



WEST OF ENGLAND MAINLINE

GOLDEN AGE DEVELOPMENTS





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FOREWORD

Thank you for downloading West of England Mainline: Phase 2

It has been over three years since work commenced on the West of England Mainline project. In that time, we have grown into an established team of Train Simulator developers with a wonderful community of fans and contributors. As of December 2023, the GAD team now consists of 12 people; our Discord server has over 950 members (with 1.9 million communications); our Facebook page has over 1250 likes (with almost 9000 people reached); our products have been downloaded over 100,000 times by well over 16,000 people. We have had the honour of working with other major developers of all kinds and expanding our skillsets to produce our very first rolling stock packs. The future is bright and we are excited to share it with the Train Simulator community.

Phase 2 is the culmination of many hundreds of hours of work by a variety of people, encompassing more than a doubling of route mileage, numerous enhancements and improvements to old work, various asset innovations, and a new standard of route building. *In particular, I'd like to credit Joe with leading asset development, Monty with leading signalling, Tom with building two branches, and Ash for creating much of our common library.* We thoroughly hope that it brings you many hours of enjoyment.

Thank you everyone for your encouragement and support along the way. Special thanks go to our donators, without whom the route surely would not have been possible.

Harry

Project Lead

INTRODUCTION

This route covers the roughly 51-mile section of track between Exeter Central and Yeovil Town (via Yeovil Junction), plus the 4.5-mile branch line from Seaton Junction to Seaton, and the 3-mile branch line from Chard Junction to Chard Central, and the 7-mile branch line from Axminster to Lyme Regis. This gives over 65 miles of west country railway lines, set in the late-SR to early-BR era (c.1940 to c.1956), but usable from the pre-grouping L&SWR up to the end of steam. In stark contrast to the line as it exists today, there are two tracks throughout the mainline, intersected by branch lines to various seaside resorts on the East Devon coast. Many stations are unrecognisable, with full station buildings, bay platforms, sidings, yards, and much more substantial facilities. Passenger services range from local stopping trains to top-link named expresses, with freight services ranging from start-stop local vans to heavy mineral through trains and important overnight newspaper trains. The route is intended to accurately depict the route with only minor embellishments for playability and minimal use of artistic licence. Scenery has been intricately placed to give the feeling that you are truly in Devon in the 1940s. The provision of numerous highly detailed custom assets has allowed us to faithfully recreate the many stations and locations along the line.

RELEASE STAGES

This release of the project is Phase 2, which includes the railway lines described above. Later phases planned to extend the mainline track towards Salisbury (Phase 3) and to add the remaining branch lines to the route. There are also possibilities to extend further West or East, but these are not currently planned. A long delay before Phase 3 commences is expected, to allow us to work on other projects and recover from burnout on this line.

MAINLINE

Phase 1: Exeter Central to Axminster

Phase 2: Axminster to Yeovil Junction

Phase 3: Yeovil Junction to Salisbury

ADDITIONAL

- Exeter: Central to St Davids branch (for banking)
- **Yeovil: Junction to Town and Pen Mill**
- Exmouth: Exmouth Junction to Exmouth, Tipton St Johns to Exmouth
- Sidmouth: Sidmouth Junction to Sidmouth (via Tipton St Johns)
- **Seaton: Seaton Junction to Seaton**
- **Lyme Regis: Axminster to Lyme Regis**
- **Chard: Chard Junction to Chard Town**

This is by no means an extensive list; however, priority will be given to the sections of track listed above. Each section of the route has numerous regular operations and huge potential for interesting and unusual events, meaning that you will most likely never be bored on the West of England Mainline.



Above: Phase 2 is highlighted in Green.

HISTORY OF THE ROUTE

The West of England Mainline was the London & South Western Railway's (LSWR) route between London Waterloo and Exeter Central (then called Exeter Queen Street) Since its opening in July 1860, it was in fierce competition with the Great Western Railway's (GWR) route between London Paddington and Exeter St Davids. Both lines continued west of Exeter towards Plymouth, where the LSWR line crossed the high-altitude regions of Dartmoor and the GWR followed the coast along the English Riviera before heading inland over the South Devon hills towards Plymouth. Even after dieselisation of the GWR route in the 1960s, the West of England Mainline still offered competitive journey times from London to the tourist destinations of the Westcountry. This account of the history of the line will focus on the section between Yeovil and Exeter.

PRE-GROUPING ERA

A railway between Salisbury and Exeter was first proposed 25 years before the construction of the line by the LSWR. The London, Salisbury, Exeter, Plymouth & Falmouth Railway was first to propose a line between Yeovil and Exeter, planning to build a railway starting at a junction near Basingstoke and running through Salisbury, Yeovil, Ilminster, Honiton and Exeter, before continuing through Plymouth and Devonport to Falmouth. However, this project did not get further than the planning stage. In 1845, more proposals were made for lines along this route, however all the bills failed. In the 1848 session an act for a railway between Exeter Queen Street and Dorchester was passed. There was, however, much debate as to whether the south western route should take a central or coastal route to Exeter. The coastal route (which was clearly anticipated by those who built the terminus at Dorchester pointing towards Exeter!) would have produced a line 10 miles longer than the GWR's broad gauge route between London and Exeter via Bristol, over significantly more challenging terrain. Both proposed routes converged between Axminster and Exeter, and it was the central line that was eventually built. After more than a decade of infighting, the LSWR promoted the Exeter & Yeovil Railway, beginning construction between Exeter Queen Street and a junction with the Salisbury & Yeovil railway near Bradford Abbas.

The first sod of the Exeter & Yeovil Railway was cut on 4th December 1856, at what would become the site of the portal of Crewkerne Tunnel, East of Axminster. Construction had, however, already begun without a ceremony at Honiton Tunnel earlier in 1856. There were three tunnels – Crewkerne Tunnel, Honiton Tunnel and Blackboy Tunnel (Exeter) – in addition to many major embankments and cuttings. Construction of the line was finished in 1860, with subsequent inspections taking place before the line was officially opened on 19th July 1860. People from towns along the line came out to celebrate the opening, with a 20-coach train of South Western directors and officials travelling along the route for the occasion. The engineer and chief promotor of the line, Joseph Locke, lived just long enough to see the line open, dying two months later on 18th September 1860. The Axminster to Honiton section of the line was originally constructed with two tracks, however floodwater from the River Axe had breached the line between Seaton Junction (then Colyton) and Axminster, necessitating the imposition of a single line. Honiton to Axminster – a distance of around 10 miles – was provided with two tracks to account for the slow ascent up Honiton Incline by heavy trains. The double track section was not re-implemented until a few days after the opening of the line.

The rest of the 49 miles between Exeter and Yeovil was single track, with passing places and some infrastructure and earthworks built for the potential future provision of a second track. The second line was provided as traffic increased, with trains also extending from Exeter Queen Street to the broad-gauge Exeter St Davids. On 1st May 1861, a double track section between Exeter Queen Street and Exmouth Junction (formerly Topsham Junction) was opened in conjunction with the Exmouth Branch. On 26th June 1861, the track was doubled between Chard Road and Axminster. Soon after, on 27th September the second track between Honiton and Whimble was opened. Similarly, on 27th January 1862 the line between Crewkerne and Chard Road was doubled, completing a section of double track 32 miles long. On the same day, a connection was made between Exeter St Davids and Exeter Queen Street. Doubling was resumed in 1864, opening the section between Topsham Junction and Broad Clyst on 5th April 1864. Further doubling occurred between Yeovil Junction and Sutton Bingham on 1st August 1864 and between Whimble and Broad Clyst on 18th March 1865. The section between Sutton Bingham and Crewkerne was doubled on 1st June 1866, completing the doubling of the line between Exeter and Yeovil.

The Exeter to Yeovil Line was gradually connected to other places by a number of branches opened during the pre-grouping years, mostly to connect with coastal towns in the East of Devon. The Chard Branch, which interfaced with the GWR branch to Chard from Taunton opened on 8th May 1863. The Seaton Branch, between Seaton Junction (formerly Colyton) and Seaton, opened on 16th March 1868. On 30th October 1871, a new station was opened east of Exeter at Pinhoe. On 6th July 1874, a branch line was opened between Sidmouth Junction and Sidmouth. Some years later, a branch was opened from Axminster to Lyme Regis. This occurred after many failed attempts to connect the town with the seaside resort, with the line finally being opened on 24th August 1903. In the following years up to the war, the line was steadily invested in – infrastructure was strengthened, stations rebuilt and sidings were opened. Notably, Exmouth Junction shed and concrete works were established before the commencement of World War I. During the war, there was an increase of traffic (despite the relative lack of major War Department sites), mostly due to troops travelling between port towns on the south coast. Munitions were also delivered from the Thames estuary to naval bases beyond Exeter.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY ERA

Upon the grouping of Britain's railways set out in the 1921 Railways Act, the West of England mainline was controlled by the Southern Railway's Western Division. After the First World War and around the time of the Great Depression, some stations on the line were downgraded and lost their stationmaster as a cost-cutting measure. An overarching feature of the grouping years was the gradual loss of traffic to short-haul freight and local bus services, the latter of which could deliver passengers directly to town centres, unlike the inconveniently sited stations on the railway. However, the Southern Railway had

clearly realised the importance of this route, as it enacted several major infrastructure projects on the line during its short tenure.

Between 1923 and 1928 there were a number of developments at Exmouth Junction. A new engine shed was opened in 1927, with a mechanical coaling plant in 1928. Sidings were also provided to facilitate the marshalling of trains and eliminate light engine movements by freight trains between Exmouth Junction and Exeter Queen Street. Exmouth Junction concrete works – which eventually provided a great deal of prefabricated concrete infrastructure to the entire Southern Railway network – was enlarged in 1928. One of the most important infrastructure projects of the grouping era was the rebuilding of Exeter Queen Street between 1927 and 1933. Provided were a new track layout, platforms and signalling; these being completed early on, followed up by new station buildings and footbridges. Finally, on 1st July 1933, 'Exeter Central' station was formally opened, finishing the upgrading and renaming of Queen Street. Another major infrastructure project was the rebuilding of Seaton Junction station in 1929, providing it with two through roads and a new yard and branch platform. Even after this expansion, the West of England mainline was still bereft of passing places, with only two stations at which faster trains could overtake slower trains between Exeter and Salisbury.

There were several other changes to the line during the grouping years. Aside from various small modifications to sidings, stations and signalling, there were a few industrial openings during this era. Express Dairies opened a milk depot at Seaton Junction in 1934, soon followed by United Dairies, which opened their milk depot at Chard Junction in 1937. In 1938, a siding was opened at Poltimore (near Pinhoe, next to Poltimore Brickworks) by the Ministry of Supply to service a grain silo installed at the same location. Of course, the Second World War of 1939-45 had a profound impact on the line, even though there were no significant military barracks on the line between Yeovil and Exeter. Government coal dumps were established in 1940 at strategic locations along the route. The route suffered from a lack of sidings to house empty stock during the 1940 evacuations first of soldiers from France and then children from London. An army camp was established at Honiton, increasing both passenger and freight traffic to the station in this period. During the Exeter blitz, the railway stations were fortunately mostly unscathed, although many station staff and residents sheltered in St Davids Tunnel at the height of the attack, fearing for their lives. At Pinhoe, a siding was opened by the Ministry of Food in 1943 to relieve food from the ports which were vulnerable to bombing. That same year, a connection was made between the GWR line to Weymouth and the SR line between Yeovil Junction and Yeovil Town at Yeovil South Junction, to facilitate diversions when the GWR line was blocked.

The overall effect of the war on the 1945-47 period was a running-down of everything from machines to the permanent way itself; trains were slower and more crowded due to the loss of stock and many staff members had enlisted to fight in the war never to return. However, spirits were gradually raised by the introduction of the new Bulleid Pacific locomotives. There is little doubt that the Southern Railway would have fully recovered and subsequently prospered in post-war Britain, however this wasn't to be as the railways were nationalised in 1948, only three years after the end of the war.

BRITISH RAILWAYS AND BEYOND

Immediately after nationalisation, the British Transport Executive enacted a number of changes to the 'territory' of each region of the new national railway company. The West of England mainline fell under the authority of the Southern Region of British Railways (BR), as expected, however many interfacing lines did change hands. However, in practice, little changed operationally. Most of the significant changes to the route happened in the 1960s, once money-saving was the most important priority of the railways, as we shall see shortly.

In the 1950s, only some small changes were made to track and signalling. A storage siding was provided for Pye Storage Ltd opposite Poltimore sidings in 1953. In the post-war economy, as restrictions such as rationing were lifted, passenger and freight traffic steadily increased. The permanent way was slowly repaired and then improved, which facilitated the re-raising of speeds and

the introduction of more commercial traffic. The modernisation plan of 1958 did not select the Exeter line for electrification, but diesel multiple units were to be allocated to the route. Diesel-electric locomotives were to haul passenger and freight trains on certain workings, for example the Lyme Regis branch. However, by the early 1960s, private car ownership was beginning to diminish passenger levels, and lorries were taking freight traffic from the line.

In what would become the fatal blow for the West of England mainline's status as a principle rail artery, the Western Region took over control of the line on 1st January 1963. Two months later, the infamous Beeching Report was published, sounding the death knells for many branches and stations on the line. The stations at Pinhoe, Broad Clyst, Sidmouth Junction, Seaton Junction, and Chard Junction were recommended for closure as well. All the branches except for the Exmouth branch via Topsham were earmarked for closure in later proposals. Beeching saw no value in the commuter traffic around Exeter, nor the large number of holiday trains to destinations along the route and beyond. In the years up to 1967, these stations and branch lines were closed, although some reopened or were re-sited in later years. These closures were a common sight across Britain at this time, however the true decimation of the line came in 1967 when a fifty-mile length of track between Sherborne and Pinhoe was singled, with only two passing places provided along this stretch. The consequences of this move were dire, reducing the train service to an absolute minimum with increased journey times. The new Western Region stock were prone to failure and the tokenless block signalling proved unreliable. A small victory was secured when the section between Yeovil Junction and Sherborne was re-doubled shortly after singling, however much of the route remained a shadow of its former self. Only recently (2009) has significant work been done on the line, with a dynamic loop opening around Axminster to facilitate a clockface hourly train service.

THE FUTURE

We delve now into the realms of hearsay and as-of-yet undelivered proposals. Firstly, a new 'dynamic loop' at Tisbury has been proposed, extending along an extant section of disused double track towards Dinton and into the platform at Tisbury. A loop at Whimple has been proposed to enable the 'Devon Metro' plan for twice-hourly trains between Exeter and Axminster. An additional loop east of Crewkerne is proposed to allow an hourly diversionary train from Exeter to Yeovil in addition to the present hourly service. Requests for full permissive working (allowing joining as well as splitting of trains) at Yeovil Junction have been made, allowing for more carriages east of Yeovil.

Of course, in a perfect world the double track would be restored for the entire length of the route, however this seems exceedingly unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.

STOCK GUIDE

We are fortunate that many locomotives and stock that could be seen on the West of England mainline are available to buy and download for Train Simulator. The following is not an exhaustive list and should be treated as a suggestion rather than a rule. We have only provided information for the intended eras; however, the route is mostly accurate for the entire period from 1930 to 1965.

SUGGESTED STOCK LIST

Here is a list of stock that would be appropriate on the route. This list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive – it is just a suggestion of what stock could prototypically be used on the route, with a weighting towards typical Southern diagrams seen from pre-grouping to the late-1950s. Stock for the GWR sections of the line is not included here. The list is only up to date as of December 2023.

BMG SR Merchant Navy
BMG SR/BR Light Pacific
BMG BR Rebuilt Merchant Navy
BMG BR Rebuilt Light Pacific
BMG SR V Schools
BMG SR S15

CW SR U
CW SR L1
CW LSWR T9
CW LSWR T3
CW LSWR T14
CW LSWR N15
CW LSWR M7
CW LSWR Adams Radial Tank
CW LSWR A12
CW LSWR 700
CW LBSCR D1
CW LBSCR H2
CW/GAD LSWR 6 Wheel Carriages
CW/MT LSWR Carriages 3&4
CW/MT LSWR Ironclad Carriages 1&2
CW/GAD SR Luggage Vans
CW/BW SR 40T Ballast Hoppers
CW/GAD Flat Wagons
CW/GAD Grouping Vans
CW LSWR Wagons
CW Private Owner Wagons 1&2
CW SR Wagons 1-3

Marketplace/MT Bulleid Carriages 1-3
Marketplace/MT Maunsell Carriages 1-4
AP Mk1 Carriages (with GAD freeware enhancement)
VW SR Q1
SSS/MT LSWR Carriages 1&2
SSS Departmental Wagons

Abbreviation	Company
BMG	Bossman Games
VW	Victory Works
MT	Matrix Trains
CW	Caledonia Works
SSS	Steam Sounds Supreme
AP	Armstrong Powerhouse
SLC	Steam Locomotive Collection
GAD	Golden Age Developments
BW	BW Productions

REQUIREMENTS

PAYWARE

[Riviera Line](#)

[Riviera Line in the 50s](#)

[Weardale and Teesdale Network](#)

[West Highland Line: Extension](#)

[Western Lines of Scotland](#)

[Woodhead Line](#)

[Settle & Carlisle](#)

You will need to buy and install all the payware requirements in order to get the intended experience.

FREEWARE

All freeware is included in the package. See notices on the website for whether any are out-of-date.

SCENARIOS

To be inclusive of those who have smaller collections of DLC, the scenarios provided with the route will use a significantly restricted list of stock. Certain scenarios may require extra items, but the following is a good baseline. **Please check individual scenario requirements in the scenarios.txt which comes in the route distribution.**

- [BMG SR Light Pacific](#)
- [CW SR U Class](#)
- [CW LSWR M7 Class](#)
- [CW LSWR T9 Class](#)
- [CW LSWR N15 Class](#)
- [CW LSWR Wagon Pack](#)
- [CW SR Luggage Van Pack](#)
- [MT Bulleid Pack 01](#)

Most scenarios don't require any extra stock, but some do (especially different eras/regions).

It cannot be understated that more scenarios will come in the future!

	01. 0740 Yeovil Town to Ilfracombe	02. 1422 Lyme Regis to Axminster Return	03. 1000 Plymouth to Brighton	04. 1904 Exeter Shunting	05. 1020 Sidmouth to Exeter Central	06. 0815 Chard to Chard Junction Return	07. 1456 Chard Junction to Yeovil Town	08. 0805 London Paddington to Plymouth	09. 1621 Axminster to Lyme Regis Return	10. 1340 Devon Belle	11. 1601 Axminster to Yeovil Junction pick up goods	12. 1636 Christmas Eve Parcels	13. 1016 Meldon Quarry to Tonbridge Ballast Train
Default Requirements													
BMG SR Light Pacific													
CW SR U Class													
CW LSWR M7 Class													
CW LSWR T9 Class													
CW LSWR N15 Class													
CW LSWR Wagon Pack													
CW SR Luggage Van Pack													
MT Bulleid Pack 01													
Extra Requirements													
CW LSWR Adams Radial Tank													
DTG Castle Class													
MT Collett Pack 01													
CW LBSCR D1 Class													
GAD/CW LSWR 6 Wheel Coach Pack													
MT/SSS LSWR Carriage Pack 01													
MT/SSS LSWR Carriage Pack 02													
BMG SR Merchant Navy Class													
MT/SSS Post-war Pullmans Packs 01&02													
CW LSWR A12 Class													
CW T3 Class													
CW LSWR 700 Class													
CW Private Owner Wagon Pack 01													
CW SR 40T Ballast Hopper Pack													

A matrix of scenario requirements for the first 13 scenarios.

INSTALLATION

To install the route:

- Unpack to contents of the .zip file into a temporary location.
- Right click the installer PART 1 and click 'Run as administrator'.
- If the installer doesn't automatically detect your Train Simulator directory, click 'Browse' and navigate to the correct location.
- Confirm the final operation to complete the installation.
- Repeat for installer PART 2 (assets) and PART 3 (route).
- Go into Train Simulator and clear your cache.
- You should now have successfully installed the route.

This version deletes and overwrites the old route and some asset folders. If you want to save the old version on your machine, **clone or make a backup** first.

Golden Age Developments does not take responsibility for any damage caused to your system as a result of downloading and installing our product.

NOTES

GRAPHICS AND PERFORMANCE

- The route is designed to be viewed with **full scenery density** and **procedural flora off**
- Armstrong Powerhouse (AP) skies are optional but highly recommended
- The route looks its best, in our opinion, at 10:00am on 06 07 (Summer) with AP Fair Cloud
- A template for RWE Pro is provided with the route so you can reproduce our settings

SPEED LIMITS

Speed signs are the SR style, with a Δ indicating a speed restriction commencement, and a T indicating a termination. Drivers are expected to know the location and speed of each restriction.



The overall speed restriction on the route is 85 mph for loco-hauled passenger stock and 60 mph for fitted freight. Diesel multiple units are allowed up to 75 mph. You should not exceed 15 mph when on crossovers, loops, sidings or any other deviation from the mainline.

Permanent speed restrictions (as indicated by the aforementioned Δ and T boards) always override the 85/75/60 mph speed limit. The speed limit on the Seaton branch is 50 mph. Chard branch is 50 mph. Lyme Regis branch is 25 mph. Yeovil Town branch is 40 mph. Yeovil Pen Mill branch is 55 mph.

SIGNALLING

We have transitioned to our own signalling, utilising AndiS scripting. These signals are advanced and we will not offer support to those trying to learn to use them in scenarios or their own routes. **Signals in free roam scenarios will not fully work for this reason. You may have to draw up to signals before they clear, if they clear at all.** Sadly, this is a limitation of Train Simulator. However, we think the change was worth it for the far more prototypical running opportunities that AndiS signals provide.

QUICK DRIVES

We have curated a large number of quick drive scenarios, for blank, 1947 & 1955 years. Try them out!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GOLDEN AGE DEVELOPMENTS

Many members of the team have helped with various aspects of the route.

COLLABORATORS

Valued members of the community who have offered help and expertise.

BETA TESTERS

For giving up their free time to test the route and scenarios.

DONATORS

Without whose contributions the route would not have been possible.

OUR FANS AND FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For their constant encouragement, positive reception and enthusiasm about the project.

EVERYONE ELSE

I hope that everyone who has helped the project or simply followed it and contributed their enthusiasm.

REFERENCE LIST

Irwell Press – Track layouts, history, operations, information
Signalling Records Society – Signalling diagrams
Middleton Press – Reference photographs
Ian Allen Publishing – Reference photographs and history
Hugh Longworth – Carriage information for scenarios
National Library of Scotland – Historical maps
Google Maps – Present-day maps
Flickr – Reference photographs
The Transport Library – Reference photographs
RCTS Photographic Library – Reference photographs

USAGE

TERMS

- Please do not re-host or redistribute in any way this route or any of the included assets/reskins/scenarios or modifications thereof without written permission from Golden Age Developments.
- The route and assets included in this package may not be used in any payware, donationware or subware content without written permission from Golden Age Developments.
- Do not create or publish any freeware (excluding scenarios or original routes) aliasing or including any work produced by Golden Age Developments.
- If this route is used in a YouTube video or any other streaming/showcase platform, please provide a link to the Golden Age Developments website.
- You must also comply with the Dovetail Games EULA.

Contact us or find more content on <https://www.golden-age-developments.co.uk/>

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