

Between The Lines

Autumn 2025

All Change at Midsomer Norton

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Between the Lines. Whilst we can't bring you The Telegraph, we can hopefully keep you updated with what is happening around the station.

As you will see, there has been a lot of progress made in improving the facilities for both visitors and volunteers, and seeing this progress has a positive effect for everyone. There is plenty more to come, and we must keep the momentum going. Thanks must go to Roger Burfitt who has organised the Volunteer's Meetings which have been the driving force behind much of what has been achieved.

There has been a lot of debate over what we should do, and how it should be done. Not everyone will agree with some of the projects, but I think everyone will agree that the package as a whole has benefitted the railway. There has been some debate over what we do, and long may that continue as that is the basis of a healthy organisation. At the end of the day we all want the railway to flourish.

What we must remember is that the railway is different things to different people. To many, it is preserving the historic Somerset & Dorset Railway, and all that encompasses – restoring and maintaining our locos and stock, telling the story through the buildings and museum. Based around that, we have the enthusiasts who appreciate the railway for its history, and what we have achieved in recreating the old line. But for many of our visitors, they are looking for a day out, or maybe to keep the children entertained for a few hours. Whatever the motivation, we must ensure that our railway is all things to all people, and that it continues to thrive and grow.

Keith Turk

BCK Joins the Fleet

Earlier this year the Trust became aware of a Brake Composite Corridor Coach (BCK) S21268 that was for sale.

BCK 21268 was built at Derby in 1964 and was allocated to the Southern Region of British Railways. After being sold out of BR service it became a main line support coach for 60103 Flying Scotsman. As part of this new use the centre toilet was replaced with a catering area. It is the intention to refit the panelling along with a 'Toilet' door. 21268 has also been used as a support coach for 46100 Royal Scot, 60163 Tornado and 70000 Britannia.

A BCK has been described by some as a train in one carriage as it has First and Second accommodation plus a Guards Compartment and a luggage/parcels area. As built it was equipped with 2 toilets at each end of the passenger compartments.



First Class Compartment (Barrie Papworth)

In late April Operations Manager Kevin Drake, Company Chair Matt Cornborough and I visited Williton on the West Somerset Railway (WSR) to view the carriage. We were met by Workshop Manager Ryan Pope.



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Examination showed that it had received attention by Rampart in Derby in 2006 including a repaint. This implied that some body repairs had been undertaken. External panelling had none of the common blistering of panels such as on the ends adjacent to the Gangways, under windows, or along the sole bar that might be expected on this type of coach.

Inside there was no evidence of water ingress and the general condition was very good. A door Droplight was found to have been broken, but our friends at the West Somerset repaired this shortly after our visit, for which we thank them very much.

The Vacuum Brake equipment had been removed by British Railways and a through Vacuum Pipe had been fitted to enable it to run with steam locomotives on the main line. Ryan said the WSR could retrofit Vacuum Brakes and, subsequently, their quotation for the work was accepted. At the time of writing the WSR expect this work to be completed by the middle of September. Arrangements will then be made to move the vehicle to Midsomer Norton.



BCK at Washford (Kevin Drake)

With this coach joining our operational fleet we now have two guards brake fitted vehicles available. We have always been concerned that if our other Brake Coach were to be withdrawn from service for lengthy repairs, we would be unable to run trains at all. Every formation must have a brake coach otherwise it cannot run.

We have been fortunate that the BSO (Brake Second Open) coach we have on loan from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway has ensured we have had a second brake coach available. The NYMR has requested the coach be returned soon due to their own shortage of brake coaches, so buying a second brake coach resolves this issue.

Barrie Papworth



Second Class Compartment (Barrie Papworth)



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Midsomer Norton Station Improvement Programme

Empowering Volunteers for a Smarter, Cleaner Station

Midsomer Norton Station, an important part of the community, was looking tired and in need of basic improvements. Volunteers, who work hard to maintain the site, felt frustrated by the lack of visible progress and wanted to see their efforts make a bigger impact.

Funding and Management

The Trust allocated £250,000 specifically for station improvements, putting volunteers in charge of the budget and planning. This decision aimed to empower those who know the station best, encouraging practical solutions and a smarter approach to upgrades.

Key Improvement Areas

- Refurbishing toilet facilities for better cleanliness and accessibility
- General site clearance and tidy-up of overgrown areas and rubbish
- Upgraded and more secure station wi-fi
- Fitting toilets in the Buffet Coach to save the catering team a long walk to the station toilets
- Improved facilities for visitors with restricted mobility
- Better workshop facilities for the maintenance of rolling stock
- Improved signage and visitor information
- Better communications so volunteers are more informed about what's happening
- New perimeter fencing to improve security and appearance

Empowering Volunteers

With control over the improvement program, volunteers are now able to prioritise tasks and ensure that work leads to lasting, visible changes. This approach recognises their dedication and gives them the tools they need to make the station a cleaner, more welcoming place for everyone. Many have commented on how volunteer morale has improved since this program commenced.

Roger Burfitt

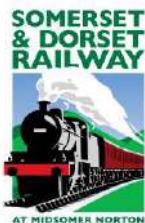
Improvements to Station Public Toilets

Led by Phil Jones, Head of Buildings

Under the direction of Phil Jones, in his role as Head of Buildings, significant improvements have been made to the public toilets at the station. These enhancements aim to provide a more comfortable, hygienic, and accessible environment for all users.



Gents wash hand basins (R Burfitt)



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Retail News

General Improvements

- Modernisation of facilities, ensuring a cleaner and more pleasant experience.
- Upgraded fixtures and fittings, including new sinks, taps, and hand-dryers.
- Improved lighting and ventilation for greater comfort and safety.
- Improved access to the Ladies Toilet which previously was rather restricted

Accessibility Enhancements

Particular attention has been given to the cubicle for those with restricted mobility. The following upgrades have been implemented:

- Installation of wider doors and handrails for easier access.
- Lowered sinks and dispensers to accommodate wheelchair users.
- Non-slip flooring and emergency assistance alarms for added safety.

Conclusion

These improvements reflect a commitment to inclusivity and high standards in public amenities. The station now offers facilities that better meet the needs of all passengers, including those with restricted mobility.

Roger Burfitt



Since our last edition, we have increased our range of S&D logoed merchandise, and we are now stocking keyrings & fridge magnets with the Locomotive logo on both wooden and metal. Also our range now includes mini torches, keyrings, and pens with the S&D Midsomer Norton South legend printed on, and early sales are very promising.

Andrew approached Jane Riley, our Resident artist, with the view of including some of her many prints of our Railway onto our online shop, and also has taken photos of her prints stocked in the shop, which if a customer wishes to purchase can come to the counter, where we take the order and Jane will post directly to the Customer a Lithographic print from the printer.

We have increased our range of newly published books on the Railway, which are now featured in our shop display units, and these are showing excellent sales, and some are featured in our online shop, which Andy keeps up to date, and we are now featuring the S&D 2026 calendar, which again is selling well both in the shop and online.

We have recently added another Ivo Peters DVD Volume 16 to our extensive range of his DVDs, and again this is featured in our online shop, and well as being available at the shop.

The recent successful event of Midsomer Summer, organized so ably by our Events co-ordinator Keith Turk, which was a huge success, and we in the shop were pleased to receive many positive comments from families with children all saying what a fabulous time they were having, and were we looking at making it a permanent fixture each year.

John Sharp manning the shop (D Thatcher)



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We also now have a Visitors book situated in the shop, and which customers can leave comments on their experience at our Railway. It is very gratifying to see, without exception, the same comments regarding their experience, and that is the friendliness and help that our Volunteers give. Thanks to Sue, our new recruit for donating both the book and the pen and holder.

The hot weather that we have been having has of course did not help our sales in the shop, and many people and families have chosen the beach over coming to the Station, but the event Keith organized has helped to make up quite a bit of the shortfall.

Thanks too to Stephen Jones for his splendid use of both existing footage of our Railway, and Al Created Santa Claus extolling the advantages of booking online for the Santa Event. In addition promoting sales of Cream Teas, the Halloween event, and Staff recruitment all very professionally done, and on a loop on the newly provided TV screen over the mantel piece in the shop.

My personal thanks goes to my two colleagues, Andrew, & John for their commitment with me to carry on serving our customers so well.

David Thatcher



Signalling Update

As usual the signalling team have been busy over the last few months. Quite apart from routine maintenance (and repairing the occasional faults that develop through using elderly equipment), the main activities have been as follows:

The "Whistle" boards which remind the driver to sound the whistle were rotting so needed replacement. We bought the necessary marine grade exterior plywood and cut out the letters from the same plywood to be fixed to the boards. A lot of sealing/painting later, we were able to get them installed.



Above: New Whistle Board & Left: Signalling Cabin undergoing repair (Stuart Garner)

The next major job was to repaint the Engineer's Siding signalling cabin. We have been fortunate in that the weather has been kind to us, allowing us to prepare the woodwork and start the painting.

Due to the requirement to repair one of the brown vans which had been used for storage of signalling equipment (which we hope to need one day), five volunteers spent two days clearing the van of all the very heavy equipment and storing it under the Up platform shelter. The original plan was to return the equipment to the van after it had been



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repaired. However we were also asked to vacate the grey RNAD van which had yet more electrical signalling stuff stored inside. The reason was that the grey van was to be sold. Another couple of days was needed to empty the van into temporary storage – a big thank you to the team for what was a considerable amount of work to clear both vans.

Once the CCT, currently being used as the Emporium has been released by the commissioning of the “new” BG vehicle as the Emporium, the CCT is being given to the signalling department as a storage facility. This is an excellent outcome, allowing all the equipment to be stored in one place in a dry, weatherproof vehicle. The only problem being that we must move all the stuff into its new home – volunteers always welcome....



Signalling Equipment stored in the Up Platform Shelter (Stuart Garner)

One major issue we have had over several years is the crossover points (No's 15a and 15b) have been very heavy, especially when returning them to normal. It needs a hard push to return the points to normal and signalling staff need to be physically capable so that they don't hurt themselves operating the points. Two of our newer members (the Phillips father and son team) have taken it upon themselves to undertake a survey of the operation. A

typical conversation goes: “We're losing about 2mm of movement at the compensator for 15a. Also the rodding under the platform is bending upwards by 5mm when normalising.” After some further adjustments it seems that the problem is at least partially resolved although there remain some issues with packing of sleepers under the point blades.

One final thing is that the West Somerset Railway donated a lineside equipment cabinet which will come in useful one day when we extend the signalling to the Redan bridge. Thank you WSR!

Stuart Garner

Battle of the Bindweed

The station gardens are tended by a small group of dedicated volunteers who put in consistent effort to keep the area looking its best. However, the task of controlling Bindweed and other aggressive plants was becoming unmanageable, and the team realised additional help was necessary.



Andrew and Another Full Load of Cleared Vegetation (Roger Burfitt)



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Professional contractors quoted high prices for vegetation clearance, presenting a financial challenge. The solution came unexpectedly when Paul Short, the Emporium Manager, met Andrew - an experienced gardener by chance at a local pub. Andrew was looking for work and offered his services at an affordable rate. After agreeing on terms, he joined the effort.

Andrew approached the job systematically, arriving early and working through tough conditions, including the hottest summer days. He focused on thoroughly removing invasive plants and roots, helping bring the garden back under control. His practical advice and reliability also made a positive impression on the volunteers.

As a result, the gardens have seen significant improvement, with invasive growth now managed and the space restored for everyone to enjoy. Andrew's support has been so effective that the team plans to work with him regularly. The experience highlights how resourcefulness, teamwork, and a bit of luck can help overcome challenges in community spaces.

Roger Burfitt

Expansion of the S&D Emporium

Acquisition of the Former Museum Coach from the S&D Trust

We are delighted to announce the recent purchase of the former Museum Coach from the S&D Trust. This significant acquisition marks an exciting development for our organisation and the continued growth of our S&D Emporium.

Enhanced Space for the S&D Emporium

The arrival of the Museum Coach enables us to substantially increase the size of our Emporium. With the generous donations we have been receiving from supporters and enthusiasts, the need for extra space has never been greater. The new coach will allow us to display and store a much wider variety of items, ensuring our collection is both accessible and well-presented for all visitors.



Matt Cornborough (Company Chairman) & Kevin Drake (Operations Manager) giving the BG a wash (Roger Burfitt)

Model Railway:

N Gauge Midsomer Norton in the 1950s

One of the many benefits of this expansion is the opportunity to improve the display of our N gauge Midsomer Norton in the 1950s model railway. The larger area will provide better viewing angles and a more immersive experience for railway modellers and history enthusiasts alike. We are excited to see how this popular feature will flourish in its enhanced setting.



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Coach Condition and Plans for Refurbishment

Although the Museum Coach is in remarkably good condition, especially considering it spent an extended period stored outdoors at the Watercress Line, it does require some attention before it can be put into full service.

Planned works include internal refurbishment and essential bodywork repairs to the doors. Once these tasks are completed, the coach will be ready to welcome visitors and serve as a centrepiece of our Emporium.

Looking Ahead

This acquisition is a testament to the ongoing support we receive from our community and the dedication of our volunteers. We look forward to sharing further updates as refurbishment progresses and to welcoming more visitors to experience the expanded S&D Emporium soon.

In conjunction with the arrival of the Museum Coach, our current Emporium vehicle, which has served us admirably over the years, is set to be transferred to the Signal and Telegraph group. They need additional storage space, and this transfer will provide them with the capacity required to better support their ongoing projects and preservation efforts.

Roger Burfitt



Calendars Cabin: Accessible Hospitality for All Our Visitors

Calendars Cabin is a welcoming retreat for passengers with restricted mobility who cannot access the buffet coach. Thoughtfully designed with ramps and wide doorways, its inviting layout makes it easy for guests and companions to gather in a relaxed, sociable setting.

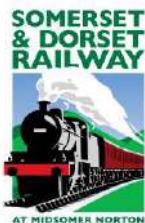
Previously, it was only possible to accommodate those of restricted mobility on the patio adjacent to the buffet coach. The patio is very pleasant on warm sunny days but when the weather is cold and inclement there was no alternative we could offer.



Cream Teas on the Patio (A Marsden)

*(Left) Sue Trott opens Calendars Cabin
(Roger Burfitt)*

Sue Trott and the catering team were introduced to a Somerset based company who design bespoke wooden outdoor buildings. Following a visit from a member of their team a suitable insulated design was produced which was accepted. Installation took place in time for the successful Midsomer Summer event.



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The cabin is being funded from the Fergus Callendar legacy and it is being named to honour his memory.

At last Sue and the team can now offer a warm and comfortable place for all, regardless of mobility restrictions, which has long been a cause for concern, especially during the colder month events such as when Santa visits the station.

Roger Burfitt

Delivering That Heavy Load

Whenever a low loader turns up at our station to deliver or take away an item of rolling stock, the eagle eyed might notice there is a small plate attached to the front of the tractor unit's cab. It has the lettering STGO on it together with CAT followed by a number which will be either 1, 2 or 3. So, what does it mean?

STGO stands for 'Special Types General Order' which are a set of regulations covering the transport of heavy or oversized loads by road which are outside the limits applicable to normal vehicle movements. The loads can vary from railway vehicles, heavy civil engineering plant, farm structures like silos, bridge sections and even the army's main battle tanks.

The category refers to the maximum weight of the vehicle and its load ranging from 50 tonnes at cat 1, 80 tonnes for cat 2 and 150 tons with cat 3. The total weight dictates over how many axles it must be spread, just as it does with locomotives and rolling stock on railway track. The maximum speed permitted on motorways and other roads is strictly regulated as are the times of day it is allowed to be on the move.

There are even more stringent regulations for much heavier and larger loads such as power station transformers which sometimes require multi-wheeled systems and rolling roadblocks due to their size and weight.



Depending on the pre-planned route, authority for the move is granted by a combination of Highways England and the relevant local authorities. In planning the route, bridges, viaducts, tunnels and other highway infrastructure must be considered. The certificate issued to the haulier will also include any stretches where an escort vehicle or police escort needs to be provided to manage other traffic and warn other road users.

Our STGO driver is more than just an ordinary Heavy Goods Vehicle driver. He or she will have had additional training in securing, handling and manoeuvring heavy and



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oversized loads. Similarly, the escort vehicle driver needs to be trained in how to guide STGO movements through challenging parts of the route including communication protocols.

Later this month our regular heavy haulage contractor, Gareth Buscombe will again arrive at Midsomer Norton South with an STGO plate mounted on the front of his tractor unit. This time it will be delivering two “Dogfish” ballast wagons from the Isle of Wight Railway. These are now surplus to their needs but very much required by our Permanent Way team as they proceed with the installation of the new sidings on the Somervale land and other important track maintenance work.

In October, Gareth will be delivering a steam locomotive for our Autumn season and Christmas services. so his big Volvo which he so expertly handles will be almost a regular sight at Midsomer Norton South Station

Roy Kethro

Anna Sabine MP’s “Race Across the Constituency”

Showcasing Local Transport and Supporting Community Initiatives

On a recent and lovely day in Frome & East Somerset, Anna Sabine MP and her Parliamentary Advisory Team undertook the “Race Across the Constituency” challenge. Their aim was to highlight the importance and accessibility of local bus services while actively engaging with the community. The event was designed not only as a test of the public transport network but also as a chance to enjoy some light-hearted fun and support local initiatives.

The Challenge: Racing by Bus

Anna and her dedicated team set themselves the task of traversing the constituency using only local bus services. This challenge served to demonstrate both the strengths and potential areas for improvement in the region’s public transportation system. By relying exclusively on buses, the team experienced first-hand what many residents encounter in their daily travels, offering valuable insights into how services can be further enhanced.



Alison, Anna & Olivia enjoying a Cream Team (Roger Burfitt)

A Fun Event: Wickham Trolley Ride and Cream Tea

To add an element of enjoyment to the challenge, the team included a “fun event” as part of their itinerary. They chose to board the much-loved Wickham Trolley, a cherished local attraction, followed by a delightful cream tea on the patio. This segment provided a wonderful opportunity for relaxation, camaraderie, and informal discussion with community members, all while celebrating local heritage and hospitality.



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Anna & Team with the Wickham Crew - Matt Cornborough & Kevin Drake (Roger Burfitt)

Support for the Railway and Community Developments

Anna Sabine MP and her advisory team have shown consistent and enthusiastic support for the local railway, recognising its crucial role in connecting communities and fostering economic growth. Their involvement extends beyond words; they have offered practical assistance, particularly during the pre-planning stages of the proposed Tunnel Lane Workshop development. This hands-on approach underscores their commitment to sustainable transport solutions and the future prosperity of the region.

Conclusion

The “Race Across the Constituency” challenge was a resounding success, combining practical engagement with public transport, community interaction, and support for local initiatives. Anna Sabine MP and her team’s participation serves as a strong example of effective, community-focused leadership, reinforcing the value of integrated transport and ongoing collaboration for regional development.

Roger Burfitt

A Midsomer Day

Back in the depths of winter, at one of the Events Committee meetings, the idea of a family fun day was suggested, and Midsomer Summer was born. From this came the idea of a day at the “seaside”, alongside our usual offering of train rides. The day developed into a Day Excursion to Bournemouth, with a beach and funfair.

Sunday 17th August was a gorgeous sunny day, ideal for a trip to the seaside! As a nod to the Day Excursions in the railway’s heyday, the trains departed from the Down Platform, returning to a re-named Up Platform – Bournemouth West.

Once back at the station, there was plenty to keep everyone entertained. Dave Hickory was an instant hit with his magic shows on the patio, entralling both children and adults. In between shows Dave was modelling balloons – he could model almost anything to the delight of the children.



Dave Hickory creating balloon magic!



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Up by the museum, you could find the beach and funfair. The beach – paddling pool and sandpit – proved popular with the youngsters, some of whom really didn't want to leave! The funfair atmosphere was provided by several games stalls where you could try your skill at things such as Hook-a-Duck, or Splat the Rat. To keep the railway theme going there was also a Thomas the Tank Engine game.



Sandcastles on the "beach" (K Turk)

You can't have a day at the seaside without an ice cream so there was a Marshfield ice cream van, and the afternoon was completed the Mendip Brass Band playing on the patio.

Whilst all this was going on, the RMB Buffet was busy providing refreshments. Cream Teas proved popular, and the patio was constantly busy with happy customers. We mustn't forget the museum, shop and Emporium who made the day complete showing what the railway has to offer.

The day was a success, with plenty of young families coming along, many of which hadn't visited us before. Feedback was positive all round, and hopefully we generated more interest in our railway.

A big Thank You to everyone involved in organising the event, and to everyone who came along and made it the success that it was. We look forward to next year!

Keith Turk

Volunteering

There can be no doubt that our most valuable asset at the Trust is our team of willing, able and hard working volunteers. As I approach the end of my first year as New Volunteer Coordinator I can look back and say that it has been a great success. Of those who have approached us looking for volunteering opportunities, a significant majority have gone on to join our various teams including with the track gang, the carriage and wagon restorers, gardening team, buffet crew, museum and retail outlets. Some are getting stuck in while they wait for opportunities to arise to train for our safety critical roles with footplate duties or as guards and signallers.

I do emphasise to newcomers during their induction that rather than sticking to one activity, multi-tasking is very important in giving us more flexibility in what we are able to do, particularly when special events are being run that require extra hands on deck. It also allows newcomers to get to know more of their colleagues, understand how we work together and engage with the various projects we are progressing to enhance our visitor and volunteer experience.

A potential issue we have is one of demographics across our work force. There are those of us, me included, who have reached the point where heavy physical work crawling under railway vehicles, wielding big spanners, digging and general manual handling are becoming more of a challenge. But regardless of this, we all still have a part to



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play with less physically demanding roles. No volunteer must ever think that they are no longer welcome regardless of their ongoing ability. I am frequently reminded that we do need more people if we are to achieve our goals, not just to increase our numbers but to replace those who need to stand aside for whatever reason.

So how do we future proof our volunteer workforce? Currently we operate a passive recruitment system waiting for newcomers to approach us either by visiting and talking to us or through our website by submitting a volunteer application form. When I receive an enquiry, I aim to strike while the iron is hot by making contact within 48 hours. We are now actively reviewing how to promote the railway to a wider audience so any ideas will be welcomed.

That brings me on to the subject of young volunteers. The issue of whether young persons under the age of 16 can volunteer on heritage railways and tramways has been a thorn in the side of heritage rail for some years.

In the House of Lords, Lord Parkinson successfully moved an amendment to the Employment Rights Bill, which is currently going through the parliamentary process, to clarify that the restrictions on the use of young volunteers covered by the *Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, 1920* do not apply to heritage railways. In this, he was ably supported by the Heritage Railway Association President Lord Faulkner and many other peers who are members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Heritage Rail.

Lord Faulkner has been seeking to remove this unintended restriction since legal advice ten years ago revealed the use of young people as volunteers in a railway undertaking was unlawful.

If it passes into law, the bill will remove the restriction on young people, particularly those between 14 and 16, participating in voluntary work on heritage railways. Naturally, their ability to volunteer will require careful management and need to be covered our safety management system, but it will no longer be unlawful.

We have written to our MP in support of this legislation amendment because we are keen to encourage young people to volunteer at the railway – after all they are the future to build on the foundations the current generation of volunteers are doing so much to create.

Initial Planning Progress for the Railway Workshop at Tunnel Lane

**Support from Anna Sabine, MP and
Collaboration with Leading Bath
Planning Consultants**

Under the leadership of Vice Chair of Trustees, Keith Bottomley the initial planning phase for the proposed Railway Workshop at our Tunnel Lane site is now underway. This marks a significant milestone in our efforts to revitalise the area and provide a state-of-the-art facility for railway operations and community engagement.



Tunnel Lane site cleared of vegetation



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Practical Support from Anna Sabine, MP

We are pleased to acknowledge the practical support received from Anna Sabine, MP for Frome & East Somerset. Drawing on her wealth of experience with the planning system, Anna has been instrumental in connecting us with expert guidance to navigate the early stages of this complex project.

Site Preparation and Next Steps

Significant progress has also been made on the ground. The Tunnel Lane site has now been cleared of vegetation, paving the way for the initial survey work to commence. This preparatory work is essential for the forthcoming feasibility study and will influence the subsequent stages of planning and design.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, the collaboration between our team, Anna Sabine, and our planning consultants will remain central to the success of the project. We look forward to providing further updates as the project advances.

We thank everyone involved thus far for their dedication, expertise, and support in bringing the Railway Workshop vision closer to reality.



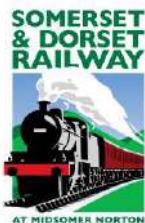
Trustee & Tunnel Lane Project Leader Keith Bottomley & Glynn Stevens from Perrys Group

Expert Planning Consultancy Involvement

Thanks to Anna's introduction, we are now working with a leading Bath-based independent planning consultancy renowned for their expertise in managing complex planning applications. Their involvement is already proving to be invaluable, particularly as we embark on the critical feasibility study required for the project. Their insight and professional approach are providing the clarity and direction needed to ensure a robust and well-prepared planning submission.



Current End of the Line



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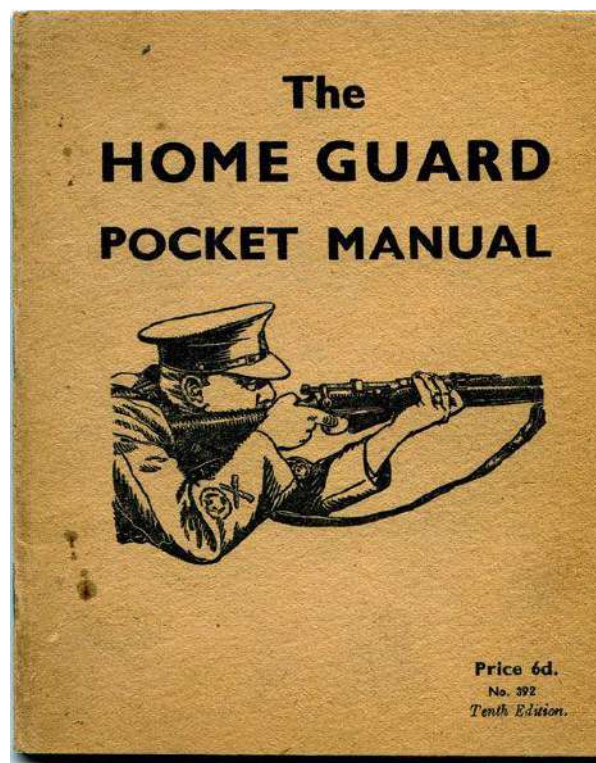
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The Home Guard at Midsomer Norton

In 2016, the Trust hosted an event where the last remaining member of the Midsomer Home Guard, Charlie Britten, revealed the 50 odd names known at that time of the local members of the Company. This was after some painstaking research carried out by Alan Redhead who discovered that his father, Bill, a teacher at the nearby Norton Hill Secondary School had been a member and indeed was a Lieutenant.

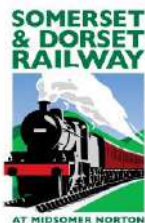
There had been a book published some years ago about the Somerset Home Guard which for practically every Company listed the names of those who served their country locally. However, for Midsomer Norton, it only listed Major Gordon Thatcher and Captain Gordon Hillier. Gordon was Headteacher at Norton Hill where Bill worked but neither he nor any others in the Company were listed. It then transpired that the school had been used for training purposes and the station buildings were used in the evenings when the men were out on patrol of railway locations such as Chilcompton Tunnel. Alan set about to try and fill this missing gap and, since that event in 2016, has managed to find almost 90 members which is an amazing achievement.

He has now published, personally, in a tribute to his father, a booklet that lists all the individuals he has found, helped by local people who remembered their fathers being participants, local paper articles and from



paperwork discovered in the course of the research. We now have a dozen copies of this 172 page book for sale at the station (we can order more if demand is heavy) for £12. The book is called *Home Guard SOM 4 – The Midsomer Norton Company of the 4th Somerset (Frome) Battalion of the Home Guard in WW2*. Alan admits it may still not be complete for although he lists 88 men there could still be some out there who were in the Company but who are still unknown. This is a fitting tribute to local men who served their time 80 years after the Home Guard, known affectionately as Dad's Army were formally disbanded.

At that 2016 get together, the Trust promised that we would update the paper listing we have in our pillbox to a brass plaque but we will leave space just in case more members come to light.



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Steaming into the Autumn

The Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust is thrilled to announce the triumphant return of a local legend: the beautifully restored locomotive 'Kilmersdon' will be steaming back onto home rails this autumn, delighting visitors throughout the season.



Kilmersdon at Midsomer Norton (K Turk)

Built in 1929 for the Somerset coalfields, 'Kilmersdon' is more than just a locomotive — she's a living link to our industrial past. After a period away, she's coming home to the line where she belongs, ready to charm a new generation of passengers by kind permission of her owners the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust and Mid Hants Railway where she is based.

From crisp October weekends to the golden glow of Christmas, 'Kilmersdon' will be at the heart of our Autumn Steam Season, offering evocative journeys through the Mendip countryside. Her whistle will echo once more through the valleys, rekindling memories and making new ones.

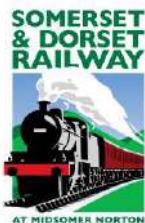
The first public steaming of Kilmersdon' will be at our Halloween event, alongside the Haunted DMU. If you are looking for a spooky experience chose the DMU, but if you want a more relaxed ride through the steam filled countryside then jump aboard the steam train. Don't worry if you can't decide, then you can ride both!

If you miss this event, you can see "Kilmersdon" in action during the following week with the Pumpkin and Teddy Bear Day on Wednesday 29th October. Autumn fun for half term, with a fancy dress competition for the best dressed teddy. Then on Sunday 2nd November to finish the summer season, there will be a standard steam running day.

In December, 'Kilmersdon' will take centre stage in our Santa Express services. With carriages decked in festive finery and the scent of mince pies in the air, she'll bring yuletide joy to families from near and far. Santa himself will be in his grotto with gifts for the little ones — and a few surprises for grown-ups too!

If a visit to see Santa isn't for you, don't worry as "Kilmersdon" will be featuring in our post-Christmas events. She will be providing Brake Van rides on the Queen Mary Brake Van on 31st December, and then to round out the season, she will be running for the Mince Pie Specials on New Years Day. Unfortunately, after that we will have to wish her a fond farewell.....until the next time!

Keith Turk



Between The Lines

Autumn 2025

92207 Project Update Summary

Recent Progress Highlights

The latest update from Keith Bottomley and Barrie Papworth details significant advancements in the restoration of locomotive 92207. Whilst technical in nature this update demonstrates that constant progress is being made on this major engineering project:

Craig Fowler has made substantial progress machining the new valve spindles. Both Valve Cross Heads have also been handed over to him for precise fitting with the spindles.



*Craig Fowler with Valve Cross Heads
(Steve Jefferey)*

At Midsomer Norton's Machine Shop, Dave Beard continues the machining of the Axle Box Underkeeps.

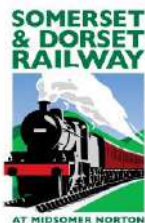
Steve Jefferey and Kevin Drake have advanced work on the lubrication system, notably installing the oil feeds between the Axle Boxes and the 16 Feed Silvertown Lubricator.

Kevin Drake has also refurbished a Steam Heat Valve Cock by stripping, cleaning, and resealing it. As Class 9Fs were not originally fitted with Steam Heat Equipment, the Trust sourced these components specially.

Allan Schoffield visited in August to repair cavities found around the stud holes of the driver's side cylinder—defects originating from the casting at Swindon Works. Using a template to ensure correct centring, Allan ground back the area, machined inserts for the stud holes, and prepared a method statement for rebuilding with weld. The cylinder face will be finished to ensure a secure fit for the cover.



*Rebuilt area on front of cylinder
(Allan Schoffield)*



Between The Lines

Autumn 2025

A recent order was placed with J & T Tubes Ltd (Poole) for new cab handrails. Work on the support trolley for cab erection continues at Midsomer Norton.

Premier Castings produced two Silvertown Lubricator bodies and a lid (with one existing lid already in stock). One lubricator body is intended for another group. Four out of all the pumps required for both lubricators are still being machined by Richard Kellaway in Cornwall.

The rear brake shaft—previously damaged during its time in Barry Scrapyard—has been sent to Allan Schoffield, along with a newly forged and machined replacement section by Pete Holloway. Allan will prepare the brake shaft for welding. Once



Loading the Rear Brake Shaft

(Barrie Papworth)

Overall, the update highlights steady technical progress across multiple areas, reflecting collaborative effort and specialist expertise as the restoration project continues.

Membership Fees and Email Addresses

Our thanks to all those who updated their standing orders to reflect the increase in membership fees last November. There were a few who slipped through the net for various reasons (email addresses having been changed for example) but hopefully all those who are on standing orders have changed them by now.

Every time we send out a notification via email we find between 5 and 10 emails bounce back and this is usually because members have forgotten to let us know. If you have recently changed your email address or are about to please would you email Vivienne Taylor, our Membership Secretary and let her know. viviennetaylor15870@gmail.com. Many thanks. This also applies to any change of home address of course, otherwise you may end up not getting the next Telegraph!

Compiled by Roger Burfitt & Keith Turk

Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust

Autumn 2025