

WEARDALE RAILWAY : NEWS UPDATE : No.17

24 APRIL 2009

No 40 RECERTIFICATED & SOON TO BE BACK IN SERVICE WITTON LE WEAR CROSSING GATES INSTALLED

May13th : TRAIN SERVICES CANCELLED FOR HMRI INSPECTION SPECIAL

- **Easter Weekend** : The Easter weekend was blessed with good weather which had a very positive effect on passenger numbers and on takings in the shop, the café and also on board the Griddle Car which was operated on the Sunday. Credit to all those involved on the trains, in the depot and at the stations. Operating the Easter Sunday service needed a total of nineteen volunteers plus the ever valuable services of the Junior Club members. (K Hillary, G Mudd)



Two satisfied customers in the Griddle Car on Easter Sunday (Photo : J Askwith)



A busy scene at Stanhope Station on Easter Sunday with the Classic Cars on display (Photo : J Askwith)

- **Message from the Trust Chairman** : The Sunday gang had 8 members at work on the 20th April clearing the north side of the line between bridges 4 and 4a. These are the new bridge on which the A68 passes over the railway and the old A68 bridge in the village of Witton-Le-Wear. Clearance is needed because of the footpath which rises up and over the embankment. We hope to put the new 'chipper', mentioned in the last update to use next weekend and start on the South side of the embankment. (K Hillary)
- **Trackwork to Bishop Auckland** : The weekday work gang are making steady progress in clearing back the vegetation and clearing sight lines on the line between Harperley and Witton le Wear, but, as ever, more volunteers would be welcome. All you get in return is a free ride on the Wickham trolley from Wolsingham and the satisfaction of helping to reopen the line towards Bishop Auckland. Contact details in the box below. Additionally it is planned to begin sleeper replacement at Broken Banks next week. (G Lord, M Westerfield)

The tasks involve track maintenance and vegetation clearance. If you can play a part in making Railway history please contact Steve Race the day before you want to volunteer on 07918-777932. He will provide you with details about the location of the work taking place. .

- **Getting to Bishop Auckland – the work you don't see** : As well as the physical effort involved on the track there are many other tasks to complete to meet our midyear target to be able to operate trains to Bishop Auckland. Dave Payne, the BARS group Safety Manager reports that the application for safety certification and authorisation is about to go in to the HMRI, he is also preparing the Application to the ORR for an extension of the Licence Exemption for the new sections of line and compiling a new rule book. Meanwhile, Steve Bissell and John Lampard are compiling the data and surveys for the four level crossings involved with assistance from Trust volunteers. (D Payne, S Bissell, T Hewitt)

- **No 40 passes its inspection :** After the low pressure test mentioned in the last Update, full pressure (180psi) was raised on the 6th April and the loco moved a short distance under its own steam. Then on 9th April the official inspection took place with the loco again in steam – this was satisfactory and the loco is now cleared for use up to the end of October 2012.
- **No 40 : the next steps:** After the inspection, trouble shooting to remedy some minor defects and leaks was carried out and repainting of the loco in its final livery continued. The livery, which was decided earlier in a competition, is to be BR lined black with additionally the Weardale Railway crest (colour version) flanked by letters ‘W’ and ‘R’ on each tank side, with ‘No 40’ on the bunker sides. As this edition is compiled the first of a series of running tests is taking place within depot limits. After these tests the loco will be handed over to the Company for its Fitness to Run examination, on completion of which it will be ready to enter service.



April 6 : No 40 at full pressure and blowing off at 180 psi.
(both photos : T Hewitt)



April 9 : No 40 re-certificated : happily wreathed in steam
the guys who made it happen : George Richardson, Reg Kemp, Keith McInally and Norman Swindle.

- **Weardale Railway Junior Club model railway donations :** The Club has received some generous donations recently for its Model Railway which is on Display at Stanhope Station at weekends and has received excellent publicity in several local Newspapers. Ken Hewitt of Marske has donated an entire layout: track, loco's and rolling stock. Martin Allnutt of Carlisle and Arthur Pratt of Stanhope have both donated Locomotives. (M Wilkinson)
- **Junior Club : Future events :** Junior Club members contributed a total of 30% of the volunteering hours for the Railway in February. In recognition of their performance over the last year an award will be given to the top four achievers on May 9th – a free trip to London courtesy of National Express East Coast. The four youngsters are :- Jordan Parker, Jack Ellwood, Daniel Brown and Jonathan Ravenhill. (M Wilkinson, D Million)
- **What is the Railways email address?** There has been some confusion recently as to what is the correct email address for the company. On our current timetables it is given as enquiries@weardale-railway.org.uk - this is correct address. However on some older literature and posters it is given as enquiries@weardalerailways.com an address registered several years before. At the moment all email traffic sent to the ‘.com’ address is automatically forwarded to the ‘.org.uk’ address, but the ‘.com’ address may expire at some point so is best avoided. (F Holmes).
- **HMRI inspection set for May 13th . :** The next phase of the inspection process will be the visit of the Railway Inspector on May 13th to check on the work done so far to improve the track and sightlines and give his recommendations for whatever further work is required. He has asked to use the DMU 141 for this purpose – the scheduled services between Wolsingham and Stanhope will be cancelled on that day. (G Lord, M Westerfield)

- **New volunteering opportunities :** In quieter times tickets can be issued on the trains but now we are approaching our summer season we need to staff the ticket offices at Stanhope and at Wolsingham on a regular basis. D Million is compiling a list of volunteers to help with this task. In this regard it is good to be able to announce that the railway is to introduce Credit Card facilities for payments at Stanhope for the shop, café and ticket office. (D Million, N Wilbraham, T Hewitt)

If you would like to help in the ticket offices at Stanhope and Wolsingham please contact David Million. (01388-747683 / 07711-017980 david.million@wrjc.org.uk)

- **Witton le Wear Crossing Gates in Place :** Earlier this week the two crossing gates were put in place at Witton le Wear. Some work remains to be done on the east gate, namely putting in place the tensioning wire and mesh. The next steps are to install the flashing road lights and rehabilitate the crossing keepers cabin. (MWesterfield, G Lord)



A view of the two gates newly installed at the Witton le Wear level crossing looking east. The nearest gate is 21ft in length , the far one 35ft. (Photo : David Scott)



Looking west a couple of days later with the tensioning and mesh in place. Shouldn't that signal be at 'danger' now? (Photo : T Hewitt)

- **WRCIC Board Meeting :** There will be a Board meeting for the Company on April 28th at Bishop Auckland to review progress and plans for the Railway. This will be the first Board Meeting since the Local Council reorganisation in which the new unitary Durham County Council will hold a 12.5% share (alongside Weardale Railway Trust : 12.5%, British American Railway Services : 75%). (G Mudd.)
- **Disciplinary Policy :** In order to comply with current legislation governing volunteers, the Trust Board at its last meeting adopted a proposed Disciplinary Policy. If you want to see a copy please ask Peter Shields on :- pshields@citysun.ac.uk
- **Can you help publicise the Railway? :** John Askwith is still looking for volunteers to man a promotional / advertising stand at the following marketing event:-

Local History Event

Saturday 16th May 2009

Location: County Hall, Durham

Contact : (john@askwith02.fsnet.co.uk / Tel : 01325 462 253

- **Funding obtained for volunteer training courses :** Funding has been obtained from Bishop Auckland College to hold a second Traffic Management course for Crossing Keepers (the first was oversubscribed) and for other courses to be announced shortly. (A Temple) Contact Dave Million to register for the Traffic Management Course.

- And finally :-



One down and seven to go. A montage of posters promoting this years special events.
Design and Photo : J Askwith

Edited by G C Mudd : 24 April 2009

Please send your contributions, comments, questions, photos etc to : gcmudd@ntlworld.com

