WHEATHAMPSTEAD

The story of the wagon

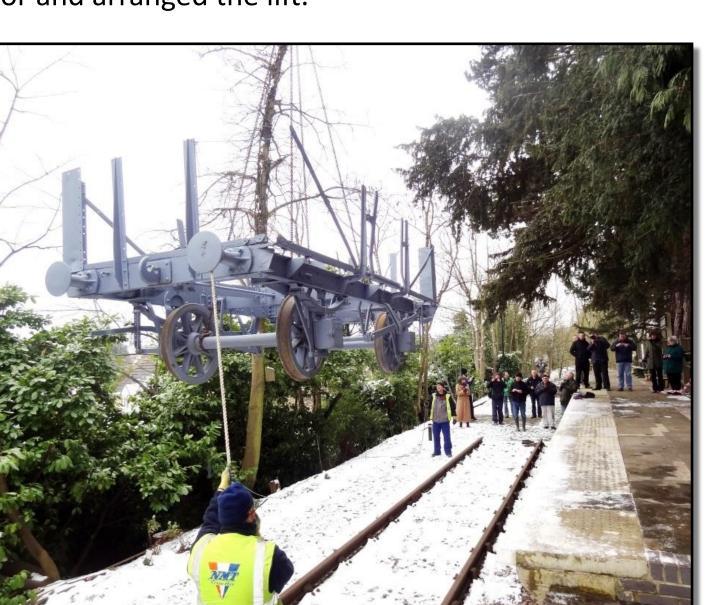


The nameplate on the wagon shows the number 118718. This tells us that it was designed and built in Swindon in 1931 for the Great Western Railway (GWR). Known as a "four wheel five plank open", it was one of the commonest types of wagon on the GWR and was used for carrying general merchandise or stone such as limestone or granite. When the railways were nationalised in 1948, it could have been used by British Railways anywhere in the country and

for any general purpose until it became redundant. It was later bought as a derelict by the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Ltd from whom we bought it, at Winchcombe in Gloucestershire, in 2012. Thanks to John Titmuss who paid for the wagon.

The first job was to strip off all the rotten woodwork and loose ironwork. This was done at the Winchcombe workshops so the bare frame could be sand-blasted to remove the rust and given two coats of priming paint with a rust inhibitor.

The wagon was then transported to Wheathampstead on a low loader and, on an exciting day in March 2013, it was hoisted by crane up over the trees and down onto the rails that we had laid in 2012. Thanks to T&B (Contractors) Ltd who paid for and arranged the lift.





Restoration

Once the wagon was on our site, work could begin. While we were working, it became apparent that many years of hard labour by the wagon had resulted in parts of the ironwork becoming bent and distorted so repairs were needed before the woodwork could be added.



The first job was to paint the ironwork. We applied two undercoats and an additional rust-proofing coat where it was needed (especially under the floor) plus two black topcoats. Each coat took about 50 man-hours to apply, the detail of the wheel spokes being particularly fiddly. The paint is made to a special BR specification for rolling stock.

Woodwork

Most of the planks are 7" wide by $2\frac{1}{4}$ " thick, with one in each section being 10½" wide. These were machined specially for this job since the sizes are no longer in standard use. We ordered 150 metres of planks, cut into suitable lengths. Each one of these had to be cut to shape to fit over rivets and distortions in the frame from years of work. Each plank was then given three coats of preservative with the painted sections having two preservative



coats, one undercoat and two topcoats. The lettering is protected with a coat of lacquer. The planks, most of which were paid for by our generous sponsors, are fitted to the frame using more than 250 bolts.

Technical information

The wagon specification

Origin: **Great Western Railway**

5 plank open wagon for general merchandise, granite or limestone Type:

Build date: 118718 **Serial number:**

12 tons (upgraded to 13 tons during World War Two) Load weight:

Tare weight: 5-16-3 (5 tons, 16 cwt and 3 qtrs.)

Wheelbase: 9 feet (axle to axle) Over head stocks: 17 feet 6 inches 7 feet 3 inches **Height from rail:**

Mechanisms

The ingenious coupling mechanism under the floor is designed to ensure that there was no strain on the main frame of the wagon. As you can see in the photograph, a single bar connects the hooks at each end, with a coil (or "helical") spring in the middle to absorb the shocks when the train stopped and started. This bar is completely detached from the frame of the wagon.



Also under the floor are four shock-absorbers, one for each of the four buffers.

As you can see on the wagon, there is a hand brake operated by a white handle on each



Sponsors and volunteers

The project team (Eddie Cornell, David Johnston, Patrick McNeill, Terry Pankhurst and Peter Ryan) would like to thank the many residents (too many to mention) who have helped us restore the site giving up their spare time, labour and expertise.

We would also like to thank (in alphabetical order) the following for their generous support for the platform and wagon restoration project:

Andrew Robley, Bertram Coates, Carl Sturges, Cutler & Woolf (Steel) Ltd, Dennis Toyer, Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway volunteers, Harpenden Recovery Service, Ian Scott Photography, John Burgess, John Titmuss, Michael Ward, Peter and Sue Holland, Richard Dawes, St Albans District Council, T&B (Contractors) Ltd, The Jarvis (Harpenden) Charitable Trust, Tony Budge, Wheathampstead & District Preservation Society (WDPS), Wheathampstead for Enterprising Business (WEB).

Wheathampstead Parish Council who own and maintain the site, and have given their full support to the project from the beginning.



Dedications

In order to raise sufficient funds to restore the wagon we asked Wheathampstead residents to sponsor individual planks. In all there were 35, each costing either £100 (end planks) or £60. We are grateful to these sponsors who have helped to make it a real community project and added a personal touch to the completed railway wagon.

Dedicated to the **Holloway Family** of East Mount

In Memory of

Charles & Marjorie Rowe

of Waterend

In Loving Memory of **Ralph Thomas Stoker** and Grace Lilian Stoker

Sponsored by **Brian and Joan Joyce**

Sponsored by **Annie Brewster Mayor of St Albans** City & District 2013-2014

In Memory of **Elizabeth Anne Johnston** 1920-1986

Sponsored by

Dr Mark Patten

Medical Director

In Memory of **Pat Robinson** (1930-2001) George Robinson (1926-2001)

Luton and Dunstable Hospital

Sponsored by

Edna & Ken Lark

For the **Duggett & Newland** families past, present and future. 2014

Plank 12

Sponsored by The Whiting Family

Sponsored by A D Practice Ltd.

Quality & imagination in the built environment

In Memory of **Gwen &**

Ernest Whitehouse

Who Loved this Village

Sponsored by

Sponsored by

Nic Homan and

Vicky Puttock

Sponsored by

Sponsored by

Corinne Heath

Sponsored by

Peter Day

Sponsored by **Joanne & David Davies** Sponsored by Kirsty O'Neil **Fuchsia Pink**

Sponsored by

Peter and Sarah Ryan

Hazel Poulter

In loving memory of **Alfredo Fernandes** Le Moulin (1910-2014)

Dusty Loves it Up Here!

Sponsored by

Paul, Hannah, Isabelle

and George Nichols

Sponsored by

Patrick and Jenny McNeill

Sponsored by **Peter and Jan Woodhams**

Judith Millac

Philip and Linda Halford

In Memory of

In Loving Memory of **Graham Lambert** (1929-2010) He loved to walk this path

1934—2012

In Loving Memory of **Frederick Stanley Bangs** Love Dave, Sue & Family

Sponsored by **Cassidy & Tate Estate** Agents, Wheathampstead

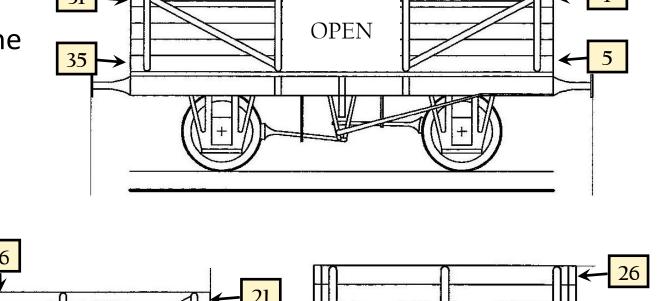
In Loving Memory of Sponsored by **Charles George Hearl** The Whitwoods: Norman, and Daisy Laura Hearl Jean, Jenni and Sophie

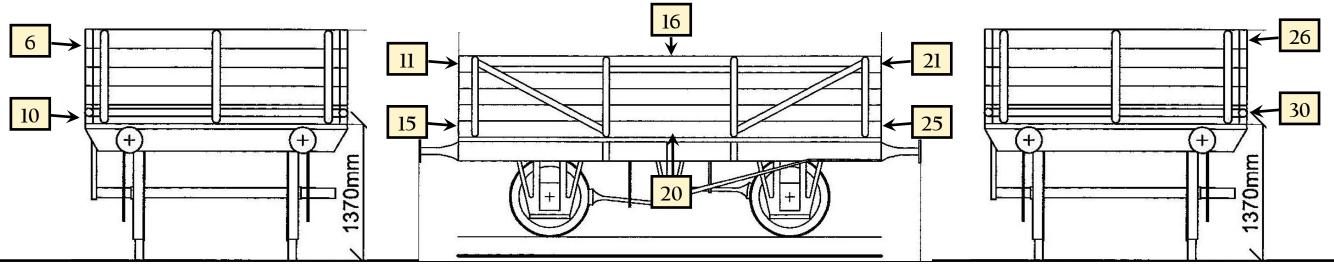
Sponsored by **Leo & Margaret Holloway**

Dedicated by **T. Brewster Georgina & Joseph Moore** Twin grandchildren. X

How to identify a plank:

Planks are numbered top to bottom beginning to the right of the open door and moving anticlockwise around and facing the wagon.







Complete restoration took 12 months.