



**South West Group**

## **CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER**



Hello everyone - I hope this finds you all keeping well, and in good spirits, in spite of all of the restrictions on our lifestyle. Who would have dreamed that we are still no nearer to being able to meet together than we were nine months ago. Amyas and I have been in contact, and we were wondering what your reaction would be if we organized a "Zoom" meeting hosted by Didcot.

For those of you who are not familiar with Zoom, a brief explanation. A date and time is arranged to hold the meeting, and a few days before, an e-mail is sent out to everyone, containing a computer link. A few minutes before the meeting is due to commence, you go into that e-mail and click on the link, and then follow the on-screen prompts. All you have to do then is to sit back and enjoy the show. Zoom is free, and easy to use, and you do not have to say anything unless you wish to. Amyas has said that he is happy to put some pictures together, so if you are interested in taking part, perhaps you could let us know, so that we can gauge the interest. My e-mail address is [colinstone601@gmail.com](mailto:colinstone601@gmail.com)

I think that, due to our ages, most of us are in the priority groups of those eligible for their Covid vaccinations, but I think it will be springtime before we get ours, so in the mean time keep well and stay safe.

### **Books**

Peter Skinns has asked me to tell you that a quantity of books which haven't sold are to be donated to the South Devon Railway.

Rosemary and I keep feeling we have forgotten something as it is the first year that we haven't put together a Christmas Quiz for goodness knows how long.

We both wish you Season's Greetings and the hope that 2021 will be better for all of us.

Colin Stone – Chairman

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## **A Message from the “Out of Work Baker”!**

### **Happy Christmas everyone**

The Committee thought we would give you a flavour of what our thoughts have been since we last met (nearly a year ago), so you will get three newsletters and not one.

At various times in the year the hall has been open for, I believe, up to 15 people but with no kitchen facilities available and we would have had to clean the hall after using it. Had people wanted to attend, by the time you take out the committee it was just not viable. Also, the hall had been in constant use as a nursery for children of key workers, so another no no as far as we were concerned.

We have got speakers lined up (in the wings) for when normality resumes (including Peter Triggs hopefully for Christmas 2021).

Gil, Amyas and I joined a Zoom meeting hosted by Didcot for all GWS Groups, covering a range of subjects around support and we were told that any information sent to Didcot will be posted on the Didcot Groups' site.

We are all here to talk or help if you need us and we will try to keep you posted on any developments.

Have you had the chance to see the new “West Country Railways” book by Peter Gray. See more about this in Amyas' report. Kevin and Amyas have spent many hours compiling the selection and have ended up with a wonderful Christmas present for yourself or a friend.

We all hope you have a good Christmas, even if it is different from normal and we will hopefully be meeting up again 2021.

Season's greetings from Joan, Gil, Sally, David and Ollie

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## **GWS - S W GROUP**

For those many of you that I have not seen since the beginning of the year, I hope that you have all been keeping well, and finding fulfilling ways to continue our hobby.

Through those that I have spoken with, there are one or two things that might be of wider interest, and just to let you know that not everything has shut down, I thought this a good opportunity to share a few things with you.

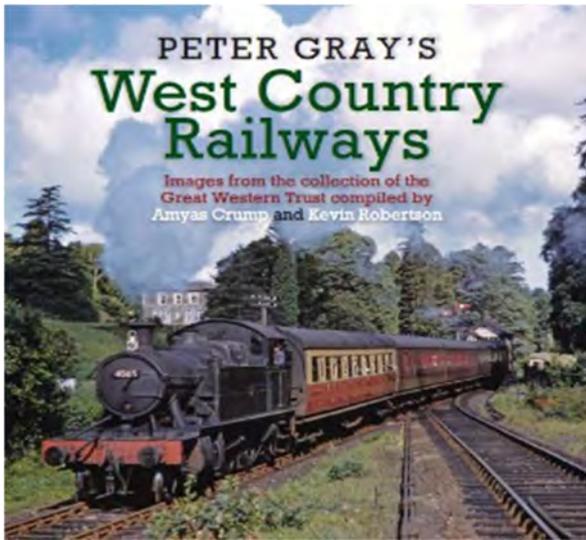
Firstly, for those of you with computer access, regular updates on a range of subjects come out from Didcot, via the "Didcot Flyer". That is available to all, via email and can be subscribed/unsubscribed at any time. In recent months Didcot has hosted three open meetings, via the "Zoom" platform, to maintain direct engagement with members on a range of matters, and enable all who wish, to have a say in future planning and direction. Although clearly not open to members without IT access, it has meant that members from all corners of the globe can join in live, for the first time ever - something that has been gratefully taken advantage of. For those who use "Twitter", there has been a series of interesting and informative articles "Tuesday Treasures" looking behind the scenes in the museum and "Going loco".

Some of you will be aware that the Llangollen Rly is going through a time of flux, and all external locomotive contract work that was being undertaken, has now ceased and locomotives removed. As a result, GWS "new build project " 4709 has moved to a new location near Exeter, for work to continue under new contracts. Currently, the chassis and engineering work, are undertaken at two separate locations. Having had dialogue with them, I have been offered the opportunity to go and have a look (subject of course, to all relevant Covid restrictions) at some stage. If there is interest, I am happy to try and arrange a small scale group visit - it would be subject to anyone making their own transport arrangements etc. Let me know if you might be interested.

Elsewhere, around the Westcountry, work continues on behalf of the Great Western Trust (the museum + anything not on railway wheels) and Swindon Panel Society (based at Didcot), toward acquisitions ranging from bicycles to buildings, rare lamps and early documents to a host of signalling equipment and associated documentation. Between periods of lockdown, that necessitated two trips to Didcot, with at least one more planned as soon as it can be arranged.

Long periods of site closure have affected the GWS finances like so many heritage venues, and it is pleasing to report the recent release by Crecy Publishing of the long awaited "Peter Gray's West Country Railways - a tribute and insight in to the lifetime and work of one of the longest standing S W Group members. It is available through Didcot shop, SDR Buckfastleigh shop, your regular bookseller, or: <http://www.crecy.co.uk/west-country-railways>

All royalties go to the Great Western Trust, to whom Peter bequeathed his "golden era" UK colour shots



For further information, or help with any of the above, please let me know:  
[amyascrump@gmail.com](mailto:amyascrump@gmail.com)

Hopefully, we will all meet up again soon - I am already aware of another once popular rail group folding locally - let us all ensure that that does not happen in Torbay.

Best wishes.

Amyas

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE**

Colin, Rosemary, Joan, Gil, Amyas and Peter

