

Friends of the Goods Shed

Community, Creativity, Culture



FoGS Newsletter No 35 – July 2020

Café Reopens

We are delighted to report that, to the relief of its faithful clientele, the Whistle Stop Café reopened on 4 July 2020 after being closed for 15 weeks. To ensure the safety of customers the café has initially opened for take-way service only but there was still a good number of grateful patrons keen to savour once again the great



caffees and the delicious cakes that Sasha and Catherine had spent the previous day making. Will Cook and the café team had spent a lot of time preparing the café for business in a Covid19 environment. Plastic screens have been installed, one-way systems implemented and hand-sanitising stations set up as well as there having been a deep clean of the premises.

Unfortunately there may be no toilet facilities at first as

Customers order their much longed for coffee and cakes before enjoying it with old friends.

we try to work out how we can operate them safely. The good news is that the café will be open from Friday to Sunday (17-19 Jul) and then we hope from Wednesdays to Sundays after that, but check on the website first. Stay Alert – Stay Safe.



Cleaning and Refurbishment

The management and volunteers at the Goods Shed have not been idle during the lock-down period. We have taken the opportunity to give the building a spring clean and a touch up. All the stackable and retractable seats have been given a wash and brush up. The walls have had a lick of paint and the great gaps in the sliding doors have been filled. Grayham Cleaver has continued his stout work in looking after all the potted plants that make the café and other seating areas a pleasure to be in. Tim Lethaby, as well as helping with the seat cleaning, gave the weeds on the platform a haircut.

The Covid19 emergency has also required some new items to be made. Volunteers, including Barrie Doyle, Bill Buss and Tim Lethaby, made some barrier posts needed to keep visitors at a Covid-secure spacing and these were painted by Christine and Nigel Berry, Dee Buss, Mandie Cran and Jane Bell. Alas, I have no photo of the happy workers doing this but the finished product, with a lovely white rope donated by Jenny Horton, is wonderful to behold. Fortunately we have other photos of volunteers beavering away on other activities.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have kindly helped to keep the Goods Shed in good order during the last few months. Apologies to those I have not named.



Frances Collinson, above and right, gives all the seats a thorough wash and clean.



Tim Lethaby, above and top right, gives the tentage a bracingly powerful spring clean and keeps the weeds in check.



Grayham Cleaver gives the plants a much needed watering.

Veg and Flowers



With Ros back selling super-fresh vegetables and Jill selling flowers, make sure you visit the Goods Shed next Saturday (and every Saturday after for that matter).

“Mary Jane” Railway Carriage

Work on the railway carriage has also recommenced with some overdue tidying up and refurbishment. When the carriage first opened as part of the café in April 2018, the volunteers, who had worked long hours to get it ready, took a well-deserved break, although a bit longer than we envisaged! The rear window frames of the carriage are still in need of renovation and painting and we had left a bit of a mess underneath the carriage. A works party on Sunday 28th June 2020 soon got stuck in and filled a skip with accumulated junk. On the following Tuesday we began investigative work to decide how to tackle the problem of refurbishing the windows and to remount the vents on the roof of the carriage.

Now that the underneath of the carriage is largely free of junk we are hoping to remove the pig netting and put a GWR-type station picket fence around it to keep out footballs, young explorers and such like.

If anybody else would like to help please give me a ring or send an e-mail. Woodworking experience would be useful but all help would be appreciated. There will be a good bit of sanding, filling and painting required before we finish.



Bill Buss sizes up the job prior to refurbishment of the railway carriage

The Canopy

Thanks to the generosity of a volunteer we have been able to undertake a structural survey of the old canopy frame over the front entrance. The good news is that after 130 years the basic structure is still sound. It has always been the hope of many of those involved with the Goods Shed that we would one day be able to restore it to its former glory; the Goods Shed looks a bit toothless without it. It was always a simple structure, just corrugated iron sheets on the iron frame, originally with a fretted wooden valance that



The station building with valance soon after closure in

gave it that characteristic GWR look. The valance was removed in about 1930 and there are not many pictures that show it in place, apart from the one above, although the 1916 station building retained its valance

until its demolition after the closure of the line.

The canopy was part of the proposed rebuild in 2016 but it was never reinstalled due to lack of funds, however, there is still planning permission in place. We believe it could finally be put back, with valance, for about £1500 although we might have to think how to stop rain pattering on the corrugated iron from interfering with performances. We are looking for one or two white knights to ride to our rescue and provide the necessary funding. I'm sure I could



The Goods Shed with its original canopy in about 1910



An original elevation drawing of the Goods Shed that was built in 1889.



persuade the Trustees to allow a suitable commemorative plaque listing donors to mark what would be a great contribution to the Goods Shed's heritage.

A photo of the road access to the Goods Shed showing the canopy after the valance was removed.

Quiz

This month's quiz is 5 more questions on Tetbury and a further five to test your general knowledge.

1. Charles Mason reputedly lived in Tetbury for a while during the 18th century. He was a well-regarded astronomer and has a crater on the Moon named after him but for what is he better known in the USA?
2. Police Bygones Museum in Tetbury was set up in 1981 to mark the 1300th anniversary of what?
3. How many Feoffees of Tetbury are there allowed to be at one time?
4. What was the rank and name of Tetbury's only VC winner?
5. Who owned Highgrove House before it was bought by HRH the Prince of Wales?
6. Why is Belfort, which is a department of France, known as the Territory of Belfort?
7. What connects Edward Oxford in 1840, John Francis and John William Bean both in 1842, William Hamilton in 1849, William Pate in 1850, Arthur O'Connor in 1872 and Roderick Maclean in 1882.
8. Why are drug addicts called junkies?
9. Under the present US constitution what is the longest time that any one person could serve as President?
10. How is the writer Isabella Mayson born in London in 1836 better known?

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

1. *Leighterton, Long Newnton, Down Farm (Westonbirt), Aston Down and Babdown were all airfields used during either WWI, WWII or both.*
2. *West Street in Tetbury was called Harper St before 1935.*
3. *Moonlight, a black cow with a white face owned by Tom Rich, was the only known casualty in Tetbury of German bombs during WW2. On the night of Saturday 6th, 1941, a single bomber dropped a stick of ten bombs in a row from behind the gas works, where Peglar's garage now is, north across open fields in a line running towards Conygar and Sir William Romney's School. Windows were broken and slates removed on 30 houses along the London Road. Moonlight was found the next morning. She had had her head blown off and it is said that by the time she was found someone had removed the tongue (there was rationing you know!)*
4. *The Erinoid Ground (now the Bath Road Trading Estate, Lightpill) was briefly a Gloucestershire County cricket ground. Erinoid was the name given to an early type of plastic made from casein which was derived from milk. The factory at Lightpill was set up in 1914 to be close to the Irish supply of milk.*
5. *King Kenulf of Mercia founded the Anglo-Saxon walled city of Winchcombe with its famous abbey in 798 AD. The town gave its name to a county, Winchcombshire, that existed briefly in the 10th and 11th Centuries.*
6. *Dog Days are normally the hottest days of the year which coincide with the time of the heliacal rising of the Dog Star, ie the period 3 July to 15 August.*
7. *The pure collected by pure-finders, and for which they were paid between one and 4 shillings a pail, was dog excrement.*

8. Frederick Leighton is the only person to have been made a lord for his services to art in the field of painting. He died on the day after he was raised to the peerage
9. Columbus made four voyages to the Americas while he was alive. In 1536 his body was moved from Valladolid in Spain to Santo Domingo, Hispaniola, and then back again to Spain in 1899, thus making a total of five return journeys (although there is still some dispute about where his body is actually buried.)
10. If it's the best thing since sliced bread? The first loaf of sliced bread went on sale in the US on 6 July 1928 and in England in 1930.

From the Archive

The Rifle Range With reference to last month's article about the rifle range that used to exist before the railway was built over it, I have found a snippet from the Tetbury Magazine of October 1880:

"RIFLE CORPS. The members of the Tetbury branch of the Cirencester Rifle Corps had their annual shooting at the Butts at Tetbury on Thursday, Sept. 23rd, when they competed for numerous prizes provided by the gentry and tradesmen of the town. The weather was rather unpropitious, but some good scores were made, Private Pegler scoring the most points, next to whom came Sergt. Webb and Private Chew. All of the members dined together at the Talbot Hotel after the shooting, and a very harmonious and pleasant evening was spent."

More Tetbury Railway Men and Women

We have now established a list of nearly 80 men and women who worked at Tetbury Station plus another 14 who were gangers or platelayers on the permanent way and a further 20 other GWR men who lived in Tetbury or Culkerton but were never actually posted to Tetbury Station. Alas, the information on some is as little as a surname but with the help of GWR and national census records it has been possible to find some detail on the professional lives of others. There is a record of all station staff at Tetbury during the period 1898 to 1907 which is probably the only period that is fully covered but this record does not include locomotive staff. I am sure that there are many more staff still to identify from 1907 to 1964.



Tommy Curtis at Tetbury on his final duty, before his retirement in March 1932. *Curtis family collection*

Without doubt the longest serving men were the railway guard/travelling porter, Tommy Curtis, who arrived with the railway in Tetbury in 1889 and was still there on his retirement in 1932, and engine driver Horace "Harry" Bird who came at his own request on 23 April 1928 and retired at Tetbury on 7 May 1955.

Tommy lived at 36 Cirencester Road, one of the "railway" cottages, from at least 1911 to 1939. Unfortunately his record of service does not seem to be available. He died in 1948 aged 80. In an earlier newsletter we mentioned Tommy's daughter stepping forward during the Great War to become a clerk at Tetbury Station. Olive Curtis married Lewis Price Calbert Morris, a brewer from Sheffield,

on 25 Nov 1933, but sadly died in Sheffield 1938 aged only 39. She was buried in Tetbury.

Harry Bird joined the GWR at Brimscombe as an engine cleaner on 12 April 1920 at the age of 16. He also worked at Cirencester, Swindon and Treherbert. Harry had an enviable record being cautioned only once in his career when on 2 Dec 1928 he committed the seemingly common offence of being without the wooden train staff when working the 5.58 pm Tetbury to Kemble and the return 6.45 pm from Kemble to Tetbury. In 1939 Harry was living at 52 Hampton Street. He died on 18 May 1959 aged 65.

*Right:
Photo
believed
to be of
Harry Bird*



It is unfair but a fact of life that the bad eggs among the many thousands of GWR staff are far more interesting to examine than the many honest, hard-working employees. The GWR like most railways was run on military lines with many rules and strict discipline. The language was also surprisingly similar. One of the service records with most entries (and

the longest name) belonged to William Charles Richard Horton Shayle, born at Tewkesbury in 25 May 1863. William was one of the first firemen, possibly the first, to be posted to Tetbury as he is noted as arriving on 28 Nov 1889, 4 days before the first scheduled train drew into Tetbury. He moved on to Shrewsbury on 17 Nov 1891. He had begun his career as an engine cleaner at Swindon on 1 May 1880, aged 17, and worked his way to 3rd Class Engineman on 4 Oct 1897, aged 34, with pay of 6 shillings per day. He would normally have had a pay rise one year later to 6/6 but this was delayed "though high consumption of fuel"; he was using too much coal while operating his engine. Even before coming to Tetbury he had been punished for several offences:

Fined 2s - Not coming on duty on time.

Fined 2s - Causing collision through inattentive working, the fireman being absent from his engine at the time. Suspended 1 day - Coming late on duty to take out train.

Suspended 8 days and finally cautioned – Not presenting himself at shed to take out train after being properly called.

Having become a driver his misdemeanours cost him more dearly:

Suspended 10 days - Passing home signal at danger.

Cautioned – Moving without a proper signal resulting in wagons leaving the rails at catch points.

Premium deferred 2 weeks – Passing the up home signal at danger

Cautioned – Accepting wrong signal, resulting in derailment of engine.

During his service he also had several injuries, usually caused when climbing on or off the engine, although he also fell down a turntable pit. However, it was not always bad news, in June 1920 he was commended for "Promptly reporting on arrival at Smethwick that he had observed a colliery stack struck by lightning and that a quantity of bricks had fallen on the line".

Commendations were not generally easily come by except in August 1911 when there was the first general strike of railway workers in the United Kingdom. Only two men walked out at Tetbury and all GWR men that did not go on strike had their records endorsed with a red stamp, "Commended, August 1911". As the strikers did not get punished as part of the deal to return to work this was all that separated the strikers from the non-strikers.

Year	Month	Location/Post
1879	Dec 12	Brinkworth
1899	Feb	Perker
1899	Apr	.
1899	Dec	Sig.
1900	Oct	Signalman
1901	Jan	.
1906	Aug	Stationmaster
1899	Apr	Perker
1900	Jan	Shoud
1900	Jan	Liddbrook Jan
1900	Jan	Dymock
1900	Jan	Liddbrook Jc
1900	Jan	Longhope
1900	Jan	Oakle Street

Commended August 1911

The record of service of Alexander Brinkworth, later a station master at Tetbury. It shows that Brinkworth did not join the railway strike of 1911.

Dismissal from the service was not unusual although we have found only two instances for ex-Tetbury workers, one of which concerns one of two brothers over whom there is some confusion. The personal record of Frederick John Townsend, staff number 32856, born 28 May 1886, shows that on 27 Oct 1905 as a lamp lad he was dismissed for "Being intoxicated when on duty at Longhope". This record shows that he worked previously at Chalford, Grange Court and Gloucester, but not Tetbury. Another record, originally for his brother William Townsend, born 20 Feb 1888, has been amended to read Frederick John and the date of birth of William has been overwritten by that of Frederick but the staff number of William, 34567, has not been overwritten. This record shows only that William was taken on as a lad porter at Tetbury in July 1902. The manning record for Tetbury Station shows that both men worked there, William from July 1902 to Jan 1904 when he went to the Locomotive Department, and Frederick from Jan 1904, when he arrived from Gloucester, to Aug 1904 when he went to Abergavenny (which posting is also not on his personal record). The records for Chalford and Gloucester stations show that William, born 20 Feb 1888, did work at Chalford and Gloucester before resigning on 12 Jun 1906. This shows that the GWR records are not necessarily as accurate as one might hope from this eminent and normally bureaucratic organization.

The other dismissal was that of William John Henry Comley who worked the Tetbury branch from July 1899 to September 1904 as a fireman. His offence was *"Taking bottles of wine from case loaded in wagon"*. In April 1907, having been found guilty by a magistrate, he was sacked.

Of course, many men resigned, for example Ernest John Viles (Tetbury 1909-1912) who left in April 1915 to join the Army (he survived the war) but some are listed as "Absconded", presumably meaning that they just walked off the job without giving the required 4 weeks' notice. These included porter George Stevens (at Tetbury August 1904 - October 1905) and signal porter Charles Thomas Gunter (at Tetbury February 1904 - January 1905). Lack of a reference obviously did not affect Gunter because in 1911 he is recorded in the census as being a signaller for the LNWR living in Abergavenny.

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