

# THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY REVISITED

Don Bishop

The West Somerset Railway has become one of the leading heritage railways in the United Kingdom, beloved by the many thousands who visit it annually. The 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 and Penzance, and climbs through the very scenic Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty until it reaches the sea near Watchet and then climbs back inland for a few miles before rejoining the coast at Blue Anchor and the final 3 miles into Minehead.

Since the publication of Don Bishop's first book on the West Somerset Railway for Halsgrove in 2005, the railway has continued to grow and develop and passenger numbers have continued to rise. With at least two major special events each year attracting guest locomotives to the line, a good variety of motive power has appeared and is featured in this new book. They include the first visit of an LNER A4 Pacific, Royal Scot and of course the new build AI Tomado which spent three weeks on the line during 2009. More modern motive power is also featured with the Western Region's diesel hydraulic classes to the fore.

This new volume aims to show the West Somerset Railway at its best, running through the wonderful countryside and coast that surrounds it. All of the superb images were taken between 2004 and 2009 and so show the line in its most recent form and at its very best.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Bishop has continued to be closely involved with the WSR through his roles in special event planning up to 2008 and as Heritage Director of the West Somerset Railway Association, having now clocked up 22 years service to the railway.

He has been a keen railway photographer for many years and travels widely around the UK looking for that often seemingly elusive "master shot". Nowadays working professionally as a freelance photographer, concentrating on his steam and UK landscape images, Don has an extensive collection of images of the UK steam scene and regularly has work published in magazines including several special features on his work. He also runs workshop days for people to learn about his techniques in getting quality landscape and steam railway photographs. Through his Steam Recreations brand he has organised many private photographic charter events at steam railways around the UK, including the South Devon line, in an attempt to recreate scenes long past, with a particular emphasis on the 1950s/60s. He is the author of *The West Somerset Railway* and of *Spirit of the West Somerset Railway*, also for Halsgrove.

### HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

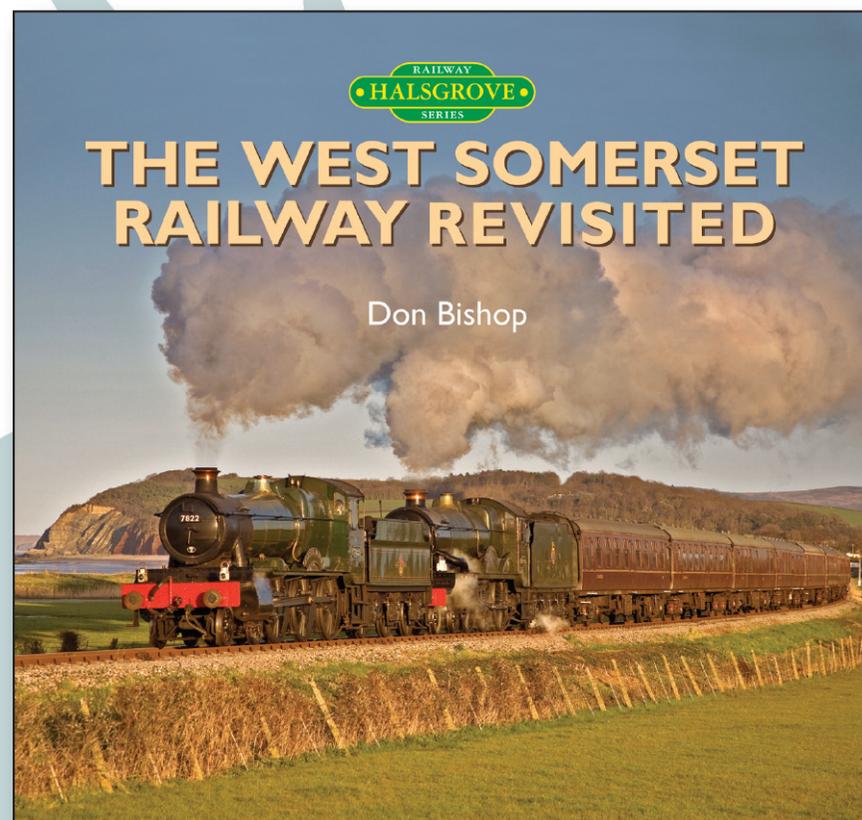
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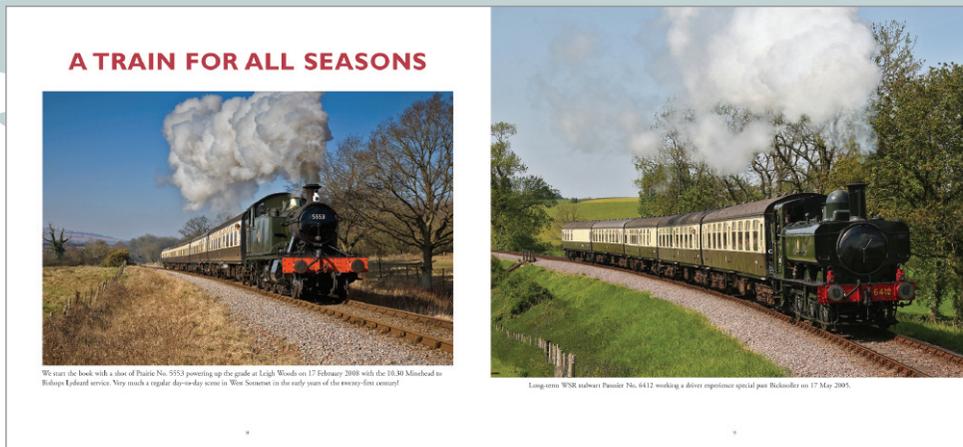
The spring flowers are blooming as BR Standard 4 tank No. 80136 passes Yarde Farm near Stogumber on a fine 29 April 2006.



No passengers waiting so No. 5542 propels auto coach No. 178 through Doniford Halt with a Minehead-bound service on 28 December 2003.



Large Prairie No. 4160 passing Nethercott on a clear and cold 21 March 2007 with the 10.25 Bishops Lydeard to Minehead service.



## A TRAIN FOR ALL SEASONS



We start the book with a shot of Prairie No. 5553 presenting up the grade at Leigh Woods on 17 February 2008 with the 10.30 Minehead to Bishops Lydeard service. Very much a regular day-to-day scene in West Somerset in the early years of the twenty-first century!



Langcote WSR subunit Prairie No. 6412 working a direct experience special past Rickardford on 17 May 2005.



38xx 2-8-0 No. 3850 works a Santa Special towards Crowcombe on 28 December 2006.

Example of a double-page spread.