



THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY

EXPRESS POINTS

WORKING MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

November 2016



Express Points
The Working Members Newsletter

- Contact -

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- About -

Express Points is distributed on the first Sunday of each month by sending a reminder link to more than 500 email subscribers.

This newsletter is intended for the information of Working Members & Staff of the Severn Valley Railway only.

- Deadline -

Articles and photographs should be submitted before the last Sunday in the month.

-Cover photo –

14XX 1450 with BR (W) & GWR AutoCoaches crosses Victoria Bridge, during the Season Finale Gala
By Jon Williams.

Welcome to the November edition of Express Points

This month's big news on the Railway is the launch of the 2016 Share Offer to support the Bridgnorth Development Project. Project Chairman Dave Postle shares the plans with Express Points on page 4, as work begins in earnest on what General Manager Nick Ralls has called the "most significant development in the Railway's history." As we go to press, the Season Finale Gala is in full swing; on page 5 there's news of how quick work by the signalling maintenance team got this prestigious event back on track after a last-minute problem. Plus there are reports on the Halloween event, the Toad van restoration project and lots more.

Other Working Members want to hear from YOU!

Please get in touch and tell us what's happening in your department so we can spread the word. Express Points is all about keeping Working Members in the picture about what's going on right across the Railway. Don't worry about the need to produce a carefully crafted article – we are more than willing to assist with producing final copy. If you can include a digital photograph to accompany your news – even better!

We'd also like to know what you'd like to see in future editions of Express Points. Is there something we could do more of? Anything you'd like less of? Perhaps you have a question you'd like to ask one of the Railway's senior managers or heads of department? Contact us on ExpressPoints@svrlive.com

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'Severn Valley Railway Official Site' & 'Express Points'

SVR contact email addresses

General feedback to the SVR on any topic should go to: feedback@svrlive.com

For staffing issues, please contact the Volunteer Liaison Office: vlo@svrlive.com

Membership enquiries: membership@svrlive.com

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2016 SHARE OFFER IS LAUNCHED



The Railway launched its 2016 Share Offer scheme on 1st November as part of its ambitious scheme to take Bridgnorth Station into the 21st Century, whilst preserving the SVR's architectural integrity and unique character as a working steam railway of the past.

Two and a half million shares are available, at the price of £1 each, and the money raised will be used to fund the first two stages of transformative works at Bridgnorth. These improvements will dramatically improve the visitor experience, and by attracting more passengers, will help secure the long-term future of the Railway.

Planned works include a new refreshment room in the style of a typical GWR building c1900 (see architect's impression in the image above), the reinstatement of the original booking hall and waiting room, as well as the installation of a turntable. There'll also be significant improvements to retail, parking and other visitor facilities, with new road access and an intensive tree-planting scheme.

To find out more please go to: svr.co.uk/share-offer or call 01562 757900.

If you don't wish to make the minimum purchase of 100 shares, or do not want to buy shares for any other reason, you can still donate to the Bridgnorth Project through the Charitable Trust, who may also be able to claim a further 25% on top of your donation at no extra cost to you. Please visit <http://svrtrust.org.uk/our-projects/bridgnorth-development-project.html>

BRIDGNORTH STATION: THE NEXT STEPS

Chairman of the Bridgnorth Project Team David Postle gives an overview to Express Points readers:

The SVR Holdings Board convened a special meeting on the evening of 31st October to discuss the awarding of a contract for starting the Bridgnorth Project. After due consideration of the figures and recommendations, the Holdings Board unanimously supported the proposal to award the first contract in the station project to Iris Construction, which will enable them to:

- Complete works already started on the supply of utilities to the site from Oldbury Road.
- Construct foundations, including piling and reinforced slab, for the proposed new building adjacent to Platform 1 in accordance with final plans.

You may already have noticed that work on the supply of utilities has started by the digging up of Oldbury Road. Work will continue to bring this supply of gas and electricity up the Donkey Gallop to serve both the new building and the refurbished existing building.

The ground on which the new building is to be erected is of very poor structural quality. We believe that spoil was deposited here by the railway contractors at the same time as the station was built in the late 1850s/early 1860s. What it might contain we do not know, but when core samples were extracted recently they comprised predominantly sand and earth, probably sourced from nearby cuttings.

In order to make the building secure on made-up land rather than watching it slide down the embankment towards Oldbury Road, a complicated system of piling and slab foundations has been designed. There is probably enough reinforcement in it to be able to support most of Bridgnorth town as well, so you will be able to rest easy when drinking your first cup of coffee/tea in the new refreshment rooms!

There will be a total of 60 piles, driven 12 metres down, on top of which will be a number of ground beams and floor slabs, and through which there will be channels for the services. As a result of the Board decision, the contractor will start moving his equipment on site after the Season Finale Gala with a view to commencing clearance and piling on 11th November. Much of the clearance work has already been done by the Bridgnorth staff, and it seems odd to think that the site has never been this empty since the old bus garage was built over 100 years ago. It is planned to have the foundation work completed by the end of January 2017. In the meantime, work continues to complete the detailed plans for costing the new building and the refurbishment of the existing station. It is planned to present these costs to the Holdings Board at their January meeting so that if everything is acceptable and the finance is available, then the contract for the remaining works of the first phase can be signed, thus ensuring that bricks can be laid as soon as the foundation is completed. It is at this stage that we are proposing to have a ceremonial occasion with a celebrity who is not necessarily known for his brick-laying skills, and of course we will have the contractor on hand to help!

On launch day, 1st November, we enjoyed coverage on Radios Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester, and there was a very generous slot on BBC Midlands Today, which has given the railway a huge amount of publicity. Before their evening programme there had been well over 1,000 expressions of interest in buying shares, and we hope this enthusiasm will continue over the next 12 months so that we reach our target of £2.5million, enabling us to complete Phases 1 and 2 of the overall master plan.

As an unashamed plug to Express Points readers, remember that the plans have all been designed by a group of volunteers giving their time freely to make a huge improvement on what Bridgnorth station has to offer for generations to come. The delivery of this project will necessarily involve the use of contractors as we all want to live long enough to see its completion! It is for this that we are asking for financial contributions, and there is a guarantee that all the funds which are raised by this share offer after costs will be ring-fenced for the project. The minimum share purchase is 100 shares at £1 each, but if you do not feel able to afford this amount, then there is also the option of donating a smaller sum to the SVR Charitable Trust, again ring-fenced for the Bridgnorth project. Such a donation by tax payers may also attract Gift Aid.

There will be regular updates of progress on SVR Live by Infrastructure Manager Chris Bond, with photographs for those who are not able to come to Bridgnorth to have a look for themselves. I have no doubt there will be much visual material on other social media outlets too. If anyone needs any further information, then they are welcome to contact me and I will try and provide and/or discuss it. The Holdings Board's decision to proceed with the project is a major milestone in the history of the SVR, and I congratulate all those who have contributed in getting us this far – the point at which, after so much talking and planning, we can truly say we have started in earnest.

IMPORTANT : SITE ACCESS AT BRIDGNORTH

Now that work on the Bridgnorth site is beginning, I just want to remind everybody who visits the station that there are very strict controls over public access.

The development site will be fenced off and will be subject to the Construction, Design and Management Regulations. There will be NO ACCESS TO THE SITE UNLESS YOU ARE AN AUTHORISED PERSON. In order to be an authorised person, you will have had to convince the SVR Infrastructure Manager and the contractor's Site Manager that you have good reason to be one. Furthermore you must:

- Have an induction briefing
- Wear personal protective equipment at all times
- Sign in with the site manager

The contractor is under strict instructions to deny access to the site to any unauthorised visitor.

The contractor is also under strict instructions that he is to build to the approved plans, and any requests for variations or any requests to undertake works of a personal nature will not be accepted. Any such requests must be made to Chris Bond, the SVR Infrastructure Manager. The budget for the works is now set and any changes to the work to be undertaken will undoubtedly involve an increase in the cost to the Company. Please respect the need to keep the development site safe and efficient, and I am sure it will result in something we can all be proud of. **David Postle**

WARLEY NATIONAL MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Without doubt one of the premier model railway exhibitions of the year, the 'Warley National' at the NEC is an event not to be missed. As usual the SVR will be present (Stand B29), so why not call by for a chat and pick up your copy of our preview Calendar & Timetable brochure for 2017.

HIGHLIGHTS for this year include:

90 working, inspirational, model railway layouts with demonstrations of techniques used in the hobby by experts in their field. 130 trade and society stands supplying all the needs of the railway modeller and enthusiast.

Special feature celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Scalefour Society. Prototype Inspiration exhibits will celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the birth of Swindon works.

50 years of Warley MRC will be celebrated on the Club stand.

Celebration of 100 years of the death of Sir Arthur Heywood, featuring layouts and a locomotive.

November 26th - 9.45am to 6.00pm

November 27th - 9.45am to 5.00pm

BAND VACANCY 4TH DECEMBER AT ARLEY

During the Santa event at Arley, we have live music playing in the tent to entertain the passengers while they queue to see Santa. There are a number of bands and choirs who have, over time, raised a lot of money in their collection boxes to give to the charities supported by their bands.

We had all the bands in place for Christmas 2016 until a couple of weeks ago when we heard that Newport Town Band have disbanded and are now unable to fill their slot in the afternoon on Sunday December 4th.

**Does anyone either play for a band or know of a band who might be interested in coming to play for the afternoon of 4th December at Arley – preferably a Christmas themed set?
Or maybe interested in joining in for Christmas 2017?**

We cannot accommodate too many instruments requiring electricity as the supply and available sockets tend to be maxed out. The afternoon slot runs from approximately 1.30p.m. to when the last of the queue goes into the grotto at around 5 – 5.30 p.m.

Bands who are already playing for us are – Pershore Brass Band, West Mercia Police Band, Malvern Hills and District Band, Bewdley Concert Band, Stourport Band, Cleobury Mortimer Concert Band, Blackwell Concert Band, City of Birmingham Brass Band.

Kidderminster Male Voice Choir are unable to make our dates this year and the New Dimensional Choir are singing for the Carol Trains. If you can help, please contact diane.malyon@svrlive.com 01746 766130/07807 424921

Diane Malyon, Santa Event Co ordinator

MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITS NEEDED!

We're looking for model railway layouts to be displayed at our Open House Weekend in April 2017!

April 8th & 9th will see the Railway host a number of model railway layouts at The Engine House, Highley, and we need your help...

Have you got an exhibition standard model railway you'd like to display?

If so, please speak to Lewis Maddox or email footplate@svrlive.com to be considered for the event.

** STOP PRESS **

STEAM GALA BACK ON TRACK AFTER FAST REPAIRS TO SIGNAL CABLE DAMAGE

Quick work by the signalling team to fix cable damage between Bridgnorth and Hampton Loade meant disruption to the Season Finale Gala was kept to a minimum.

The cable problem meant that organisers were forced to put in place an amended timetable for Friday 4th November, the first day of the Gala. However, with the rapid response of the maintenance team, the issue was resolved by late Friday morning, allowing a full service to go ahead for the Saturday and Sunday.

We'll have a full report on the Gala in December's Express Points.

EVENT TO BOOST TAKE-UP OF SHARE OFFER

As part of the new Share Offer launch in support of the Bridgnorth project, the Railway wants to fully engage with its existing major shareholders and potential new recruits.

It's planned that the Chairman will host an event to travel by train to Bridgnorth to view the current station, the works and Pan Pudding Hill, with a return to Kidderminster for dinner and a presentation about the Bridgnorth project and the funding requirement.

Around 30 guests will be invited once a date for the event has been arranged.

NEW FACES JOIN US

Jane Preece joined the SVR as the HR and Heritage Skills Training Academy Officer and is already supporting managers on a number of personnel matters, meanwhile **Richard Thurlow** is handing over to Jane, prior to his retirement from the Company after the next HSTA Board meeting.

Neil Taylor has begun in post as Works Manager for the Engineering Services Motive Power Department. He is a Chartered Engineer and a Fellow of the Institution of Engineering and Technology, and has more than 30 years' experience in the aerospace and defence sectors.

Donna Sheridan has moved from the Accounts Department at Kidderminster to the Engine House, Highley to take up a post as Education Co-ordinator, working with Amanda Peplow.

Coralie Hudson joined the SVR Charitable Trust team on 31st October as the Fundraising Officer. She will focus on securing financial support from trusts and companies.

Recruitment at Bridgnorth Works continues, with all Mechanical Team Leader roles now filled, and the recruitment of one boilermith. Appointments are still to be made for two fitter machinists, one Team Leader boilermith, and two boilermiths.

LANDSLIP AT COUNTY BOUNDARY



Investigations are ongoing into the multiple embankment slip at County Boundary, just north of Bridge 19.

A preliminary visit by the structural engineers David Symonds Associates led to the immediate imposition of a 10mph speed restriction, along with a first movement of the day 'stop and proceed' edict.

The accompanying photo shows material being pushed into the adjacent field by the movement. As Infrastructure Manager Chris Bond explains, the solution will take some time:

"Volunteers have been removing vegetation to allow further investigation, and this has already revealed several deep cracks. Subject to the agreement of the landowner, the next thing to do is dig some test trenches so that a comprehensive topographical survey can be carried out. Once we have a full geotechnical picture, a suitable solution can be engineered, to include stabilisation and potential improvement to drainage in the area."

Initial cost estimates of £150,000 mean this is likely to trigger a claim on the Railway's insurance.

NOTES FROM C&W

Paintshop Supervisor Hugh McQuade writes:

GWR Toplight 9369 saloon came in for its 'due by date' mechanical and brake exam. New stainless steel outlet pipes for one of the lavatories were fitted, but other issues have sadly meant the withdrawal from traffic of this venerable coach until further notice.

These issues included the deteriorated condition of one lavatory floor, plumbing leaks in the other and concerns over the state of a guard's door.

The coach will be sent to Bewdley workshop for repairs as soon as they have completed 6562, which is awaiting its re-upholstered third class seats.

BR Open 4550 is in Kidderminster Paint Shop as we take a break from the overhaul of the Gresley coaches (three of these remain to be dealt with in 2017-18.) Supposedly a 'short' job, 4550 has already pulled a flanker on us when a cleaner's broom went through a toilet wall!

Further investigation with sharper tools only stopped once the lavatory wall, floor, ceiling and neighbouring vestibule floor had all been removed. Because we're unlikely to get 4550 finished in time for Santa duties, we've already got a replacement coach lined up as our 'Plan B'.

LMS Open Third 27220 came back from Bewdley with a replacement gangway following an earlier shunting incident.

Additionally a steel lining has been welded into both gutters to cure long-standing leaks. 27220 had further attention in the carriage shed, where two of the Bewdley staff came to finish it off with fresh varnish and Crimson Lake paint to touch up the window frames.

VOLUNTEER MONTHLY VOUCHER DRAW

Congratulations to **Brian Spaul**, one of the Kidderminster TTIs and November's winner of the SVR £20 gift voucher, drawn at random each month by the Volunteer Liaison Officer.

UPDATE ON SVR RETAIL



The decision to trial on-train retailing during the Pacific Power (PP) event has revealed a previously untapped market. During the six days of the event in September, a single trolley working on each of the PP trains took more than £9,500. Heritage Support Manager Andrew Burton says:

"This is a fantastic result, and shows that in the future there may be benefit to including on-train sales at other events, subject to the agreement of the event organisers. We ordered in a substantial amount of Flying Scotsman-related products and this proved extremely popular. Clearly, getting specific product for the right audience is key and we're going to work on developing this for future events."

PA TESTING

Please note that the role of SVR PAT tester has now passed from Melvin Spilsbury to Tim Smith a newly recruited volunteer.

All requirements for PAT testing must now be directed to Tim who will be happy to carry out the necessary inspections and labelling.

Tim can be contacted via email:
Email timbosssmith@gmail.com

Please remember to keep an eye on you label expiry dates and arrange for recertification.

Chris Bond, Infrastructure Manager

LNER 'TURNS' TO GWR: RESTORATION PROJECT ON THE TOAD VAN



These 'before' and 'after' photos clearly show the impressive progress that's being made on the Toad van by the hard working LNER volunteers



As work completed on LNER Brake Third 24506, also known as the 'Pigeon Van', the volunteers of the LNER Carriage Group soon found themselves a new project, although it did mean turning to a GWR vehicle! The Toad brake van 17410 is now owned by the SVR Charitable Trust, which has commissioned the LNER volunteers to carry out the van's restoration. Carriage Group volunteer and fundraiser Richard Hill explains the progress that's been made so far:

"There are many issues to resolve, the main ones being rust and general decay. One of our newest volunteers, Jim Davies, has done a sterling job of emptying, cleaning, rust-proofing, painting and reloading the Toad's eight steel ballast bins. These will give the van its 20 tons' braking capacity. In the process, Jim uncovered a squirrel's nut hoard, evidence of a rat's nest and a wheelie bin load of rust dust!

"We found that the van's wooden veranda doors and the cabin window frames were beyond redemption, and work to make replacements is underway. In fact, we'll need to replace most of the wooden areas, including the floor, cabin walls and roof, and a new roof canvas will be essential."

Project manager, Richard Gunning, adds:

"The new veranda steel corner posts, kerb rails, side plates, end plate and underfloor plates have now been skillfully welded into place by a professional coded welder. This replaces the original steelwork that had seriously corroded, but thankfully many of the more complex original sections were repairable."

The Carriage Group is appealing for donations to fund the ongoing work, and has drawn up a list of items for sponsorship. The plan is to get the Toad back into service as soon as possible, with the hope that the restored van will earn revenue for the Railway, providing 'experience' days and brake van rides, and will allow training opportunities for freight train guards.

You can download a donation form at http://www.lnersvrcoachfund.org.uk/Donations_and_Gift_aid_TOAD_17410_form.pdf or email richardhill@lnersvrcoachfund.org.uk for a standing order form.

Read the latest on the Toad project at: <http://svrlive.wixsite.com/svrlive/news-130916-1>

The LNER Carriage Group is actively seeking working volunteers. Please contact them via the Volunteer Liaison Office at Bewdley Station on 01299 401776 or email vlo@svr.live.com

IMPORTANT: PLEASE TELL US IF DIGITAL EXPRESS POINTS WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU!

We've been reminding Express Points readers for many months that we will be converting to a fully digital format early in 2017.

This makes sense from both cost and efficiency angles. However, we don't want people to miss out.

So if you won't be able to receive an online copy, you must let us know.

We will produce a printed copy for those who have specifically requested it. Please speak to Lesley Carr on 01562 757915 to register your request or write to Express Points, One Comberton Place, Kidderminster, DY10 1QR.

If you are online already and are not receiving email reminders please sign up to receive digital copies, by emailing ExpressPoints@svrlive.com.

RECIPROCAL TRAVEL ON OTHER RAILWAYS

Thinking of using your free travel? For a full list of participating Railways, click here: <http://www.svrlive.com/Pages/ReciprocalTravel.aspx>

On 'Normal' operating days' timetables all the railways signed up for the scheme should permit free 3rd class (2nd/standard class on some lines) on production of an SVR working member's staff pass.

For special events, some, though not all, allow a reduced fare rate. Best to check in advance!

SVR HALLOWEEN HORRORS

In the dying days of October, with a chill in the air, it could only mean one thing for Arley: the Railway's Halloween event was entering its fifth year and an army of scary spooks was about to descend on this remote and undefended station. Event organiser Paul Hingley paid tribute to the truly terrifying characters who haunted the platforms and spooked the passengers:

"It never fails to amaze me the lengths we'll go to in order to raise funds for the Railway! Every night around 25 witches, devils, zombies and demon barbers turned up to scare the living daylights out of people who'd apparently paid good money for the privilege. The screams from both children and adults told us we'd got it just right!"



The Halloween event, which took place over three evenings in late October has become a firm favourite with the Railway's customers, and this year more than 3,000 of them booked to travel on board the sell-out ghost trains to Arley. As well as the living dead, sorry volunteers, on the platforms, the station's technical staff had created a full range of eerie decorations and tableaux, using a state-of-the-art digital LED lighting system. The spooks and the station staff were grateful for the hot food that had been kindly provided by the Highley catering team.

Passengers were treated to further horrors as they commenced their haunted journey at Kidderminster, and as they passed through Bewdley station; at both locations, volunteers had pulled out all the stops to decorate the platforms and buildings, entering fully into the spirit (ouch!) of the occasion.



Autumn Views of the Valley, 7802 approaches the Blue Bridge on the 22nd October with the Kidderminster bound diner. By Ian Murray.

Our next edition will be available on Sunday 4th December 2016

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