

Friends of the Goods Shed

Community, Creativity, Culture



FoGS Newsletter No 33 – May 2020

Coronavirus and the Goods Shed

The picture opposite sums up these strange times. A beautiful day and not a car or soul to be found in the Goods Shed car park. We are now well into the second month of complete closure of the arts centre and the café. The paid staff are all on furlough and therefore not allowed to be working. This is not to say that nothing is happening. The Trustees and volunteers continue to do everything possible to ensure that we do not lose any of our loyal patrons and that we shall be able to emerge from this crisis ready once again to open our doors to reveal an eclectic programme of events.



We have now reimbursed all those customers who had bought tickets for cancelled events and requested repayment; we are, however, very grateful to all those who have generously allowed us to keep their money or are keen to have their seats already paid for when the events are rescheduled. And, of course, many, many thanks to all those who have generously given us donations via the website and by other means to help us through the Covid19 emergency.

We also have some excellent news. Thanks to some great work by Douglas Looman and Joseph Durning, an application to the Arts Council England (ACE) Emergency Response Fund has resulted in a useful award which will be of great help in covering our losses during the closure period and will enable us to pay for the necessary marketing of events when we reopen.

Our website has been revamped with an emphasis on letting users see videos of those performers whose events they unfortunately had to miss or those performers who will hopefully be playing at the Goods Shed later in the year. We have taken the opportunity to do some modest refurbishment of the Goods Shed including painting the walls to get rid of the marks of wear and tear. Fortunately there was still paint left over from the original renovation.

Quiz

This month's quiz is five more questions on Tetbury and Gloucestershire and, because there is not much else to do at the moment, an extra five questions to test your general knowledge.

1. Where was the Goods Shed's railway carriage built?
2. There were two goods sheds built on the Tetbury branch line; where is the other one?
3. Bourton-on-the-Water is on which water?
4. What is the connection between Westonbirt House and the Snooty Fox in Tetbury?
5. The "Great Heathen Army" of the Vikings spent the winter in Cirencester in what year?
6. Why did the RMS Titanic fly the Blue Ensign instead of the normal Red Ensign of the British merchant marine?
7. President Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar, elected in 1838, was the first president of what country?
8. What happened in Italy in 1582, in Prussia in 1583, in Poland in 1586, in Denmark in 1700, in Great Britain in 1752 and Japan in 1872.
9. What links the names of Martin-Leake, Chevasse and Upham.
10. (Catch question) When was a uniform postal rate first introduced for mail sent anywhere within the United Kingdom?

Answers to April's quiz.

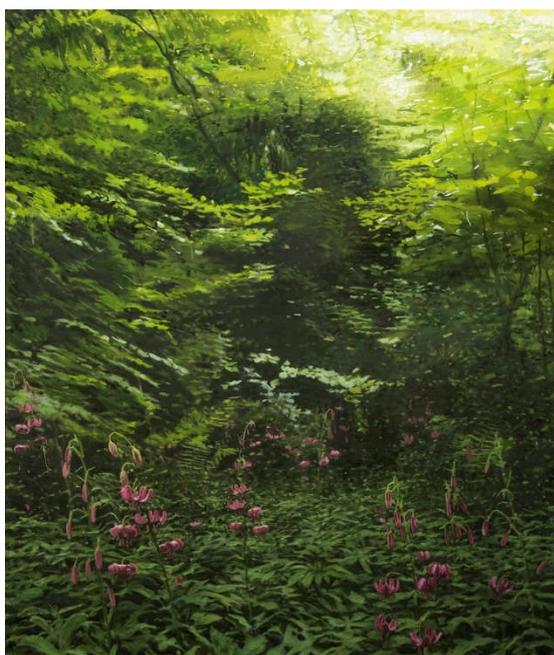
1. *The first scheduled train arrived in Tetbury on 2 December 1889.*
2. *AC Cars Ltd made the railbuses that were in service on the Tetbury line from 1959 – 1964? The company's chequered history includes the construction of the Government issue 3-wheeler invalid carriage, high performance sports and racing cars and the Southend Pier railway rolling stock.*
3. *Stop Line Green was the name of the military defensive line built in 1940 that passed close by Tetbury and crossed the railway at Larkhill.*
4. *A weighbridge used to be on the ground immediately alongside what is now the Goods Shed's office. Did you know there also used to be one on the Chipping?*
5. *A return 2nd class ticket from Tetbury to Paddington in 1896 following the introduction of reduced tariffs cost 18s (90p).*

Exhibitions

With the lock-down still in place Rob Collins's Gloucestershire exhibition continues to hang in the Goods Shed; see April's issue of the Newsletter for details. Here are a few more pictures from that exhibition. All the pictures are still available for purchase.



Oak Tree – in the deer park at Ham, near Berkeley.



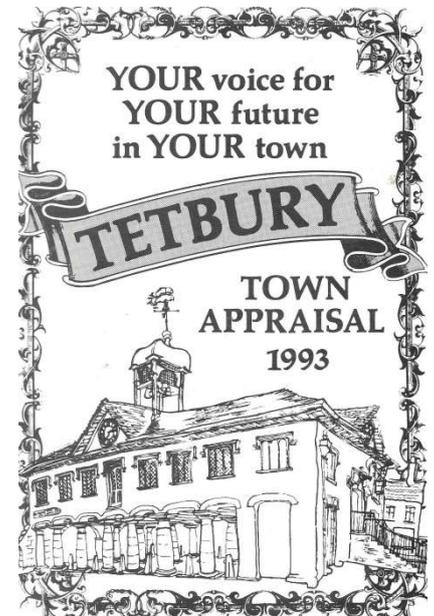
The History of Tetbury Rail Lands and the Goods Shed

I am always surprised at how many of us are relatively recent “incomers” to Tetbury and might not be aware of how much history there has been to the creation of the wonderful facility that is now the Goods Shed Arts centre, the pleasant park land that surrounds it and the glorious Tetbury Trail that runs from the Goods Shed to the Trouble House. Needless to say, it was not always so although 6½ years ago when I first came to Tetbury the Goods Shed was still a rather forlorn, derelict building. When I was sucked into the project by the enthusiasm of the newly appointed Chairman of TRLRT, Will Cook, and the small band of volunteers he had collected together I assumed I was in at the start of the project. How wrong that proved to be when I found in the archives that the project as a whole started over 25 years ago! I thought it would be interesting to write a short history of the of the rail lands and if you will indulge me, I should like to expose you to a first draft of the history:

The History of the Tetbury Rail Lands Part 1, 1964-2000

The Tetbury branch line was built between 1887 and 1889, after the Great Western Railway had bought up land in Tetbury for a station and goods yard. Much of this land was acquired from the Feoffees. Rail services ended in 1964 and British Rail (BR) immediately stripped out any assets of value and demolished the station and engine shed leaving only the Goods Shed and the cattle loading dock. The Goods Shed was rented out and used as a warehouse by coal merchants for 20 years and then by a tyre company but was then abandoned.

In April 1993 a local builder and BR applied for planning permission to build houses on and around what is now The Old Rope Walk using Mr Bowsher’s old builder’s yard and a small section of the BR land. In the following month Tetbury Town Council (TTC) set up the Tetbury Town Appraisal Group to find out what the local people wanted to have in Tetbury and specifically what to do with the old rail lands. In June 1993 a planning application was made by Tetbury Gymnastics Club to convert the Goods Shed into a gymnasium. In August Cotswold District Council’s (CDC) local plan stated that the rail lands could be used for parking and residential development. In 1994 the Town Appraisal report, based on the responses of over 60% of the population, was published and indicated that people wanted an area of public park land and better facilities. TTC therefore set up an Action Group to explore the purchase of the rail lands and their regeneration. They commissioned Gloucester Building Consultancy (GBC) and in 1995 GBC issued an initial feasibility report with drawings stating that four components of the scheme - park land, car park, community centre and green - were viable, total cost about £250k. By this time the two planning applications had received consent but a few Tetburians, keen to see a properly planned development for the good of all Tetbury, managed to stop them. In December 1995 a meeting of interested parties was held at Highgrove with the Prince of Wales’s support.

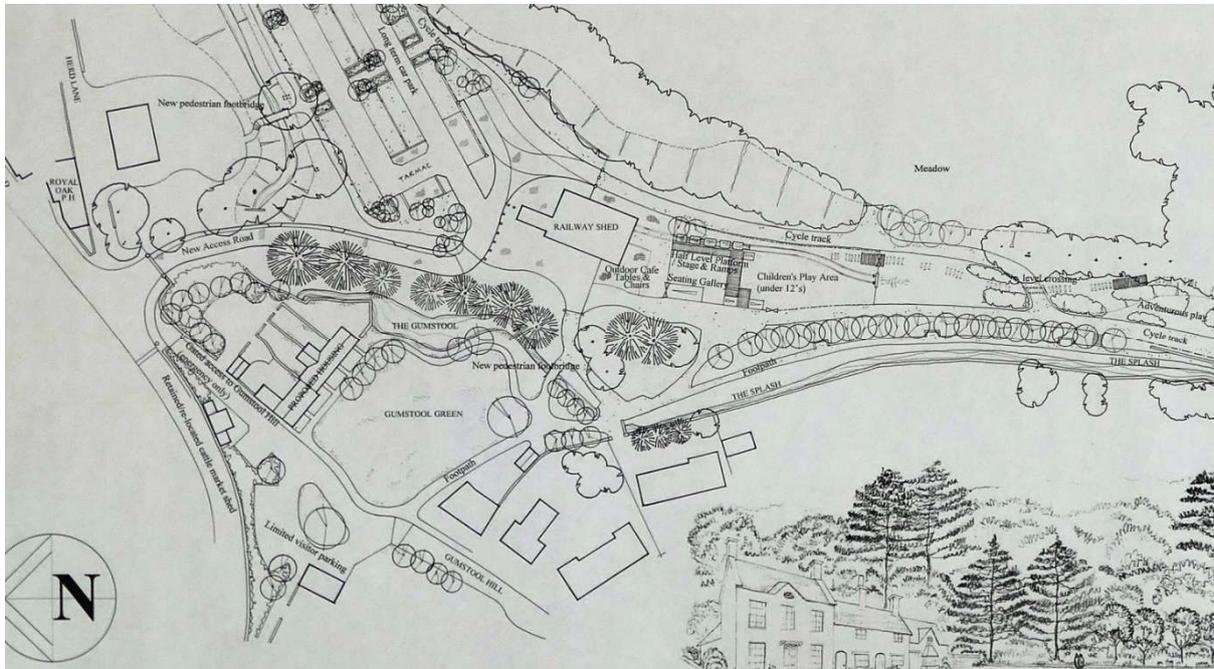


In 1996 BR, having received residential planning consent, put the whole site up for sale. In April TTC voted to buy the land and agreed to raise the precept should it become necessary to repay the loan needed to buy the land. In May TTC set up two committees to oversee the project, the Working Group and the Railway Yard Information group; Cllr Phil Randall was appointed Project Manager. Meanwhile the Feoffees demanded equal representation on the working groups. Another meeting with the HRH The Prince of Wales at Highgrove in July 1996 gave further momentum to the town’s plans. In September the housing developer, Colburn Homes, and Cheltenham Landscape Design both gave presentations of their ideas to TTC and the Feoffees and days later Cllr John Dearnley urged TTC to take a lease on the land so that the town’s development plans could go ahead. In October there was a public exhibition of the parkland proposals and housing developments for the old Railway Yard Site at the Town Hall and in November the TTC voted again to purchase the land. A scheme had been proposed whereby TTC with CDC and government help would buy the land and then sell it on to the Feoffees when they had raised money from the sale of their land around the old cattle market for residential development.

During 1996 the Working Group had a meeting with a representative from the Government Office for the South West at which funding was sought from the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund and they also applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund but with no success. However, in late 1996, closely coinciding with a visit by the Prince of Wales to the site on 20 December, CDC agreed to release £155k of Loan Monies for the purchase. On

18 Feb 1997 contracts were exchanged for the purchase from BR by TTC of all the rail lands (less part of what was to become The Old Rope Walk) from BR for £205,000 plus VAT. On 4 Mar 1997 the sale was completed. This was financed with one-year loans from RDC of £50k and from CDC of £155k and TTC subsequently reclaimed the VAT. With stamp duty and land registry fees the sale had cost a total of £207,709.

In January 1998 TTC set up a Railway Projects Board with four working groups - Landscape, Car Parking, Cattle Market, and Goods Shed - meeting bimonthly. This resulted in some rapid progress: in April, the Project Appraisal of a Public Car Park was issued which gave an estimated cost for a car park on the rail lands of £610k and an



Part of the masterplan developed by Cheltenham Landscape Design for the rail lands in 1998.

estimated completion date of the end of March 1999. A planning application for long-stay car park was submitted and applications for money from the CDC community projects fund and for Millennium Green Funding were submitted. In July 1998 a further presentation was given to HRH when he opened the new wing of Tetbury Hospital. An ecological survey of the site was carried out and, in October, an invitation to tender for construction of the long term carpark was issued. Work on the Old Rope Walk development had started in July. In November CDC approved Level II funding for a feasibility study of the redevelopment of the Goods Shed and it was late in 1998 that the idea of setting up a charity or trust to manage the creation and operation of the rail lands was first mooted.

While planning continued, on 4th March 1998 TTC had informed CDC it was unable to pay back the RDC loan of £50k plus interest but on 31 March 1998 the site was transferred to the Feoffees with the Feoffees paying a first instalment of repayment to CDC of £51,667 with promise of paying further instalments when the money was available from the sale of their land to a developer. Simultaneously TTC was granted a 250-year lease. Despite considerable public funding there was always a need to find money for the many items of preparatory work for which government was not willing to fund. On 31 January 1998 the first of what was to become many public fundraising events was held. The Limelight Theatre presented "Music Hall & the Twenties" at Dolphins Hall at £5 per ticket and raised £350 for "Tetbury's Railyard Park".



The great and the good gather for the official opening of the new car park on 11 May 1999.

On 8th January 1999 the Feoffees granted TTC a sub-lease for the car park area and on the 14th C J Pearce Ltd were awarded the contract for the construction of the car park. Work began four days later and on the 11th May the car park was opened to much acclaim. Early in 1999 planning applications were made for the Millennium Green and the four adjacent houses that the Feoffees needed built to pay back CDC. In March the Millennium Greens Commission confirmed funding of £43k for Tetbury's Millennium Green and in June a Trust was created to manage the project work on which began in the November.

Sadly, in January 1999 Sue Stoner as Chair of the Rail Lands Project Development Board accepted the resignation of Phil Randall who had worked tirelessly on the rail lands project but fortunately Phil laboured on tirelessly as a volunteer. In

March, Cheltenham Landscape Design were given a contract to further develop the master plan for the rail lands and in April Gale & Snowden Architects were commissioned to prepare schemes to develop the Goods Shed. Diana Johnson was appointed Arts consultant and tasked to produce a report on the various uses the Goods Shed could be put to and a survey in June asking Tetburians what they wanted for the Goods Shed gave overwhelming support for a cinema. Studies showed that the cinema was viable. In September 1999 David Bridge for the Railway Land Regeneration Project Board requested comments from the main stake holders on proposed creation of a charitable trust for the railway lands and in October TTC and the Feoffees agreed to the setting up of a Trust to manage rail land development.

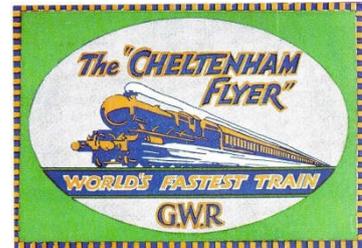
(To be continued.)

From the Archive

Not strictly from Tetbury's archive but a welcome article from our longest serving Trustee, Stephen Hirst:

The Fastest Scheduled Train Service In The World – All in a Day's Work.

Throughout the 20th Century the Great Western Railway had a number of outstanding locomotive superintendents, not least the great G. J. Churchward who produced a number of first-class powerful locomotives for the company.



In 1922 he was succeeded by C B Collett who achieved fame by producing the 'Castle' and 'King' classes which were amongst the finest steam locomotives that have ever been built; they were real speedsters and the fastest train that was pulled by them was the 'Cheltenham Spa Express', more well known by its unofficial name of the "Cheltenham Flyer", the fastest scheduled train service in the world. Passengers from Tetbury for Paddington could benefit from riding on this world record breaking train by joining at Kemble Junction.

Although the "Cheltenham Flyer" had for some time been famous for its high speed runs, its story is one of steady acceleration. Before World War One, it ran non-stop from Kemble Junction to Paddington - 91 miles in 103 minutes. After the war normal services were restored and a stop was put into the timetable at Swindon, allowing 85 minutes for the just over the 77mile run from there to Paddington. It then became the fastest 'start to stop' run in the United Kingdom. In July 1929 it was accelerated up to an average speed of 66.2 miles per hour, with 70 minutes being allowed for doing the 77 miles – making the train the fastest scheduled train service in the world.

The locomotives used on these runs were the Great Western Railway 'Castles', christened "Greyhounds of the Steel Highway", which were built at the Company's Swindon Works. Between Swindon and Paddington 25 hundredweights of coal were used and 3000 gallons of water, half of the water being taken from the Goring water troughs. The speedy runs were made possible by Brunel's level railway, having only a slight fall from Swindon to London amounting to 270 feet, less than the height of St.Paul's Cathedral, on the whole 77 miles without any severe curves.

The "Cheltenham Flyer" start to stop runs took place every weekday as a matter of railway routine using the same track as other trains. Behind the tender were six to twelve coaches with 500 passengers on board; all in a day's work.



The Cheltenham Flyer, No 5069 "Isambard Kingdom Brunel, picture by Terence Cuneo.

The highest speed achieved by this famous train was on 30 June 1937 when "Rhuddlan Castle" with eight coaches reached 95 mph. On 5 June, No 5005 "Manorbier Castle" hauled seven carriages from Paddington to Swindon, against a slight gradient, in 60 minutes flat. The world record for a start-to-stop run was pushed up to 81.68 mph and this still remains the British record with steam traction.

Contact me if you have any questions or wish to contribute to the newsletter: David Walker, opheliatheboat@gmail.com. 01666 500137.