

THE AGE of steam came alive for a group of Kyrle Probus members and their wives last week when they experienced a journey on the Dean Forest Railway heritage line between Lydney Junction and Parkend.

A gloomy morning had been replaced by glorious sunshine by the time the Probus group stepped into their coach at Norchard high level platform. As the train pulled away from the station, drawn by a GWR 4575 Class locomotive, built in 1928, the travellers were served a cream tea by the welcoming volunteers of the Dean Forest Railway Society.



The nostalgic noises of steam train travel came flooding back as it made its way along the forest railroad to its first stop at Whitecroft station, where it took on water. Whitecroft station was recently restored by the DFR Society and includes a former GWR signal box that once stood at Codsall in Staffordshire.

Then it was on to Parkend, the end of the line, where the locomotive turned round to couple up to the opposite end of the train for the journey back down the line to Lydney Junction, calling at Whitecroft, Norchard and Lydney Town on the way.

Here locomotive no. 5541 repeated its manoeuvre of going from one end of the train to the other, to take its passengers back to Norchard, where they could explore numerous railway artefacts from yesteryear in the DFR Society museum.

The four-and-a-quarter mile route between Lydney Junction and Parkend was part of the former Severn and Wye Railway, which ran from Lydney to Cinderford. The DFR Society, bought the trackbed and line from British Rail in 1986. It now plans to extend the line from Parkend, a further two-and-a-half miles to the disused station of Speech House Road at Cannop and eventually through to Cinderford.