



Newsletter No.212 - April 2025

Thank you to those who have contributed to this newsletter.

Your contributions for future editions are welcome:

please contact the editor, Steve Page

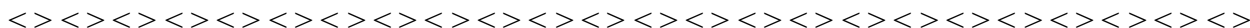
Tel: 01761 433418, or email page564@btinternet.com



New signage in traditional style has recently been installed at Castle Cary station.

Photo by Andrew Tucker.

Andrew's article about the latest developments at the station is on page 17.



Welcome to Newsletter No.212, containing the usual mix of meeting reports and interesting contributions from our members.

Richard Pelham

We have just become aware of the sad news that Fraternity member Richard Pelham has passed away. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

2025 Programme

All talks take place in Wells Town Hall, on the second Tuesday of the month; meet from 7.00 pm onwards for a 7.30 start.

- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| 13 May | - | Oddities Around Swindon - <i>Brian Arman</i> |
| 9-10 August | - | Railwells Model Railway Exhibition |
| 9 September | - | Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway – <i>Caroline Hardie</i> |
| 24 September | | Outing to Pecorama * |
| 14 October | - | Freight Operator GBRf and D&EPG – <i>Bob Tiller</i> |
| 11 November | - | Stothert & Pitt Crane Makers – <i>Peter Dane</i> |
| 9 December | - | AGM and Quiz, compiled by <i>Jim Allwood</i> |

*An information sheet / booking form for this has been emailed separately, and a paper copy is included with this newsletter for those who do not use email.

Concrete Fence still in situ in Wells – just!

- by Andrew Tucker

The Lidl development in Wells has swept away most of the remaining sections of the concrete panel fence adjacent to the electricity sub-station (see attached photo taken a few years ago). This product of Exmouth Junction concrete works formed part of the boundary between the Station Master's house and Priory Road. A short length still remains behind the sub-station (the green structure to the right).



With questions set by Andy Ball, the Quiz took place at our December meeting:

The Quiz 2024

Four possible answers are given for each question.
Select the one you think is correct

Q1. The Midland Railway Line from Settle to Carlisle is known as the.....

a) Long Haul..... b) Long Drag..... c) High Line.....d) Pennine Way.....

Q2. The Caledonian Sleeper is usually hauled under the wires by an electric locomotive of class

a) 86..... b) 90..... c) 92..... d) 93.....

Q3. Inter City HST trains have largely been phased out of service by GWR and LNER in Britain, to which American country have some been sold

a) Mexico..... b) Uruguay.....
c) Paraguay..... d) Canada.....



Q4. How many “Bugatti style” streamlined steam locomotives were built or rebuilt by the LNER.....

a) 35..... b) 36..... c) 38..... d) 44.....



Q5. The Vivarais narrow gauge railway in France uses articulated locomotives of which type.....

a) Fairlie..... b) Beyer Garratt..... c) Mallet d) Shay.....

Q6. Bath Green Park station was previously known as Bath.....



- a) Green Square.... b) Queen Square....
- c) Midland Road.... d) Queens Road.....

Q7. What does a White Cross on the arm of a semaphore signal mean.....

- a) signal not in use..... b) reverse when signal clears.....
- c) pass for shunting only.....
- d) wait for signaller's instruction.....



Q8. Freightliner is owned by which American railroad.....

- a) Union Pacific..... b) BSNF..... c) Genessee & Wyoming..... d) Santa Fe.....

Q9. Which viaduct is the odd one out.....

- a) Crumlin..... b) Meldon..... c) Belah..... d) Ribblehead.....

Q10. How many “Bob Reids” were Chairmen of British Rail.....

- a) one..... b) two..... c) three..... d) four.....

Q11. The S&DJR locomotive works were situated in.....

- a) Templecombe..... b) Highbridge.....
- c) Evercreech Junction..... d) Bath.....

Q12. Which Freight company currently holds the contract for hauling stone trains from Torr and Whatley Quarries.....

- a) Freightliner..... b) GBRf.....
c) Colas Railfreight..... d) DB Cargo.....



Q13. Which Railway company built the Waverley Line from Edinburgh to Carlisle

- a) Glasgow and South Western..... b) North Eastern.....
c) North British..... d) Caledonian.....

Q14. What are the Class 345 EMUs on the Elizabeth Line not fitted with.....

- a) Toilets..... b) 3rd Rail DC capability.....
c) 25kV AC capability.....
d) air conditioning.....



Q15. The Swanage Railway built a new station in 1989, what is its name.....

- a) Matravers Halt..... b) Herston Road..... c) Corfe Road.....
d) Harmans Cross.....

Q16. Network Rail class 97/3 diesel locomotives are re-numbered class.....

- a) Class 20..... b) Class 31..... c) Class 37..... d) Class 47.....

Q17. The new class 777/I trains for the Mersey Rail have....

- a) 3rd rail DC and battery power.....
- b) 25kV AC electric capability.....
- articulated carriages d) rubber tyred wheels.....



Q18. A Class 08 Shunter has recently been converted from diesel to battery power, where was it recently trialled.....

- a) Exeter Riverside Yard.....
- b) The West Somerset Railway.....
- c) Whatley Quarry.....
- d) The East Somerset Railway.....

Q19. What was the background colour of the British Railways Scottish Region station totems.....

WELLS RAILWAY FRATERNITY

- a) Tangerine.....
- b) Light Blue.....
- c) Dark Blue.....
- d) Green.....

Q20. The Double Fairlie locomotive recently built by the Ffestiniog railway is named

- a) Little Wonder,,,,,,,,, b) G P Spooner.....
- c) C E Spooner.....
- d) James Spooner.....



Q21. The Manchester and Milford Railway served these stations.....

- a) Manchester & Milford.....
- b) Manchester.....
- c) Milford Haven.....
- d) None of these.....

Q22. The Class 99 locomotives to be introduced by GBRf are to be powered by 25kV AC Electricity.....

- a) only
- b) and diesel....
- c) and battery.....
- d) and hydrogen



Q23. What is the operating voltage of the London Underground.....

- a) 500V DC.....
- b) 600V DC
- c) 630V DC
- d) 750V DC.....

Q24. Which fruit was the Yatton to Wells railway line nicknamed after.....

- a) Strawberry.....
- b) Black Currant.....
- c) Cherry.....
- d) Apple

Q25. What colour were S&DJR passenger engines painted.....

- a) Green.....
- b) Crimson Lake.....
- c) Chocolate Brown.....
- d) Prussian Blue

***** Answers on page 18 *****

My Scanned 1960 Negatives – by Richard Blunden *followed by* The Listowel and Ballybunion Railway - by Malcolm Dowson

Tuesday 14 January

A resume by Andy Ball

As is traditional the January meeting featured two talks each given by a member of the Wells Railway Fraternity.

The first by Richard Blunden was entitled My Scanned 1960 Negatives. This covered a range of photographs taken on several different cameras dating back to the 1960s. The negatives and images having been scanned into files using both a flatbed scanner, which proved to be laborious and so was replaced by a Kodak Scanner capable of dealing with several formats, including 35mm, 126, 110 and slides but not 120 formats. This device allowed around seven hundred pictures to be scanned in one evening and ~750 images to be stored on a single SD card in a much smaller space than that taken by thousands of negatives, photographs, and slides.

The subjects were largely of railway subjects, the first one shown, scanned from a black and white glossy print being of Standard Class 5 no. 73015 at Bristol Temple Meads Station. Also shown were shots taken around Trowbridge, where Richard was living at the time, featuring Bristol buses and an early Minivan belonging to the local business of James Ladd and Son Décor Suppliers. The Minivan was decorated with hand written sign writing including a dorsal fin longwise on its roof.

The photographs featured steam locomotives including a County, a Hall and a Standard 9F 2-10-0 and their successor diesel engines of the Hydraulic type 42, 35 and 52 before moving on to later designs of diesel electric types classes 47 and 50. More unusual were images of the Brush development locomotive D0280 Falcon which morphed into the BR Class 47 Brush type 4 and the first “Teddy Bear” D9500. Away from the South West Richard covered, amongst other places, the former Great Eastern lines from Liverpool Street which featured the class 306 1500V dc electric multiple units used on suburban services. These were rebuilt when the former GER lines were converted to 25kV a.c. power.

Narrow Gauge was also featured with shots of the Vale of Rheidol, Ffestiniog, and Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railways. Also covered was the preservation scene with views of Swindon and Eastleigh open days and the Bluebell, Dart Valley, and Kent and East Sussex Railways.

Many of the audience were familiar with the local places featured and were able to add additional information about the pictures.

The Listowel and Ballybunion Railway - by Malcolm Dowson

The second talk, by Malcolm Dowson, was about the Listowel and Ballybunion Railway in the south-west of Ireland.

This was a branch line built by a Frenchman Charles Francois Marie-Therese Lartigue, opening in 1888, at his own expense in response to the people of Ballybunion who wanted, but local politics would not approve the funding of construction of, a branch line to connect to the main line at Listowel. Listowel had very good secondary education to which the children of Ballybunion needed transport and sand, to be used as a soil improver, needed to be transported from Ballybunion to the mainline for distribution. Lartigue saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate his unusual mono-rail system where the single running rail was supported on A frames with guide rails at a lower level for stability.

The Listowel and Ballybunion Railway - *continued*

It was designed on the principle of Camels carrying panniers on each of their sides for balance. The 0-3-0 steam locomotives therefore had two boilers, one each side of the monorail, and similarly the carriages and wagons had two separate panniers. This design had previously been used in Algeria where the sandy conditions made the use of an elevated running rail attractive in that the engines and rolling stock were lifted away from the sandy ground.

The system was rather inconvenient to use as it was necessary to balance the loads on each side of the running rail, this was achieved by each vehicle having steps at the end to allow passengers and goods to be moved over the running rail to evenly distribute weight each side of the running rail. The system precluded the use of conventional point work which was replaced by turntables to move from one track to another with level crossings being replaced by draw bridges or turntables.

The line closed in 1924, but in the year 2000 a 500m long replica was opened to celebrate the new Millennium, with all the original features of the line. The replica locomotive is an 0-2-0 diesel powered steam outline engine with a dummy boiler each side of the running rail. Malcolm recommended that anyone visiting the south west of Ireland should visit the museum and railway.

At the December AGM meeting the Fraternity approved and sent a donation of £2800 to the Railway Children Charity which supports children associated with railways around the world. The Fraternity has supported this charity for many years.

The History of Hattons 1946 to 2024 - by Richard Davies

Tuesday 11 February

A resume by Andy Ball

Richard Davies, the former managing Director of the well-known Model Railway Shop in Smithdown Road, Liverpool gave a presentation entitled "The History of Hattons 1946 to 2024". Sadly, it could have been called "The Rise and Fall of Hattons" as it closed its doors in 2024. As well as covering the origins of Hattons the talk also encompassed the developing business environment that Hattons found itself in which caused its eventual closure

Returning from a Japanese Prisoner of War camp Norman Hatton, born in 1917 and died in 2005, used government money to open a shop in Liverpool where he dealt in anything he could buy or sell. Eventually the shop became a specialist model railway shop, where in addition to shop sales a thriving mail/telephone service was established by advertising in magazines such as "The Railway Modeller"; no internet in those days. The advertisement was changed every month to keep it fresh. In addition to new models from the likes of Hornby there was a good trade in second hand equipment, which remained with Hattons throughout its existence. As a by and by your reporter bought his Hornby Class 4 tank engine second hand from Hattons in the early 1960's. The shop did deals with manufacturers and became, until recently, a clearing house of overstocked models for the model Railway Industry. The company policy was to treat every customer in the same way.

The History of Hattons - *continued*

After Norman retired his son Keith took over the reins. Our speaker, who from 1990 had enthusiastically grabbed the latest edition of the Railway Modeller as it came through the door became a customer on both his own and his father's behalf and became involved in 1999 when he visited the shop and asked to speak to the top man. As a computer science graduate from Liverpool University, he offered to build a Hattons website as they needed quicker exposure to the market, editions of the Railway Modeller could take several months to reach Australia and New Zealand for example. There was some discussion between Richard and Norman about his employment terms as neither really knew what to offer or what was acceptable before Richard took up the challenge and learnt HTML.

In 1995 Bachmann Railways was formed with manufacturing in China. This gave Hornby a significant rival and forced them to restructure their business with mass redundancies at their Margate factory and manufacturing moving to China. This was the precursor to other manufacturers arriving in the market place encouraged by low production costs and new technology. Sadly, in September 2008 Keith Hatton unexpectedly died and Richard became joint Managing Director with the sister Christine Hatton, an aeronautical engineer. Initially suppliers wrongly suspected that Keith's death was a suicide caused by the company being in financial trouble and stopped supplying models, but Richard and Christine kept packing and despatching orders and paid all the bills at the end of the month proving that they were still in business. New versions of the website were introduced to keep the business thriving, but as the internet became more established rival shops used the internet to advertise their wares and began to make their presences felt.

After disagreements over the Trading Terms with two of their major model suppliers, Bachmann and Hornby, Hattons lost their status as a one stop shop for all model railway items. Hornby who was owned by Venture Capitalists instituted an aggressive marketing policy which focussed on sales directly to the public and restricted the quantity of models they would supply to Hattons and adopted a "whack a mole policy" of introducing models into their range pre-empting those that other manufacturers had previously announced. Bachmann took umbrage when Hattons decided to start manufacturing under their own label. The imposition of punitive import taxes by Australia and New Zealand and a collapse of the Canadian market where the younger generation of modellers were not so interested in British prototypes did not help.

Despite efforts to diversify into things such as having rolling stock manufactured in China and marketed under the "Hattons Original" label, financial losses were made which culminated in the business going into Members Voluntary Liquidation with the loss of seventy-five jobs. Fortunately, at least some of those made redundant have joined other model railway businesses and parts of the Hattons label have been taken over by Rails of Sheffield. Richard, very candidly said he thought his strengths were in software development, and that relationships with other businesses were more difficult for him, so that is where he has returned to for now at least.

This very interesting talk covering not just the models but also the trials and tribulations of running the business was given a very enthusiastic show of appreciation by the Fraternity audience.

A resume by Andy Ball

Bob Bunyar, a volunteer at the Swanage Railway and Southern Railway enthusiast, gave the Fraternity audience a view down memory lane with his presentation covering the former Southern Railway lines in North Devon and Cornwall. Before the wholesale closure of the lines in the 1960s many people used these lines to reach their holiday destinations. They have been known since closure as “the Withered Arm.”

The Atlantic Coast Express ran from London Waterloo to the west country, detaching a carriage or two for branches including Lyme Regis. After reaching Exeter it began to split into many sections, each heading for different holiday destinations, including Ilfracombe, Bude, Padstow and Plymouth.

The talk covered in two parts the lines from Okehampton to Bude via Halwill Junction and Okehampton to Padstow (North Cornwall Line) that served such remote places as Camelford, Delabole with its deep slate quarry, Otterham, and St Kew Highway. In addition to showing images of the lines in their working days the modern day remains of the infrastructure including station buildings, goods sheds and viaducts were featured. Images of Bude showed the line to the canal basin and its sea lock where the narrow gauge tramway extended from the basin onto the beach for collection of sand and is still extant albeit derelict. Particularly interesting was the image of a wagon turntable which can still be seen when the tidal conditions are favourable. At Padstow the station building is a good example of railway infrastructure which has been re-purposed in modern times. Some of the small stations in North Devon had extensive sidings, a relic of wartime when large quantities of munitions were stored in the remote countryside.

For those more interested in the steam locomotives, classes illustrated included veteran LSWR T9, O2 and M7s together with more modern types such as Bulleid West Country and Battle of Britain pacifics, LMS Class 2 tanks, BR Standard tanks and Maunsell N Class moguls. At Meldon Quarry pictures were shown of an LSWR O2 tank engine and its successor USA tank DS234 shunting. However, the stars of the show were the diminutive Beattie Well Tanks which started their lives in London suburbia in the 1870s before being transferred to the West Country to haul china-clay wagons on the lightly built Wenford Bridge branch line, surviving until the early 1960s when they were replaced by GWR 1366 class pannier tank engine and then class 08 diesel shunters. A few diesel locomotives were illustrated including Warships and North British type 2 hydraulics. Diesel multiple units took over the passenger workings for the last few years but failed to prevent closure of the lines, victims of the move to mass private car ownership.

The pictures showed the recently refurbished and re-opened Okehampton station which is now served by the reinstated Great Western Railway passenger service to Exeter. The even more recent re-opening of the nearby Meldon Quarry which used to supply ballast to the Southern Railway will provide freight traffic. These good news stories illustrate an admittedly limited revival of part of the Withered Arm system. The wrought iron Meldon viaduct was originally single tracked but was later double tracked by building a second the legs of which were interlaced with those of the first. If the much spoken about re-opening of the Southern Railway line to Plymouth via Tavistock is ever achieved the viaduct will need to be repaired for relaying of the line with new track.

The audience gave a very enthusiastic show of appreciation at the end of an informative and well-illustrated presentation.

The Fraternity were pleased to be able to announce a donation of £73 to the Railway Children Charity from the sales of coffee and biscuits at previous meetings.

First in the World - The S & D 200th Anniversary


- by Andrew Tucker

In this case the S & D is of course the Stockton & Darlington not the Somerset & Dorset. On 27th September 2025 it will be 200 years since the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. It is widely acknowledged to be the world's first steam worked public railway. George Stephenson was the engineer for the line and he also designed *Locomotion No. 1* which hauled the train on the opening day. The track was laid to 4ft 8½ in gauge which became known as the standard gauge in this country and abroad.


As well as the celebrations in the local area on 27th September there are other events planned to take place throughout the year. The first was on 1 January when the great 'Whistle Up' took place. At midday locomotives all around this country and abroad sounded their whistles (or horns) at midday. Many of the preserved railways will be holding special galas and an exhibition train will be touring the country. On 1st to 3rd of August there will be a Great Gathering at Litchurch Lane Works in Derby. It is expected to be the largest temporary exhibition of trains and other railway vehicles in a generation.

The preserved *Locomotion No. 1* is in the care of the National Railway Museum but it will be displayed in the Heads of Steam Exhibition in Darlington during 2025. The replica of *Locomotion No. 1*, built for the 150th anniversary in 1975, is normally kept at Beamish Museum but will be out running with a newly-built coal wagon and the passenger coach *Experiment*. From 26th to 28th it will make demonstration runs between Shildon, Darlington and Stockton. Hornby have taken on the challenge of producing an OO gauge ready-to-run model of *Locomotion No. 1* and this is now available together with chaldron coal wagons of the period. In videos all the working motion is fascinating to watch.

We have already announced plans for a photographic competition to be judged at our Railwells model railway exhibition in August – see details below. Also, the topic for our meeting on 9th September will be *The Stockton & Darlington Railway – the Railway That Got the World on Track*. The speaker will be Caroline Hardie who is a Trustee and also Editor and Webmaster for the Friends of the S&DR.



Wells Railway Fraternity
PRESENTERS OF "RAILWELLS"
Supporters of the Railway Children charity
www.railwells.com










2025 PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Members are invited to enter this competition to mark 200 years since the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. It will be held at Railwells 2025 on 9th/10th August. Up to three photos may be submitted. Black and white or colour prints (any slides must be printed), max. size 11¼ x 8¾ inches (A4). The photos must be of a railway subject illustrating some aspect of the progress that has been made over the last 200 years and taken by the member. Photos can be mounted and captioned but must remain anonymous.

Arrangements will be made for the photographs to be displayed on pinboards at the Town Hall. Members, exhibitors and visitors will be able to vote for their favourites and prizes will be awarded before the end of the show. First prize – a two-year subscription to the Fraternity. Second prize – a one year subscription.

Bring your entries along to the Town Hall between 17.00 and 19.30 on Friday 8 August or between 9.00 and 10.00 on Saturday 9 August
Entries may also be handed in at our meeting on 13 May. Photos to be in an envelope clearly marked with your name and telephone number

Start looking through your photo collection NOW or plan a trip to capture an appropriate image.
Any questions? Contact Andrew Tucker 01749 830695 andrewctucker@btinternet.com



The Iron Ore Railway

by Andrew Tucker

In January my wife Jacky and I enjoyed a Great Railway Journeys tour of Northern Norway and Swedish Lapland. We found the scenery of the Lofoten Islands particularly spectacular and we couldn't fail to be impressed by the number of bridges and tunnels that the Norwegians have built to link these and other islands to one another and to the mainland. Moving on into Sweden we travelled by train from Narvik to Kiruna. A scenic journey but also a line that, for over 120 years, has been vital for the transport of Swedish iron ore to Narvik for export around the world by ship. Mining started in Kiruna in 1890 and a railway was built south eastwards to Gällivare where there were other mines. This railway linked up with an existing line built to take ore to the Swedish port of Luleå on the Gulf of Bothnia for shipping via the Baltic Sea. However, Narvik in Norway was seen to be a better choice for shipping the ore. It was ice free even in mid-winter and is closer to Kiruna. The Narvik to Kiruna line was opened in July 1903 by King Oscar II who was king of Sweden and Norway at the time.



This map shows the full extent of the iron ore railways - other connecting lines in Sweden have been omitted



The Norddalsbrua bridge was a major engineering feature on the Norwegian part of the line. It was bypassed in 1988 but can still be seen from trains near Sosterbekk station (model in the Museum Nord, Narvik)

To begin with, two or three Swedish steam locomotives were required to haul each train of iron ore. Later dedicated ore-hauling 2-8-0 steam locos were introduced. The line south of Kiruna was electrified with a 1500v overhead system in 1915 and the route from Kiruna to Narvik followed in 1922. The first electric locomotives were class **Oa** and they could handle trains of 1900 tonnes. As more capable electric locos were introduced the length and weight of the trains increased necessitating improvements to the infrastructure for longer trains and increased axle loadings. The line is standard gauge but has remained single track with more frequent and longer loops. Currently the 8600 tonne iron ore trains with 68 hopper cars dominate the traffic on the line. They are hauled by **lore** class electric locomotives. Remarkably the most modern of the 'jack-shaft' drive electric locos were not withdrawn until 2013. There are timetabled passenger trains, including an overnight service between Narvik and Stockholm, and two daily container trains come via Sweden. The *Arctic Train* is also run as an out- and-back tourist train from Narvik to the border with Sweden. Special ski trains started running in the 1930s but ceased when road improvements were made in the 1970s and skiers could make the journey by car.

The information panel (right) at Narvik station clearly shows the arrangement of the multi-section jackshaft drive locos and the current Co-Co + Co-Co



This EL12 locomotive was in use on the line between 1954 and 1992. It has been cosmetically restored and stands outside Museum Nord

MTAB		Lok	
MALMTÄGSLÖK DM3 MTAB		IRON ORE LOCO DM3 MTAB	
Leveransår år: 1960 - 1979		Delivery year: 1960 - 1979	
Effekt: 7 250 kW		Power: 7 250 kW	
Totalvikt: 273 ton		Total weight: 273 ton	
Max. hastighet: 75 km/h		Max. speed: 75 km/h	
MALMTÄGSLÖK IORE MTAB		IRON ORE LOCO IORE MTAB	
Leveransår år: 2000 - 2004		Delivery year: 2000 - 2004	
Effekt: 10 800 kW (2 x 5 400 kW)		Power: 10 800 kW (2 x 5 400 kW)	
Totalvikt: 380 ton (2 x 190 ton)		Total weight: 380 tonnes (2 x 190 tonnes)	
Max. hastighet: 90 km/h		Max. speed: 90 km/h	
Max. startdragkraft: 1 200 kN (2 x 600 kN)		Max. tractive effort at start: 1 200 kN (2 x 600 kN)	
Axeltryck med (och utan) ballast: 30 (25) ton		Axle pressure with/without ballast: 30 (25) tonnes	
Längd över kopplings: 45,8 m (2 x 22,9 m)		Overall length: 45,8 m (2 x 22,9 m)	
Axelöpp: Co-Co + Co-Co		Axle configuration: Co-Co + Co-Co	

The Iron Ore Railway - *continued*

The Norwegian part of the line is the northernmost railway in Europe but it can only be reached via Sweden. From Narvik the line, known as the Ofoten railway, runs 43km to the Swedish border. From there it is a further 127km to Kiruna. The summit near the border is over 500m above sea level. Sufficient power is regenerated on the journey from Kiruna to Narvik to power the empty trains on the return journey.



*Our 2-coach train for the journey from Narvik to Kiruna.
Björkliden station is in Sweden about 70km from our destination*



This memorial to workers who built the line is at Kiruna station

Kiruna has the world's largest iron ore mine. A downside of this is subsidence due to the underground workings. A large project is underway to rebuild the whole town 3km to a new site away from the workings. The railway is now a joint operation between LKAB, the mining company, and SJ+NSB the Swedish and Norwegian railways

The iron ore railway drew international attention in the early months of the second world war. Norway and Sweden intended to stay neutral but both the Allies and Nazi Germany recognised the importance of the iron ore supplies. Pre-emptive strikes from Britain damaged the port at Narvik and some ore carrying ships were sunk. Troops were landed to help the Norwegian's military efforts. However, it was too little too late and the Norwegian Government surrendered on 9 June 1940. Bridges on the line were rigged with explosives but the demolition efforts were ineffective and damage was soon repaired by the invaders. Despite Sweden's neutrality supplies of iron ore continued to be shipped to Germany.

Much more recently all trains were stopped following the derailment of a loaded ore train inside a snow shelter out in severe cold and blizzards. . Parts of the track were destroyed over a stretch of 15 kilometres. Repairs were carried out in severe cold and blizzards Only four days after reopening in February 2024 an empty ore train suffered a derailment just 6km away. After further repairs the line re-opened on 20 February. By that time about 3 million tonnes of ore had to be stockpiled at the mines

The Iron Ore Railway - *continued*



In typically snowy conditions at Kiruna station a loaded iron ore train waits its path north west to Narvik. The Ore Line is inside the Arctic Circle operating all year round in temperatures as low as -30°C (it was -21°C while we were there). The Co-Co electric locos are leased from the UK company Beacon Rail

[illegible]

Commemorating the Somerset Coalfield

Decorative planters, shaped like narrow gauge colliery tubs, are to be found in towns and villages within the area covered by the Somerset coalfield. This one is beside the main road through Chilcompton.



At our 2024 AGM we were able to agree a donation of £2,800 from our various activities to the Fraternity's nominated charity *Railway Children*. As well as the significant profit we made from our model railway show Railwells back in August, we were able to add significant sums from the sale of second hand books, our maps of railways in the Wells region and your donations for the teas and coffees laid on by our diligent refreshments assistant David Lawrence at our monthly meetings.

But do any of us stop to think what our contributions to the charity help with? As a regular supporter and donor since I took part in their 3-Peaks Challenge by Rail 18 years ago, I receive frequent e-mails highlighting what their outreach workers manage to achieve currently in India, Tanzania and here in the UK. There are many positive stories telling of how victims of abuse, exploitation, abject poverty and homelessness have been identified and supported. It often goes beyond basic help with educational programmes enabling youngsters to turn their lives around, even sometimes giving them a helping hand to set up little businesses to support their wider family as their lives progress through their teenage years towards adulthood.

So when you put something in the pot for your tea or coffee, buy that old book from our charity stand or volunteer to make Railwells the success that it is year on year, please spare a thought for what you are helping the Fraternity to achieve in supporting a very worthwhile cause which results in such a positive outcome for many young lives.

Thank You!

Here is the text of an email from the Railway Children charity:

I wanted to say a huge thank you for the incredible donation you have made from Wells Fraternity recently. Your continued support is vital for children around the world who are found on the rail networks – vulnerable and alone.

Last year, we supported 14,000 children back to safety - and we could not have done any of this without you. Whether it is providing family-based care, access to education or finding the best solutions to break cycles of abuse, we are there for every child for as long as it takes.

Thank you so much for continuing to join us to ensure we protect every child at risk on the transport networks and providing crucial support to a child who is in need.

Please pass on our thanks to your members, and we hope you have a wonderful, rested Christmas and New Year.

Kindest regards

Emillie McNally
Supporter Services & Digital Officer

Progress at Castle Cary Station

- by Andrew Tucker

Back in 2020 I wrote an item for this Newsletter on proposals to create a new car park and restore the former creamery at Castle Cary station. After a long delay due to Covid-19 both schemes were completed last year. The new 'east car park' as it is referred to on the signs, has a separate access off the A371. It has almost 200 spaces including a few that are specifically for dropping off or picking up train passengers. There is easy access up to platform level via steps or a ramp. Payment for parking can be made at the machines using cash or card or via the APCOA Connect 'app' on your mobile phone. The cottages alongside the access road have also been restored. The existing parking area adjacent to the station building has been largely retained with a bus stop and dedicated parking spaces for Blue Badge holders.

The Creamery is owned by Emily Estates who have already spent millions of pounds transforming the former Hadspen House Estate which is around 3 miles south of Castle Cary. The entrance to the Creamery faces the station building and is at the same level as the platform. There is a shop off of the lobby selling mainly produce from the Emily Estates. Glazing also provides a view down into the cheese-making area on the lower floor. A stairs and lift provide access to the lower floor restaurant which serves lunch and dinner and also offers takeaway breakfast for travellers from 07.00. A useful service but at a premium price.

A view taken in 2022 from the temporary footbridge showing work in progress. Scaffolding surrounds the Creamery building and the factory chimney is being rebuilt. The new East Car Park is the area top right surrounded by site fencing.



The restored and extended Creamery building still has a brick factory chimney. However, this is not the original - it was taken down and rebuilt as part of the works. French doors from the restaurant lead out onto an enclosed garden area. This has recently been graced with a Pullman car that has been brought from its previous location at Portsmouth Arms station on the Exeter to Barnstaple line. It carries no name or number at present but was apparently built in 1921 as a kitchen car and named FORMOSA. It was rebuilt in 1948 and given the new name MAID OF KENT. The car was withdrawn in 1960 and had further service in the Departmental fleet before being sold to a private buyer.

One structure where there has been no further progress is the goods shed. It remains as a roofless shell but no doubt this part of the station site will find a new use.

The Pullman car, on its own length of track arrived in time for the official opening of The Creamery by Lord Peter Hendy, Minister of State for Transport on 24 November 2024.



Quiz Answers

1 b. 2 c. 3 a. 4 d. 5 c. 6 b. 7 a. 8 c. 9 d. 10 b. 11 b.
12 a. 13 c. 14 a / b (either or both for one point only) 15 d. 16 c.
17 a. 18 c. 19 b. 20 d. 21 d. 22 b. 23 c. 24 a. 25 d.

And Finally:

Did you know that George Stephenson's lathe still exists? It is now situated in the workshop of the "1820's Pockerley Waggonway" at Beamish Museum, County Durham. It was used by George Stephenson at Killingworth between 1812 and 1818. During this time he built his first locomotives, "Blucher" and "Wellington". It was powered by the large wheel to the right, which was turned by hand. The lathe was used in 1975 to machine wooden plugs for the wheels of the replica of "Locomotion".

