

WEARDALE RAILWAY : NEWS UPDATE : No.19

2 JUNE 2009

BISHOP AUCKLAND : NETWORK RECONNECTION ON JULY 4th AUGUST DEADLINE FOR FINAL INSPECTION OF LINE

- **May Special Events** : Would you believe it! Two years in a row, the weather for our Teddy Bears picnic has been glorious and the event on Sunday 24th May was once again a great success. The first train of the day, (our 141 DMU), was full to capacity. All the later trains were operated by the Class 73 with the coaching stock and griddle car operational. Overall attendance was excellent with everyone seeming to have enjoyed the day. Provisional figures look to be up on last year in terms of passenger numbers and incomes. (I Gardner)
- **HMRI Visit** : The inspection took place on the 13th May and was completed satisfactorily. The 141 DMU travelled from Wolsingham to within a half mile of Bishop Auckland then came back the length of the line to Stanhope before returning to the depot. The railway was asked to make a further progress report at the end of June and then arrange for a full inspection of the completed works in Early August. Further time will be needed to finalise the Level Crossing orders for the Witton le Wear and Engineman's Terrace crossings – but the full line should be ready for train operation by the end of the third quarter of the year. (M Westerfield)



73139 hauling the coaching stock across Broadwood bridge on May 24th. (Photo : J Askwith)



The picnic field at Bondisle, Stanhope on May 24th, the day the Teddy Bears had their picnic. (Photo : J Askwith)

- **Trackwork news : Wolsingham – Bishop Auckland:** The really good news is that Network Rail have notified us that they will reinstall the turnout at Bishop Auckland on the weekend of July 4th, thus reestablishing our connection with the Network . Meanwhile the ballast regulator has been employed to clean out the sleepers as far as Etherley Viaduct ready for the considerable re-sleepering work needed to ready the line for regular traffic. A team from elsewhere in the BARS group is planned to be engaged to help with this work, which could involve the replacement of around 4,000 sleepers. The first 3 miles of track has been checked and the sleepers marked out for replacement as required. Work should also start in the next week on upgrading the level crossings to the required standard (M Westerfield, G Lord)
- **No 40 : The work continues** : Painting is now well underway – black undercoating has replaced the grey primer - next comes four coats of gloss followed by the lining out of the tanks and bunker. Work is also underway preparing the engine for a full test by the Trust's expert prior to handing over to the Company – hopefully ready for service later in June. (T Hewitt)

- **Trust Chairman's update :** I wish to thank all involved in preparing for and running the activities on the Teddy Bears picnic event – special mention to the two bears (aka : Mike and Jordan). Also a special mention to Norman Crockett for providing the model loco cum collection box which is located in the shop at Stanhope. This has proved to be a regular and significant contributor to funds for the restoration of No 40. (K Hillary)
- **Sunday Gang :** In preparation for upcoming work to remedy the track profile at Broken Banks 'landslip' site (Nr Bishop Auckland) the Sunday gang have cleared back the vegetation on each side of the track – this will also enable the placing of a monitoring facility to check for any further movement. In future weeks the gang will return to maintain the current operational section between Wolsingham and Stanhope, (K Hillary, G Lord)



The 141 passing Enginemans Terrace Crossing on May 13 visit of the Railway Inspector (Photo : D Scott)



Two bears spotted at Wolsingham answering to the names of Mike and Jordan. (photo : J Askwith)



Poster for Morris Minor Rally (23 August)

- **Group visits :** There is a significant increase in the number of group visits this year This has continued the trend we have seen over the month of May. In the week beginning May 18th we had three coach trips visit the railway. The week started with a private charter for a group from Merseyside, followed on Wednesday by a group from Epsom coaches, and finally a visit on Saturday from the travel company Inside Track. Both Epsom Coaches and Inside Track have visited us in the past so hopefully we will see even more of them in the future. (I Gardner)
- **Junior Club Award Winners London Visit :** The group travelled First Class to King's Cross and in addition to seeing some of the sights of the capital the group also visited the RAF Museum at Hendon, Hamley's toy store and London St Pancras International Eurostar Terminal. A further three juniors will be offered a similar experience during June as part of the Junior Club award scheme. (D Million)



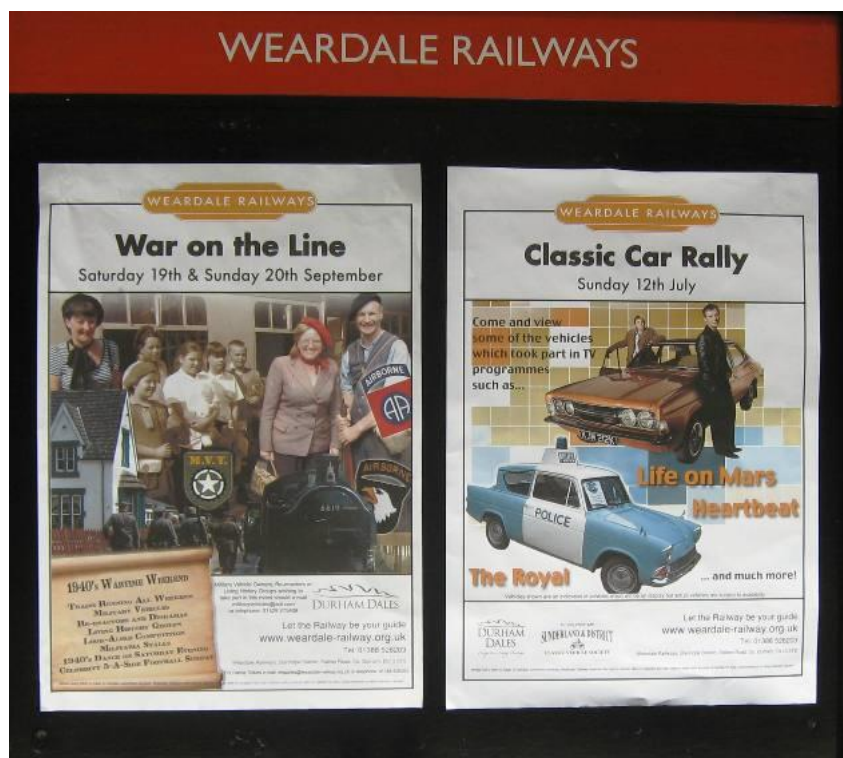
The Junior Club Award winners outside Buckingham Palace L-R : Jonathan Ravenhall, Jack Ellwood, Jordan Parker and Daniel Brown (Photo : D Million)



On the train – First Class – en route to London (Photo ; D Million)

- **Update from Catering Manager, Kath Wood :** We are seeing a steady increase in party enquiries. After catering for a Silver Wedding Anniversary last month we have had further enquiries for birthday parties on the train. We also recently hosted a party of 30 for lunch at Stanhope Station. I am pleased to welcome to 2 new volunteers, Jean and Joan, have come forward to give assistance in the cafe. Both are from Billingham and have husband/son volunteering elsewhere on the railway. As we go into the summer we will need more volunteers than ever. Each weekend for the car rallies and War on the Line events we will be opening the cafe from 7am through to 7pm as the participants in these events will be camping from the Friday to Sunday evening. We are seeing a steady increase in party enquiries. After catering for a Silver Wedding Anniversary last month we have had further enquiries for birthday parties on the train. We also recently hosted a party of 30 for lunch at Stanhope Station.

CATERING : THANKS AND A PLEA. Our Catering services provide a significant income to the railway and are part of the 'railway experience' for our guests so first I must give huge thanks to Wendy, Dawn, Judith and Geraldine for their great efforts over the last few busy weekends in the cafe, and to Joan Carrick for serving the cream teas on Easter Sunday and for manning the picnic table on the field at the Teddy Bears Picnic last Sunday - only the 2nd year for this but another hugely successful event! I make no apologies for putting out further pleas for more volunteers, particularly those persons who are willing and able to act as cooks during service and those who can knock together a fantastic cake or two! **Kath Wood**



- **Forthcoming Events : War on the Line : Sept 19, 20th : Call for Help :** Advance planning is well underway on this which is our largest event in terms of organisation and numbers. So, if you can help on either or both of these days please send in your names and contact details to either Kevin Hilary or John Askwith. For Trust members who have to travel, camping facilities will be available on the Bondisle field next to Stanhope station.
- **Do you Twitter? :** The editor is informed that if you a Twitter or Facebook aficionado and you search for 'Weardale Railways' you will find that the railway is represented.

- **Marketing news : Are you able to display one of our event posters?** To enable us to continue to grow and attract more visitors can you put up a poster at work for example, or can you drop one in at your local library or shop. If you are willing to help in this way, we can arrange for posters to be available for collection at Stanhope station or we can send a copy in e-mailable format for you to print out yourself. The more we can get the word out about the railway the better. Finally from me for now, whilst it may seem a long way off, Santa Specials leaflets are available now, with tickets going on sale shortly. If you wish to help in any way with the marketing of the railway, please get in touch. I can be contacted at sibgard@aol.com (I Gardner)

Edited by G C Mudd : 2 June 2009

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