

SPIRIT OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

Don Bishop

The West Somerset line runs for 23 miles through some of the finest scenery in South West England. It starts at Norton Fitzwarren near Taunton, where it meets the main line of Network Rail to Exeter, Plymouth & Penzance, and climbs through the very scenic Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty until it reaches the sea near Watchet and then heads back inland for a few miles before rejoining the coast at Blue Anchor and the final 3 miles into Minehead.

Don Bishop has captured the line working through all the seasons over some 18 years with a particular emphasis on "steam in the landscape" shots, particularly in the months between October and April when the light is at its best, the sun lower in the sky and crisper. A great variety of steam locomotives that have worked over the line in recent years is seen, ranging from single coach Auto trains to through excursions from the national network.

Through more than 60 photographs included in this new, ground-breaking pocket-format book, Don portrays vividly Britain's longest preserved steam line in all its glory.

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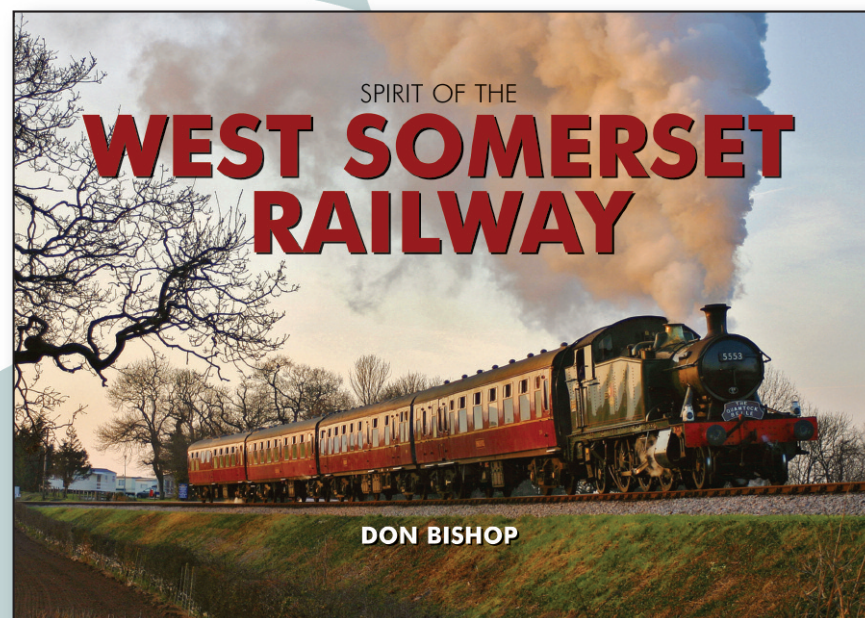
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Bishop has been involved with the West Somerset Railway for over 21 years and has been active in footplate work as a fireman for much of that time. Don also played a key role in arranging the special gala events on the WSR, as a member of the Special Events Planning Team, including the big 2006 S & D gala and subsequent "Holiday trains to the West" event plus several very popular diesel events. Don is also a member of the West Somerset Railway Association & Promotions boards.

Don has been a keen railway photo-grapher for many years and with regular coverage of the WSR has gained a reputation for the quality of his work and knowledge of the line. He is the author of the Halsgrove Railway Series volume *The West Somerset Railway*, published in 2005.

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A dramatic departure from Bishops Lydeard in wonderful low light conditions, only possible in December, as 7F No. 88 takes a train of children to see Santa on 17th December 2006.



On a photo charter No. 5199 is worked downhill at Sampford Brett with a goods train on 4th October 2004.

West Country No. 34046 Braunton is turned on Minehead's new turntable in the pouring rain on 5th October 2008.



Example of a double-page spread



A night scene at Minehead shed on 27th October 2007 sees No. 62 Marfella resting after its day's work on the line between Minehead, Dunster and Blue Anchor.

Opposite page: GWR 0-4-2T No. 1450 heads a two coach auto train past Narrvis Bridge near Crowcombe on 4th October 2007.



The Bristol Channel forms the backdrop to this shot of BR Standard tank No. 80136 rounding the curve on the cliff tops at Doniford on 1st May 2006.