



Great Western Society



TAUNTON GROUP JOURNAL 2023 Edition



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GROUP COMMITTEE FOR 2023 as elected at the GROUP ANNUAL MEETING 2023

Francis Lewis	Chairman
David Hartland	Secretary
David Whatley	Treasurer
Barry Atkinson	Assistant Treasurer
Peter Triggs	Programme and Welfare Officer
Lynn Triggs	Assistant to Mr Triggs
Philip Izzard	Email Newsletter & Catering
Roger Hagley	Publicity Stand and Membership
David Barge	Co-opted Member

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EDITORIAL

Another year passes, and we have a full copy of this august journal for our Group, with I hope a good variety of content. The last few weeks have been overshadowed by the death of our former Chairman Carl Honnor. Carl was to many of us an inspiration and gave encouragement in all Group activities. Richard Antliff pays tribute to him in this edition. The Group continues its activities with gusto, and we are proud to be one of the last two GWS groups still going strong, 55 years after the first tentative meeting.

David Hartland.

Cover Photograph:

D9017 'The Durham Light Infantry' at Edinburgh Waverley on the 10.00 from Kings Cross 'The Flying Scotsman'. Wednesday 24th July 1968. John Sparkes

Chairman's Report

of the Group activities in 2022.

After further disruption because of Covid restrictions, it was great to hold regular meetings again, commencing with the Group Annual Meeting on 18th March 2022. My predecessor, Stuart Trott, stood down as Chairman after that meeting. Thank you very much, Stuart, for your leadership over the past 15 years. It was a pleasure to serve under you on the committee and, latterly, when I was Vice Chairman.

We have been very pleased to welcome David Barge and David Whatley onto the Committee. Unfortunately, we lost the services of Carl Honnor and Richard Studley, who had to stand down from the active committee due to ill health. They remain as associate members. Both Carl (a former chairman) and Richard have contributed greatly to the work of the group over the years and are much missed.

Richard Antliff made a presentation in the second half of the G.A.M., and enlightened members about progress at Didcot Railway Centre relating to current and future site projects. He updated us on operational matters and progress on restoration of locomotives and rolling stock.

In April, Peter Triggs presented the Best of Steam in Wales. He showed images of the many branch lines that served the coal industry in South Wales and the preserved narrow-gauge lines in North Wales that linked with slate quarries. He also visited holiday areas on the former Cambrian railway, the various coastal resorts, and rural Central Wales.

In November at Rockwell Green, Peter showed West Country delights and, in January this year, the subject was heritage railways. In both meetings, he showed a variety of transport and views of landscapes. Many of the slides came from collections that he has inherited. In December, Amyas Crump used archive footage of railway scenes around Exeter, the West Country and elsewhere. These mainly came from the post war years to the diesel hydraulic era. There were also rare photographs of GWR road vehicles and ships.

'A Quick Look at Slow Trains' by David Peel in May evoked the mass appeal of Trainspotting in the 1950s and the Ian Allan ABC series of handbooks. The programme was a regional view of branch lines, stopping trains on the main lines, freight services and facilities. A similar theme was explored by Ian Bennett in November. Of specific interest here were local views including Somerset and Devon Branch lines. Ian concluded with archive material from the Didcot collection of pre nationalization Great Western scenes.

In June Philip Bisatt highlighted various trips that he had made in Britain and abroad in a presentation entitled 'Aberdeen to Adelaide'. A highlight of the year was the presentation in July by Ian Boskett about the Great Train Robbery of 1963. He detailed the planning and organisation made by the robbers and gave us a practical demonstration of the simple but ingenious method used to fool the train driver that the signals were yellow and then red. There were, however, many flaws and disagreements after the event that led to the robbers' downfall. He explained fates of the robbers, the unfortunate crew, and postal workers.

David Hartland's talk in August entitled 'GWS Taunton Group – the first 50 years' reflected on Group activities from the first meeting at the Phoenix Hotel on 24th July 1969 to the present day. These included talks, quizzes, tours, work at Taunton Depot etc. and the formation of the Broad-Gauge layout at Didcot. Also featured was the restoration and use of the much-loved pump trolley. Photographs showed many present and former members looking a lot younger! David finished by discussing the workings of water troughs and an attempt to re-create this on the miniature railway at Vivary Park.

In October, Alan Randle took us over 50 years of Photography at home and abroad. There was modern traction, steam specials and views of heritage railways. Alan Reeve in November showed us views of main line trains on the ECML, at Worting Junction (SR) and other areas in the home counties and beyond. Of particular interest were views of Sittingborne and Kemsley railway before preservation. Of note was the lack of lineside vegetation thus making photography easier.

Generally, attendances at meetings have been in the mid-20s. There were reduced numbers in December and January because of poor weather conditions, illness, and infirmity. Covid is still very much with us. Thank you to all who have contributed to the smooth running of meetings. This includes setting up projectors etc., providing refreshments, organising the raffles and collecting the money.

We thank all our speakers during the year. A special thank you to Peter for his unstinting work in organising the programme and ensuring that everything is set up prior to meetings. It is now much more difficult to find speakers. Many people who used to appear regularly have either died or are in poor health. It is most important that we have group members who can make presentations. Eight meetings this year will be conducted by members. There is an opportunity for other people to try their hand at making short presentations when we hold 'Members present' in August.

We welcomed many people to our 50th Anniversary lunch at The Beam Bridge hotel in July. It was good to see supporters who had been part of the group over the years. Thank you to Peter and those who assisted in the organisation of the event. It was a great success.

The other highlight this year was the Group visit to Taunton Model Engineer's railway at West Buckland. We viewed progress being made and the substantial work that has been done. We also had the opportunity to ride on the trains and even drive! Thank you very much to David Hartland and the T.M.E. for making us most welcome and for providing refreshments. We are hoping to make a return visit this year.

In March there will be a Group meal at The Maypole Inn, Thurloxton. The committee is hoping to arrange a visit in the summer to Didcot Railway Centre. We are also considering a visit to a model railway. I wish to thank all the committee members for their work and support over the past year. Thank you, especially to David Brabner who is retiring from the Committee and his role as Treasurer, a post that he has held admirably for many years. David Whatley is formally taking over as Treasurer. Norman Hanniford, who has been our independent auditor for many years, has also stood down and I wish to thank him for his help during this time. David Brabner has kindly agreed to take on this role and to assist with Publicity. Thank you to David Hartland for producing the 83B magazine and printing the programme. Also to Philip Izzard who has taken on email communications. Finally, I wish everyone well for the coming year.

Francis Lewis Group Chairman

Treasurer's Report 2022/23

For the first time since 2019 we have been able to hold an almost complete year of meetings – eleven (rather than twelve) in Stoke St Mary village hall and one in Rockwell Green, Wellington. As these meetings are now our only source of income, local speakers have mainly been used to minimise expenses, and this, combined with generous contributions from members and friends in the way of raffle and collection, has resulted in an increase in our end of year balance from less than £500 at this time last year to over £800 this year. Our only other major annual expense is the production and distribution of the 83B journal – unfortunately there are now fewer members of the Great Western Society living in the Taunton Group so this expense has reduced.

As some of you may know, I have recently moved to live in Devon, and this has resulted in my decision to stand down from the Taunton Group committee, and therefore also as your Treasurer, from today. David Whatley has been acting as assistant Treasurer for the last few months and, subject to your decision regarding the re-election of the remainder of the committee, will become the next Taunton Group Treasurer. The improvement in the Group finances has allowed Peter to book some well-known speakers such as Jack Boskett and Don Bishop for this year's programme so I hope you will all continue to support the Taunton Group – there are now only three active local Groups of the GWS remaining and we are the only one organising a programme of meetings throughout the year. Railway Magazine has recently been added to Didcot Railway Centre, Railway Herald, and Taunton Trains as places where the programme is advertised, in addition to Philip Izzard's monthly reminder.

Finally, I must thank Norman Hanniford for auditing the accounts for many years – he is also retiring this year and I have offered to take over that position in the future. **David Brabner**

GWS Taunton Group Accounts 12 months to 31st January 2023

<u>Income</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>
Sales	0.00	0.00	Sales Purchases	0.00	0.00
Donations (Sundry)	0.00	0.00	Meetings Expenses	124.00	425.00
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	138.95
Donations (Tours and Events)	0.00	0.00	Donation to Didcot Projects	0.00	0.00
Meetings (Collections)	347.67	791.58	V.A.T. paid (to G.W.S. Treasurer)	0.00	0.00
Meetings (Raffle Profit)	56.00	154.00	Sundry Expenses	63.00	21.00
V.A.T. Collected	0.00	0.00			
	<u>£ 403.67</u>	<u>£ 945.58</u>		<u>£400.32</u>	<u>£584.95</u>

Balance Sheet

Brought forward January 2023	473.34	Expenditure 2022/23	584.95
Income 2022/23	945.58	Lloyds Bank Balance January 2023	831.56
		Cash in Hand	2.41
	<u>£1418.92</u>		<u>£1418.92</u>

David Brabner, Hon. Treasurer Norman Hanniford, Hon Auditor

Carl Honnor 1935—2023

Obituary by Richard Antliff

Carl was one of the elder statesmen of the Great Western Society. He chaired the Taunton Group, from the early 1970's when the West Somerset Railway Association was set up, initially seen as a local alternative to the GWS but developing into the vital organisation of today, and led the re-emphasis of the Group on a meeting and visits focus after the Taunton depot moved to Didcot in 1985. Carl steered this change with gentle skill, ensuring that its committee sustained activity to remain the busy

Group that it is today. He ensured that links with the Society centre, increasingly orientated to Didcot, stayed strong, attending the tri-annual gatherings of representatives from the Groups and the GWS Management Council, many a time casting wise words over a difficult issue.



Photo: Peter Triggs



Photo: David Hartland

His commitment to the Taunton Group remained unbounded, staying on the committee after passing on the Chairman's role in 1992, editing the Group annual journal 83B and arranging many trips and visits both in the UK and abroad.

Carl's influence helped the Group to flourish. He was a hands-on participant in the many Taunton Group railway artefacts recoveries and on preservation projects ranging from painting the rolling stock in Taunton, joining working parties on the broad gauge project at Didcot and supporting the GWS contribution to the restoration of Crowcombe station on the West Somerset Railway, particularly the authentic GWR signalling installation. Furnished with greasetop hat, originally white storeman's coat and suede shoes, which surely had steel toe caps, he would remind us at working parties that heavy railway objects "had no friends".

We had a great and loyal friend in Carl. He made it to his 88th birthday passing away three days later on 9th September.

We will all miss you.

Photo: David Hartland



ALL BRITAIN RAILROVER 1968 – PART 1 by John Sparkes

Following on from my 1966 and 1967 Railrovers (Wales & London Midland Region) I decided to undertake an All Britain Railrover in 1968. This was much more ambitious than the previous years.

It began on Wednesday 24th July on the 6.20 Bristol TM – Paddington (D1934) from Bath and continued on the 10.00 'Flying Scotsman' to Edinburgh (D9017), then the 17.00 to Aberdeen (D265). This was a marathon of 631 miles. On arrival at King's Cross I noted D180, D5590, D1535, D1970, D1998, D1578, D9017, D5904, D1525, D5641, D5551 & D1543 on the Diesel Siding and in the station D5646 on 2B66 suburban stock 7.46 from Cambridge, D5902 LE, D5606 ECS from carr sdgs, D5595 LE, D1937 3N09 ECS from carr sdgs & D1706 on the 7.25 from Sheffield 'The Master Cutler' with Pullmans including lone & Hercules.

Leaving on the 'Flying Scotsman' I was in the first coach (of 11) and took the precaution of closing the windows for the tunnels. Because

the train was first (and only) stop Newcastle my first sight of York was from the now removed through line under the overall roof and I missed seeing Locomotion at Darlington, by-passing the station on the through lines.



D9017 'The Durham Light Infantry' at Edinburgh Waverley on the 10.00 from Kings Cross 'The Flying Scotsman'. Wednesday 24th July 1968. John Sparkes

There was plenty of interest, however, including the fine prospect of Durham Cathedral and Castle (the speed limit was lower then – 40mph) and view from the Royal Border Bridge.

Observations included at Dukeries Junction D5680 on freight; at Doncaster, D1880, D4079, D5556, D6953, D5852, D6922, D5605, D5656, D3484 & D5552; at Selby, D1107; at York D1867, D2075, D2054, D6864, D2051, D9015, D1977, D8307, D8304, D168 & SC79190/189; at Darlington D5164, D2102, D6779 & D2311; at Tyne Yard D6874, D6825, D266, D3875, D8596 & 2xD50xx Iron ore to Consett. At Newcastle D9007 1A20 5car + vans 10.05 Perth – Caledonian Road motorail at 13.50, D1580 1A31 12.00 Edinburgh – King's Cross, D1577, D2066, D2339, D89 & 2 dmus and at Dunbar D5306. I wonder how a 'Deltic' found itself on a 'Motorail' train! On arrival at Edinburgh I noted D3742, D5301, D308, D3877, D3878 as station pilots, & several dmus, including Swindon inter-city units on the Glasgow service, D5315 on a Parcels from Glasgow at 16.15 & D5316.

Continuing from there on the 17.00 to Aberdeen (D265 with 9 on), I had my first crossings of the Forth and Tay Bridges. Observations included on Haymarket Shed Yard D3879, D357, D9006 & D6850, at Rosyth HMS Maidstone (a submarine depot ship), a County class destroyer, HMS Hermes & several frigates, at Dundee D6133, D3535 & SC51906/51801 at Arbroath SC56132 7 SC51248, and at Aberdeen D3934/5/93. I then went to Ferryhill Shed where I noted D3932/35/553/551/930, D2420/1, D5071, D5318, D263, D5307, D5342, D8020, & D360/66.

I might add that I timed the trains throughout from Bath and found the North Eastern Railway intermediate mileposts very difficult to see, particularly north of Darlington, where some track realignment and demolition of closed stations had taken place. Another problem I faced was in Aberdeen trying to find my hotel, because there was both a Bon Accord Street and Bon Accord Terrace.

On the next day I travelled from Aberdeen on the 7.50 to Inverness on a Swindon cross-country dmu. At Inverness, I noted D5116, D4095/6, D5342 on the 10.30 for Wick & Thurso & D5329 on the 10.40 for Kyle of Lochalsh before visiting the shed where D5341, D5119, D5324, D5120, D5340, D5337, D5123, D5114, D5343, D5327, D5334, D5117, D5330 & 2 dmus were present. I then left for Glasgow on the 11.20 behind D5340 & D5337 with 8 on.



D6137 at Glasgow Queen Street on the 7.25 from Mallaig Thursday 25th July 1968. John Sparkes

At Aviemore we crossed D8080 on a ballast train, at Newtonmore D5130 & D5131 on the 9.40 Glasgow to Inverness and overtook D5123 on an up freight at Dalwhinnie. At Perth were D3543 & D8112. Passing Eastfield Shed Yard I noted D6100/01/05/11/15/33 & D3392.

At Glasgow Queen Street H.L. were D6108 & D6152 carriage pilot before I moved to Low level, where I noted 10 trains (some ECS) between 15.43 and 16.07, all electric sets. Back at H.L. the 16.50 to Edinburgh was a 6 car intercity set, the 16.28 to Falkirk Grahamston 2x2 car sets, D360 and 8 on arrived on the 13.15 from Aberdeen at 16.25, D5353 & D6152 were carriage pilots, another 6 car intercity set arrived on the 15.30 from Edinburgh and D6111 was also on ECS.



D360 at Glasgow Queen Street on the 13.15 from Aberdeen Thursday 25th July 1968. John Sparkes

I then left on the 16.35 to Mallaig (D6108 with 6 on incl BC), which left at 16.54, 19 minutes late (reason not recorded). En route to Fort William we passed D8319



D6119 at the old station at Fort William on the 9.40 to Mallaig Friday 26th July 1968. John Sparkes

Drumry, D8093 and Glen Shiel (Glen Line Ltd) on the Clyde at Bowling, crossed D6121 on the 14.05 Mallaig – Glasgow & King's Cross at Ardlui, D6112 On the 17.40 Oban-Glasgow at Crianlarich, D6102 on the 17.25 Fort William – King's Cross with 9 on including Sleeping Cars at Tyndrum Upper, overtook D6103 on a down freight at Bridge of Orchy and crossed an up freight at Rannoch Moor. At Fort William D6106 took the train on to Mallaig.

Distance for the day was a more modest 411 miles. It seemed particularly appropriate that most of the trains on the West Highland Line were in the hands of North British type 2s (class 29).



D5126 at Inverness with a D53xx. John Sparkes

Next day (Friday 26th July) I left Fort William on the 9.35 to Glasgow (7.25 Mallaig), which arrived behind D6106 with 4 on and left behind D6137 with 7 on incl BC. D6119 was on the 9.40 to Mallaig and D6107 on shed. Rather surprisingly we crossed D8108 & D8070 on the Kings Cross-Edinburgh- Mallaig (incl SCs) at Spean Bridge and D8105 & D8099 on the 10.05 Glasgow – Mallaig with 6 on incl BC at Crianlarich. Presumably this could only happen in the Summer months because of the locos' lack of steam heating. At Dumbarton East we passed a dmu and emu set 081 and on Eastfield Shed Yard D2589/2756/60/79, D6105/9/10.

At Queen Street before leaving on a train for Edinburgh via Falkirk Grahamston were D6132 and D6918 on the 12.40 from Dundee. Other locos noted on Eastfield Shed were D2710, D8103/8321 & D8325. At Falkirk Grahamston were D5315 and D8316 on an oil train on Haymarket Shed yard D2579, D260, D1580, D1971, D5314 & D8513.

At Edinburgh Waverley I was in time to see D9007 arrive on the 10.00 'Flying Scotsman' from King's Cross at 15.48, D3977 station pilot and a 6car intercity dmu form Glasgow on the 14.30. before leaving behind D9019 with 11 on, on the 16.00 to King's Cross as far as Darlington. At Alnmouth was D6920, At Newcastle D2050, D5149, D1993, a dmu, and D1984 on 1A32 a relief from King's Cross, at Tyne Yard D6917 and at Darlington, where I changed trains (the 16.00 did not stop at York),



D5362 on the West Highland line with a D61xx on a freight train. John Sparkes

I noted D172 on the 14.56 Liverpool – Newcastle at 18.43, D1970 on another train to Newcastle at 18.44, D251 On the 14.20 King's Cross –Newcastle relief with 10 on at 1853, D9013 on 1A40 with 14 on, on the 15.00 King's Cross – Newcastle at 19.03/5, 2x2car dmus, D362 on 1S06? Malt Whisky wagons to Scotland, at 19.11. I then went to the shed, where I noted D2102, D3227, D3577, D330, D2069, D2055, E50751/59233/59097, E50750, E59540/50261.

Back at the station I noted a 'Peak' on the 13.20 Bristol – Newcastle at 19.50, a 'Deltic' on a North-bound relief at 1954, D30 on the 19.10 Newcastle – Bristol passenger & mail at 20.05/07, D5161 LE down at 20.05, D1578 1A44 16.10 King's Cross – Newcastle at 20.07/ and D3278, before leaving on the 17.08 Edinburgh – Leeds for York.

At York I noted D7603, D6823, D8304/8, D7524, D257/77 on the shed yard and then at the station D1532 on 1A90 at 21.20, D1858 on !M41 parcels, D1999, D1571 on 3E71 up parcels at 21.30, D266 on a down parcels at 21.30, D2075 station pilot, a 2 car dmu, D1104 3E4- freightliner Aberdeen- York Way at 21.33 and Dn1913 LE to shed.

The total mileage for the day was 375.

On the Saturday 27th July I began my day by visiting York shed, where D79, D237/53/4/77, D111, D2047/2101/113/2229/324, D3076/238/9/3315/20, D8300/05/07, Departmental 54 & 60019 'Bittern' (in store) were present before going to the station, where i noted a 5 car dmu on the 8.05 Scarborough – Manchester at 9.04, D1913 with 11 on the 7.05 Newcastle – Leeds at 9.00/02, D1763 IV77 with 11 on, on the 7.35 Newcastle – Paignton at 9.08, D2054 station pilot, D9004 1A with 12 on, on the 7.50 Newcastle-King's Cross at 9.11/27, D1997 on the 8.40 Leeds – Edinburgh at 9.18 and D296 on up through ECS at 9.22 before leaving on the 7.56 Newcastle – Llandudno (11 on) at 9.34.

At Leeds, where I changed on to the 6.45 Birmingham N St –Glasgow via the Settle & Carlisle Line (D311, 10 on) I noted D5130, D2162, D2244/7, D6732 7 D6811. Interestingly, I did not see any other trains on that line.

At Carlisle I joined the 10.35 Edinburgh – Birmingham in charge of D1662 with 10 coaches at 12.45. At Preston, where I changed again I noted D388 on a down express freight, D369 on !S71 13.30 Manchester – Glasgow & Edinburgh at 14.18, a D50xx

on through up ECS at 14.21 a 2car dmu, D5289 D5030, D330, D382 !S 13.35 Liverpool-Glasgow (combined with the 13.30 Manchester), D426 1M24 13 car 10.40 Glasgow – Birmingham at 14.26 and D406 !M26 10car 7.40 Perth-Euston before leaving for Carnforth on a Euston –Barrow relief behind D316 with 9 coaches at 14.38.

On arrival at Carnforth, before visiting the shed I noted D1816 on the 11.05 Euston –Barrow at 15.29. On shed there were 64 locos present – 25 'Black 5s', 2 Stanier 8fs, 7 BR9Fs, 1 BR5 4-6-0, 3 BR4 4-6-0s, 2 Fairburn 2-6-4Ts, Ivatt Class 2 2-6-0, 1 B1 4-6-0, 2 class 40s, 7 class 47s, 2 D57xx, 1X D85xx, 3 class 08s & 1 class 25. Of these locos 44871, 42073, 42085, 46441, 61306 & 75027 were subsequently preserved.

Following the shed visit I returned to Preston on the 14.55 Barrow – Manchester (D7626 with 8 on). At Lancaster D405 passed on the 12.05 Euston – Perth, D1812 called on 1P31 11.55 Euston – Carlisle, D425 passed on 1M26 13.10 Glasgow-Euston and 44809 was shunting freight wagons.

At Preston D5150 was on 1N79 15.08 Blackpool – Newcastle, at 16.45 (50 minutes late), D421 on 1P62 13.05 Euston – Blackpool North with 13 on at 16.48, a 2 car dmu on the 16.15 Blackpool North – Colne & D311 on 10 on a Euston – Glasgow relief before I left on the 14.05 Euston – Glasgow 1S75 (D427 with 13 coaches incl RC) at 17.37.

En route I noted D210 & D1903 with 5 coaches and cartics on the 16.30 Stirling – Newton Le Willows 'motorail' and D320 on 3Z35 up ECS at Carlisle. On arrival at Glasgow Central I noted D408, D5368, D431, D6855 and several dmus.

Total mileage was 403.

Thinking of the variety of diesels and number of loco-hauled trains one can only think how much we have lost these days (many of the trains were of good lengths and had restaurant or buffet cars). What price customer service and comfort?

John's story will resume as Part 2 in the next issue of 83B.

Dining in tonight? by Richard Antliff

What do you use your dining room for? There is too much to do to spend much time dining. Besides by the time the food reaches the dining room from the kitchen, it has started to get cold, unless you are desirous of a cold collation. Perhaps this was the Victorian's solution. So why not get rid of the dining table? Then there are all those chairs that get in the way. Lots of room now, in the dining room. Umm, what about a few shelves on the walls, replacing those dull pictures. There is room for over 60 linear feet of these on two of the walls and you can still look into the sitting room and out at the rewilded garden. On the floor the yellow carpet is not very practical, unless your main spillage had been custard, and the parquet flooring shows around the edges anyway. Why not replace it with some durable, wipeable vinyl matting, from skirting board across to skirting board?

Good thing the parquet flooring is flat and on a solid concrete base. You could rest a lot of weight on that. The floor-standing electric press drill, that can form 1 inch diameter holes in steel, although the lights in the street go dim, would be a good feature and talking point at parties. There is that big bench, not to sit on, unless you really want a sore and dusty bottom, with lots of spaces underneath to load up with heavy items so that you do not need to fix it to that lovely parquet floor. It is narrow enough to walk around and still leave room for a plentiful number of side units and tables along the walls underneath the shelving. Plenty of places now for all those tools that were so cold to use out in the garage.

So what's for dinner? Well for starters, what about a choice of signs, big ones and small ones to suit all tastes. The Great Western called them overhanging (or was it hangover) and bracket notices (see paragraph 414 of the GWR Engineering Department 1933 Instructions for Inspectors and Storekeepers). Several are needed at Didcot Railway Centre but best not to try to digest too many at once. They also want a porch to attach to the entrance ticket office. The dining room would serve to make the ingredients for the roof. But where to trial assemble it? There's lots of room in the sitting room, if the sofa, armchair and telly were grouped along one side. Nice parquet floor to work on here too. Always a few bits left over. No room in the dining room. Why not leave them in the space in the sitting room when the porch has gone?

The dining room shelves are filling up too. All those tinned items - paint, now stored at a recommended temperature, and a multitude of bits and pieces accumulated with intent or supplied by well-meaning friends (oh dear!). You get the flavour.

More electric appliances too, not warming cupboards, microwaves and blenders but angle grinders and a very useful magnetic drill with broach cutters to meet every recipe. Just the right mix, if you add some 6 inch box section, lots of thick steel angle iron and M12 and M16 bolts to taste (imperial weights and measures not allowed while in the EU) to make the icing on the cake for



Here's the dining room in 2010.
Richard Antliff



the Great Western Trust's Museum Archive at Didcot – time will tell. They may need a dining table and lots of chairs for comfortable study of the collection too.

So do you do anything useful in your dining room?



No 'T' in the dining room in 2012! *Richard Antliff*



Here's the dining room in 2022. Can you see what has moved on the shelves since 2010? *Richard Antliff*



Manufacturing the structure for a large timepiece for the roof of the Museum Annexe at Didcot Railway Centre. *Richard Antliff*

Box Sunrise—The Story Continues, by Eric Hayman.

Following the article on Box Tunnel in the 2022 edition of 83B, member Eric Hayman has been in touch with his own story, which complements well the previous work. We must thank him for providing your Editor with another useful facet of the Box Tunnel Phenomenon.

Firstly, Eric makes the point that the sun if it shines through the tunnel at all, it will do so on two occasions per year, in early April and early September. The difference optically is that in September there is considerable leaf growth on the trees on the cutting side at the east end of the tunnel, whereas in early April the trees are without leaves. Eric was present at the west end of Box



Photo 1 and 2: View from the West Portal at 6.30 am on 6th September 1985 *Jim Barnes*



Tunnel at 6.30am on 6 September 1985 with Jim Barnes, Bristol Area Signalling Inspector, who took photograph 1, with an enlargement as photo 2. Although it is unclear exactly what is being revealed, it appears to be a very small portion of the sun shining through the trees at the top of the cutting. It should be noted that this light is showing only in the top left-hand corner of the tunnel, corresponding to the top of the cutting in the distance.

Prompted by suggestions from astronomer Alan Jefferis, Eric has carried out further research at the eastern end. Photo 3 shows the ordnance survey map in Broad Gauge days with the bridge which crosses the line east of the tunnel, the Potley Lane bridge. Photo 4 is a copy of a Google Streetview

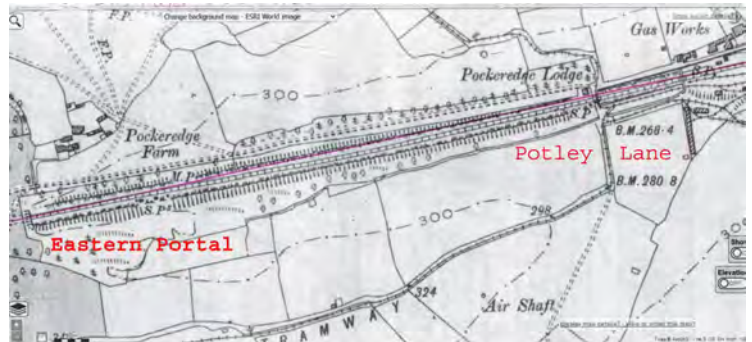


Photo 3: Extract Ordnance Survey Map of 1880



Photo 4: The Potley Lane Bridge (*courtesy Google Streetmaps*)

picture showing the bridge parapets as they are now. Next to the bridge is a low stone wall, and it will be observed that the bridge parapet, originally very low, has been raised by the addition of a steel barrier above the original stone.

Eric took two very significant photographs from this area, both with a very long telephoto lens. The first, photo 5, is taken over the bridge parapet at the southern end of the bridge, looking towards the



Photo 5 and 6: The Eastern Portal with the west portal just visible to the lower right of the bore. *Eric Hayman.*



tunnel, and looking closely you can see right through to the western portal, at least in part. This is enlarged in photo 6, and you can see the next colour light signal at the west end of the tunnel. What Eric did next is very significant. He moved his tripod



Photo 7: The point beside the stone wall where Eric Hayman took photo 8. (Google Streetmaps)

to a point shown by the red arrow in photo 7, and with the aid of a stepladder, raised his camera to a height of around 8ft from the road. By carefully aiming the camera through gaps in the foliage, he was able to take photo 8 which is very close to having a direct central view right through the tunnel.

Photo 8 confirms without any doubt that the sun could shine from the eastern horizon, over the low stone wall, and would then shine directly towards and through the tunnel if the foliage were not too dense. The foliage is on the railway side of the boundary, and will be subject to occasional major cutbacks.

Photo 8: View directly through the tunnel to the west end, from above the stone wall, the view interrupted by foliage. *Eric Hayman.*



Eric then turned his camera around and took photo 9 which is a view towards where the sun would rise in April and September. It will be seen that the land is open and clear, except for some fairly large trees which have grown up.

The conclusion of this work is that the sun *could* shine directly through the tunnel providing the foliage on the cutting side is not too dense. Jim Barnes' photo shows what must be a small glint of sunshine through a gap between leaves. The effect would also depend on how many leaves were on the two large trees beyond the cutting edge to the East.

Once again, we are left with a tantalising possibility that the sun does shine through the tunnel in early April, as perhaps Brunel intended. Is it too much to imagine Brunel standing here in 1841, looking over the low stone wall, directly through the tunnel, and *gloating*?

There is one other point to make, which becomes a chilling afterthought – when the line is electrified, the foliage is likely to be cut back severely, leaving a clear



Photo 9: View to the eastern horizon from beside the stone wall in photo 7. Eric Hayman

route for the sunshine as it must have been in Brunel's day. Unfortunately, the electrification will also result in the bridge parapet being further raised, along with, probably, the low stone wall. If the wall is raised too much we will lose the Box Tunnel Sunrise for ever.



EVENING MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2024

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.

- 19 Jan** 'Transport of Delight' by Rev.Robin Lodge
- 16 Feb** **GROUP ANNUAL MEETING** and 'Update from Didcot' by Richard Antliff
- 15 Mar** 'Where or What is it?' by Ian Bennett
- 19 Apr** 'Tony Whitby Collection Part 1' by Peter Triggs
- 17 May** 'Railways in the North and East' by John Sparkes
- 21 Jun** 'Wandering Around India' by Peter Tickner
- 19 Jul** 'Trip Down Memory Lane' by Ian Boskett
- 16 Aug** 'Steam Recreation (South)' by Don Bishop
- 20 Sep** 'Grand Days Out' by Philip Bisatt
- 18 Oct** 'Multi-Coloured Railways' by Alan Randle
- 1 Nov** 'London Then and Now' by Peter Triggs
- 15 Nov** 'Yet More Railway Tales' by David Hartland
- 20 Dec** 'Tony Whitby Collection Part 2' by Peter Triggs