

L&BR Newsletter No. 85 January 2025

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2025. As you will read there is a lot going on which is all interesting or exciting but is certainly progress.

2024 was a difficult year and made a lot of demands upon our full-time staff and hard-working volunteers. Thank you all for your efforts which are of immense value to the L&BR.

Rail 200 is already underway and although North Devon may be viewed as a bit of a backwater, we will be taking our part in this. Details are on the website if you are unaware of the scope of this historic event.

All businesses will be hit by increased costs following the recent Budget. The Railway is already considering the likely impacts and ways to deal with these challenges. Yet another hurdle to recreating the most iconic railway in the country!

Extension to Cricket Field Lane planning update – January 2025

The planning application was submitted to Exmoor National Park on 18th September 2024 and following statutory consultation several detailed questions were raised by the ENP Ecology officer following an objection from Devon Wildlife Trust. A comprehensive response was issued on 3rd December.

Several further requests for additional technical information were received from the heritage officer, public rights of way officer, South West Water and the area flood authority, together with extensive comments from Parracombe and Martinhoe parish councils. A comprehensive response to these further points was provided on 17th December 2024. These lengthy and detailed documents may be viewed on Exmoor National Parks planning portal under planning reference: 62/50/24/014. <https://planning.agileapplications.co.uk/exmoor/application-details/25033>

There was no planning committee meeting in December or January. Consequently, we understand there is a backlog in the planning department and that the February planning meeting is overburdened with three months business. We have been advised that the extension application should be considered at the 4th March planning committee.

John Barton

Proposals for accommodation and a museum at the Old Station Inn

The Trust and the Lynton and Barnstaple Blackmoor Company PLC (a subsidiary of the Trust) are delighted to announce that agreement has been reached for the Trust to lease the house adjacent to the Old Station Inn which was acquired when the pub site was bought in 2023.

This exciting news has the potential to unlock staff and volunteer accommodation and allows us to accelerate our plans for a museum thus increasing the effectiveness of the railway family's multi-site offer.

With the railway at Woody Bay and its café and woodland walk, the pub with accommodation and museum, the historic station site at Chelfham and via our friends at Exmoor Associates developments at Bratton Fleming and Snapper - visitors to North Devon and Exmoor can immerse themselves in the unique history of the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway.

Staff and volunteer accommodation has been much needed and is a recurring request given the geographical remoteness of the railway from many of our volunteers across the UK, helping them reduce their costs when contributing their time, skills and knowledge to the railway.

The museum, a long-held aspiration for the Trust, will unlock the numerous assets documenting the unique history of the railway allowing the public to see these artefacts for the first time.

In advance, we have also acquired a display cabinet which will be installed in the Woody Bay café before the new operating season, giving us space to show a limited number of interesting items as we develop the museum.

Please keep an eye on the news section of the website where we will post further news as we progress.

Giles Perkins, FCILT

Proposal for Woody Bay carriage shelter

The Planning Officer's report appears to be positive and the application will be heard at the Planning Committee meeting on 4th Feb. I am getting on with the Building Control application which we will submit as soon as we hear the planning outcome. *Planning permission was granted on 4th Feb.*

Ric Auger

Carriage & Wagon Report January 2025

Carriage No 9

All 3rd Class seats are now built, varnished and stored ready for installation. The two centre walls having been rebuilt from parts recovered from Colin Pealling's garage in Walsall many years ago are now stored, while the two original doors donated by the thatched cottage near Arlington are now rebuilt and stored together with the floors, roof,

internal boards, two ends and curved laminated roof beams. Most of the brass fittings have been obtained and are ready to use.

Van 23

The internal wall and its missing door have been completed together with the two sliding doors and the two guard's doors. The wood side frame and ends are now being worked on. There has been substantial progress on completion of the underframe and bogies at Woody Bay over the last few months. Delivery to Essex will enable the reconstruction of this historic van to proceed.

Woodscrews

Various brass and steel screws from John Crouchman and other Members have been donated. More are always wanted.

Volunteers wanted!

Now that we have eaten all the mince pies, work has restarted at our Colchester workshop. Any members wishing to try out their hand at carriage-building are very welcome and should contact either myself, Dave Ely (Workshop Supervisor) or Steve Arthurs (Group Chairman) for access details. Donations Wanted! The completed heritage coaches are a centre piece of the Railway. The visiting public, enthusiasts and others recognise the splendid vision of the past which is unique to our railway. But the restoration and construction of the coaches – and pressingly Van 23 comes at a price: can you help with this by making perhaps a small donation on a regular basis? Large donations are also appreciated! If so, please contact Paul Curson (details in the Magazine) to set up your support – many thanks from the Carriages Team.

Charles Summers B.E.M.

Somerset & Bristol Area Support Group (SABA)

Coins and Notes

I would like to thank once again those members who have donated banknotes and coins to the Group. The proceeds are still providing a very useful income to the Group's funds which are being used for Van 23. During 2024 we raised over £700.

However, as always, we still need more!

We still require:

- The old (large) 50p, 10p and 5p, together with ½ p
- Old £1 coins together with any old £1, £5 and £10 notes
- Euros & Cents; US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Dollars / cents coins and notes
- Pre-decimal coins (pre-1971)

Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey coins and notes. In fact, any coins and notes from around the world.

Please contact me (details below).

L & B Magazine Back Issues

As members will know, the Support Group maintains a stock of back numbers of the award-winning L&B Magazine. Issues 15 to 21 plus 33 and 34 have now been re-printed and are available for £2 each + postage. An up-to-date list of the other issues is available - contact me (details below) We continue to receive donated items which are being added to our eBay account (LynBarn-SABA) – these donations are also greatly appreciated Contact me at landb-bristol@hotmail.co.uk or write to 27 Clements Way, Tytherington, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8FT or I can be contacted on 07811 774469.

Mark Bladwel Hon Chairman – SABA

Membership Matters

Just a quick update from the membership team as all being well you will notice some changes this year. April 2024 members who renewed by direct debit received new colour printed cards which came as part of a printed letter. This was the first step towards automating the mailing of membership cards and we assume as we had no adverse comments that these have been well received. We are planning on expanding this now with the hope that we can mail the cards with the magazine providing the dates can be made to work.

What does this mean for the annual members? It means that anyone paying online or by cheque prior to the 1st April will not receive their membership card until the bulk mailing goes out, which could be as late as mid-May. We are doing this so that we make better use of the membership database and merge where possible our mailings. If we can consolidate just one mailing that gives the Trust well over a thousand pounds saving per annum but also gives us the option to provide more personalised mailings. For example, we could (if required) send out personalised voting papers for the AGM or insert regional newsletters with relevant areas. For cost reasons we may choose not to do any of the above but at least we will be able to make a choice. Should anyone have any questions or concerns I am available on 07927 769061 or via jfdiprint@mac.com.

Peter Leach Membership Secretary

Chelfham 2024 report

The new wooden work shed below the hedge line was completed early in 2024 using materials purchased from funds raised at Chelfham recently. The shed, which is generally out of sight from visitors viewing the station, has largely been designed and constructed

by Graham Lee. There is a small mess room and a bench workshop area for volunteers to undertake a variety of tasks and small projects for the whole railway, from refurbishing platform bench seats to sack barrows and signalling equipment.

Visitor numbers grew throughout 2024. We continued to receive generous donations as well as sales of the L&B books and souvenirs. The best seller of course is the Chelfham 25 book compiled by Barry Marshall in time for publication at the May AGM weekend. Also most first-time or occasional visitors are given a tour, at the end of which the objective is to sell them the book!

If you haven't got one yet, then they are always on sale (just £10) either at Woody Bay or the online shop and at Chelfham. We hope that every L&B enthusiast will add one to their collection as it's an interesting pictorial diary of all the restoration work carried out by the few volunteers involved largely using funds raised themselves at Chelfham.

In June 2024 specialist contractors surveyed the viaduct for future repairs. Some replacement of the parapet bricks and repointing will be needed soon. We understand the viaduct will have to be covered in scaffolding for this project, funded by the owners National Highways Residual Railways Estate. Only working volunteers can cross the viaduct to access the trackbed beyond. This trackbed was largely cleared of overhanging trees in winter 2022 but further clearance may be undertaken where possible (see below).

During the summer on several days we enjoyed some contrasting visitor numbers. Many arrived with their dogs to enjoy the woodland and trackbed walks. Meanwhile we were able to promote Chelfham and the Yeo Valley end of the Railway with a couple of exhibitions at Barnstaple and Bude. The Autumn Gala in September was well attended at Chelfham too by all L&B supporters who could sample our basic catering and refreshments. Parking was again at the Chelfham Mill site courtesy of the Grow Forward group.

Immediately after the Gala weekend a couple of big projects commenced....The next signal to rebuild is the Up Home. An oak wooden post was purchased, prepared and painted. We are currently obtaining all the ironwork required before this signal is installed.

.....Inside the booking office, we are converting the room into a 'museum' to show off and demonstrate 'virtual' signalling using the Tyers Tablet machines restored by Malcolm Kitchen and the signalling team. The modern-style kitchen units were stripped out and a heritage-style Belfast sink with a wooden worktop has been fitted to give some facilities for tea-making etc here.

In January 2025 we resumed further tree clearance work around the trackbed just south of the viaduct. Several leaning trees have been removed recently, gradually opening up the views of the viaduct from there. A couple of original Southern Railway concrete telegraph posts and gate posts have survived well and will be preserved here. Chelfham will be open as usual 10.00 – 16.00 every Wednesday and Sunday throughout the winter.

Nigel Thompson

L&B related Holiday Timeshares available to buy

Owing to a change in personal circumstances some timeshares are currently available to buy in Rowley Moor House. The property is just a few minutes' walk from The Old Station Inn at Blackmoor Gate. More information about Rowley Moor House can be found at www.lynton-rail.org.uk/page/rowley-moor-properties-ltd For further details please contact Mike Pearce by using the email address rowleymooreweeks@gmail.com

Working Weekend

Hope you are all well and looking forward to more working weekends at the L&B. We really do appreciate your efforts and they really do help us achieve so much every year.

The future dates are - March 2025 - 28th / 29th /30th

As ever there are jobs for all skill levels and abilities. The dates are at Woody Bay at 0900 to 1600 each day. Please bring warm and waterproof clothing and coats and strong footwear. Bring a packed lunch; drinks will be provided.

Stuart Nelhams, General Manager

And finally

You said: you wanted to see the railway extended. We've submitted a planning application for the extension to Cricket Field Lane.

You said: we needed to take better care of the carriages. We've submitted a planning application for a carriage shelter.

You said: you'd like a museum. We've started the process to get the necessary approvals and we will be installing a small exhibition at the Woody Bay café and at Blackmoor.

You said: you'd like more regular information about the railway. We've started the 'Steam on the Moor' video series on YouTube and published more news articles on the website.

You said: where are funds going to come from? We've restarted the funding sub-group and are formulating our strategy.

You said: what is our strategy? We are developing an integrated strategy covering all our activities to help guide our operations and developments.

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