



LYNTON & BARNSTAPLE RAILWAY. NEWSLETTER

L&BR Newsletter No. 86 June 2025

Extension Planning Application

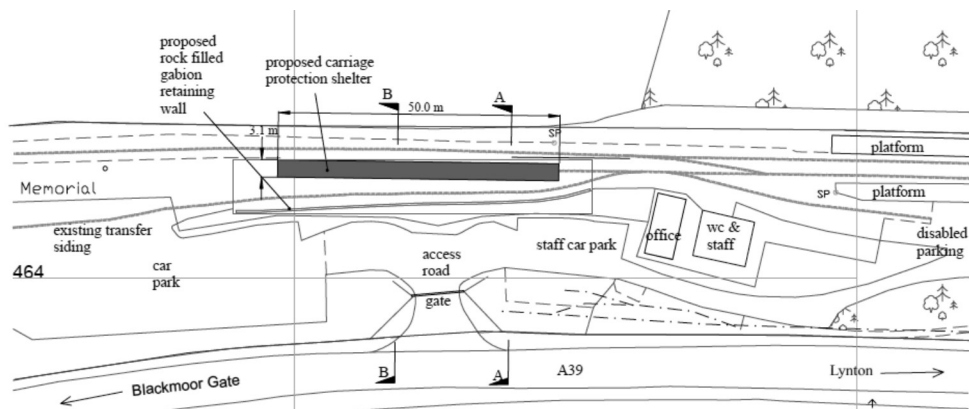
Our planning application to extend to Cricketfield Lane was eventually heard in May and as you have probably seen, was refused. This was as a result of the report from the Heritage Officer and Landscape Visual Architect who thought that the embankment – required to provide a level station trackbed – was potentially harmful to the scenic beauty and character of the Park considering the nearby Parracombe Conservation Area and a listed wall at Heddon Hall, also nearby in the environment (both 100 metres away). There seemed to be some room for debate in their view, but the planning officer recommended refusal and the ENPA planning committee went along with that advice.

At the AGM, Giles Perkins explained that this rejection was for two reasons and two reasons only, namely the scale and setting of the proposed halt at Cricket Field Lane on a level embankment branching off the original route as required for a terminus. He outlined various options on how to proceed from here which will be put to all the members to consider. Enclosed with this magazine and Newsletter you will find the options listed out and a form to return to express your preferences on the way forward.

Overall, a disappointment after the extensive work by those involved including regular and frequent meetings with the Planning Officer intended to avoid such problems and rejection.

On a more positive note, our planning application to North Devon Council to amend two restrictive planning conditions has been approved, enabling restatement of the railway between Blackmoor Gate and Wistlandpound without first having to build the A399 bridge over the proposed route of the railway into Exmoor National Park.

Woody Bay carriage shelter



Tenders were invited for the construction of the Carriage Shelter and a contract has been placed with A&B Contractors Ltd for the work. Their start date is 16th June with completion of most of the works by the end of July.

Trackwork in the area including the headshunt siding and the transhipment siding has been dealt with by our volunteers. The pointwork giving access to the loading dock has been realigned to improve its function. . Next will be the earthworks for the gabion wall as part of the contractor's work in the project.

Remember you can donate to this critical project here - <https://www.lynton-rail.co.uk/carriage-shelter-appeal> and all donations would be gratefully received.

Old Station Inn and Station House

The Old Station Inn is now well into its 3rd year of trading since acquisition by the railway in April 2023 and once again it is beating its targets. This is because we have such a great team of people working together with manager Mark Halliday, maintaining the Inn's reputation and position as a popular local hostelry.

The former owners have now vacated the adjacent 6-bedroom house and LBBC and the Trust are working on plans for its conversion and future use. It has been proposed the building will be known as "Station House".

Carriage Workshop report.

A temporary halt has been called on most of the work on Van 23 and the workshop cleared to allow track laying for the urgent repairs to carriage No 7. This was the first carriage that we rebuilt and the Exmoor weather has taken its toll meaning that it now needs part replacement of the Solebar, (that's the bottom bit on top of the steel underframe), on one side.

While we have No7 in Essex we hope to upgrade it to our current standards so that it will be returned to service in time for the Autumn Gala in a more authentic condition than it was previously!

When No7 is collected from Fridaywood Farm we are expecting the underframe of Van 23 to be delivered to us and we will then return to its reconstruction.

The underframe and bogies for Van 23 progresses well and the rolling chassis has been initially tested at Woody Bay. Next will be the final engineering details before the chassis goes for shot blasting and painting.

We'll be announcing further details on how you can get involved in supporting this historic project soon as the rolling chassis goes to Essex for body assembly. This is the only complete survivor of L&B goods stock and as such deserves support for its restoration and return to service. It is a versatile and useful vehicle that will fulfil many functions from display space, visitor reception, bulk transport and brake van for passenger train use.

Engineering update

As members will be aware Axe is now out of traffic following the expiration of its boiler ticket. We've been assessing the required work and costs and as soon as Van 23's chassis has left the workshop we'll also be announcing how you can donate to Axe's overhaul and future.

Other workshop efforts have focused on Van 23's underframe and bogies (as above) along with other routing maintenance. Lyn returned to service last month looking very tidy indeed after some refreshment to the effects of weather and being in service. A real credit to those involved.

Railway 200

As part of the national Railway 200 celebrations, we've had a new set of interpretation boards designed for the Woody Bay, Blackmoor (Old Station Inn) and Chelfham sites, these will be installed over the coming weeks. We've got a new 'Steaming Today' board at the entrance to Woody Bay, providing visitors with information on the engine in steam. Our locos this year are wearing a headboard for Railway 200.

We've also got a new rolling video in the tearoom which includes the history of the railway and its revival, details on our logos and rolling stock, the attractions on site and elsewhere as well as information on how to support and get involved. We are very grateful to SKF for their kind sponsorship of the interpretation boards.

As part of Railway 200, Chelfham viaduct was opened for public access by Historical Railways Estate over the weekend of 17th & 18th May. About 2,000 people took the opportunity to visit the viaduct and Chelfham station some were enthusiasts, but many were general public who were interested and keen to see this landmark which was open for only the second time since 1935. A very successful event – will it be repeated?

Fencing to Bridwick Farm

Many years ago, a section of trackbed was bought by Exmoor Associates running from Blackmoor Gate towards the Old Barnstaple Road near Whistlandpound. A few years back this was transferred to the Trust and work to Bridges 54 & 55 has been carried out. Now we are about to see the railway fenced off from the farmland. The setting out of the land we own and the area required for the trackbed, embankments etc will be done in the next few weeks with the erection of fencing following soon after. The fence posts and other materials have been ready in stock for some time and it will be good to see this all in place showing the railway striding across the countryside again.

Woody Bay Museum Cabinet

We have installed a new museum display cabinet in the tearoom at Woody Bay, with a selection of historic objects from the Trust's collection. Items on display include L&B single-line tablets, a wooden track gauge, original signs, a 1933 guard's journal, and a catalogue from the 1938 property auction.

As explained in recent newsletters, we aspire to create a proper museum, and this display is the first step towards that goal. We are working in parallel to formalise the cataloguing and documentation of the Trust's collection, with a view to making images and descriptions of objects available online in future. The Trust is always interested in expanding its collection of objects to allow us to better tell the story of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. The museum team can be contacted at museum@lynton-rail.co.uk

Peter Martin

A familiar face as a volunteer around the tearoom since 2015, and latterly in the shop, Peter died on 17th April following a short illness.

Previously a housing officer with Dorset County Council, Peter was ordained in 1985, and after his curacy served as Rector of Cannington, near Bridgwater for 27 years. For a while he was involved with some of his parishioners in running Crowcombe Heathfield Station on the West Somerset Railway, but later on, following retirement in Minehead, he came along and supported the L&B.

His smiling presence and good humour lent a good deal to our railway, but he also helped out as one of the little team of retired clergy, preparing Remembrance and Carol services, and offering friendly assistance to fellow volunteers and passengers. Peter leaves an elder brother, Geoff, and many good friends and neighbours. May he rest in peace.

Tim Woods

Barnstaple Town Signal Box

The restoration of the signal box continues at its private base. The standard of workmanship is very high and the end result will be lovely to see. Next task is replacement window frames as some had been 'modified' over the years or simply taken out and lost. The team would really appreciate some support for this as the cost is getting on for £ 3,800. Any contributions to Martin Swainson please marked 'Barnstaple Signal Box' will see your help going to the right place. Regular contributions would also be very welcome.

This is the only original signal box surviving from the Lynton & Barnstaple and it is in remarkably good and complete order, a real treasure.

And finally

Don't forget to watch the Steam on the Moor YouTube series for regular updates on your smart TV, on-line, tablet or mobile - just search 'Steam on the Moor' The series is up to Episode 18 to date and very well presented and filmed.