



West of
England
Thematic
Society

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IN THIS ISSUE – WETS News by email, Twitchers Delight, Annual Subscriptions are now due, Spring WETS Day,

WETS NEWS by email – Has really caught on with our computer user members, over half our members are now receiving WETS News by this method, WELL DONE. If you are not yet a recipient make sure your name and email address are given to the Editor. Look at our website www.wessexpf.org.uk/WETS to see some examples of the quality. Download time is very fast. **DON'T FORGET TO SAVE WHAT YOU GET.** It is suggested you create a file called WETS News to put them in.

The Wessex Federation are now distributing Wessex News by the same process. Did you know the Wessex website carries dates of all meetings and philatelic events in our region, these can be viewed at www.wessexpf.org.uk/events the integrated calendar of club meetings also appears on this page.

TWITCHERS DELIGHT – Members who are into Birds may be interested to know that the British Post Office have introduced Pay & Go Machines at a few Crown Post Offices and they issue pre-paid self adhesive labels featuring Birds. The postal rate and value are printed at the time of vending based upon request. To date there have been two releases of labels Birds 1 and Birds 2. The labels are in horizontal format and vertically se-tenant, printed in rolls on cylinders that print 18 designs per pass, there are 6 different designs each featuring a different bird (*the cylinder produces three complete sets of designs for each pass*). The picture shown features designs from Birds 2. They are reputed to be a Blackbird, Magpie, Long-Tailed Tit, Chaffinch, Collared Dove and a Greenfinch. The issue date for Birds 2 was timed to coincide with the RSPB “Big Garden Birdwatch” on 29th and 30th January 2011, Birds 1 was issued on 17th September 2010. Both sets are reputed to have a short life. These postal labels would seem to be a very useful addition to any thematic collection featuring birds but you may have difficulty obtaining them here in the South West. We would be interested to hear from any members (*or local Twitchers*) who are aware of their availability in any Post Offices situated in the South West. This really would be a find for a twitcher.

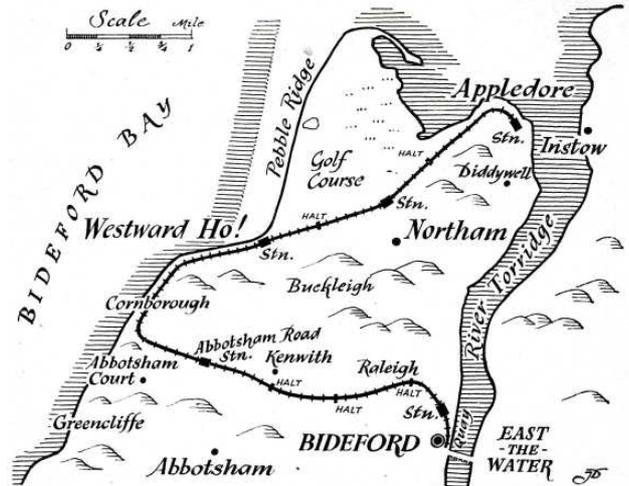


ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE – You will find a form with this publication to make you payment to the Treasurer. Due to the fact that many members now get WETS News by email the form is no longer personalised, please complete and return as soon as possible.

SPRING WETS DAY – 16th April 2011 at the Dartmoor Lodge Ashburton starting at 10.00am for 10.30am. This years speaker is Captain Peter Denly, subject “Mans Marine Adventure”. The booking form is part of the subscription form attached. **Please BOOK EARLY and ensure the Treasurer has your booking and payment by no later than 9th April 2011.**

The Bideford, Westward Ho! and Appledore Railway by Jim Wigmore

This small and short lived railway is not well known philatelically, although examples can be found. Bideford's Museum in the Burton Gallery has a few examples of mail relating to the railway. All mail would have been delivered to or from, but not actually carried upon the railway. The Bideford, Westward Ho! And Appledore Railway Act received Royal Assent on Thursday May 21st 1896 and the railway opened as far as Westward Ho! on Monday May 20th 1901, the extension to Appledore did not open for a further seven years.

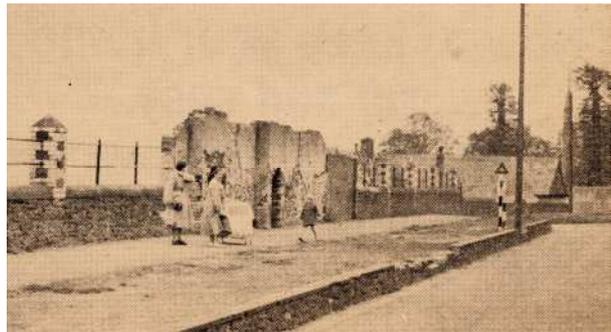


A typical train is shown at the terminus on Bideford Quay right and the route of the railway is shown in the map above.

As can be seen from the map the railway was not connected to the LSWR railway operating on the opposite site of the River Torridge, this was a major part of the railways final demise along with

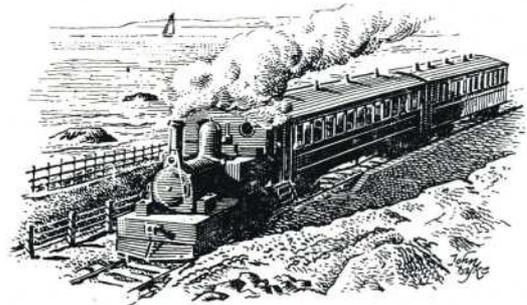
the fact that it was operated as a tourist railway only. The shareholders of the company never received any dividends as the railway always ran at a loss hence the enterprise was doomed to failure. The end came on Tuesday 27th March 1917 when the last train ran and all the locomotives carriages and rails were requisitioned by the Government for use in France. The sad thing is the ship carrying all the above was sunk by a German Submarine off Padstow.

Much of the railway route can still be seen and followed if you know where to look. Appledore Station is seen right after the closure, although it now forms



part of Torridge Road a plaque appears on the wall as a commemoration. There are those who think the Appledore RSO cancel means Appledore Railway Station Office, this is not so it actually means Appledore Rural Post Office.

The illustration right gives a good idea of how the trains looked, the journey must have been very picturesque. It is now almost 100 years since this short lived venture started and failed and it still has a fascination amongst railway



historians and philatelists alike.

Thanks to Edith Rees of Exeter for the supply of copies of articles that appeared in the Bideford Gazette and Devon Life about the railway.

NEXT NEWSLETTER – This newsletter has been kept short in order to get out the details of the Spring Meeting. We need lots of articles for the next newsletter by June 2011.