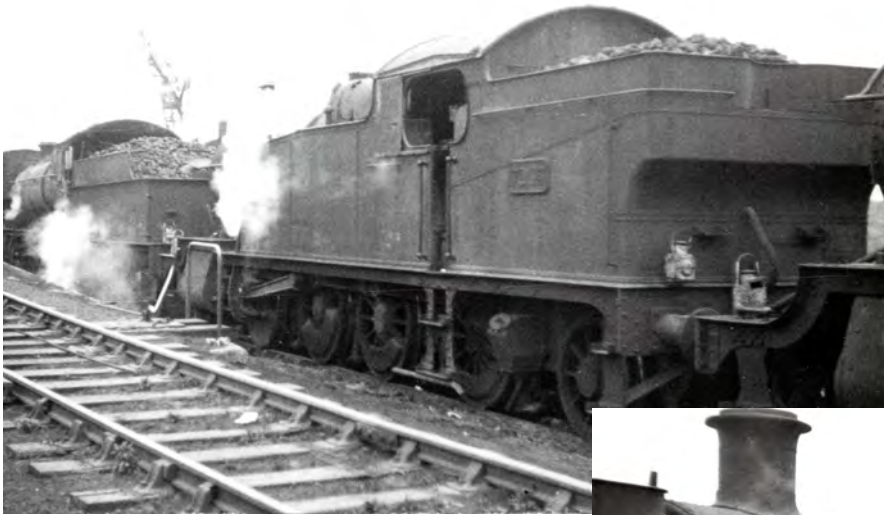
Back at Cardiff again, more valley lines trains were noted D6848 on up heavy freight at 5.47 pm, a 3 car C-C set Swansea – Hereford at 5.50 pm, D1017 on 43 wagons, up at 5.54 pm, W50702/ set from Cheltenham at 5.55 pm, , D1020 5C21 LE at 6.00 pm , 2x3 car cc-dmus on 5 pm Bristol – Swansea, & a pannier tank on a short freight.

I started my homeward journey on a Cardiff – Gloucester train (D7032 7car inc BRC), changing at Newport. En route 3 Brush type 4s on down freight, another Brush 4 LE and a pannier tank LE down were noted.

At Newport D6838 was on 5J40 down freight at 6.46 pm, D1070 was on the 4.00pm Paddington – Swansea at 6.53pm, D1753 28 iron ore to the docks, D1611 down LE, D6824 6X75 iron ore to the docks?, at 7.14pm, a 'Hymek' on the 3.15pm Plymouth – Cardiff, D6899 9J20 28 down freight at 7.20, D1594 at 7.46pm, D3819, 9649 & 7252.

My journey resumed on the 5.10pm Swansea – Bristol (2x3car C-C units) and I changed at Bristol on to the 9.05pm to Salisbury with D7004 in charge. This was a passenger and mail train, which continued to Eastleigh unadvertised. It was, moreover, the last train to Trowbridge, which restricted quite a lot of my journeyings in the 1960s & 70s.

I was interesting that i observed more steam – hauled freights to and from South Wales at Gloucester in January 1965 – possibly this may have been due to engine changes on the inter – regionals at either Gloucester or Severn tunnel Junction. In 1963 on 5th December, when some of the photographs were taken there was certainly more steam activity, with, at Cardiff, 5055 (86C) on the 4,45pm to Liverpool, 5073(88A) on the 5.30pm to Hereford, 4088 (82B) freight from the docks, 6357 (87A) on an up parcels, a 9F on oil to Milford Haven, 7226 (87D) on oil, an 8F from Woodford Halse on an up freight, and 4929 (85B)on an up fitted freight. There was more steam to the valleys too – at Radyr 7205 & 7250, which were regulars on the loco coal working to Salisbury were on shed amongst others.



Locomotives 7245 and 2873 on Severn Tunnel Junction shed coaling road 6th December 1963
John Sparkes

Locomotive 6665 at Radyr Shed 6th December 1963
John Sparkes

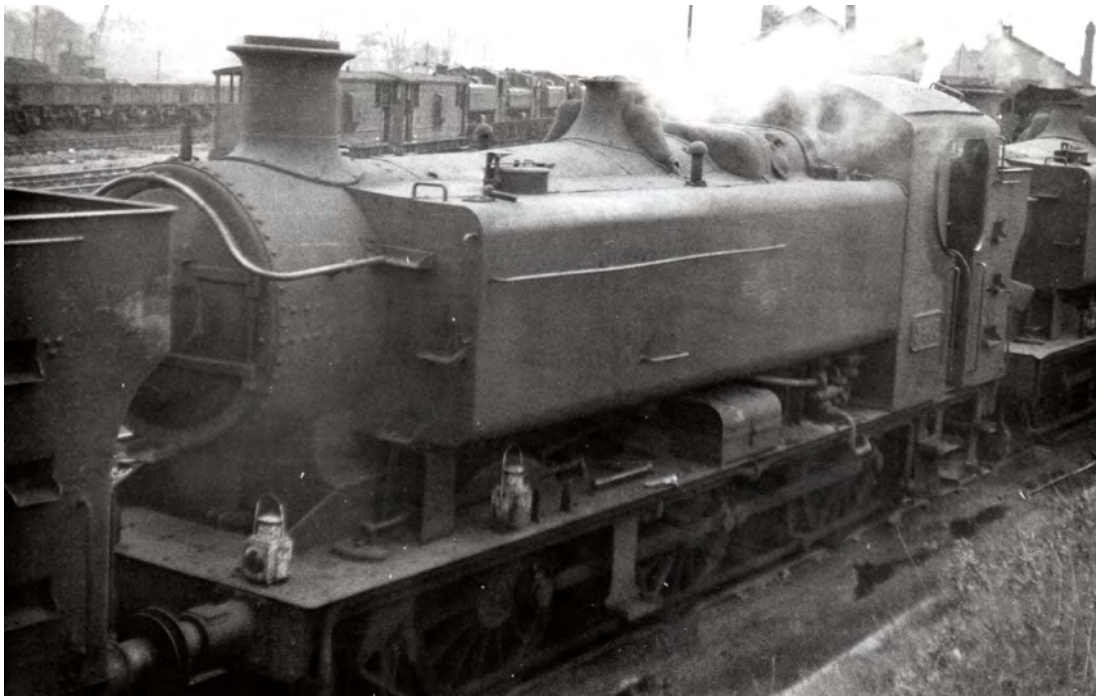


TABLE 1 –CARDIFF GENERAL 10.40 TO 11.30am

D6829	7K40 to Aberbeeg/Dowlais		W52096/86 set	1M77 to Derby	11.13/
D3607			D6830	LE from Canton	11.14
7923 (88A)	freight from W.Wales		D1615	6M88 heavy freight	11.18
D1738	6f04 mainly bolsters down	10.57	D3823		
D1755			D1007	1A58 12c	10.20 S'sea –Padd 11.20/
D6913	22 grampus, down	11.01	W50690 (C-C)	set 8.05 from B'ham SH	11.27
3402	H20 wagons up valleys	11.10	D7005	LE from Canton	
D1691	up LE	11.11	Note: 4 valleys line trains also		
D6834	LE from Canton	11.12			

TABLE 2 CARDIFF GENERAL 3.48 – 4.24 pm

5670	freight from valleys	3.48	D3267		
D6856	38 iron ore to Llanwern?	3.51	3686 BV	up valleys	4.10
D1691	5F03 35 down coal	3.56	5692	down LE	4.14
D1723	30 up freight	3.58	D6917	–Z56 LE to Bromsgrove	4.14
D70xx	8.20 from Newcastle	3.58	D7024	1065 7c	4.35 to P'tsmth 4.19/
D6822& D1744	LE from Canton	4.03	D6822	6F86 54 wagons down	4.34
Note : 5 valleys line trains also			D1587	1A 11 (RC)	3.20 S'sea – Pd 4.24
"Capitals United Express2					



**Locomotive 3405
with others of the
same class at Radyr
Shed 6 December
1963**
John Sparkes

**Locomotive 3866
passing Patchway
Tunnel signal box on
Down coal empties
3rd September 1963**
John Sparkes



**Brand new D6840 running
light engine to South Wales
passing Patchway Tunnel
Box. Note the splitting
distant signals.**
3rd September 1963
John Sparkes

Sunrise at Box by David Hartland

It is 6.20 on the morning of 9th April 1990 and I am with a small group at the western end of Box Tunnel. It is still dark at this end, but visible in the distance through the tunnel, almost two miles away, is a pink glow as daylight emerges at the eastern portal. The tunnel is clear of diesel fumes, for this is a Monday with few trains overnight. I set my camera up – 300mm lens with 2x converter and a sturdy tripod. There is excited chatter amongst the group as we wait. The pink glow in the distance grows stronger and turns yellow. A click of the camera. The chatter dies down, and there is silence as all eyes are concentrated on that distant view. The yellow glow grows brighter. It is 6.38 and the glow at the far end of the tunnel is golden bright with the light reflecting off the rails. Another photo. Now it is getting lighter around us and the eastern portal appears less bright – the moment has passed. We can hear an HST coming up the bank from Bath and the BR lookout is telling us to clear the track.....

The Idea

Anyone who has watched sunlight move around a room will understand the thrill of being able to predict the movement of that light. Ancient civilisations appreciated this and the Egyptians had structures built to produce magical indications as the sun glinted through a crevice just once a year. Similarly, Stonehenge is structured around the concept that the sun is called upon to fall in one position, just once per year, to herald a date in the calendar.



Up HST entering West Portal of Box Tunnel David Hartland

Young Isambard Brunel was keen on all things dramatic; he was interested in Egypt and several of his works feature Egyptian influences. He was friendly with an astronomer, John Snow, who had an observatory in Kensington, and Brunel designed a new observatory dome for Snow in 1831. There was a partial eclipse of the sun on 29th November 1826 and it is not fanciful to imagine that Isambard observed this eclipse with his friend in the observatory. Isambard also knew John Pond, the Astronomer Royal. It was this combination of influences which may have given Brunel a grand idea.

Construction

Box tunnel might not have existed at all. Macdermot (ref 1) quotes that the plans of the Great Western Railway allowed Brunel a choice with the route at this site – to build a long incline at 1:330 or a shorter tunnel at 1:100. He chose the tunnel option, and persisted with the plan against fierce opposition at the time. The construction was completed and the tunnel opened in June 1841.

The finished tunnel was constructed on an interesting alignment. Coming down from London, the route is on a gradual rising gradient. The Eastern Portal is approached via a right-hand curve then suddenly, as the tunnel is entered, the gradient changes to 1:100 down, this gradient being maintained right through the bore which is

dead straight. On emerging at the west end, the track levels out, then features a left hand curve down towards Box station at a more gentle gradient of 1:660. This combination of right-hand curve, straight through the tunnel, then a left-hand curve, combined with a

sudden steep gradient within more gradual slopes seems a little odd, and perhaps unnecessary. At the eastern portal the line is in a deep cutting with trees on top.



Down HST about to enter Box Tunnel. Note the cutting wall on the left with tree growth

David Hartland

In 1842, shortly after the tunnel's completion, the *Devizes Gazette* reported an observation of the sun rising through the tunnel on 9th April, Brunel's birthday, and this was reprinted in other local newspapers. Many years later, after Brunel's death, the *Daily Telegraph* republished the story. (was this delay perhaps to avoid embarrassing the man for spending shareholders' money on a fanciful whim?) Since then the legend has surfaced at intervals, and many confusing accounts have been published, many with factual errors.

The Legend Grows

Adrian Vaughan (ref 2) quotes calculations and observations by a gentleman from 1968 demonstrating that the sun shines through on 15th April. MacDermot's official history (ref 3) quotes a date of 21st June for the effect, which is quite ridiculous. Other observations mention a 'flash' of sunlight lasting only a few seconds. There are other, even more confusing observations quoted elsewhere. More serious publications have taken up the story. The *New Civil Engineer* published a photo taken by David Needham of the tunnel mouth on 9th April 1982 (ref 4) showing a glow at the far end but no direct beam of sunlight. Smoke or fumes in the tunnel (especially in steam days) would confuse the observations, and of course any clouds in the eastern sky would nullify the effect. At the Corsham end the cutting is surmounted by a row of trees which can potentially block the sun, and are periodically trimmed.

As the years have gone by so the legend persists. The more that is published, the more confusions result. If you look up 'Box Tunnel sunrise' on the internet today you will find no end of interesting comments, many of them spurious and contradictory.

The Mathematics

It seems obvious but for the sun to be able to shine through a railway tunnel it must be dead straight and the gradient must be relatively steep. The sun will shine through only when very low in the sky. Equally important is the alignment of the tunnel in plan view. The mathematics are not



View through Box Tunnel from the East at 06.25, 06.32 and 06.35 on 9th April 1990.

Below, an enlargement of the 06.35 picture showing the sunlight extending into the tunnel as revealed by the reflection from the rails in the distance. *David Hartland*



Eastern Portal of the tunnel at 6.30 on 9th April 2017. The sun is shining into the tunnel, and note that it is above the top of the cutting, but not by much. *Adam Scott Images*

complicated and have been covered in two written publications dating from 1985. The Royal Astronomical society paper (ref 5) and the article in the *New Civil Engineer* (ref 4) both go through the calculations of the tunnel alignment and the sun's position in the sky. The complication is the calendar, which means that the actual date when a specific alignment of the sun occurs will vary from year to year according to the drift due to leap years.

Even calculating the sun's position in the sky is not straightforward. When the sun is near the horizon, the position as seen by an observer is different to the true position because of atmospheric refraction. This has been known since the early 19th century, and it is a well known point that seafarers avoid taking sun sightings on their sextants when the sun is low in the sky. Published correction factors are of limited use in the Box situation, but the correction is likely to amount to one or two days' difference in observation.

Both the published mathematical papers conclude that the tunnel alignment means that the sun will shine through the tunnel at sunrise on 6th or 7th April every year, depending on whether the year is a leap year. (It will also shine through at a corresponding date in the autumn, around 6th September). Strangely, the astronomical society paper concludes that

because the phenomenon does not occur exactly on his birthday, Brunel could not have planned it, and therefore the legend is without foundation. Yet it is so close - just two or three days adrift.

Recent Developments

Most recently, during the electrification works for the GWR line, Alstom commissioned a photographer to be at the tunnel on 9th April and with the benefit of a clear sunrise he was able to show the sun penetrating the tunnel at the eastern end, and clear of the trees above the cutting - but not right through. The direction of the rays on the tunnel wall can be seen to slant down, and will not reach the western portal. The sun is just slightly too high, suggesting that a few days previously with the sun lower, the phenomenon might work. The same picture shows that the trees at the top of the cutting might obstruct the sun if allowed to become too tall.

If Brunel had been aligning the tunnel to do this, it was a challenge. To build a tunnel dead straight is one thing, but to arrange so that the tunnel points accurately to a position in

Eastern Portal at 06.35 on 9th April 2017. The sun's rays are entering the tunnel, but the slanting angle shows that they will not reach to the far portal. Adam Scott Images.



the sky is another. And to make that alignment match the exact point in the sky where the sun will be at a specific date, requires very precise calculations and construction. To visualise the required accuracy, try looking down the end of a 13ft long piece of copper water pipe and aiming it at a 2in diameter light bulb. This scales approximately to the Box Tunnel proportions.

Other Ideas

There is the possibility that Brunel was aiming for a different date. Isambard was the youngest of three children. He had two older sisters, one of whom, Emma Jane, was born in April 1803, and by all accounts she and Isambard were fairly close. This point has been taken up by Peter Maggs in Genealogists Magazine (ref 6).

Peter has found proof that Emma Joan Brunel was born on 6th April 1803 and he makes the suggestion that Isambard may have designed the tunnel to allow the sun through on HER birthday, not his own. If this were true, then the secret was well kept through both lifetimes. If the tunnel had been designed to suit a specific date then Brunel was spending money on what may be the greatest practical joke ever played – and shareholders' money at that. How did he have the audacity to undertake such a dramatic illusion and then keep quiet about it for future generations to guess? Perhaps this is the reason that the plans were kept secret.



View into the tunnel and the sun's rays are failing to reach the far end. Adam Scott Images

Since the phenomenon was first noted people have gone most years to the tunnel to check, on 9th April. (Subject to formal permission of course). My own experience on that morning in 1990 was quite conclusive and matches the conclusions of the Alstom photograph – the sun comes close to shining through on 9th April but not fully. My view on that day was dramatic, but it would have been so much more than dramatic had the sun actually aligned and penetrated the full length of the tunnel. In my photographs the light can be seen reflecting off the rail heads and the tunnel wall but not right through. Once again the sun is slightly too high in the sky, slightly too late in the calendar.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that the sun does shine directly through Box Tunnel on 6th or 7th April every year. There are three possibilities:

- **The whole thing is an enormous coincidence, or**
- **Brunel planned it to occur on his birthday but made an error – perhaps he was not aware of the defraction issue, or the final construction was fractionally out of line, or**
- **Brunel planned the phenomenon to occur on his sister's birthday and was dead right.**

As far as is known, Brunel left no diary entries or other records to give any background to this issue, so we may never know the full truth. It is, however, an intriguing puzzle which continues to cause interest and excitement 180 years after the tunnel was built.

References

1. Macdermot, *'History of the Great Western Railway'* volume 1 page 23
2. Vaughan, *IK Brunel, Engineering Knight Errant*, chapter 14 page 141.
3. Macdermot, *'History of the Great Western Railway'* volume 1 page 133.
4. Martin Barnes, *'Maths shows Light on Brunel Legend'* 'New Civil Engineer' 4th April 1985.
5. Atkins, C.P. (1985). *"Box Railway Tunnel and I. K. Brunel's Birthday: A Theoretical Investigation"*. Journal of the British Astronomical Association. **95** (6): p260–262.
6. Peter Maggs, *"Brunel's Gift"* Genealogists' Magazine December 2016.

Counting the Rivets *by John Gulliver*

I'm not normally a rivet-counter, but I have attached four photographs to intrigue readers. All show the buffer beams on GWR, or former GWR, 4-cylinder locomotives. Have a close look at these buffer beams.

I believe that the dimensions of three of them, two on 6000, one on 7029, are identical (as we know, from the days of Churchward onwards, standardisation, and therefore interchangeability, was one of Swindon's continuing themes). Look closely and you will observe six rivets, in two vertical rows of three, to the outside of each buffer.

The latest issue of Steam Railway has a cover picture of 6024 and when I saw it I immediately bought a copy. The fourth picture has been scanned from the magazine, but look at the buffer beam - the picture shows that there is now just a single row of rivets beyond each buffer. This suggests that perhaps 3 or 4 inches have been trimmed from the overall width of the beam. I was anticipating that I would find within the pages of the magazine an account of all the work done on the engine, especially her outside cylinders, but I'm afraid I was disappointed. There was nothing. Nevertheless, the work has been done neatly and, in my view, suits the engine well, given the other things that have had to be done to reduce her size.

Such things matter now, given the work that is being done on 6024 to afford it greater route-availability on GB's mainlines. I accept the need for it: without it, 6024 would be tied to heritage lines and would never exceed 25 mph again.

It also reminds me of the story I believe was associated with Laira - or was it Old Oak? - in connection with the 1948 inter railway locomotive trials. As you will know, while 6018 did run on the Eastern to Leeds, she was banned from the Midland and Southern main lines. Too wide, it was said, doubtless with justification. 'Give me a hammer and a hacksaw', said one of the drivers. 'I'll sort that out'. I like it.

6000 King George V on the 1981 'Ten Years since return to steam Railtour, believed to be at Hereford. John Gulliver



6000 King George V at Church Stretton in September 1983 on a railtour. John Gulliver



6024 King Edward I under test. Courtesy, 'Steam Railway.'



Castle Class locomotive 7029 Clun Castle being prepared at Worcester Shed. This is believed to be the Ian Allan Lickey & Midlands Railtour on 27th March 1965 which ran from Paddington to Nottingham via Worcester and the Lickey incline. John Gulliver.



EVENING MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2023

Meetings are held on the third Friday of each month, throughout the year, at Stoke St Mary Village Hall, near Taunton. TA3 5DE (unless otherwise indicated) commencing at 19.30, and members and visitors are all welcome.

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| 20 Jan | 'Our Heritage Railways' by Peter Triggs |
| 17 Feb | GROUP ANNUAL MEETING and 'Articulated Locomotives' by Peter Darke |
| 17 Mar | 'Steam Recreations' by Don Bishop |
| 21 Apr | '50 years of Mainline Steam' by Roger Marsh |
| 19 May | 'Salute to the Great Western and Southern' by Simon Foote |
| 16 Jun | 'Journey to Wales' by Francis Lewis |
| 21 Jul | '13 years of Saying 'CHEESE'' by Jack Boskett. |
| 18 Aug | 'Members Present' (15min each) compiled by Francis Lewis |
| 15 Sep | 'West Country Steam' by Peter Triggs |
| 20 Oct | 'Railways in the 1970s/80s' by John Medley |
| *3 Nov | 'Bridgwater to Blue Anchor' by Peter Triggs
<i>at Rockwell Green Parish Church Hall, Rockwell Green, TA21 9DH</i> |
| 17 Nov | 'Yet More Railway Tales' by David Hartland |
| 15 Dec | 'Transport Video Highlights' by David Brabner |

Sponsored cycle ride on 16th May 1976. From left to right:

Mike Hartland, Trevor Whitfield, Geoff Harris, Peter Eveleigh, David Brabner, Mike Wheeler, Martin Middleton, Philip Bisatt, (unknown) David Hartland, Peter Triggs, and Andy Taylor.



Income for Great Western Society stock restoration was boosted last summer when fifteen Taunton Group members and friends took part in a sponsored cycle ride to Blue Anchor on the north Somerset coast. The route from Taunton was arranged to extend to twenty-five miles, further than necessary to reach the sea but enabling one or two additional places of local and railway interest to be passed. Nearly all the riders arrived at Blue Anchor unaided and the party enjoyed an excursion on the West Somerset Railway to Minehead before returning to Taunton by car. The photograph above shows the main group of cyclists near Bishop's Lydeard, about five miles from the starting point. Peter Triggs (2nd from right) co-ordinated arrangements for the ride while Martin Middleton and Mike Wheeler (6th and 7th from right) conceived the idea and planned and tested the route.

RICHARD ANTLIFF