

SPIRIT OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

Reprint

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 many 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, Don portrays vividly Britain's longest preserved steam line in all its glory.

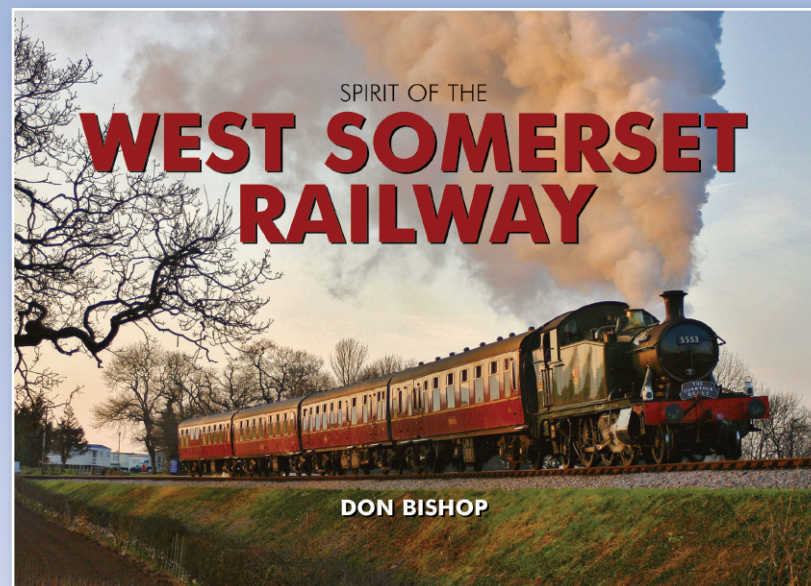
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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. He is also a member of the West Somerset Railway Association & Promotions boards. Don has been a keen railway photographer 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.

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The 7F passes Watersmeet near Bishops Lydeard a little while after sunset with a Santa Special working on 27th November 2005.

Opposite page: During the line's 2006 Somerset & Dorset Gala the resident S&D 7F No. 88 pilots BR Standard 5 No. 73129 past Nethercott with a Minehead-bound train of maroon stock, 19th March 2006.

Example of a double-page spread.

Right: Great Eastern J15 0-6-0 No. 65462 is seen with its charter goods on 22nd March 2004, with pleasant back lighting at Roebuck curve.

Below: The Bristol Channel forms the backdrop to this shot of BR Standard tank No. 80136 rounding the curve on the cliff tops at Doniford.



Above: On a photo charter No. 5199 is worked downhill at Sampford Brett with a goods train.

Right: A Santa Express working to Williton sets out from Bishops Lydeard at Whisky Trail on 11th December 2005 behind No. 9351.



Right: No. 5553 passes the caravan site at Helwell Bay, Watchet.

