



# WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

## Minehead to Norton Fitzwarren

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# 1 Route Information

## 1.1 History

In 1845, when the Bristol and Exeter Railway (B&ER) had recently completed its main line, there were proposals for a number of different and competitive railway schemes in west Somerset. A Bristol and English Channels Direct Junction Railway was proposed as a link from Watchet through Stogumber and Bishops Lydeard to Bridport on the south coast, which would be an alternative to ships taking a long and dangerous passage around Land's End. This prompted the promotion of a connecting line from Williton to Minehead and Porlock, a line designed to attract tourists to Exmoor. Shortly afterwards, a Bristol and English Channels Connection Railway was suggested from Stolford to Bridport which would have passed through the Quantock Hills near Crowcombe. Alternatively, the Bridgwater and Minehead Junction Railway would link with the B&ER at Bridgwater and run through Williton to Minehead with a branch to Watchet and a connecting Minehead and Central Devon Junction Railway would provide a line to Exeter. An alternative link to South Devon was proposed by the Exeter, Tiverton and Minehead Direct Railway through Dunster and offered an extension to Ilfracombe.

The West Somerset Mineral Railway (WSMR) was intended to link the iron-ore mines of the Brendon Hills with the harbour at Watchet. In 1856, before it was even opened, it was suggested that the WSMR should be extended to Minehead instead of the WSR and an Act of Parliament for this work was passed on 27 July 1857 but it was never constructed. Instead, an Act for a new Minehead Railway was passed on 5 July 1865 to build a line from the WSR at Watchet to Minehead. This again failed to be built but a renewed Minehead Railway Act of 29 June 1871 finally saw the construction begin the following year.

The new railway was opened on 16 July 1874. In 1871, the WSR had agreed a new perpetual lease to the B&ER for a fixed sum each year which rose annually to a maximum of £6,600. The new Minehead Railway too was leased to the B&ER which then operated the two railways as a single branch from Taunton. To break up the 22.75 miles (36.6 km) of single track, a passing loop and second platform were installed at Williton, 13 miles (21 km) from the junction.

On 1 January 1876, the B&ER was amalgamated into the Great Western Railway (GWR). To increase the capacity of the West Somerset line, another loop was opened in 1879 at Crowcombe Heathfield. The 7 ft 1/4 in (2,140 mm) broad gauge was converted to 4 ft 8 1/2 in (1,435 mm) standard gauge in 1882. Trains ran as usual on Saturday 28 October but the track was lifted the following day and reopened for traffic on Monday afternoon.

### 1.1.1 Closure of Line

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#### **Run down to closure**

The GWR was nationalised, becoming the Western Region of British Railways on 1 January 1948. Camp coaches made a reappearance in 1952 and were available to the public at both Stogumber and Blue Anchor from 1952 to 1964 and the latter were kept on for British Rail staff holidays until 1970.

However, Washford signal box was closed in 1952 and Minehead engine shed was closed in 1956. Norton Fitzwarren station closed on 30 October 1961, after which passengers once again had to travel through to Taunton to change onto trains travelling west.

Despite the opening of a Butlins holiday camp at Minehead in 1962 which brought some 30,000 people to the town that year, the line was recommended for closure in the 1963 'Reshaping of British Railways' report. Goods traffic was withdrawn from Stogumber on 17 August 1963 and from the other stations on 6 July 1964 after which the railway transported any goods traffic by road from Taunton. The two loops which were not situated at stations (Leigh Bridge and Kentford) were also taken out of use in 1964. Also in 1964, steam locomotives from Taunton depot were replaced by diesel multiple units based at Bristol, except on summer Saturdays when Hymek diesels operated several of the services with full rakes of coaches.

In 1966 there was further signalling rationalisation. Rather than Norton Fitzwarren, the branch now began at Silk Mill Signal Box (nearer Taunton). A single-line section ran from here, utilising what had been the Up Relief line, to Williton. The next section was Williton to Blue Anchor and this was the last crossing loop on the branch. Dunster Signal Box was retained to control the level crossing, and Minehead Signal Box was closed. The previously double track from Dunster was then operated as two independent bi-directional lines. Ground frames controlled the points at Minehead to allow locomotives to run round from one end of the train to the other. The original turntable was removed from Minehead in 1967.

The double track from Norton Fitzwarren was reduced to one line on 1 March 1970 and the line was finally closed early in 1971; the last train left Minehead on Saturday 2 January and, on Monday, an enhanced bus service came into operation.

### 1.1.2 Heritage Railway

On 5 February 1971, a Minehead Railway Preservation Society organised a meeting in Taunton and a working party headed by Douglas Fear, a local business man, was tasked with investigating how the line could be reopened as a privately owned railway. In May, a new West Somerset Railway Company was formed to acquire the line and operate a year-round commuter service from Minehead to Taunton alongside which a limited summer steam service could also run. A deal was agreed with British Rail to purchase the line with the support of Somerset County Council, however the council was wary of the lucrative Minehead station site falling into private hands should the railway fail. Instead, it purchased the line itself in 1973 and leased back the operational land to the West Somerset Railway Company plc.

The proposed commuter service never materialised, due to traffic restrictions between the newly installed Taunton Cider Company sidings at Norton Fitzwarren and Taunton, but the line was slowly reopened as a heritage railway. Minehead to Blue Anchor was the first section to see trains restored, opening on 28 March 1976 and services were extended to Williton on 28 August the same year. Trains returned to Stogumber on 7 May 1978 and they reached Bishops Lydeard on 9 June 1979. A new station at Doniford Halt was opened on the coast east of Watchet on 27 June 1987 to serve a holiday camp at Helwell Bay.

In 2004, work started on constructing a new triangle at Norton Fitzwarren which included a part of the old Devon and Somerset line, and a ballast reclamation depot opened there in 2006. In 2008, a new turntable was brought into use at Minehead. A new station opened on 1 August 2009 at Norton Fitzwarren on a new site a short distance north of the main line.

During 2007 a regular service ran from Minehead to Taunton and Bristol Temple Meads on a couple of days each week. Known as the Minehead Express. It left Minehead at 11:10 and Bristol at 14:06 with Victra Westlink's Class 31s 31452 and 31454 powering the five coaches. 31128 was available as a spare locomotive but was not used on the service trains. These first ran on 20 July and operated on a total of 18 days, finishing on 27 August.

## 1.2 Rolling Stock

The preserved rolling stock on the West Somerset Railway is used to operate trains on the West Somerset Railway (WSR). There is a variety of preserved steam and diesel locomotives and diesel multiple units, passenger coaches and goods wagons. Most of these are typical of Great Western Railway (GWR) branch lines in Somerset, or of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway (SDJR). Some are owned by the railway itself but most are owned by various individuals or voluntary groups such as the West Somerset Railway Association (WSRA), Diesel and Electric Preservation Group (DEPG), and Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust (SDRT). The line is also regularly visited by locomotives based elsewhere. Some come for a day on a rail tour, others for a few days or weeks to take part in a special gala, but a few stay for many months and form part of the stock working scheduled trains. Over the years these have included well known locomotives such as City of Truro, Duke of Gloucester, Evening Star, Tornado, Britannia, Sir Lamiel and King Edward I.



## 2 Class 33

### 2.1 Class 33



The British Rail Class 33 also known as the BRCW Type 3 or Crompton is a class of Bo-Bo diesel-electric locomotives ordered in 1957 and built for the Southern Region of British Railways between 1960 and 1962. A total of 98 Class 33s were built by the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Company (BRCW) and were known as "Cromptons" after the Crompton Parkinson electrical equipment installed in them.

They were built with the ability to supply only the then new electric train heating rather than the ubiquitous steam heating which passenger carriages largely used. Early delivery problems and a shortage of steam locomotives resulted in many Class 24 locomotives being borrowed from the Midland Region and pairs, of 33 + 24, became common on Winter passenger services. This resulted in unpopular, complex run-round manoeuvres as Class 24 needed to be coupled inside to provide steam heat. Emergency provisioning of through-piping for steam heat on some examples of class 33 alleviated this somewhat.

The Class 33 were also familiar working inter-regional freight and passenger trains on the Western Region. 6566 was renumbered 33048 and 6575 became 33057 in 1973. The former spent most of its working life at Hither Green TMD from where it was withdrawn in 1995 but was retained for staff training until sold to a private buyer for preservation in 1997 when it moved to the WSR. It carries British Rail green livery with full yellow ends. 6575 was also based at Hither Green until 1985 after

when it spent time at both Stewarts Lane TMD and Eastleigh TMD; from 1991 it carried the name Seagull. It was withdrawn in 1997 and eventually sold to freight operator Direct Rail Services, however it was never put into traffic and instead was sold to a private buyer and moved to the WSR in 2005. It was intended to be a source of spares for 6566, however its restoration was started in February 2010. It also carries green livery but with the original half-height yellow ends.

## 2.2 Design & Specification

<b>TOPS Number</b>	Class 33
<b>Wheel Arrangement</b>	Bo-Bo
<b>Weight</b>	77 tonnes
<b>Height</b>	12ft 8in
<b>Length</b>	50ft 9in
<b>Width</b>	9ft 3in
<b>Bogie Wheel Base</b>	10ft
<b>Bogie Pivot Centres</b>	29ft
<b>Wheel Diameter</b>	3ft 7in
<b>Minimum Curvature</b>	4chains
<b>Engine Type</b>	Sulzer ALDA28A
<b>Engine Output</b>	1,550hp (1,156kW)
<b>Power at Rails</b>	1,215hp (909kW)
<b>Maximum Tractive Effort</b>	45,000lb (200kN)
<b>Design Speed</b>	85Mph (137km/h)
<b>Brake Type</b>	Dual A/V
<b>Braking Force</b>	35 tonnes
<b>Fuel Capacity</b>	750 gal
<b>Total Built</b>	98



## 3 6960 Raveningham Hall

### 3.1 Raveningham Hall



The origins of the Hall class began in 1922 after Chief Engineer C.B.Collett was asked to produce a 4-6-0 to replace the Mogul “43xx” class. To do this he came up with the idea of reducing the coupled wheel diameter of the “Saint Class” No 2925 Saint Martin from the original 6ft 8 inches to a smaller 6ft 0 inches.

Production began in 1928 and was a landmark in that from inception it was designed as a mixed traffic locomotive. Previously there was a belief that one class of engine should work passenger services and another would work freight. The Hall broke down this paradigm and paved the way for mixed traffic locomotives in Britain.

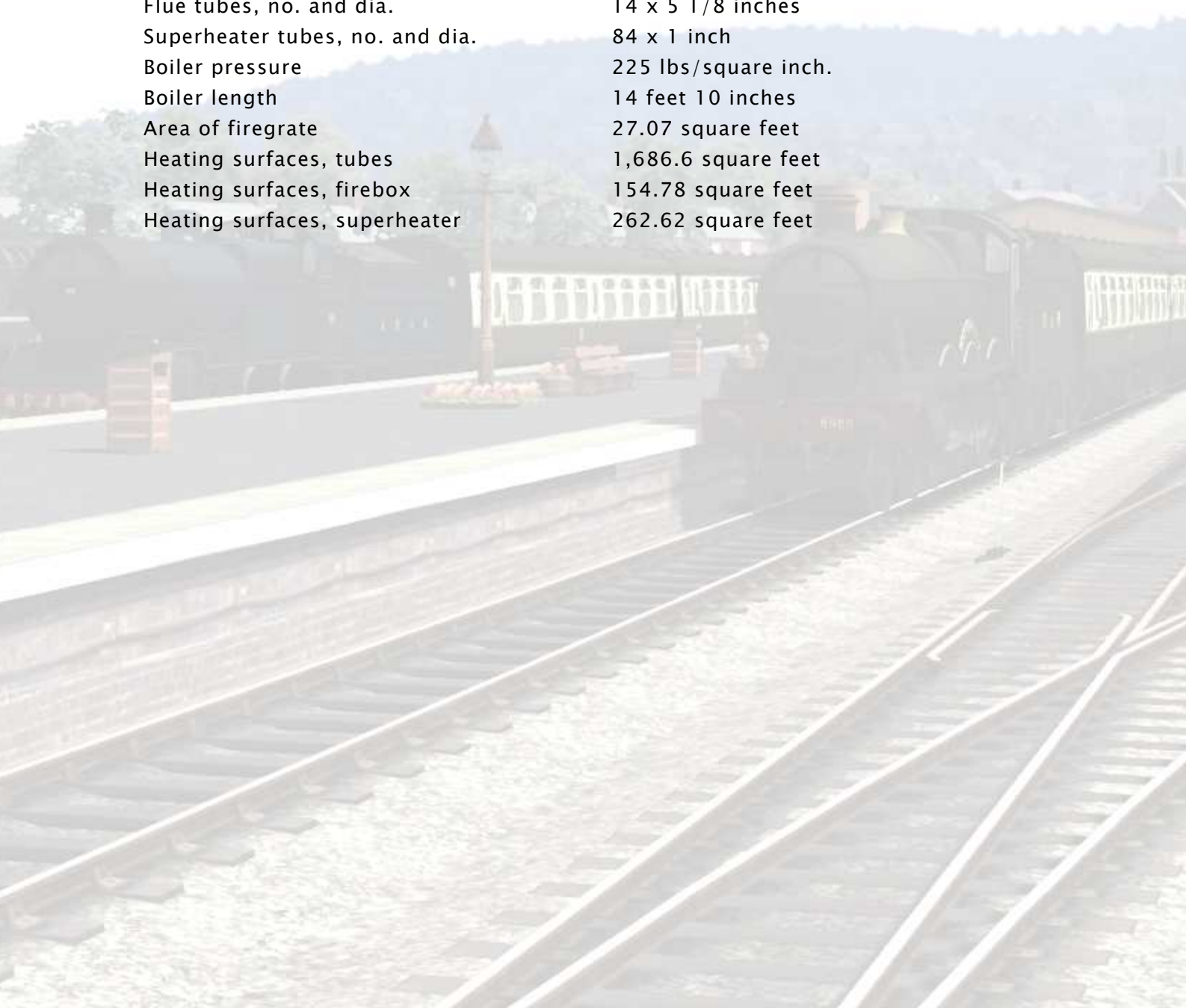
Shortly after initial production, an order for 80 locomotives was placed. These were fitted with spring compensating beams between the axles but these were later removed and subsequent Halls were not built with this feature. Halls continued production up to and including World War Two when Hall Nos 6916 to 6970 entered service without being named.

In 1944, F.W. Hawksworth developed the Hall class further by adding modifications to the frames, saddle, cylinders and often boilers. These changes evolved the Hall into the “6959” or “Modified Hall” class (6960 supplied in this pack). Withdrawals began in April 1959 when 4900 was condemned from Old Oak Common shed with the

last being withdrawn in December 1965. Eleven “Hall” locomotives and seven “Modified Hall” locomotives (inc **6960**) have survived into preservation.

### 3.2 Design & Specification

Cylinders	(2) 18 x 30 inches
Driving wheel diameter	6 feet 0 inches
Bogie wheel diameter	3 feet 0 inches
Tractive Effort	27,275 pounds
Boiler type	Number 1
Boiler maximum dia.	5 feet 6 inches
Boiler minimum dia.	4 feet 10 13/16 inches
Fire tubes, no. and dia.	176 x 2 inches
Flue tubes, no. and dia.	14 x 5 1/8 inches
Superheater tubes, no. and dia.	84 x 1 inch
Boiler pressure	225 lbs/square inch.
Boiler length	14 feet 10 inches
Area of firegrate	27.07 square feet
Heating surfaces, tubes	1,686.6 square feet
Heating surfaces, firebox	154.78 square feet
Heating surfaces, superheater	262.62 square feet



## 4 88 – Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway 7F 2-8-0

### 4.1 7F 2-8-0 - 88



The 7F design fulfilled the Somerset and Dorset's need for a powerful freight engines with relatively low axle weight. The first, No. 80, arrived at Bath in March 1914 and was immediately set to work on a series of test runs with heavy mineral trains over the line to Evercreech. These proved most successful and Nos. 81 to 85 entered traffic during the next few months.

Two batches of SDJR 2-8-0 mineral engines were built. The first batch of six locomotives was built to the design of Henry Fowler at Derby 1913. The locomotives were the first on the SDJR to feature outside cylinders and the Walshaerts valve gear (the cylinders were angled in order to clear platform edges). Their length, at 59ft 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in, proved to be longer than the turntables on the route! Subsequently, the tenders (which normally just carry the coal and water) were equipped with cab apparatus to alleviate operating issues. On delivery, each locomotive cost just £3,500 - that's about a quarter of the cost of most locomotives at the time!

In operation, these engines proved invaluable - they were reasonably fuel efficient and very reliable. They were equally useful for main line or branch line usage and pulled both goods and express passenger services.

The S&DJR had a number of these large locomotives based at Bath Green Park for working heavy freight trains over the Mendip Hills, but they also took their turn on summer Saturday passenger trains. Number 88 was built by Robert Stephenson and Hawthorns in 1925. After it had been taken into the London Midland and Scottish Railway fleet it became number 9678, but this was later changed to 13808 so its British Railways number was 53808. It then received a second hand boiler from Midland Railway 4P 4-4-0 41092. It was sold and moved to Woodham Brothers' Barry scrap yard in 1964, but was rescued by the SDJT in 1970. Their museum at Radstock was closed in 1976 and so their locomotives were moved to the WSR. 88 finally returned to steam in 1987; its boiler was last overhauled and

recertified in 2005. The blue S&DJR passenger livery that it carries is unprototypical - SD&JR goods locomotives carried a plain black livery by the time 88 was built.

## 4.2 Design & Specification

Cylinders	(2) 21 x 28 inches
Driving wheel diameter	4 feet 7.5 inches
Bogie wheel diameter	feet inches
Tractive Effort	35,295 pounds
Boiler type	G9AS or G9BS
Boiler maximum dia.	5 feet 6 inches
Boiler minimum dia.	4 feet 10 13/16 inches
Fire tubes, no. and dia.	176 x 2 inches
Flue tubes, no. and dia.	14 x 5 1/8 inches
Superheater tubes, no. and dia.	84 x 1 inch
Boiler pressure	190 lbs/square inch.
Boiler length	feet inches
Area of firegrate	28.4 square feet
Heating surfaces, total	G9AS: 1,681 sq ft (156.2 m2) G9BS: 1,845 sq ft (171.4 m2)

## 5 Mk1 Carriage Stock

### 5.1 Mk1 BG (Brake Gangway) – Chocolate and Cream



### 5.2 Mk1 BSK (Brake Second Corridor) – Chocolate and Cream



### 5.3 WSR Mk1 FK (First Corridor) – Chocolate and Cream



### 5.4 Mk1 RMB (Miniature Buffet) – Chocolate and Cream



### 5.5 Mk1 SK (Second Corridor) – Chocolate and Cream



### 5.6 Mk1 TSO (Tourist Second Open) – Chocolate and Cream



## 6 Freight Wagons

### 6.1 3 Plank Wagon



### 6.2 3 Plank Canvas Wagon





### 6.3 5 Plank Wagon



### 6.4 5 Plank Canvas Wagon



### 6.5 7 Plank Wagon



### 6.6 GWR Brake Van



### 6.7 GWR Van Brown

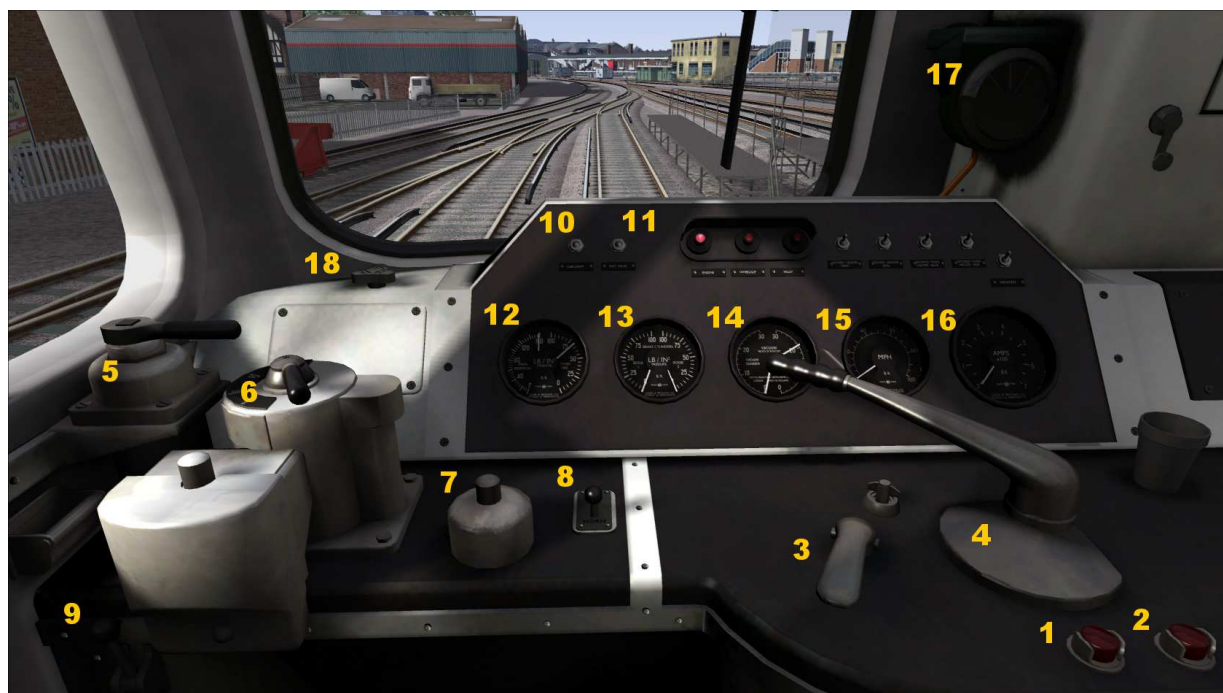


### 6.8 GWR Van Red



## 7 Driving the Class 33

### 7.1 Cab Controls



- |                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Engine Start Button     | 10. Cab Lights Switch             |
| 2. Engine Stop Button      | 11. Instrument Lights Switch      |
| 3. Reverser Lever          | 12. Brake Reservoir Pressure Dial |
| 4. Throttle Lever          | 13. Brake Cylinder Pressure Dial  |
| 5. Locomotive Brake Handle | 14. Brake Vacuum Pressure Dial    |
| 6. Train Brake Handle      | 15. Speedometer Dial              |
| 7. AWS Acknowledge Button  | 16. Ammeter Dial                  |
| 8. Horn Paddle             | 17. AWS Display                   |
| 9. Sander Control          | 18. Windscreen Wiper Switch       |

## 8 Driving the 7F Steam Locomotive

### 8.1 Cab Controls

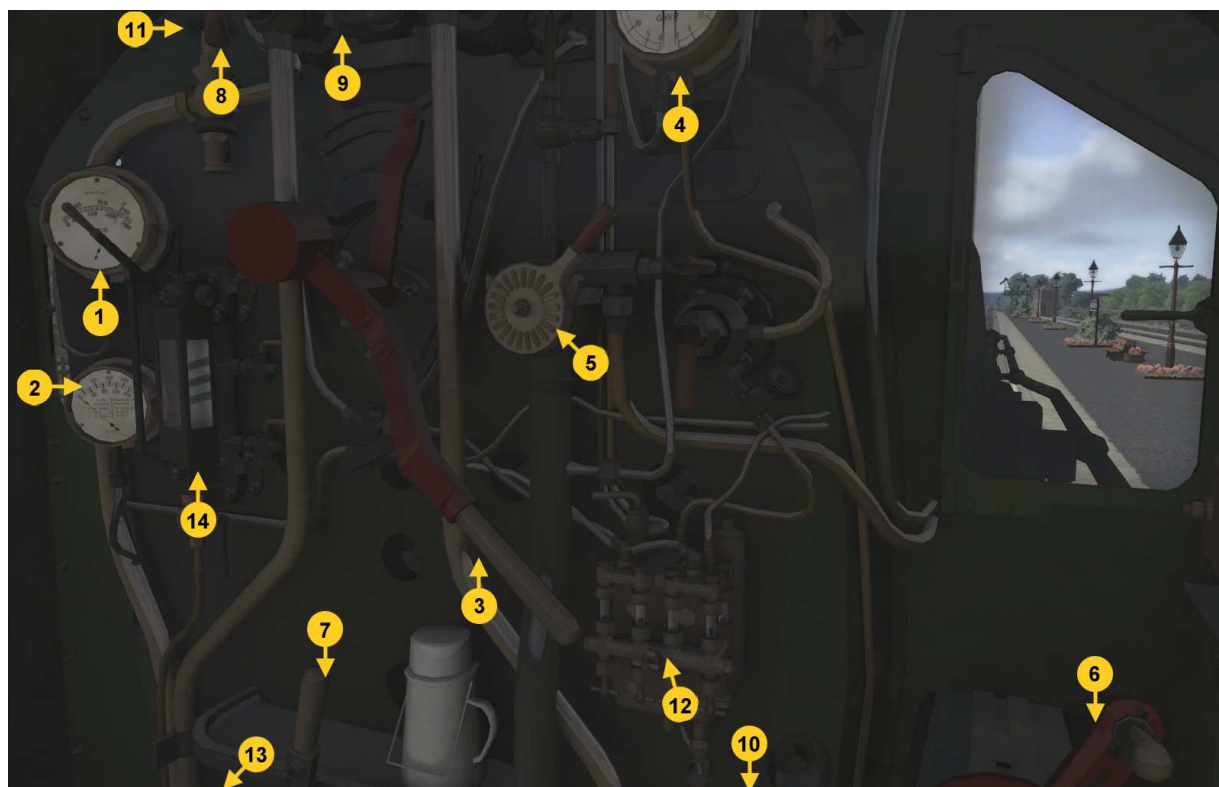


1. Steam Chest Pressure
2. Vacuum Pressure Dial
3. Boiler Pressure Gauge
4. Steam Heat Gauge
5. Small Vacuum Ejector
6. Reverser (Cut Off)
7. Regulator

8. Water Level
9. Train Brake and Large Ejector
10. Live Steam Injector – Steam Valve
11. Regulator
12. Blower Valve
13. Firebox
14. Dampers

## 9 Driving 6960 Raveningham Hall

### 9.1 Cab Controls



- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Boiler Pressure Gauge                | 10. Cylinder Drain Cocks     |
| 2. Steam Heat Gauge                     | 11. Instrument Lights Switch |
| 3. Regulator                            | 12. Whistle                  |
| 4. Vacuum Pressure Dial                 | 13. Dampers (on floor)       |
| 5. Train Brake                          | 14. Water Level              |
| 6. Reverser (Cut Off)                   |                              |
| 7. Firebox                              |                              |
| 8. Exhaust Steam Injector – Steam Valve |                              |
| 9. Live Steam Injector – Steam Valve    |                              |

## 10 Scenarios

### 10.1 WSR Simple Controls Introduction

Driving trains is easy. Learn how to control them in this quick introduction.

- **Duration**                    **5 Minutes**
- **Type:**                        Tutorial
- **Start Location**            Minehead
- **Locomotive:**            Class 33 BR Green / 7F SDJR Steam Locomotive

### 10.2 WSR: Fireman Training (Steam Controls)

In this tutorial you will learn how to drive a Great Western Railway Modified Hall.

- **Duration:**                **15 Minutes**
- **Type:**                      Tutorial
- **Start Location:**        Bishops Lydeard
- **Locomotive:**            GWR Modified Hall Steam Locomotive

### 10.3 WSR: Drivers Duties (Diesel Controls)

Learn how to drive the Class 33 with a short drive from Minehead to Dunster

- **Duration:**                15 Minutes
- **Type:**                      Tutorial
- **Start Location:**        Minehead
- **Locomotive:**            Class 33 BR Green Diesel Locomotive

### 10.4 West Somerset Railway

Enjoy the glory of the West Somerset Railway as you pass through the summer fields and gentle coast breeze driving a train from Bishop Lydeard to Williton. Driving the GWR Hall Steam locomotive hauling a full rake of Mk1 coaches packed with enthusiasts. Take in the sights and sounds as you wind through the countryside.

- **Duration:**                35 Minutes
- **Start Location:**        Bishops Lydeard
- **Locomotive:**            GWR Modified Hall Steam Locomotive

### 10.5 Santa Special

Departing from Watchet, drive the Prussian Blue 7F to Minehead conveying festive families and their presents home for the holiday period. Experience the line during its winter period as light snow fall completes the scene.

- **Duration:**                35 Minutes
- **Start Location:**        Watchet
- **Locomotive:**            7F SDJR Steam Locomotive

## 10.6 By the wayside

Drive a freight train along the line from Williton to various crews working at maintenance sites during a quiet weekday afternoon. Piloting Class 33 D6566, haul the various supplies to each crew before storing the wagons back at Bishop Lydeard.

- **Duration:** 35 Minutes
- **Start Location:** Wilton
- **Locomotive:** Class 33 BR Green Diesel Locomotive

## 10.7 A Summer Spin

Crowds have gathered to see the West Somerset Railway in all its glory. Picking up the GWR Modified Hall in the shed at Minehead, your first task is to reverse it out of the station and return to the turntable. Rotate the locomotive to face the correct direction and then manoeuvre it onto the front of a waiting train. Once ready, take the train forward to Williton

- **Duration:** 60 Minutes
- **Start Location:** Minehead
- **Locomotive:** GWR Modified Hall Steam Locomotive

## 10.8 Watchet for the Storm

Tranquil fields and quiet villages have been replaced by the storm that has blown in from the Atlantic. Frantic residents are relying on the railway to provide vital transport links to local towns after many trees have fallen, blocking roads all over the country. Departing Williton, convey frightened locals along the line to Minehead, but, watch out for the storm's fury as you approach the coastline.

- **Duration:** 60 Minutes
- **Start Location:** Bishops Lydeard
- **Locomotive:** 7F SDJR Steam Locomotive

## 10.9 The Quantock Belle Special

Starting at Bishop Lydeard, you are to run a luxury dining train to Minehead. Consisting of 4 coaches, the train is not the concern, but given the busy line and changeable weather, keeping to timetable will be your main concern. Start by shunting the train to the right platform at Bishop Lydeard.

- **Duration:** 90 Minutes
- **Start Location:** Bishops Lydeard
- **Locomotive:** Class 33 BR Green Diesel Locomotive



## 11 Signals and Signage

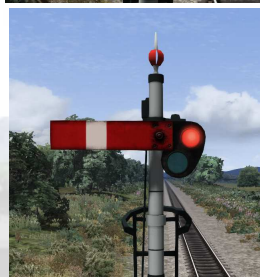
### Signals

These signals appear on the Somerset and Dorset route.

#### Home Signals



The line ahead is clear.



The line ahead is occupied.

#### Distant / Warning Signals

These signals come before the Home signals, and give a warning about what the Home signal is displaying.



This display indicates that the Home signal is showing the line ahead is clear.



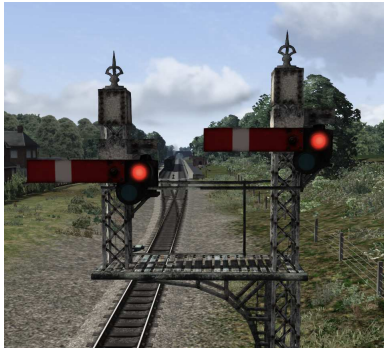
This display indicates that you should be prepared to stop at the next Home signal

### Junction Signals

The taller signal indicates the main route, with the lower signal indicating a diverging route. There are also ‘warning’ versions of these signals.



This signal indicates that you should use the main route and the line ahead is clear



This display indicates that the line ahead is occupied on both routes.



This signal indicates that you should use the diverging route ahead and the line is clear.

### Ground Shunt Signals

These act like miniature semaphore signals. They indicate if a junction can be used.



In the diagonal position, the junction is clear and can be used. While in the horizontal position, the junction is not safe to use.

## Color Light Head Aspects



Colour light signals are used for controlling running movements. They display aspects by means of red, yellow and green coloured lights.

Signal Aspect	Description	Instruction to Driver
Red light	Danger	Stop.
Single yellow light	Caution	Proceed: be prepared to stop at the next signal.
Double yellow lights	Preliminary caution	Proceed: be prepared to find the next signal displaying one yellow light.
One flashing yellow light	Preliminary caution for a diverging route	Proceed: Be prepared to find the next signal displaying one yellow light with feather junction indicator for diverging route(s).
Double flashing yellow lights	Indication of diverging route ahead of the next but one signal	Proceed: Be prepared to find the next signal displaying one flashing yellow light.
Green light	Clear	Proceed: The next signal is displaying a proceed aspect.

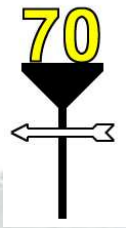
## 12 Speed Signs

### Signage

#### Speed Limit Signs



#### Speed Limit Signs with Directionality



## 13 Credits

Railsimulator.com would like to thank for the following people for their contributions during the development of The West Somerset Railway.

### Route Production

Adam Lucas  
Chris Linington  
Colin Ross  
Derek Siddle  
Edwin Thurston  
Gray Poyda  
Jeff Douglas  
Kevin McGowan

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### Scenario Production

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Stuart Galbraith

### External Contributions

Beta Forum Testers

