



# Between The Lines

April 2025

## Welcome to this edition of Between the Lines.

**Roger Burfitt, Vice-Chair of Trustees**

Dear Members,

We hope this message finds you well. We are writing to share some important updates concerning our magazine publications and our Chair of Trustees.

You are receiving this Spring 2025 edition of the "Between the Lines" newsletter. This year, we have chosen to send this newsletter to all our members to keep you informed about our latest activities, projects, and events.

### **S&D Telegraph Magazine**

Regrettably, we must inform you that we are unable to produce the "S&D Telegraph Magazine" as you may have been expecting. The reason for this change is that we no longer have an Editorial Team available to compile and produce the magazine. Until an editorial team is in place we cannot say when you might see the next edition of the magazine. Despite our best efforts to find replacements we have yet to secure the necessary personnel to maintain the high standards of the publication that you have come to enjoy. If any Trust members have experience with magazine production or can put us in touch with others who might be willing to help, do please let us know. We understand that this news will be disappointing for all our supporters who enjoy reading the high quality magazine for which we have been praised. We remain dedicated to keeping you connected and informed about the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust and we hope that the "Between the Lines" newsletter will serve as a valuable resource in the meantime. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

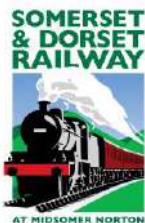
## Chair of Trustees

Stephen Lacey who has been our Chair of Trustees for many years has, for personal reasons, taken the decision to stand down from this role and as a Trustee. Stephen's decision to stepdown marks the end of a significant chapter in the railway's history. On behalf of the Trust, I sincerely thank Stephen for his achievements. It has been my privilege to work with him, and as Trustees, we have valued his strong leadership in advancing the railway through challenging times.

I have agreed to stand in as Acting Chair of Trustees whilst the Trust Secretary, John Baxter, undertakes process of appointing his successor.



**Full Steam Ahead at Midsomer Norton**



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## Positive Developments at the Railway

Despite the temporary halt in the production of the S&D Telegraph Magazine, there are numerous positive developments at the railway that are worth celebrating. Firstly, we are in a strong financial position, providing a solid foundation for future operations and initiatives. Our working volunteers are doing a remarkable job, showing great enthusiasm to develop the railway into the major visitor attraction of the area. Their efforts are also focused on fostering interest in the legacy of the Somerset & Dorset Railway and its significance to the region.

In this edition of Between the Lines, we have exciting news about an array of important projects, all of which are volunteer-inspired and led. These projects exemplify the dedication and passion of our volunteer team, ensuring the railway's ongoing success and growth. Join us as we delve into these inspiring initiatives and celebrate the unwavering spirit of our volunteers who continue to drive progress at the railway. The future looks bright, and together we are making strides towards becoming a premier attraction while honouring the rich history of the Somerset & Dorset Railway.

## Midsomer Norton Railway Station Revamp

### A £250,000 Transformation

Midsomer Norton railway station is set for a significant overhaul as volunteers and the Board of Trustees come together to rejuvenate this cherished local landmark.

Recognising that the station has started to show signs of wear and tear and at the request of the working volunteers, the Trustees were pleased to allocate £250,000 to fund a comprehensive upgrade, aiming to enhance both its functionality and aesthetic appeal.

## The Plan

The dedicated volunteers, who have been the driving force behind the station's operations, have been actively reviewing ways to revitalise the site. Their plans encompass a variety of improvements to modernise the facilities and elevate the visitor experience. Even though compared with some of the larger heritage railways our one mile operation might seem small, the reality is that it takes a great deal of volunteer effort to manage, enhance and operate what we have. In common with so many organisations we are always in need of more volunteers. At a recent meeting attended by over 25 volunteers it was agreed that we shall have to make increasing use of contractors if we are to achieve the transformation which is our collective goal.

## Internal Enhancements

Among the top priorities are:

### IT System Overhaul:

This upgrade aims to streamline operations and enhance communication, ensuring more efficient station management. The Company Treasurer, Pat Stevenson is taking the lead on this. The project is one that can best be delivered by specialist contractors and Pat is now in discussions with prospective suppliers.



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## Toilet Upgrades:

Providing greater comfort and accessibility for all visitors, the revamp of the station's toilets is a much-needed improvement. Phil Jones, who is Head of Buildings is taking the lead on this project.

## External Improvements

The focus will not only be on the interior but also on the station's exterior:

## Perimeter Fencing:

Enhanced security and a better aesthetic appeal are expected through improved fencing around the station. This will be a huge task and Phil Jones is looking at the most efficient way to replace the extensive fencing we have. It will almost certainly be a job for contractors.

## Car Park Revamp:

The car park will undergo significant changes to address the need for more efficient and appealing parking facilities. Matt Cornborough is researching our options and consulting with another heritage railway who have an excellent station work car park.

## Signage:

New and improved signs will make navigation simpler and more intuitive for passengers and visitors. Stephen Jones has lost no time in preparing some examples which have been well received by our volunteers.



## Disabled Access:

Sue Ross who is a member of our excellent catering team has spoken passionately about the need to improve our facilities and access for disabled visitors particularly at the time of our ever popular Santa Special trains. The nature of this event inevitably results in some waiting. For most visitors that is easy to manage with warm carriages, the buffet car and the shop providing warm facilities.

Regrettably, for wheelchair users, we can only offer waiting accommodation in the shop which is not ideal. A review of how we can improve our disabled access facilities is now underway with the aim of providing significant improvements before the Autumn and Winter seasons are upon us.

## Commitment to Legacy

The £250,000 investment from the Board of Trustees underscores their strong commitment to preserving the station's historical significance while adapting it for modern-day use. Volunteers are diligently exploring ways to maximise the impact of this funding, ensuring that Midsomer Norton







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railway station becomes a vibrant hub for the community and beyond.

With these planned upgrades, the station is poised to shed its tired appearance and emerge as a refreshed, welcoming gateway.

## The Relocation and Refurbishment Plan for the Wells Hut

From Washford to a New Home  
Near the Museum

When our friends at the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust were compelled to vacate their long-standing home at Washford, they faced a significant challenge regarding the future of the large wooden building that originated from Wells. We were delighted to provide a new home for this structure, which we affectionately refer to as the Wells Hut.

### Current Use of the Wells Hut

The Wells Hut has been instrumental for us, serving as storage and display space for the overflow stock of the S&D (Second-hand & Donated) Emporium. During the festive Santa season, our Catering Team utilizes the hut to store and distribute the “goodie bags” that are an integral part of the Santa experience for our visitors. Recently, ownership of the hut has been transferred to us by the S&D Trust and thus we can reassess and optimise its usage.

### Challenges and Relocation Plan

Despite its utility, the Wells Hut presents two primary challenges:

- Its size is somewhat excessive for the patio area where it is currently situated.
- It requires significant refurbishment and repair.



**Wells Hut on the Patio**

To address these issues, we have decided to relocate the hut to a more suitable location closer to the museum. This move will facilitate its refurbishment and enable our museum team, into whose care it is being transferred, to make full use of the additional space it provides.

### Project Leadership and Execution

The relocation and refurbishment project is being spearheaded by our dedicated volunteers, Steve Jefferey and Dave Read. Steve is tasked with planning the relocation with the assistance of a contractor, while Dave is diligently preparing the base for the hut, ensuring it is ready to be lifted into its new position.



**New Location for the Wells Hut**



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These efforts will not only preserve the Wells Hut but also give it a new purpose, making it another visitor attraction to tell the story of the Somerset & Dorset Railway.

## Somervale Sidings Planning Consent

### Outline and Conditions

Somervale Sidings received outline planning consent in November 2024, two years after the application was first submitted. This milestone marks the beginning of a series of detailed pre-commencement conditions that must be met before any work can commence on the site.

### Pre-Commencement Conditions

The consent comes with six pages of pre-commencement conditions, each meticulously designed to ensure that the development proceeds in a manner that is both environmentally responsible and compliant with local regulations. One of the most significant conditions is the submission of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. This plan must be approved by local planning authority ecologists, and it has been prepared by a qualified ecologist to ensure that it meets the stringent requirements set forth by the authorities.

### Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is a comprehensive document detailing the measures that will be taken to preserve and enhance the local habitat. This plan includes strategies for protecting wildlife, maintaining biodiversity, and ensuring that the development does not negatively impact the surrounding ecosystem. The plan will be

subject to annual reviews by the local planning authority ecologists for the first five years after its approval. Following this initial period, monitoring will continue every five years for the next 25 years, ensuring long-term compliance and environmental stewardship.

### Obligations and Compliance

A detailed 89-page document has been created to define our obligations and monitor compliance with the various conditions set forth in the planning consent. This document covers every aspect of the development, concerning environmental protections and biodiversity improvements. It provides a clear plan for how the project will be managed and monitored, ensuring that all legal and regulatory requirements are met.



### Monitoring and Reporting

Once the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is approved, the project will enter a phase of rigorous monitoring and reporting. Annual reviews for the first five years will help to identify any issues early on and ensure that mitigation measures are effective. After this initial period, monitoring will occur every five years for an additional 25 years, creating a long-term commitment to environmental responsibility.



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The planning consent for Somervale Sidings marks a significant step forward for the project. With the conditions set forth and the detailed compliance document in place, we are committed to developing the site in a manner that respects the environment and meets the needs of the railway. The ongoing monitoring and reporting will ensure that we remain accountable and transparent throughout the development process, fostering trust and collaboration with the planning authorities.

## Somervale Sidings and Their Benefits

The development of Somervale Sidings marks a significant milestone in the enhancement of railway infrastructure. With construction anticipated to commence later this year, this project is poised to bring numerous advantages, both operational and environmental, that will greatly benefit the community, the workforce, and the surrounding environment.

### Operational Efficiency

One of the key benefits of the new sidings is the operational efficiency they will bring. Currently, carriages and other rolling stock must be shunted out of the station at the start of each operating day and shunted back at the end. This process is labour-intensive and imposes a considerable strain on the volunteers responsible for these movements. Once the sidings are complete, rolling stock can be safely stored on-site, significantly reducing the need for these daily shunt movements.

### Volunteer Support

The reduction in shunt movements will alleviate a major strain on the volunteers.

These dedicated individuals will no longer have to expend time and effort on these repetitive tasks, allowing them to focus on other vital areas of railway operation. This not only improves the efficiency of the railway but also enhances the overall volunteer experience, making it more rewarding and less physically demanding.

### Environmental Impact

Another significant advantage of the Somervale Sidings is the reduction of unnecessary emissions. The daily shunting of rolling stock consumes fuel and generates emissions. By minimising these movements, the new sidings will contribute to a reduction in the railway's carbon footprint. This is a crucial step towards more sustainable railway operations and aligns with broader environmental goals.

### Community Well-Being

The construction of the sidings will also lead to less disturbance for the neighbours. The noise and activity associated with the current shunting processes can be disruptive to those living nearby. By centralizing the storage of rolling stock within the sidings, these disturbances will be minimised, resulting in a quieter and more peaceful environment for the local community.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of Somervale Sidings is a pivotal project with far-reaching benefits. From enhancing operational efficiency and supporting volunteers to reducing emissions and minimising community disturbances, the sidings represent a forward-thinking approach to our railway infrastructure.





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## Redan Curve Vegetation Clearance

During the winter months, we engaged a local contractor to crop the Redan Curve vegetation growth on the trackbed and in the adjoining field, which we now own. A local tree surgeon has also been engaged to clear diseased trees that were overhanging an adjoining property and some others along the trackbed.

The tree and vegetation clearance has greatly improved the look of the Redan Curve, and there is now no doubt this was a railway line.

However, we still have a problem with flooding of the trackbed towards the Chilcompton Tunnels. This is caused by a large earth bund installed by the adjacent landowner on their part of the trackbed. We may have to install a land drain across an adjacent field so this water can flow into the River Somer. We have been advised that we shall require approval from the Environment Agency before we can divert the water flow.

For the time being we shall simply engage our land contractor to keep the vegetation growth in check now that the fencing that we were contracted to install, separating our land from that of the landowner from whom we purchased the Redan Curve & adjoining field has been completed.



## Testing the Chilcompton Infill

The investigation into the Chilcompton Infill is of paramount importance to the future of the railway line in this region. One of the major obstacles that must be overcome is accurately determining the contents and safety of the infill leading to the Chilcompton Tunnels. Speculations abound as to what might be embedded within the infill, but without thorough soil sampling, certainty remains elusive. This land, owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and leased to a local farmer, plays a crucial role in this study.

### Background and Current Efforts

The Chilcompton Infill has long been a point of interest, not only due to its potential impact on local infrastructure but also because of what it might contain. This infill could hold historical artifacts, toxic materials, or purely benign soil and debris. To pave the way for future development and ensure the safety of the railway line, comprehensive testing is essential.

### Volunteer Contributions

Matt Skidmore, one of our dedicated volunteers, has leveraged his connections with Rogers Leask, an award-winning consulting engineering firm with expertise in dealing with infilled land. Their Bristol Office has decades of experience and vast technical knowledge, which is invaluable to our investigation.

### Site Visit and Water Sampling

Rogers Leask Consultant, Andy Jackson, conducted a site visit and observed water running from the infill into the drainage channel beside our railway line, eventually flowing into



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the River Somer. Following Andy's suggestion, water sampling was undertaken to assess whether any contamination was present. Andy provided his time free of charge as part of their charity support scheme, exemplifying the community spirit and dedication to this project.

The water samples were analysed under laboratory conditions, and the results were encouraging. The water tested showed near drinking water quality, significantly reducing the likelihood of the infill being toxic. This finding is a critical step towards ensuring the safety and feasibility of further investigations.

## Seeking Permissions

Despite the promising results of the water testing, we are yet to obtain permission for soil sampling from the Duchy of Cornwall. This next phase of testing is crucial to ascertain the complete profile of the infill. Unfortunately, the Duchy's approval is pending resolution of other matters they are currently addressing. We remain in close communication with the Duchy and await their decision with optimism.

## Technical Expertise and Collaboration

The collaboration with Rogers Leask has provided access to specialised knowledge that is instrumental in our investigation. Their experience with infilled land brings a wealth of technical strategies and methodologies that will guide our soil sampling once permission is granted. The firm's recognition in the industry and their award-winning status adds a layer of credibility to our endeavour.

## Community Impact and Future Plans

The findings from the Chilcompton Infill investigation will have significant implications

for local infrastructure and the health of the environment. Ensuring the non-toxicity of the infill is essential for the maintenance and expansion of the railway line, which we intend to become a valued conduit for local transportation and economic activity.



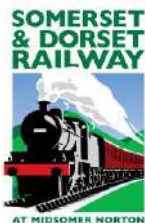
## Environmental and Health Considerations

Confirming that the infill and the water running through it are safe is crucial not only for construction and development but also for the health of the local ecosystem. The River Somer, which receives runoff from the infill, must be protected from potential contaminants to preserve its natural state and support the wildlife that depends on it.

## Conclusion

Testing the Chilcompton Infill is a multifaceted project that requires careful planning, technical expertise, and community support. The preliminary water testing results are promising, indicating a lower risk of toxicity. As we await permission for soil sampling from the Duchy of Cornwall, continued collaboration and volunteer efforts will remain central to our progress. The eventual findings will shape the future of the railway line and contribute to the safeguarding of the local environment.





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## 92207 Morning Star

**Roy Kethro**

Our Chief Mechanical Engineer Barrie Papworth and the team of engineers and machinists he has assembled are making steady progress on restoring the chassis of our recently acquired class 9F loco where it currently resides in Dorset.



My part in the process is to gather as much information as I can on this locomotive covering its emergence from Swindon Works in 1959, use under British Railways, withdrawal to Dai Woodham's scrapyards at Barry before being rescued by Keith Bottomley after languishing there for 21 years. Then there is the almost four decades of work carried out by Keith and his team of helpers leading up to the Trust becoming involved a few years ago.

My plan is to write a book telling the story from cradle to grave and back again to coincide with when we complete the restoration and witness the first steaming around 2029. I am also gathering stories and photos to include some of these impressive locos working over the Somerset and Dorset during the summer seasons in the 1960s, which managed to eliminate much of the double heading of heavier passenger workings over the Mendips.

## 92207 Progress Continues

**Barrie Papworth**

Machining of parts is continuing with Craig Fowler progressing the Valve Spindle forgings. See photographs below. These are nearing completion with some threads to be cut in and tapered ends machined. Craig is waiting for a CNC lathe to be free at his workshop.



Craig in the workshop



Trial fitting one of the Piston Valve Heads

Dave Beard has been machining the Return Crank Bearing Covers. One of them is pictured below in the lathe at the machine shop in the Goods Shed at Midsomer Norton. The photograph below shows the bearing cover on the one fitted in position on 92220 Evening Star at the NRM.

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The Team is also machining numerous parts for the Reversing Gear assembly. We have numerous castings already along with the Cut Off indicator and the Hand wheel. Recently Dave Beard machined 2 fittings which are to be located on the Reverser Gearbox.



Steve Jefferey is machining the first of the axle box underkeeps. These are oil reservoirs that are positioned under each axle journal to provide lubrication as the wheels rotate. The radius that can be seen has been carefully machined to match the underside of the axle journal. Steve has also machined the locating hole for the oil fitting that is being trial fitted as shown in the photograph.

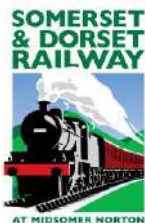


The photograph below shows one of the original underkeeps in position on the leading axle of the locomotive. When 92207 was in Barry Scrapyard it was not possible to remove this due to the location of the GWR Automatic Train Control apparatus that was positioned on the brackets protruding from the axle box. The flexible pipe is the bearing oil supply from the 16 feed Silvertown lubricator that is located on a bracket alongside the running board on the Fireman's side of the locomotive. The oil fitting is provided with a plug to drain off the oil if there is a need to withdraw the underkeep. Clearly the two underkeeps on the leading axle have been fully cleaned and replaced along with new Oiler Pads.



**Thanks to Barrie Papworth, Dave Beard, Craig Fowler and Steve Jeffery for the photos.**





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## 92207 Limited Edition Prints

Limited stocks of the 92207 print are available via the online shop. See the link below.

<https://sdjr.digitickets.co.uk/category/31853?navItem=321434>

This unique piece of railway memorabilia is available as an A4 size limited edition print, with artwork by renowned railway artist Stuart Black.



Each print has been signed personally by Peter Smith and Aubrey Punter, who were the Driver & Fireman, of 9F 92220 "Evening Star", on the last Northbound Pines Express over the S&D on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1962.

Peter & Aubrey are both Patrons of 92207, which was built at Swindon in the same final batch of locomotives as "Evening Star"

Each of the 207 available have been individually numbered and will look stunning mounted on a wall. All proceeds go to the restoration of BR Class 9F 92207.

## Signaling Update

Stuart Garner

The signalling team have been busy recently completing repairs to the points operating mechanism at the Engineer's siding. The work involved modifying the layout of the mechanism and repositioning the cranks.



The photo shows Richard Billington attaching the crank to the base plate with the new rodding in the foreground.

However the work proved very challenging with problems unrelated to the work itself. For example, the Wickham trolley was needed to transport tools and equipment to the work site but we lost a day's work because the Wickham wouldn't run. On another occasion we needed the portable generator to power a magnetic drill but the generator had a leak on the fuel supply – another day's work lost! A further loss of work time was caused by the Santa Specials where the Wickham trolley was locked in the yard because of other rolling stock which meant that we couldn't progress the work during December. We managed to complete the installation and test it on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February – hooray!

The recent storms put paid to one of the Whistle boards up the line on the approach to the Hunt Crossing – the photo is of the other board on the Chilcompton side of the crossing.





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So yet another job to make a replacement for the broken board.



All this illustrates the variety of skills needed to keep the railway running – in our case in the signalling team, mechanical engineering and fabrication, woodworking, electrical skills and knowledge, painting and a host of others.

Other than that, we have started the annual preventative maintenance on the signalling equipment in anticipation of the next running season, checking the mechanical and electrical operation of the equipment both in the signal box and out on the track. Next, we look forward to the start of the new season and the opportunity to train two new volunteers to become qualified signallers.



**Permanent Way Team clearing vegetation**

## Operating Company Update

**Matt Cornborough, Chair Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway Co Ltd**

As I write this, we've just had our first operational Sunday of the season which went off very well and had a good number of customers for our opening day. Great work by everybody to help us get there again. Our first Wickham Wednesday is happening today and there's someone booked on every slot across the day - on further inspection of the bookings I note that some were booked in February so we must be doing something right! Over the winter months the vegetation along the line has been cut back producing a much more visually pleasing and well cared for lineside - a good job well done and big thanks to Trevor and team.

Recently our PW team has been busy bringing down 400 check rail chairs and putting them into boxes in the car park for collection by the purchaser - each one weighs about 75 lbs so lots of muscle building received. Hopefully, in the near future, we will attain approval from BANES to proceed with the work on Somervale which will reduce rolling stock congestion within the station area. It will be no small task to lay the track etc but will be well worth the effort - when the time comes all would be most welcome in assisting with this work.

Across our closed season the Emporium has remained open on Sundays and has brought in a steady income from the sale of non-seasonally affected second hand goods which has been great. With our return to the operating season and all retail outlets open every Sunday our regular income stream will





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return as we deliver train rides to our customers.

There has been a bit of a buzz around the site recently as people work hard to return it to the "in service" condition further spurred on by the decision of the Trust to release a defined amount of legacy money to make improvements around site. Over the coming couple of months we will see some visual improvements that will enhance our offering to our customers. Some of these improvements or upgrades will take time so please bear with us whilst they are implemented.

The Events Committee has been working hard putting together our programme of events for the year. We've recently republished our brochure including an operating timetable across the year - if you can distribute any of them in your area please get in touch.

Looking forwards to a busy but hopefully enjoyable operating season at the railway.



**First train of the 2025 season ready to depart (Roger Burfitt)**

## Permanent Way Update

Every Sunday during the winter our Permanent Way team have been striving away working on clearing trackside vegetation to get things back to how they should be for when the railway re-opens on Sunday 6th April. This

has involved countless hours of hacking away at undergrowth, brambles and trees to reveal the proper extent of the space between the cess (the area to the outside of the track) and our boundary fence.

It's looking so much better with things trimmed back! The equally large challenge will be to keep it that way as spring growth starts to break through again.



## Rolling Stock Update

**Barrie Papworth**

**BR Class 08 D4095**

Work continues to refurbish the cab which will include new wooden floor boards. External paintwork still needs attention. Unfortunately, the volunteer who was leading on the floor replacement has been unable to get to site for some time which clearly has resulted in delay.



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Matt Cornborough has cleared out the oil drain lines between the cylinder heads and the engine crankcase/sump yesterday to see whether oil/diesel drainage into the spill tank reduces. One of the cylinder heads (No.1 RHS) did have a build-up of oil as found. Spill tank was emptied after blowing the line's clear.

## English Electric Shunter D1120

Lubrication issues have been found with the left hand rear connecting rod bearing. On inspection, although the oil pot for that bearing was full, we found that no oil was flowing down into the bearing. When the oil pot was disassembled it was evident that the bottom of the oiling tube down into the bearing was blocked with brown sludge deposits plus some of the wick material. This has all been cleaned out and the bearing flushed through with fresh oil and then reassembled. It will now be necessary to remove the whole connecting rod on that side.

New wiper blades have been sourced and fitted.

## Mark 1 coaches

The repainting of the BSK has continued with the Up-Side having received its topcoat. The roof on the Up-Side has also received attention. The BSK was then positioned in the Down Platform and work continued the other side. Progress was hampered by the weather. On several days when the sun was particularly strong work had to be suspended due to the high temperature of the roof metal which prevents painting of it. There have also been numerous rainy days on which volunteers are on site.

Work also took place to clean and repaint the RMB roof. Again the weather has impacted on progress but eventually the job was completed and the scaffolding removed.

With the Access Platforms now available this makes the ability to safely access the roof of the RMB from the patio side.

## SR Box Van S49208

Two of the main springs at the Radstock end have been replaced.

Work to free off the brake gear is progressing. New vacuum pipes have been fitted. The Vacuum release valves have been stripped and cleaned and new seals have been sourced ready for fitting.

## Mineral Wagons

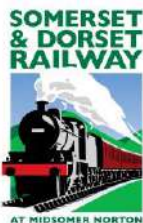
We are almost at the stage where one of the Mineral Wagons must be moved into the Goods Shed so that further body repairs can be carried out. The picture below shows where previous progress has been made cutting out the rotten sections along the level of the solebar. New sections have been curved to shape and will be welded into place.



## Brown Box Van B756069

The floor in this vehicle is being completely replaced. The picture below shows Keith Turk in the process of applying Hydrate 80 rust killer and preventer to the exposed frames now the old rotten floor has been removed. The doors on the right were repaired a couple of years





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ago but now the team has full access to the vehicle it is we also plan to replace the sides which are showing signs of deterioration. The gap and the general condition of the panelling in front of Keith shows this graphically.



## Events for Everyone

Easter will see the first special event of the year with a family day. Easter at the Station gives children a chance to take part in the Easter Hunt, with a special prize on completion of the trail, whilst adults get to enjoy Easter Biscuits. Trains will be running from 10.30 with the last train at 3pm. With the DMU rostered for Easter Sunday and a diesel shunter and the Mark 1 coaches on Easter Monday, there is something for everyone.

There are several events planned throughout the year, the next being the Spring Gala. Using the DMU and the diesel shunters, a half-hourly service will be run, with departures from the Down Platform, returning to the Up Platform. This will also create more interest as there will be train movements in the station between services.



June sees a couple of smaller scale events with the Diesel Driver Experience on Fathers Day 15<sup>th</sup> June. A chance to drive a diesel shunter under the close supervision of one of our drivers. You will be hauling the Queen Mary Brake Van and up to 16 friends and family can come along for the ride on the Brake Van.

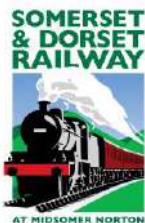
Then on 29<sup>th</sup> June we will be running Brake Van rides on the Queen Mary Brake Van.

The Wickham Weekender takes place in July and then in August we have another family day – Midsomer Summer. A summer seaside themed day, with a band, an entertainer, and funfair style games. Come and enjoy a day at the “seaside” Midsomer style.



September is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the modern railway – the Stockton & Darlington Railway having opened in September 1825. To help celebrate we are holding a Railway 200 Gala on 28<sup>th</sup> September joining many other railways across the country in marking this anniversary.

To close the year, there will be the usual Halloween Special on 26<sup>th</sup> October, when the ghouls and ghosts take over the railway. Then, to complete the year, we will have the Santa Trains in December plus a Driver Experience and the Mince Pie Specials to close the season. For full details and all the latest news check the website [www.sdjr.co.uk](http://www.sdjr.co.uk).



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**Special Events 2025**

**Easter at the Station**  
April 20th and 21st

**Spring Gala**  
26th May

**Brake Van Rides**  
29th June & 31st August

**Wickham Weekender**  
5th and 6th July

**Midsomer Summer**  
17th August

**Railway 200 Gala**  
28th September

**Halloween at the Station**  
26th October

**Santa at the Station**  
30th November, 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th, 20th and 21st December

**New Years Day Mince pie Special**  
1st January 2026

**Driver experiences**  
Diesel: 15th June, 27th December  
Steam: 31st December

**MIDSOMER NORTON SOUTH**  
Find out more at [WWW.SDJR.CO.UK](http://WWW.SDJR.CO.UK)  
Midsomer Norton Station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY

## Development of Workshop and Maintenance Facilities

### A Long-Held Ambition of the Railway

#### Introduction

The railway has long aspired to establish comprehensive workshop and maintenance facilities. The need for such facilities is paramount to ensure the proper restoration and upkeep of our fleet, including both motive power and rolling stock.

#### Acquisition and Initial Development

Three years ago, we procured a three-acre site adjacent to the southern terminus of our operational line, known locally as Tunnel Lane. Initial efforts following the acquisition involved creating an access route from Tunnel Lane, but, progress stalled due to insufficient funding.

#### Funding Secured

Last year, we were fortunate to receive an exceptional legacy, providing the necessary financial resources to embark on the planning phase of this crucial project. This funding injection is a significant milestone in realising our long-held dream of developing state-of-the-art workshop and maintenance facilities.



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## Expertise Required

The development of such a plan necessitates expertise across various domains:

- Civil Engineering
- Planning Control
- Ecology
- Habitat Management & Monitoring
- Building Design & Construction
- Safety Management
- Regulation Compliance

## Team Formation and Initial Meeting

The enthusiasm within our railway community to advance the Tunnel Lane development is palpable. A project management team has now been formed to steer the project. The team recently convened for its inaugural meeting, where they identified the many benefits that this development promises to bring.



**Artist Impression of new workshop**

## Benefits of Development

The identified benefits of developing the Tunnel Lane site include:

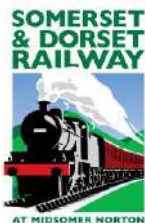
- Enhanced Credibility: The railway is more likely to be perceived as a serious and professional entity within the industry.

- Attraction of Visiting Locomotives: With appropriate facilities, we can attract more visiting locomotives to our railway.
- Proper Maintenance: The development will enable us to conduct proper maintenance of our rolling stock, ensuring its longevity and operational efficiency.
- Visitor Attraction: The facilities will become an integral part of the visitor experience, encouraging longer stays and greater engagement with the railway.
- Welding Facilities: Currently lacking, these facilities will enable us to undertake essential welding tasks.
- Educational & Engineering Opportunities: The new facilities will include educational spaces to attract and nurture young talent.
- Attract investment as part of the local community development opportunities.
- A platform halt will be included. We then offer a destination to our visitors rather than a simple out and back ride as we currently provide.



The Tunnel Lane development represents a pivotal step forward for the railway. With the secured funding and a dedicated project team in place, we are poised to bring our vision to fruition. The benefits are manifold and will position the railway as





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beacon of excellence in restoration, maintenance, and visitor engagement. The journey ahead is as promising as it is challenging, and we look forward to witnessing the transformation of our aspirations into reality.

## The S&D Emporium Goes from Strength to Strength

The S&D (Second-hand & Donated) Emporium is going from strength to strength under the leadership of Paul Short.

Supported by a willing team of volunteers, including Andrew Marsden, Matt Skidmore, Linda Godwin & Roy Kethro the S&D Emporium is a major source of income for the railway.



The model railway featuring Midsomer Norton in the 1950s is another popular attraction in the Emporium. This is ably managed by Chris Ross who is also our go-to expert when any of our model railway stock requires fettling before going on sale.

Last year we received an exceptional donation from Trust member Helen Davies. It was her late husband Ted's wish that his entire extensive model railway collection should be donated to the S&D with some of the money generated going towards the costs of our Redan Curve land.

We are so grateful for this donation from which we have already raised sufficient money to cover our expenditure last year on the Redan Curve. We still have much more good quality model railway stock so we are well set for the coming season.

During the winter period when the railway closes, the volunteer team have refurbished the Emporium layout whilst opening for a few hours each Sunday. This raised £2000.

Our stocks of donated railway books are another good source of income and we have a great range of titles for most interests.

To comply with VAT exemption rules all the Emporium stock is second-hand & donated - none is bought in. We are dependent on donations. Good quality transport books & model railway items, whatever gauge, are especially welcome.

We look forward to welcoming you all in the Emporium as we commence the new season.

**Emporium volunteers Paul Short and Matt Skidmore welcome Trust Member Helen Davis who has generously donated her late husband's Ted entire railway collection to the Emporium (Roger Burfitt)**



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## Reimagining Our Railway Shop

### Transformation and Renewal

David Thatcher

### Planning and Execution

The transformation of our Railway shop was a carefully planned and executed process. Starting from the decision to replace the old display units, every step was taken with the goal of enhancing the shopping experience for our customers. The new eight box units were selected not only for their functionality but also for their ability to showcase our products in a visually appealing way.

### Team Collaboration

The success of this project was largely due to the collaborative efforts of our team. Roger, Andrew, John, and I worked together to identify the best solutions for our shop's needs. Andy's research and insights were invaluable. The S&D Company's willingness to support us financially ensured that we could implement our plans without compromise.

### Overcoming Challenges

Throughout the process, we faced several challenges, including the unfortunate delay caused by the death of one of the box makers. Despite these setbacks we remained committed to our vision and adapted as necessary. Andy's timely intervention during my illness ensured that the units were set up as planned, maintaining our timeline for the shop's transformation.

## Enhancing the Shopping Experience

The enhancements to our Railway shop go beyond the new display units. My wife's keen eye for design has elevated our product displays, making them more attractive and engaging for customers. The use of risers has particularly improved the presentation of our luxury soap range and humorous metal signs.

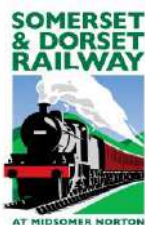
### New Product Additions

To complement the revamped look of our shop, we have introduced several new products, including from Emblem torches, key rings, and pens featuring our S&D Totem sign. Additionally, Whistlefish cards, known for their green credentials and high-quality images, now adorn our spinner, adding a touch of elegance to our offerings.

An image below of the new shop, but full justice can only be seen if you come and look and spend some money.



**Company Director and Retail Team Volunteer, John Sharp ready to welcome customers to our revamped shop on the first day of our 2025 operating season**



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## Final Touches

The final touches to our shop's transformation have included replacing the old carpets with new ones and cleaning and buffering the flooring to ensure it looks pristine for the grand opening on April 6th. These improvements will create a welcoming and pleasant environment for our customers, encouraging them to explore and enjoy our products.

## Invitation to Visit

We invite everyone to come and visit our Railway shop and experience the transformation firsthand. We believe that the new look and product additions will impress and delight our customers. Come in and have a look for yourself, and we are confident that you will be impressed.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Vivienne Taylor

### New membership rates from 1 January.

Those members who renew their membership by standing order in January and April should have received notification of the revised membership rates from 1<sup>st</sup> January, so please ensure that you have altered your standing order. If you are able at the same time to move the payment as near to 1 January or 1 April as possible in future that helps me to check the bank statements. Those of you who are due to renew by standing order in September 2025 and are on email will shortly receive a notification giving the new rates.

## Email addresses

When we send out emails, a few bounce back because we haven't been notified of a change. It is important, with postage rates constantly

increasing, to let me have any changes as soon as they occur. The same of course goes for your home address as we have had a handful of members who say they haven't received the latest Telegraph and then we find that they haven't told us of their new address. Please email me of any changes at [vivienntaylor15870@gmail.com](mailto:vivienntaylor15870@gmail.com)

## Telephone numbers

A reminder that if you change your mobile or home phone numbers to let us have these changes. We sometimes will text to you over membership queries and we would not want to delete you from our database inadvertently.

## GIFT AID

John Baxter

Gift Aid is an important element of our normal budget and the more of you who are eligible for us to collect Gift Aid the more income we can get from HMRC. Up until a couple of years ago, many senior citizen members never paid tax but this has changed quite dramatically so, if for the last financial year from 1 April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 you started to pay income tax, please let us know and we can then get 25p in the £ back on your membership fees and any donations. I will be contacting those for whom we have no information shortly as we will be dealing with the 2024-2025 Gift Aid in the next couple of months. Income derived from Charity Aid Foundation (CAF) donations is not subject to Gift Aid. Cash donations paid into the three boxes we have at Midsomer Norton, in the museum, the shop and the letter box to the left of the shop door can also now be claimed against Gift Aid up to a certain sum, so if you are a non-taxpayer and wish to make a donation, a cash payment via the three boxes is still advantageous to us.





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## CLARITY OVER BANK ACCOUNTS

**John Baxter**

As we have had the occasional query concerning bank accounts, some clarity may help. We have four separate Trust accounts. The first is for Membership and associated donations and you will see this number on our membership leaflets and any letters or emails from our Membership Secretary, Vivienne Taylor. We have an investment account into which any legacies are normally paid before decisions on longer term deposits are made. We have our original account that pays the bills we receive; transfers across to this account are made from the membership and investment accounts as appropriate.

Finally, there is a totally separate account for 9F income either from standing orders or donation. It is important to note that this separation is important, as the project must be totally self-financing and does not draw on funds for the continuing restoration from other income streams. As a Trust account, the income and expenditure will of course be shown in the overall Annual Income & Expenditure report to the AGM that is then sent to Companies House and the Charity Commissioners after a full examination.

## STOPPED CHEQUES

**by John Baxter**

We have had a few members pay by cheque and then, without telling us, they put a stop on the cheque. This is only picked up by the Trust when HSBC inform us by letter some weeks later. We don't want to discourage cheques at all and stopping a cheque might be for very good reasons, but we will now

only process a membership application once we know that the funds have been deposited

in our membership bank account. However, if you do feel that you need to stop a cheque it is far better to let us know quickly and before we have deposited it into our account as HSBC charge us an incredible £16 just for telling us that the cheque has been stopped!

## PLEASE REVEAL WHO YOU ARE

**John Baxter**

We have a few membership references where we have been unable to identify the member. If you recognise the following reference, please email me at [jbsdjr@btinternet.com](mailto:jbsdjr@btinternet.com) with your name and address.

They are:

ESQ D.ESQ (£10 per month),

S&DRHT ANNUAL MEMB which is paid on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April (this was for £14)

S&DRHT MTHLY DONAT (£5 per month).

**Compiled by Roger Burfitt & Keith Turk**

**Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust**

**April 2025**