

Board appointments for West Somerset Railway

April 27, 2021



The Board of the West Somerset Railway has announced two new appointments, with immediate effect.

Bob Meanley is rejoining the board as Director (Mechanical Engineering). Bob has previously been a member of the Board until mid 2020, but stood down for personal and family reasons.

Bob is one of the foremost locomotive engineers of the preservation era, and was for nearly 25 years the Chief Engineer of Tyseley Locomotive Works. He oversaw the restoration and operation of much of the Tyseley fleet including Castle class 5043 Earl of Mount Edgumbe, and 7029 Clun Castle.

He was responsible for managing the restoration of many other mainline steam engines and Bob was also responsible for the 're-streamlining' of LMS 'Princess Coronation' Pacific 6229 Duchess of Hamilton for the National Railway Museum. In managing the operation of the Tyseley fleet he oversaw the operation of the Vintage Trains operation for nearly 20 years.

In 2020 at the HRA annual awards Bob achieved the annual award for services to railway preservation. In rejoining the Board, Bob will be monitoring all aspects of mechanical engineering and will be supporting

the mechanical engineering team in developing the locomotive fleet, and the mechanical engineering facilities.

John Gibbins is becoming Civil Engineering Adviser to the Board, with a view to joining as Director in the near future. John is a chartered civil engineer and his 45-year career has included project management at all levels up to projects of £100m. This work included a period in project management with London Underground.

Over the years he has been responsible for all aspects of project management culminating in leadership of very large complex projects. John has worked as a volunteer in the West Somerset locomotive department for the last 20 years and is now a driver (in passed fireman grade). Prior to joining the West Somerset he worked as a driver for 15 years on the Mid Hants Railway. On the Mid Hants he also managed the development of the Ropley yard and became a director of the Mid Hants PLC operating company for nearly 4 years.

John also had a significant role undertaking bridge inspections of all the brick arch bridges.

Jonathan Jones Pratt, West Somerset Railway PLC Chairman said: "With the addition of Bob Meanley and John Gibbins to the Board, we take a major step towards completing the key skills and experience which are essential for the Board of a Heritage Railway. Bob and John are well known to many around the railway and their highly experienced advice and guidance will be of very great value."

Photo credit: Tom Gulliford