



LYNTON & BARNSTAPLE RAILWAY. NEWSLETTER

L&BR Newsletter No. 82 December 2023

After a successful year on the Railway it is now time for the last few days of the 2023 running season. After that it is time for maintenance of track and rolling stock to get ready for 2024. The new tamper will be much used and doubtless prove its worth. The recently acquired stock of new plastic sleepers will be laid along with all manner of other tasks.

And before long it will be time to start all over again!

Winter Prize Draw

It's that time of year again and the Winter Prize Draw tickets along with return form & envelope are enclosed. This is a popular and effective fund raiser – and you might even win a prize! All profits go to Trust projects. All contributions gratefully received.

Please note that if you have asked that you are not included in the Prize Draw circulation (yes, some people do) we have tried to omit your name from the distribution. Please accept our apologies in advance if you still receive the tickets!

As high-street banks are becoming a rare species it has been asked if payment could be made by internet banking. This was used by a number of members last time and worked well. Anything to reduce the number of trips to an open Lloyds Bank would be appreciated!

Payment details are:-

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust. Sort code 30-90-49. Account Number 00445050

Reference Membership number or your name. Please ensure that you return the counterfoils and return slip and state 'Paid by internet banking' Many thanks – and Good Luck!

A message from the Treasurer

Dear All,

Forgive this slightly impersonal, generic email but this is my attempt to convey the Railway's thanks for your contributions in 2023.

Each month, busiest being the 1st, I record all your contributions into the trust's accounts software. Then when the timing is right, I submit a Gift Aid claim to HM Charities on your behalf. The vast majority of you have sent me a valid gift aid declaration over the years, which allows me to claim 25% more to add to your chosen fund.

Without your contributions, there is no way that OUR railway will expand. These amount to £98,000 including £18,000 of gift aid in 2023. So, despite what inaccuracies you might or might not have seen on anti-social media, please continue to support YOUR railway.

Kind Regards, *Martin*

Woody Bay Telephones

An unwanted task was set before us this year by BT. Across the country, analogue phone lines are to be gradually replaced by voice over internet devices because the exchanges are too old and there are far fewer customers as we all move to mobile phones (well, the younger among us anyway). Our BT contract was up for renewal soon and they informed us that after it expired, our phones would no longer be guaranteed to be maintained but would be supported on a best-endeavours basis. That is high risk for a business like ours, and so we investigated our options.

Changing supplier would lead to the same problem and so we looked at the digital solution. So, after quotes from BT and Southern Communications, we did the deal with BT. The big disadvantage of changing to voice over internet is that we lose our phones if the power fails although we do have a generator back-up but there are some advantages to the change. The first upside of all the extra work for us is that, with BT so keen to move customers off the analogue wires, we were able to secure a monthly price that is a third less than we have been paying up to now. All our phones are now new and, given our charitable status, have been provided without an upfront charge.

The new phones do not need an exchange and the set-up can be changed by us on a web page. There is no longer a need to dial 9 for outside calls (but they still cost money!). The phones will have an extension list next to them and calls between the phones will be simple, eg to call the office from the mess room dial 01 and the reverse would be 03.

Operationally, the new system means we can take several calls at a time on our main number and outgoing calls do not block the line either. We have a mix of fixed and cordless phones and the cordless phones have a very much greater range. We have added a phone in the kitchen and both the shed and signal box are on the system but use analogue phones which are converted to digital. Calls to the main number 01598 763487 ring in the office and shop and can then be transferred to any of the other phones. There is a voicemail service for out of hours. Calls to the emergency number 01598 763682 ring in the signal box first and then divert to the shop. The third number 01598 763683 is now the General Manager's direct line and rings in Stuart's office.

Electrics

Every time we want to change something at Woody Bay, like the phones or the Wi-Fi for instance, there is always a need for power or light or a data cable or more. We are incredibly lucky to have two professional electricians among our volunteers in Dave Bloomfield and Dave Drayson who toil away (between the other jobs they do for us) maintaining our lighting, our power, our testing and keeping us legal. They have just finished adding some power to James's workbench in the shed and I noticed there are some energy-saving heaters in the mess room which will no doubt be installed by the Daves.

So, I just thought I would mention the work they do because, noticed or unnoticed, their work is important and greatly appreciated. Thanks very much, boys.

Malcolm Smith, Managing Director

Coins and Notes - Somerset & Bristol Area Support Group (SABA)

I would like to thank, once again, those members who have donated banknotes and coins to the Group. The proceeds are still providing a very useful income to the Group's funds which are being used for Van 23. However, as always, we still need more !

We still require: The old (large) 50p, 10p and 5p, together with ½ p

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

Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey coins and notes.

In fact, any coins and notes from around the world. Please contact me (details below)

L & B Magazine Back Issues

As members will know, the Support Group maintains a stock of back numbers of the award-winning L & B Magazine. Issues 15 to 21 plus 33 and 34 have now been re-printed and are available for £2 each + postage. An up to date list of the other issues is available - contact me (details below). We continue to receive donated items which are being added to our eBay account (LynBarn-SABA) – these donations are also greatly appreciated.

Finally, we are still looking for a local member who would be willing to take over as the Group's Sales Officer. The job is not too onerous but if you are interested please contact me.

Contact me at landb-bristol@hotmail.co.uk, or write to (NOTE NEW ADDRESS) 27 Clements Way, Tytherington, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8FT or contact on 07811 774469.

Mark Bladwell. Hon Chairman - SABA

TAGvideo Production latest production for 2023.

L&B Gala Days: Volume 17 DVD. Now available from Woody Bay Station priced £12.00 or online www.lynton-rail.co.uk priced £12.00 plus P&P. The DVD features the September Gala with all that was happening around Woody Bay and the marquee and Killington Lane, including drone footage. The May Non-gala features in the DVD as does award-winning Cheltenham Station with drone footage. There is a bonus video of TROJAN on the Valley Line at Fawley Museum. The DVD has a running time of 120 minutes approx.

Sir George Newnes on track

Sir George Newnes (formerly Charles Wytock) is in the final stages of its restoration. There is every chance that it will be able to share the duties of hauling trains with Lyn during the 2024 season. This will enable more time to be spent in maintaining the railway's 'flagship' engine.

To enable Sir George to become operational, more funds are needed. To date, the 38 shareholders in the Bagnall 2819 Co Ltd have raised £125,000 for the project. It is estimated that another £25,000 is needed, and so the share offer is being opened to the wider L&B membership.

In order to ensure that the engine remains on the L&B, for as long as the L&B needs it, shares are offered only to L&B members, volunteers and staff. Each share costs £1000. If you would like a share application form or more details about the Bagnall 2819 Co Ltd, please contact Anne Belsey on annebelsey34@gmail.com or phone 01271 883614.

New volunteer groups

As I have been appointed as the L&B's Volunteer Liaison, I am seeking to create two new groups of volunteers:

The Devon & Exmoor Publicity Team

Reaching out to the people of North Devon in particular and to the wider Devon and Exmoor population is important if the railway is to generate the sort of support that it needs for any extension plans. The purpose of the DEPT will not be to promote the L&B as a tourist attraction, but as a project in which local people might like to take an interest or even become involved with.

In recent years, we have represented the railway at the Exeter Garden Rail Show. We need to get to more events, particularly those that are not railway-focused (which seems too much like preaching to the choir!). So if anyone knows of any events in their locality across Devon and Exmoor where we might have a presence, I would be pleased to hear from them. Also we shall be seeking volunteers to help with the L&B Publicity Stand.

At this year's Exeter Show, we featured for the first time a 009 scale model based on Lancey Brook viaduct, so the Publicity Stand can be regarded as a genuine exhibit in its own right.

The Trailblazers

The recent project organised by Chris Duffell for coppicing, hedge-laying, tree-planting, etc., that was described in the last Newsletter (No.81), prompted a suggestion from the Trust Board for the creation of a group of volunteers to undertake work along sections of the L&B trackbed away from the current operating railway.

Besides the jobs just mentioned, other tasks might involve erecting fencing, restoring drainage, erecting signs, removing rubbish and generally clearing the trackbed to a point whereby it is ready for track to be laid. All these jobs are simple matters of land management and hence no planning permission is needed, but the more that L&B trackbed can be made 'track ready' and be seen to be so, the more credible will our plans to rebuild the L&B become. The name 'Trailblazers' has been suggested for this group. So if you would like to become a Trailblazer, please let me know and I will be able to inform you of any projects that will be organised in the future.

Anne Belsey. annebelsey34@gmail.com, 01271 883614

The Signal Box

Some months ago, a call was received informing the railway of a possibility of obtaining an original and genuine L&B signal box. The current owner wanted it removed to build a bigger shed but wanted to see it returned to the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and put into use. A visit was arranged and a deal agreed. The relocation was to happen later in the year when the weather should be better (!)

A team was organised by Stuart Nelhams which includes the current S&T gang. The initial idea was to move the box whole but size and condition plus its location made this very difficult. Therefore dismantling was the preferred method. This has been completed and the box is now in store ready for refurbishment and repair work. Considering the box was built and in position from 1898 it is in very good condition. At some point the cladding has been largely replaced and the slated roof has been re-covered. Some windows have been changed for 'modern' types but other originals are there and ideal for copying.

It was thought that this was the Barnstaple Town box and as the work progressed this was confirmed. The plans are for it to be placed at Blackmoor by the water tower and fitted out with signalling equipment for display to the public. When the line down to Wistlandpound is rebuilt this box would be ideal to use at the Blackmoor end. Eventually the trackwork and signalling at Blackmoor will require a larger box but at least we have a perfect example of how the originals were built and what they looked like.

This frankly amazing survivor from the very beginnings of the L&B will require some investment to restore. Any contributions can be passed to Martin Swainson marked as 'Barnstaple Signal Box'. Your help will be much appreciated.