



March
2019

THE TRUST'S AIMS

It is now almost two years since we had our first event in the redeveloped Goods Shed. Since then we have continued to improve the Goods Shed with cinema equipment, stage lighting, a café, and, not least, a Steinway piano. The total number of ticket sales has slowly increased although our trading income from events has yet to cover our operational expenses. We are very fortunate that the income from the café has helped to cover costs. We have had some memorably successful events and a few lows.

Some may have wondered how the Events team choose what sort of events will be put on and how often. The Trust's guidelines are that the Goods Shed should concentrate on arts and culture, leaving our sister organization, the Dolphins Hall, to cater for sporting and social events. However, engagement with the Community is a high priority for us and we aim to bring entertainment and the arts to all sections of the local population; we therefore consciously try to cater for the tastes of the young, the old and all ages in between. The Trust obviously aspires to bring high quality arts to Tetbury, without being elitist, and to have a balanced programme of events such that there is something for everyone with, hopefully, nobody being left out. It is this approach we hope that will eventually qualify us for Arts Council funding thereby allowing us to employ professionals to manage the running of the Goods Shed. In the meantime we must obviously consider how we can cover our costs while maintaining this balance. More events are not necessarily the answer as we can only ask so much of our volunteers and they do an awful lot already. The key is better marketing and advertising to ensure that we get more "bums on seats" at each event thereby maximising the return from limited resources. Friends of the Goods Shed can help by volunteering, making that extra visit to the Goods Shed to see a show and encouraging as many friends and acquaintances as possible to attend events. We are sure that all will enjoy it!

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUNDING

As announced in the last newsletter we are delighted to confirm that we have been awarded a £5,800 National Lottery grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This year is the one hundred and thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Tetbury branch line which finally allowed local people to explore beyond Tetbury with excursions being organised to Cirencester, London and the sea-side. Today only The Goods Shed survives from those days, saved and now restored as an arts centre by the hard work and dedication of local volunteers. With the Heritage Lottery Funding we can now collect memories from people who either worked on or used the Tetbury Branch line in the 1950s and 60s. These will form part of an audio history of the Branch Line and allow us to provide a more complete exhibition of the background to the site and highlight the whereabouts of major buildings.

Chair of the Trustees, Christine Berry, said: "We are delighted the National Lottery has given us this chance to expand our knowledge of the place of the line in our history and hope lots of people who remember using or working on the line in the 50s and 60s will come forward with their memories." We'd love to hear from anyone who has memories they would like to share as part of the project. If so do contact the Goods Shed at info@shed-arts.co.uk or call 01666 505496

The Heritage Lottery Fund exists to invest money in helping people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife, visit www.hlf.org.uk or follow them on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLottery.




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VOLUNTEER PRIZE WINNER JANUARY 2019

Gail Moss won the January cinema tickets draw. Gail has been helping regularly and keeping us amused in the kitchen and the bar since she joined us and deserves our thanks. When the café staff leave after their hard day in the kitchen we rely on our volunteers such as Gail to man the café hatch and serve the customers at our evening events with drinks and light refreshment. Our photo shows Ros Tildesley, our bar manager, with Beryl Champion manning the bar at a recent event.




WHISTLE STOP CAFÉ

The Whistle Stop Café is now a wholly owned subsidiary company of Tetbury Rail Lands Trust with its own board of directors who are Caroline Morgan, Will Cook, Karen Quaddy and Simon Rawlins. This arrangement allows the Trust to benefit from the profits of the café without endangering the Trust's charitable status or its assets. The café's profits are boosted by the wonderful work undertaken by many ladies (and some men!), including directors, who give generously of their time. It may not be glamorous work (however, look out for the forthcoming latest fashion in uniforms) but the volunteers' camaraderie and good humour shine through, even when the weather makes outside dining a challenge. We salute and thank all these selfless volunteers.





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RECENT EVENTS

After a relatively subdued Christmas and New Year Period we have now settled into a busy routine with some form of major event every weekend supplemented by our programme of cinema, talks and open mic evenings. On 25 January the very popular Jim Hannaway and Sarah Vernon hosted a Swing Jive dance which was well attended. On 26 January we were entertained by Kim Cypher and her jazz band. Kim is a sensational saxophonist as well as an exceptional singer and was much appreciated. The locally based Ninebarrow folk duo were with us on 2 February giving their usual accomplished performance. Our Wednesday evening talks are proving popular with both "Cooking with Physics" given by Peter Barham on 30 January and "Extinction of Bees" presented by Rosamund Portus proving very interesting and entertaining. Just before a scheduled performance on 8th February there was much consternation in the Event planning committee when they were informed that the pianist booked for the event, Clare Hammond, had been taken ill. With the help of friends in high places the situation was saved when the brilliant Japanese pianist Maki Sekiya was found to replace Clare. On 23rd February we were treated to a return to the Goods Shed of Le Swing. We didn't need to go to an expensive Parisian or London nightclub as Helen Marshall sang beautifully all the classics that we can all remember from our youths (assuming you are all my age!)



Kim Cypher and her band



Helen Marshall of Le Swing sings the favourite chansons of the Parisian nightclub scene.





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TEA CONCERTS

A series of Wednesday afternoon tea concerts organised by Will Cook in co-ordination with the café has been a great success. The concerts, aimed at raising money for the piano, are quite informal with Sasha and the ladies serving tea and buns while we have listened to classical and modern favourites played on the Steinway. With only a £2.50 entry fee and a chance to chat with friends, who needs the Ritz tea room? The performers have all given their services for free and we thank them very much for their generosity.



An appreciative audience at an afternoon tea concert in the Goods Shed.



EXHIBITION

SLIGHTLY SHEEPISH



Due to its popularity Mary Griesse's Slightly Sheepish exhibition has stayed on show throughout January and February. We are pleased to note that many of the paintings and prints have been sold with commissions going to help the work of the Goods Shed. If you hurry, there is still a chance to purchase a beautifully executed animal painting that you will be able to admire for the rest of your life.

Our exhibition stewards are perhaps the least mentioned of the unsung volunteers without which the Trust could not operate. We thank them all for doing what can be a lonely job on a wet weekday afternoon waiting to welcome visitors to the Goods Shed and its exhibitions.





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CINEMA CLUB

Recent films shown have included Rider, The Little Stranger, Crazy Rich Asians, Cold War, I Tonya, A Star is Born, Disobedience and First Man.

The popularity of the films is still somewhat hit and miss but we aspire to put on some artistic, interesting and though-provoking films as well as blockbusters. If you give some of the less well-known films a try, you will probably not be disappointed. A Star is Born unsurprisingly proved very popular but not as much as the imminent Bohemian Rhapsody which is already a sell-out.



EXERCISE TRAIL

In November we told you that the Trust and Tetbury Town Council had recently created an exercise trail along the Council owned section of the Tetbury Trail. This initiative to improve the health and fitness of the local community was the result of a proposal by Tetbury resident Geoff Turbott who also project managed the equipment installation.

There are 20 exercise stations in all. Ten 'stretch' stations are located together between the Goods Shed and the Malmesbury Road. The 10 stations with exercise equipment are located on the other side of the Goods Shed along the Tetbury Trail.

The cost of the exercise equipment has been funded by a grant from Gloucestershire County Council's "Growing our Community" fund that was approved by Tetbury's County Councillor Stephen Hirst. The Town Council are providing insurance cover for the exercise trail and are responsible for ongoing maintenance of the equipment.



The installation of the exercise equipment has not been covered by the GCC grant and the Trust is raising funds to cover these significant additional costs. Each exercise station has a sign with instructions for use. Individuals and local companies can sponsor the exercise stations and the name and logo of the sponsor will be displayed on each exercise station. Please see at the end of the newsletter who to ask for a sponsorship form.





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GOODS SHED GIFT COUPON

Don't forget that if you need a gift for your intellectual, discerning friends or relations, you can get a Goods Shed gift voucher. We can tailor a gift voucher for however much you wish to pay and whatever you wish it to be used for: event tickets, drinks, café, workshops, etc. Just contact Kathryn at the goods shed: office@shed-arts.co.uk, 01666 505496 (Thursday to Saturday).



PIANO FUND

We have had an indication from a charitable body that, if by May we can raise £17,500 of the £22,500 needed to complete the purchase of the Steinway B piano, it would provide the last £5,000. We are now hovering at about the £11,500 mark. If you have been hesitating up to now thinking that we can probably raise the money without you, please reconsider as we need to raise that £6,000 in the very near future. Do please consider funding one of the keys (£88) or just give what you can. Ask for a form at the Goods Shed or go our website where you can give on line.



FROM THE ARCHIVE

THE DIESEL YEARS

Stephen Randolph has kindly agreed to let us share his memories of the last years of the Tetbury Branch and has let us use a nostalgic photo of him as a 14-year old alongside one of the railbuses in use on the Tetbury branch from 1959-1964. (The railbuses were built by AC Cars Ltd, founded 1901 and famed for their sports cars!)

"I have great memories of Walter (Jim) Long, who appears in the Tetbury booking-on log from October '62 when he started as a railbus driver. In July '63 my younger brother Bill had a birthday party and we invited "Jim" and his guard Fred Harrison, who we had befriended on visits to the station office, to our house for tea and cakes. On the return trip to Kemble we rode in the cab, unpaying of course, and I was invited to try my hand at the controls! These were standard DMU-type and subsequently, on empty return trips, and there were plenty of those, I would ask Mr Long for further driving lessons. As the road and the railway are quite close together in places, he would stand in the small cab area with his jacket held over the side window to hide the diminutive driver from view! I don't recall how many times I did this, with Jim standing by my side, but the fact is I can still remember every detail of how to drive a diesel railbus to this day!

CONTINUED . . .





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FROM THE ARCHIVE

CONTINUED . . .

A week before the branch closed, the 7.30 from Tetbury was empty, so with lights out and Jim and Fred sitting on the cushions having a smoke, I drove the railbus solo from the terminus for seven miles, pulling up just short of the home signal for Kemble on the branch curve, where "Jim" took over again, a never-to-be-repeated experience for a fourteen-year-old. The railbus was W79977, the repainted one, which was cut up around 1968 after being used at Bodmin and finishing its days in Scotland. I remember "Jim" as very friendly but no respecter of the authorities, certainly as seen through a schoolboy's eyes. He lived up the station office with pictures of pin-up girls, which amazed a young boy from a sheltered background, and which would be covered over with railway posters if the station master from Kemble was doing a check visit to an otherwise uninhabited station. He would often cycle home with a pheasant in his bag which had been knocked down by a timely acceleration of the railbus; he would pick it up from the lineside on his next trip along the branch – locals were used to such delays! Although the driver's cab doors were locked when out of use, when in service the doors were held open by some twine as most of the drivers liked to converse with the passengers.



The author, then 14 years old, had added a few pieces of black crepe to the railbus drawbar, and is captured here, quite unaware, by the photographer. This railbus has survived, and twenty years later, has found its way to the Colne Valley Railway in Essex. Mike Farr

The railbuses had a fixed wheelbase, so that with that factor and the under maintained track, the ride on the branch could be lively, especially round the curves if speed limits were being ignored. Of course, it was a very different time then, and there was no will to develop under-used services for social as well as environmental reasons, otherwise the railbuses could have been perfected and used on a wide variety of secondary and branch lines. This had been done successfully in Germany, but I don't think BR was going to take lessons from the Germans! I wish I had taken more photographs – I only ever took one on my Brownie 127. How was I to know it would all disappear so quickly and finally? After closure, I used to walk back from school along the track, looking forlornly for signs of something having come down the branch during the day, but the rails remained rusted and they were finally lifted in July of '64."

VOLUNTEER NEWS

We always welcome new volunteers and there is something for everyone at the Goods Shed. If you can spare some time to help out please feel free to come to an event and ask any volunteer on duty how you can help; or contact the individuals below

Office - Christine Berry 01666 503076; Events - Jennie Horton 01666 503569; Bar - Ros Tildesley 01666 502882; Café - Caroline Morgan 01666 505744; Projects - David Walker 01666 500137; Cinema - Sally Battersby 01666 504473; Exhibition Stewards - Margaret Gibbs 01666 502622.

Contact us if you have any questions or wish to contribute to the newsletter: Kathryn Limoi, office@shed-arts.co.uk, 01666 505496 (9am - 5pm, Thurs-Saturday), or David Walker, opheliatheboat@gmail.com. 01666 500137, or visit the Goods Shed itself by the long stay car park - for satnav use GL8 8EY.

