

Great Western Society Limited **Job Details for Operations Manager**

The Great Western Society was formed in 1961 to preserve the spirit and style of the Great Western Railway and now has one of the finest collections of railway locomotives, rolling stock and other artefacts in the country. Indeed it can be considered a collection of National Importance. The collection of 20 locomotives and 40 coaches and numerous wagons is housed at Didcot Railway Centre and represents a comprehensive range of vehicles used by the Great Western Railway during the 20th Century, plus a few from the 19th Century.

The Society took up residence at Didcot Railway Centre in 1967 when it became obvious that it needed a permanent home to keep the locomotives, carriages and wagons it had already acquired. The Railway Centre is based around the original 1932 Engine Shed built by the Great Western Railway during the depression years which with the adjacent water tower and coal stage is now a Grade 2 listed structure. Subsequently further land has been acquired beyond and beside the engine shed and the area has been gradually developed to include and incorporate structures from the Great Western Railway from the earliest days of railways with a recreation of Brunel's Broad Gauge Railway of 1840 up to the end of steam on the railways in the 1960s. Indeed it is possible at Didcot Railway Centre to trace the development of railways and other related aspects over 125 years through the history of one company – the Great Western Railway.

Since arriving at Didcot the Society has continued to enhance the collection both of rolling stock and smaller artefacts and now has one of the most comprehensive collections in existence. This effort continues. It has built a Carriage Shed to house and restore all the coaches in its collection and a Locomotive Works where locomotive restoration is carried out. There are three demonstration running lines one of which is fully signalled, a Museum to house the collection of smaller artefacts, print and publicity and a Science, Learning and Railways (SLR) facility to demonstrate to our younger visitors the background to railways.

The current membership of the Society is circa 7,000 and there are in the region of 300 regular working volunteers who provide the mainstay of much of what has been achieved.

In recent years, the Society has started to pay particular regard to the educational importance of its work and how this may be interpreted for the benefit of our visitors, members and education institutions. The SLR facility has been developed in conjunction with local schools and we are now embarking on the provision of work experience opportunities for students at the Railway Centre.

The Society is about to embark on the major development of its 20 acre site and buildings to improve access and provide further attractions and facilities for visitors and the corporate market. It is positioning itself to prepare a Heritage Lottery Fund application for future development and the challenges of maintaining our listed buildings.

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The Great Western Society (GWS) through its Board of Directors is responsible for the overall management of activities at Didcot Railway Centre. It is supported in this by Great Western Preservations (GWP) who are custodians of the locomotive and rolling stock collection and by the Great Western Trust (GWT) who are responsible for the collection of smaller artefacts.

Didcot Railway Centre is a registered museum, dedicated to recreating the golden age of the Great Western Railway. It is typically open to visitors for 200 days each year, which includes every weekend. There are around 80 steam days when visitors can enjoy rides in our original carriages pulled by a variety of GWR locomotives. These range from our popular Days Out with Thomas events through family activity days to days more aimed at the railway enthusiast.

The Centre also has retail activities in the form of a shop, restaurant and railway related trading, which includes hiring out locomotives, rolling stock and facilities and operating railtours on the mainline. The Centre's facilities are available for a wide range of special events, including private parties, corporate functions and commercial filmings. There are also public dining trains for special events such as Valentine's Day.

As Operations Manager you will be responsible to the Railway Centre Manager for the management of a team of paid staff and volunteers for the administration, day to day operation and general maintenance of the Railway Centre which will include the following:-

- provision and management of paid staff and volunteers required to achieve the Railway Centre programme.
- provision of locomotives, rolling stock and facilities required to achieve the Railway Centre programme
- compliance with legislation and insurance requirements.
- procurement of supplies/services, utilities, materials and equipment for the day to day operation and maintenance of the Railway Centre.
- hiring in locomotives and rolling stock.
- arranging the movement on and off site of all locomotives, rolling stock, supplies, materials and equipment.
- disposal of waste including the movement off site when required.

You will also be personally responsible for the following:-

- the preparation of an input for Railway Centre operations to the annual budget.
- conducting an annual performance and salary review for the permanent employees who report direct to you.
- deputising for the Didcot Railway Centre Manager.

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The following experience is considered essential: -

- leading, managing, training and motivating a team of staff associated with railway operation
- performance assessment and resource management skills.

The following experience is considered desirable:-

- knowledge of heritage railway operation, procurement management, risk management, health and safety requirements.
- dealing with Train Operating Companies and Network Rail.
- computer literacy and planning skills.
- financial management and control.