

WEARDALE RAILWAY : NEWS UPDATE : No.28
8 NOVEMBER 2009

No 40 BACK IN STEAM ON SANTA SPECIALS
WEARDALE RAILWAYS AND UK COAL ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR A
COAL LOADING FACILITY AT WOLSINGHAM
HMRI INSPECTION OF FULL LINE IN JANUARY 2010

- **PROJECT CONNECT 1 : BROKEN BANKS – WORK COMPLETED** : The longstanding blockage caused by subsidence of the trackbed at this location between Escomb and Bishop Auckland has now been rectified. As mentioned in previous updates, the profile of the trackbed has now been restored and the last step, the relaying of ballast and re-profiling was completed over the last 3 weeks. This was the last major operation in getting the track ready for inspection. The location will still need continual monitoring as subsidence at this point has been occurring since at least British Rail days and probably longer. The Company has engaged a geological engineering consultancy to recommend suitable long term remedial measures at this location.



The WRT 'Dogfish' wagons being put to use at the work location at Broken Banks in November (A Gregory)



The Sentinel shunter en route to Escomb on a works train. (Photo : A Gregory)

- **PROJECT CONNECT 2** : By early December only 3 more days of re-sleepering remain to be completed by the team from BARS affiliate RMS Locotec. The team estimate they have replaced close to 3000 sleepers over the last 3 months. Some work remains to be done on fencing and signage needs to be put in place. Meanwhile work in the yard is well underway in preparing the site for a coal loading facility. The depot has been cleared of surplus or non serviceable stock – three of the original sidings have been removed and one newly positioned siding relaid. This will make room for one long siding to accommodate the coal wagons for loading from an adjacent pad. As part of the project additional land has been leased from the adjacent landowner for the extended loading siding.
- **HMRI INSPECTION** : The newly restored and reopened section of line from Wolsingham to Bishop Auckland will receive its inspection in January – currently scheduled dates are 25th, 26th January. The Inspection is carried out by Her Majesties Railway Inspectorate –a division of the Office of the Rail Regulator. The first scheduled passenger train will be the February 19th UK Railtours charter from Kings Cross to Stanhope.
- **DATE FOR THE DIARY : DECEMBER 28** : aka 'WORK THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING OFF DAY' : Join fellow enthusiasts and volunteers at Stanhope station on of December 28th from 10.00 am until 3.30pm . To give you a flavour here is what John Askwith said last year "It was a good days work which included leaf clearing, strimming and bulb planting, dismantling the grotto (Junior Club) and friendly banter to boot! Thanks to Nigel in the café for the soup kitchen keeping the workers suitably fuelled.



A view looking towards the main shed with the ground prepared for the new siding extension –leading from the rear of the main depot shed) The effects of the recent spell of wet weather are evident. (Photo : A Gregory)



Looking in the opposite direction (towards the road) with the first section of track in place. The red brick building will be demolished to allow the loading siding to be extended. (Photo : A Gregory)

- **COAL TRAINS FROM WOLSINGHAM** : The first step in the process of formalising the arrangements to transport coal from Wolsingham depot to power stations further south was announced this week. A public exhibition will be held in Wolsingham Town Hall on Monday 14th December. The coal would come from the recently approved development at Park Wall North between Crook and Wolsingham - the site has the capacity to produce 1.27 million tonnes of coal and 500,000 tones of fireclay over 5 years.. The ability of the Weardale Railway to assist in moving the coal by rail will greatly reduce the environmental and community impacts by reducing highway usage. The announcement is shown below.

WEARDALE RAILWAYS AND UK COAL

are holding a Public Exhibition as part of the consultation on their draft proposals for a **TEMPORARY COAL DISPOSAL POINT AT THE FORMER WOLSINGHAM STEELWORKS**

at

Upstairs room of Town Hall Wolsingham

on

Monday 14th December 2009

Between 3.00pm - 8.00pm

Please come along to see and discuss the plans

- **AGM** : There was a good attendance at the Annual General Meeting held in Stanhope on November 14th. Members were updated on the Trust finances, membership and the work done on No 40. There were six vacancies on the Trust Board and as there were also six nominations they was no requirement for an election. Mark Westerfield gave an overview of the Companies achievements and the plans for the future. A full report will be included in the next 'Between the Lines'



After the AGM, trust attendees were given the opportunity to travel on the 13.30 hrs departure from Stenhope which was specially extended through Harperley to McNeils crossing. The left photo, taken on the day, shows the remains of one of the platforms at Harperley and the other shows the vegetation growth near Harperley in 2005 with some of Sunday Gang peering through the trees. (Photos : J Askwith)

AGM : Honorary Vice President : As mentioned in a recent update the Trust Board had agreed to appoint Wilf Hume of Frosterley to this position. At the meeting, Chairman Kevin Hillary said “This is in recognition of your distinguished career in Weardale and your support for the Weardale Railway in particular. We were especially pleased that you were able to attend the opening day of service of our steam locomotive and it was a pleasure to see four generations of the Hume family on the occasion of your footplate ride on no 40 on August 1st We recognise also that you were for some years Secretary to the Council in Stanhope in which role you were instrumental in organising a group to go down to London to successfully canvas those in power to bring the cement works to the dale . We hope to see you riding the line again on many future occasions – including perhaps our inaugural run to Bishop Auckland. Wilf made a wonderful speech in reply in which he said it was an honour to be presented with such recognition at the age of 97 – He thanked all the volunteers for their efforts and their personal acts of kindness and hoped, if he is spared, that he can still be riding the line after he attains his 100th birthday.



Trust Chairman Kevin Hillary presents Wilf Hume with the certificate commemorating his appointment as Honorary vice President. (Photo : J Askwith)



Wilf on the special AGM train to Harperley (J. Askwith)



No 40 pulling up the gradient through Frosterley with a Santa train on Nov 28th. (D Million via the WR Twitter site)



Another shot of the Dogfish wagons in action at Broken Banks(A Gregory)



The completed Witton le Wear Cabin from the east. (T Hewitt)

- **No 40 BACK IN ACTION:** No 40 was ready for the first Santa special weekend of November 28/29 and performed perfectly, as she also did the following weekend. The problem with the over heating axle bearings was traced to unsatisfactory modifications made at some time in its earlier history. These would not show up in the shorter runs with lighter loads and no gradients at its previous location. We managed to trace the original design drawings (thanks to Arthur Temple) and with a lot of hard work by Steve Race, Andrew XXXXX and Graham Richardson and others and some excellent work in manufacturing new bearings by Richard Campbell, it would appear that this particular problem has been solved. On the second weekend No40 pulled a 5coach train 'up the hill'(3 Mk1's + Griddle car+ Mike Woods support coach)
- **WITTON le WEAR CABIN COMPLETED :** The dedicated group who have been working on the once near derelict cabin at the Crossing have now completed their work and judging by the photographs they can be proud of their work. All that remains is the fitting of a new sign above the door and reconnection to all the services (water and phone) and the cabin will be ready to be restored to its original role plus in the future it may become the control centre for the railway when regular services are established through Bishop Auckland. Congratulations to the two main volunteers on this project , Trevor Hewitt and John Wardell and the invaluable help also from David Scott and Kelso Yuill



The Witton le Wear cabin now restored and with a welcoming fire in the grate. (Photos : T Hewitt)

- **EDITORIAL** : First an apology. After mentioning in a recent issue that I had managed to produce these updates on a roughly fortnightly basis for a whole year, some of you may have noticed that it is one month since the last issue – excuses follow - the editor has been on a holiday and returned to a series of time consuming computer hassles – hopefully normal service will be resumed now. Since returning I have had the opportunity to observe the Santa Trains in operation both as a fare paying passenger with three generations of my family and on other days while working as Controller.
- On Sunday the 6th December I tried to count the number of volunteers who turned out to make it all happen – I reached a total of 36 volunteers – this total included seven members of the Junior Club and 5 members of the Sunday gang working on the line near Frosterley – it also included staff members of WRCIC who turned out on their days off. Special mentions to Dave Million who has masterminded the booking and checking in procedures and to Kath Wood and her team – she puts in a tremendous number of hours before during and after the actual trains. I could go on but it is essentially a team effort – so thanks to all concerned. The reward is seeing the smiles on the faces of the passengers.

- **TORNADO TO VISIT LOCOMOTION AND ?? :-** The following appeared in the Northern Echo “TORNADO is to return to its native County Durham next spring for an extended two-week stay. The steam locomotive, which has attracted huge crowds wherever it has run since its completion last year, will be at Locomotion: the National Railway Museum at Shildon, over the May Bank holiday. The steam locomotive, which has attracted huge crowds wherever it has run since its completion last year, will be at Locomotion: the National Railway Museum at Shildon, over the May Bank holiday.” WRCIC is investigating the feasibility and possibility of inviting the Loco to visit our line while at Shildon.



Dave Scott with the Sentinel on a works train – he writes :-
 “We all have ambitions as volunteers and today I achieved Mine. That was to drive a train from Wolsingham to Bishop Auckland .. now I have driven the whole line. (D Scott)



The Sunday Gang en route to the Unthank area passing through Stanhope on 11 November 2009 (Photo ;D Scott)

- **REMINDER ; REMINDER ; VOLUNTEERS CHRISTMAS PARTY ; DECEMBER 15th.** Just a reminder from Mark Westerfield that we have scheduled a Christmas Party for all Weardale Railway volunteers and employees for Tuesday, December 15, 2009. The party will be held at the Social and Sports Club in Stanhope and will run from 6:00p to 10:00pm. All volunteers are welcome, plus one guest. Mark would appreciate an RSVP sent to him at either westerfieldm@iowapacific.com ;or 07739 615110.

- **REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE** : Members of the Junior Club represented the Weardale Railway at the Remembrance Day service at Stanhope, with 10 attending in WR uniform and a further 3 attending as part of other organisations that they are members of (St John Ambulance & Scouts). During the service Mark Parnaby and Stuart Watters laid a wreath at the War Memorial. The group were very well turned out and were a credit to the Railway.



Wrc members with Dave Million and Mike Wilkinson prior to attending the Remembrance day Commemoration at Stanhope (D Million)



After 31452 (see last issue) here is the second Class 31 restored and rebranded in D&CR colours (A Gregory)

- **MINCE PIE SPECIALS : MORE VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED:** Trains will be running everyday from Boxing day through to Sunday January 3rd. Volunteers are still needed in several areas on some of these days. Please contact Dave Million if you think you can help out. **David Million, Telephone: 01388-747683 : Mobile: 07711-017980 : david.million@tiscali.co.uk**
- **2010 TIMETABLE** : Next years timetable is now at the printers and will be circulated in the near future. There are fewer midweek operating days than in 2009 outside of the school holiday periods. Analysis of this years results suggested that the passenger numbers on midweek days outside of the main school holiday periods are not viable. Publicity will be directed towards maximising revenue over those holiday periods and ‘shoulder’ periods, weekends and bank holidays.
- **EASTGATE PROJECT :-** We understand that a Project Manager has now been appointed and is starting to assemble a Project team. The Weardale Railway is planned to participate in the first phase of the Project. More news in the next update.
- **SOME RECENT EMAILS :-**

- **After problems with the answering machine :-** “I hadn’t realised that the office was run by volunteers. Perhaps if this was made clear on the answering machine it would be helpful.

(However)David (Million) rang me last night and I have bought my 16 tickets for a Santa special and he personally delivered them on his way home. Thank you for a good service and a special thanks to him. We look forward to the trip. We are interested in joining the Weardale railway in the New Year. We have a particular interest in Railways as my father in law Claude Buckle was a prolific railway artist from the '30s – '60s and produced 80 posters and 26 carriage prints.”

- **From Anna Metcalfe :-** I've been following the progress of the Weardale Railway since I first became aware of it a year or so ago, and wanted to say congratulations on completing your reconnection to the national network. I grew up on Etherley Lane in Bishop Auckland(just down from Latherbrush Bridge, in fact) and I remember vividly the house shaking every time one of cement trains bound for Eastgate thundered by. When I moved out of the area at the end of the 80s I lost touch with pretty much everything there, so when I returned for a brief visit a couple of years ago it was a bit of a shock to see the line so overgrown and unused. I'm very glad to see that that is no longer the case. I'm booked on the Kings Cross - Stanhope tour on 19th February, and looking forward to seeing it all in person. Well done.

- **From Robert Forsythe :-** Just back from an excellent day at the AGM. The weather was what you might expect from Weardale in mid November. Mixed was the nicest way of putting it. But everything seen from my angle went smoothly. It is very encouraging to see the Trust and the CIC singing from the same hymnsheet and sharing good news about future prospects. The Santa Specials hauled by no 40 are now imminent and look like something worth turning out for. Today there were special printed tickets for the members extension of the 1330 ex Stanhope beyond Harperley. So much work has been done to get this to happen. Another lovely touch (was when Wilf Hume)was appointed an honorary vice president, aged 97 and he was most appreciative of the moment.

- **WRJC PLAY KEY ROLE ON SANTA TRAINS :** This year's Santa Specials are well underway and for the first time, the Junior Club have taken on the role of Train Stewards looking after our reserved passengers and providing an at seat service of seasonal refreshments. Led by Jack Ellwood, the Stewards meet and greet guests as they arrive and escort them to their private reserved compartment, the Stewards then take orders for refreshments and deliver them direct to their guests. Other Juniors are gainfully employed helping out in the Buffet Car, selling raffle tickets and handing out customer comments forms. (See photo above)
- **WEARDALE RAILWAY TIES NOW ON SALE :** The long awaited, first ever, Weardale Railway ties are now on sale. A limited number of ties are available at a cost of £15 each. Anyone interested should contact David Million (david.million@wrjc.org.uk) See Photo below
- **NEW CLOTHING ITEM HI VIZ JACKET :-** It is planned to source WR branded High Visibility Jackets, subject to the level of interest from volunteers. If you are interested in purchasing a jacket please let David Million (david.million@wrjc.org.uk) know. It is envisaged that the price will be in the region of £20; however, this price may decrease if there is a high level of interest.



- **MESSAGE FROM THE TRUST CHAIRMAN :-** May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has assisted in the running of the Weardale Railway over the last year in any way or form, many people who visit the railway will see the train crew and station staff going about the business of operating the railway. There are many other people who work just as hard behind the scenes. These tasks are just as important to the railway as the train driver, guard and station staff.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF THE RAILWAY'S VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, SUPPORTERS AND OF COURSE ALL OF OUR VISITORS

We can all look back on this year as being a successful in many areas and look forward to a even better new year to beat this years numbers, again many thanks and I look forward to your continued support for the year .

Kevin Hilary



The support BG coach owned by Mike Wood attached to the rear of the Santa stock at Stanhope. (Photo : J Askwith)



No 40 pulling a Santa special over Broadwood Bridge on Dec.5 (Photo : J Askwith)



Entertaining with audience participation at Stanhope on December 6th – the Malcolm McKinnel Trio (Photo : J Askwith)



No 40 waiting to start the days operation on Dec 6th (Photo : J A skwith)



The Class 73 made its first trip to Bishop Auckland on 25th November and is seen here on Etherley Viaduct (left) and at the limits of the Weardale Line at Bishop Auckland on the right. (Photos : A Gregory)



Finally a drivers eye view of the crew operating the at Witton le Wear Crossing gates (Left) and the END of the LINE at Bishop Auckland – Cockton Road bridge in the distance – but not for much longer? (Photos : A Gregory)

- **BRANDED CLOTHING BACK BY POULAR DEMAND** : Following numerous requests a WR branded clothing order will be placed in the next few days. Buy now before the VAT increase!
Contact Dave Million at : - david.million@wrjc.org.uk

Weardale Railway Branded Clothing

Premium Fleece Jacket **£17.50** each

| Colours |
|--------------|
| Black |
| Navy |
| Royal Blue |
| Bottle Green |
| Red |
| Maroon |

| Chest Sizes | |
|-------------|--------|
| XS | 36" |
| S | 38" |
| M | 40" |
| L | 42/44" |
| XL | 46/48" |
| XXL | 48" |
| XXXL | 50/52" |
| XXXXL | 54" |

Prices are inclusive of VAT at 15%

Payment must be made **before** order is placed.

Garments bear the Weardale Railway crest.

Please check sizes before ordering as garments cannot be exchanged or replaced.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to David Million.

Items can be collected from Stanhope station, alternatively please email david.million@wrjc.org.uk for post & packing costs.

Premium Rugby Shirt **£17.00** each

| Colours |
|--------------|
| White |
| Black |
| Navy |
| Royal Blue |
| Red |
| Bottle Green |

| Chest Sizes | |
|-------------|--------|
| XS | 36" |
| S | 38" |
| M | 40" |
| L | 42/44" |
| XL | 46 |
| XXL | 48" |
| XXXL | 50/52" |

Unisex Polo Shirt **£7.00** each

| Colours |
|--------------|
| Black |
| White |
| Navy |
| Royal Blue |
| Sky Blue |
| Bottle Green |
| Heather Grey |
| Yellow |
| Kelly |
| Red |
| Maroon |
| Purple |

| Chest Sizes | |
|-------------|--------|
| XS | 36" |
| S | 38" |
| M | 40" |
| L | 42/44" |
| XL | 46 |
| XXL | 48" |
| XXXL | 50/52" |
| XXXXL | 54" |

NEW ITEM

WR Branded Holdall with detachable shoulder strap.

£12.00

Dimensions

| |
|--------|
| Orange |
|--------|

Defender II 3 in 1 Jacket **£40.50** each

| Colours |
|--------------|
| Black / Grey |
| Navy / Royal |
| Red / Grey |
| Navy / Black |

| Chest Sizes | |
|-------------|--------|
| S | 36/38" |
| M | 40" |
| L | 42/44" |
| XL | 46/48" |
| XXL | 50/52" |