

WEARDALE RAILWAY

NEWSLETTER No.42 : 15 JULY 2010

NEW TIMETABLE AND NEW STAFF - THE FIRST TWO MONTHS

WEARDALE TRAINS NOW TRACKED BY SATELLITE

NETWORK RAIL DIRECTOR VISITS WR

- **KEEPING THE TRAINS RUNNING : Malcolm Dean reports :** As mentioned in the last Newsletter the new daily timetable introduced on May 23rd involved the railway in operating duties on a shift basis, with earliest crews booking on at 6.30am in the morning and the last crew booking off at 9.15pm. Slightly shorter hours are worked on Sundays, but on weekdays a mixture of three shift and two shift systems have been tried – the three shift involving an early turn until 9.30 am and finishing with a late turn from 5pm until 8.45pm and the two shift having an early and late shift only. The intention was to use volunteers whenever possible supported by paid staff. With this support of volunteers and staff we have been able to run nearly all trains, though we have had to cancel some. (See next item)
- **WELCOME TO THE NEW STAFF : Mike Fairburn (GM, BARS) reports :** In April The Company advertised for new staff to cover the increased operational workload of operation of the community service. Some of the new staff employees are working part time, others full time. The operation of the community service is but one aspect of the ambitions for the development of the Weardale Railway and British American Railway Services business and the contribution of all volunteers and staff is vital in this. The first 8 weeks of operation of the community service have shown, as expected, that there is a complex and vital task in developing integration of volunteer and paid staff. As with other aspects of the operation, there are lessons to be learned and improvements to be implemented, and the patience and efforts of volunteers and staff alike are much appreciated in this formative phase of development.



Northern Rail drivers on a visit to the Weardale Railway
(Photo : D Scott)



Newly arrived DMU 141113 on a test run to Stanhope on 11 June.
(Photo T Wansbury)

- **WEARDALE TRAINS NOW TRACKED BY SATELLITE ;** Thanks to advice from Steve Bissell the Weardale Railway DMU has been fitted with a device which via the GPS satellites transmits a signal which can by means of a special computer programme be accessed via the internet and downloaded onto any computer that has the access code. Thus Control Office in Stanhope can call up this information and check the location of the train at any time and display it either on a map or on a satellite photo display. The programme continuously gives location coordinates and time and can also calculate train speed.

- **KILLHOPE VISIT OFFER FOR VOLUNTEERS** : Dave Million reports : You may recall that last year Killhope Mine provided the Weardale Railway with free tickets for volunteers, I am pleased to advise that Killhope are repeating the offer again this year. The offer consists of: Free admission for two people (includes Park Level Mine and the voucher is valid until 31st July 2010. Killhope mine is open from 10.30am to 5pm. **The Vouchers are available from the Stanhope station ticket office.**
- **JULY 17 CHARTER CANCELLED** : The Charter from the Bristol area to York, Locomotion, High Force & Stanhope scheduled for July 17th was cancelled by Pathfinder Tours due to low bookings. The charter was due to start at 5.15am and return 11.10 pm, it may just have been a journey too far.
- **NETWORK RAIL DIRECTOR VISITS WEARDALE RAILWAY** : On June 30th the railway received its first visit by a Network Rail board member. Non Executive member Chris Green travelled on the 1130 from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope, had lunch in the station café and then visited the town centre before catching a bus to Wolsingham, where he made a visit to the maintenance depot. After walking to Wolsingham station he took the 1540 back to Bishop Auckland. The next day he attended a Northern Rail stake holders conference in Leeds where he was able to cite many of the things which he had observed as examples of what Network Rail and Northern Rail need to do to make the overall travel experience of people coming to Weardale and the Weardale Railway more attractive and hassle free. A fuller account of this visit can be found at the end of this report.
- **GENERAL MANAGER** : Malcolm Dean returned to take up his post as General Manager on July 14th – our thanks are due to David Million who has stood in for Malcolm since June 16th with Alistair Gregory and Graham Isom acting as agents, as necessary on a day to day basis
- **RIO GRANDE SCENIC INTRODUCES OPEN AIR CAR** : Sister company, the Colorado based Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, announces : “Due to popular demand, seats are available for reservation in our open air car **Lookout Mountain**. Built in the 1920's, this car lets its rider enjoy the sights and sounds of the ride. It's ideal for taking photographs and spotting wildlife See Photo below :-



- **EASTGATE PROJECT IN HOT WATER** : Whilst the new County Council conducts a review of the Eastgate Eco Village Project, work has continued on testing the potential of utilising geothermal energy at the site. Drilling had earlier revealed “hot rocks” containing water at a depth of over 3,000 feet, that could be used via a heat exchanger to produce clean energy at the former cement work site. Now a second hole has been drilled which is used to return the water to the granite at a depth of almost 1,380 feet. Here, the water absorbs heat as it seeps down through the cracks and crevasses in the rock. Then, the reheated water, which has a high salt content can be pumped to the surface and reused.. Said Professor Paul Younger, “Using a twin borehole system – the first of its kind to be used in the UK – has overcome problems that hindered earlier attempts to tap the benefits of the deep-seated hot water. This means we are able to maintain the natural water pressures in the rocks and allow pumping to continue for many decades to come.” The next move at Eastgate will be up to the local Authorities who are due to be considering the future of the development during the coming months.

- **DEPOT WORK** : Other than general maintenance of the two DMU's and the Class 73 work has concentrated on repairs and repainting of the Griddle Car , this includes some re-flooring and next will be repainting in the 'blood & custard' livery to match the other four Mk 1 coaches.
- **JUNIOR CLUB VISIT TO SCOTTISH RAILWAY.** As part of their programme of visits to other Heritage Railways, members of the Junior Club accompanied by Michael Wilkinson and David Million visited the Bo'ness and Kinniel Railway near Edinburgh, travelling via the East Coast Railway Whilst at the Railway, Dave and Michael were allowed to flag the trains off at Bo'ness station in return for sending them details of the set up and organisation of the WR Junior Club, a concept they wish to emulate having seen and heard of the capabilities and achievements of the Juniors.
- **JUNE 20 - THREE TRAINS ON THE LINE SIMULTANEOUSLY** : Donald Heath reports : June 20th saw the arrival – and departure – of the third main line excursion to come on to Weardale Railway metals. Unlike the previous two occasions, this was done round the normal public service albeit somewhat altered to accommodate the hand over times determined by the NetworkRail train planners. It was also the occasion for four notable firsts in our train operations. The “first first”: we had no less than three trains in traffic on the railway simultaneously – the 141 dmu running the community rail service to Bishop Auckland, the class 73 loco hauling the Mark 1 coaches offering a heritage service between Wolsingham and Stanhope and the return working of the excursion which ran from Alnmouth and back with the stock going on to its home at Bowness afterwards. The “second first” was the use of the down loop at Stanhope for the platforming of the dmu when the up platform was occupied by either of the heritage or excursion trains. How was it done? See the report from Donald at the end of this Newsletter.



Junior Club members breakfasting en route to Edinburgh and on the Platform at Bo'ness station (Photos : D Million)

- **VOLUNTEERS : IS YOUR ID CARD OUT OF DATE?** : Please check your Weardale Railway volunteer card. If it is out of date, or lost, please send a passport sized colour photograph with your name and membership number to : - Trevor Hewitt, Weardale Railway Trust, Stanhope station, Stanhope, Bishop Auckland, DL13 2YS
- **NORTHERN RAIL STAFF VISIT** : David Scott reports : On the 28th June we had a party of drivers and guards from our “connecting train partners” Northern Rail boarded the 11.35 train from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope. They were a very enthusiastic group and appeared to love the journey up the dale. Stories of how it used to be were told, back in the 80s and early 90s, and memories revived of long gone crossing keepers, ex drivers and signalmen.
- **NEW BROCHURE/TIMETABLE OUT SHORTLY** : A new timetable was introduced on 12th July and is being incorporated in a revamped version of the brochure which will include revisions for the full service between, Bishop Auckland and Stanhope . It is expected to be ready to distribute later this month. (A copy of the new timetable is included at the end of this Newsletter)

- **JUNE 20 : CHARTER AND BIG BOYS TOYS** : Michael Wilkinson reports: The thanks of the Volunteer Liaison Officers go to all those who gave their time on Sunday 18 June to make this years “Big Boys Toys” event better than ever. Despite a couple of minor issues all the trains, including the charter, ran to time and this is due to the dedication and hard work of all those involved who are intent on making the line the success we know it can be. This commendation applies to the Juniors and Adult members equally without whom we could not make this work. Congratulations all on making this an event many will remember for a long time”
- **HMRI INSPECTION** : The Inspector has confirmed that his next visit will be on August 4th. On this occasion he will check to see that the remaining works he asked to see completed have been carried out. If he is satisfied that the works have been completed then the consent will be extended without end date. These works are being carried out by staff from RMS Locotec assisted by the Sunday gang. One major task was the installation of the permanent traffic lights at the Witton le Wear level crossing which are now in place and operational.



Rush Hour at Stanhope both 141 units present on June 11th (Photo ; T Wansbury)



A reminder that posters for events are available to download from the website for distribution by volunteers (Photo ;J Askwith)

- **WHAT ABOUT TOILETS ON THE TRAINS?** Now that we are operating journeys of 55 minutes in length, the question is often asked – why don't the toilets on the DMU's work? The answer is that the toilets can be made operational fairly quickly, but what we don't have is the equipment to handle cleaning out and the means to dispose of material in a foul sewer. Plus of course, the necessary rota for daily cleaning , otherwise we risk a public health prosecution. So this item now joins the lengthy list of items for the new GM to prioritise.
- **No 40 : LATEST** : With the arrival of a motor for the hydraulic jacks, the loco was finally lifted on the 9th July to inspect the axle boxes which were running hot on the opening day. We found that two axle box bearings will need re-machining plus further work on two of the axles. It is hoped to have this work completed and the Loco back in action within the next three weeks.
- **JUNIOR CLUB HQ COACH MAKING PROGRESS** : Work is progressing on repairs to the bodyshell, re-installing the interior panels and windows. It is hoped to have most of the work finished by the beginning of August. The plan is to install the coach in the old loading dock area of Stanhope station.

• **FOUND ; TWO SD CAMERA CARDS** : On the 141 class railcar between Stanhope and Bishop Auckland containing hundreds of photographs including weddings and holidays and these will have great sentimental value to the owners! Please contact Stanhope Ticket Office 01388 526203

- **FROM THE MAILBOX :**

My partner and I have just spent a week in Weardale and travelled on the railway from Stanhope to Bishop Auckland and back on Wednesday. All the railway people we met were very friendly and helpful. In particular our ticket collector/guard Derek was a real character and is a real asset to your railway. We were also very impressed with his smart and professional appearance. Thank you once again, keep up the good work and congratulations for getting this far.

K R, BOREHAMWOOD, HERTS

Well what can I say , only that I had a great day out today. The weather helped but I would have enjoyed it anyway. Could you also pass on my thanks to Mr. JOHN ASKWITH for his history of your work and advising me on how I could look into being a volunteer with yourselves . ONCE AGAIN, A GREAT DAY OUTTHANK YOU JOHN . STANLEY, Co DURHAM

Having travelled on the newly opened service from Bishop Auckland West to Stanhope today, I just wanted to write and thank you for an enjoyable day out. I do however have one or two comments to provide feedback on the service which I hope you don't mind me mentioning..... The morning service results in arrival into Darlington far too late for commuters or passengers wishing to transfer to services elsewhere in the North East in time for work..... I am also interested as to the future plan for new stations/halts along the line. I note that the service stopped at Kingfisher Country Park for operation of the crossing, and that this could be an opportunity for an additional halt to service the adjacent caravan park. I shall travel the line again, and spread the word about your timely rail service, and look forward to hearing from you in regard to the above.

ANDREW C

I saw a request for feedback, so here is mine. I live in Northallerton. In May my wife and I joined a walk on former rail lines, starting from BA station to which we travelled by train. On Sunday 20 June we thought we'd try the Weardale service, as it was a Sunday (when 'main line' services can be disrupted) we drove to BA and parked at the station. It took us a couple of minutes to work out we needed to walk the current detour, as we initially missed the notice. We caught the 10:30 departure, travelled to Stanhope and returned to BA departing just after 1pm I think. While at Stanhope we walked round the town, and had lunch at the Dales centre. Overall we were very impressed. There was a slight delay on the return journey, while our train was shunted into the sidings at Wolsingham to let a special through - I quite enjoyed that unexpected extra and see there are plans for a passing loop so this should be less of a problem in future. We work as volunteers on the North Yorks Moors Rly, and know there needs to be attractions along the line. Obviously I like railway interest but it could be much wider. Stanhope station is certainly of interest to me, but so are the wider area and towns. In many ways the Class 141s are a benefit as we were able to see the countryside, and occasionally the line ahead. Steam-hauled would be great, but I appreciate it's costly and I think it's more important to keep the fares low. Key message: it was a successful trial trip & we'll be back. Admittedly we won't be travelling every week so our revenue won't make a huge difference, but every little helps. We're also likely to buy lunch etc in the dale, so the wider community benefits. Fingers crossed it's now up, up & away. Keep up the good work.

KEITH R

- **CAN YOU HELP ? VOLUNTEER TO RUN AN EBAY SITE FOR THE TRUST:** Steve Raine asks. We receive donations of second hand books which occasionally contain some valuable rare items which were priced on the net – we would probably get a better price if these items were offered on eBay. If you would be prepared to help the Trust get the value from these donations please contact Steve on steve.raine@tinyworld.co.uk
- **EDITED BY : Gerry Mudd :** Comments, suggestions, contributions, corrections all welcomed.
gcmudd@ntlworld.com or 01932 889 811 or 07773 800 554

- **TAILPIECE ONE : VISIT OF NETWORK RAIL DIRECTOR, CHRIS GREEN.** Here is the full report from Donald Heath : -

During the course of his visit he travelled in the cab and viewed the route which he rated as very picturesque and definitely a feature which we should be majoring on in our marketing. He met and talked with Trust chairman David Scott, Trust council members Brian Cox and Malcolm Simpson, Maintenance Manager Steve Race and working volunteers Messrs Slack, Swindle and Wilson. He was very taken with the professionalism of the people he spoke to as well as those he observed at work.

He was very disappointed by the interchange arrangements at Bishop Auckland: to have to walk around the back of two warehouses when, in the short term, there should be a direct path alongside the railway linking the two stations in the most direct way possible was incomprehensible as well as totally unacceptable (he said). He undertook to use the conference to highlight the situation and to urge all the parties concerned to get together at the earliest possible moment to resolve these problems.

He was complimentary about the facilities at Stanhope, but suggested that more could – and should - be done to highlight the café facilities within the main part of the centre of the town. He recommended some pro-active advertising be provided at the east and west entries to the town as well as within the town centre itself. Likewise, he found the references to the station at Wolsingham to be almost non-existent – there should, he suggested, be large signs at the entrances to the town, in the Market Square and by the caravan sales outlet.

His strongest recommendations arose from the lack of advertising. We had, he emphasised, a wonderful attraction to sell and we ought, he suggested, we put at least an order of magnitude increase into our advertising effort and expenditure. We needed to find reasons for inviting - separately – all of the big names in railway journalism to Weardale with a view to getting them to “write” the railway up in the most positive and attractive fashion possible. If necessary he offered to help by providing some contacts.

Altogether a most successful and useful visit. If half of his contacts deliver in the way that he intimated that he is going to ask them to do, then our operation should take a big step forward. As ever with Chris, it was pleasure to spend a day out with him savouring the joys of a real railway whilst, in parallel, gaining the benefit of his independent professional advice.”

- **TAILPIECE TWO : JUNE 20th RUNNING THREE TRAINS SIMULTANEOUSLY :** Here is the full report from Donald Heath :-

June 20th saw the arrival – and departure – of the third main line excursion to come on to Weardale railway metals. Unlike the previous two occasions, this was done round the normal public service albeit somewhat altered to accommodate the hand over times determined by the NetworkRail train planners. It was also the occasion for four notable firsts in our train operations. The “first first”: we had no less than three trains in traffic on the railway simultaneously – the 141 dmu running the community rail service to Bishop Auckland, the class 73 loco hauling the Mark 1 coaches offering a heritage service between Wolsingham and Stanhope and the return working of the excursion which ran from Alnmouth and back with the stock going on to its home at Bowness afterwards. The “second first” was the use of the down loop at Stanhope for the platforming of the dmu when the up platform was occupied by either of the heritage or excursion trains.

To facilitate this, Malcolm Dean had some special ramps made which, when positioned opposite the dmu’s doors, enabled passengers to alight/join the train just as if they were on a standard height platform. This required very careful liaison with the driver and the guard – the first to stop the unit in exactly the right position, and the second to ensure that the doors were not released for opening until the station master was satisfied that the ramps and doors were, indeed, in perfect alignment.

The “third first” was running a quite complicated service by only using the train staffs and, when consecutive movements were made in the same direction, arranging to return the train staff to the other

end of the section by road transport. This involved the “controller’s agents” at Stanhope, Wolsingham and Scotch Isle in a lot of running around – in particular, Dave Butler, who kindly took on this role at Wolsingham station, must have gone to and from Stanhope/Scotch Isle at least 6 times during the course of the day. (The alternative to this is the use of paper tickets to authorise the first of two consecutive moves which avoids the need to resort to road transport. For the record, this is a well tried method with a history that goes back well into the nineteenth century and, by way of example, is still in regular use on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.)

The “fourth first” was the passing of trains at Wolsingham depot ground frame. This was done by running the dmu on to the depot exit road stopping it outside of the depot gates. The Scotch Isle staff was then either walked to the Scotch Isle stop board or taken by road to Wolsingham station so as to facilitate the passage of the excursion train through that section. When the latter had cleared the end of the section the staff was taken back to the depot ground frame allowing the dmu to return to the main line and proceed on its way to either of Bishop Auckland or Stanhope as was required.

All of the above is relatively simple to describe but it took quite a bit of detailed planning. The instructions to the 3 controller’s agents and the train crews took some 10 hours to write and then there was the need to brief everybody involved so as to make sure that everybody clearly understood what they had to do and when. The fact that everything went exactly according to plan is a tribute to the professionalism of all concerned and it gives me great pleasure to publicly acknowledge this. My thanks to Brian Cox, Reg Kemp, Steve Raine, John Hargreaves, David Million, Michael Wilkinson, Mike Wood, Dave Butler, Alistair Gregory, Kevin Hillary, Ian Jowett, John Asquith and, especially, Kelso Yuill who carried out the role of Controller in his inevitable cool, calm and collected manner.

The only regret about the whole day which, incidentally, had superb weather, was the fact that to run the excursion it was necessary to lose one return community service working to Bishop Auckland and that we had to retime half of all of the advertised service. Perhaps we will need to review whether this disruption to our normal service is, overall, worth it? In that context it is worth recording that the excursion spent just under 2hrs in Stanhope which gave the visitors plenty of time to go into Stanhope town and make additional direct contributions to the local economy.”

WEARDALE RAILWAY TIMETABLE FROM 11.7.2010

SUNDAY version A

BA-NR arr			1020	1219			1646	
		H		H	H	H		
Bishop Auckland			1030	1240			1700	
Wolsingham	0853	1000	1103	1315	1515		1733	
Stanhope	0915	1025	1125	1345	1540		1755	
Stanhope	0920	1130		1415		1550	1615	1800
Wolsingham	0935	1150		1440		1605	1640	1815
Bishop Auckland	1015	1230				1645		
BA-NR dep	1029	1240				1656		

SUNDAY version B

BA-NR arr			1020		1219			1646	
		H		H		H	H		
Bishop Auckland			1030		1240			1700	
Wolsingham	0853	0945	1103	1155	1313	1355		1515	1733
Stanhope	0915	1010	1125	1220	1335	1420		1540	1755
Stanhope	0920	1030	1130	1240		1440	1550	1615	1800
Wolsingham	0935	1055	1145	1305		1505	1605	1640	1815
Bishop Auckland	1015		1225				1645		
BA-NR dep	1029		1240				1656		

SATURDAY

BA-NR arr			0904		1316		1652
		H		H		H	
Bishop Auckland			0920		1330		1705
Wolsingham	0745	0920	0953	1150	1403	1450	1738
Stanhope	0807	0945	1015	1215	1425	1515	1800
Stanhope	0815	1040	1220	1330	1555	1620	1805
Wolsingham	0830	1105	1235	1355	1610	1645	1820
Bishop Auckland	0910		1315		1650		
BA-NR dep	0923		1326		1700		

MON-FRI

BA-NR arr		0859	1121	1321	1624	1858
Bishop Auckland		0920	1135	1350	1635	1910
Wolsingham	0750	0953	1208	1423	1708	1943
Stanhope	0812	1015	1230	1445	1730	2005
Stanhope	0820	1030	1235	1520	1755	2010
Wolsingham	0835	1045	1250	1535	1810	2015
Bishop Auckland	0915	1125	1330	1615	1850	
BA-NR dep	0925	1140	1340	1630	1903	

NOTES

ALL trains call at Frosterley by request - passengers wishing to alight must inform the guard before the train leaves Wolsingham or Stanhope and those wishing to join must give a clear handsignal to the driver as the train approaches the station. Trains depart from Frosterley 9 minutes after leaving Wolsingham and 6 minutes after leaving Stanhope.

A - This is the normal Sunday service and will run on all Sundays except when advised to the contrary.

B - This is the special Sunday service which will only run on those Sundays which have been particularly identified as Note B service days.

H - Denotes a heritage train which will be hauled by a steam or a heritage diesel locomotive. [jd/dlh/weardale.099 - timetables](http://jd/dlh/weardale.099-timetables)