

WEARDALE RAILWAY

NEWSLETTER No.49 23 DECEMBER 2010

SANTA TRAINS : A SELL OUT SEASON, DESPITE HEAVY SNOW

EASTGATE PROJECT UPDATE

WEARDALE RAILWAY SERVICES MODIFIED IN NEW YEAR

A MESSAGE FROM COMPANY PRESIDENT, ED ELLIS :

Dear Volunteers and Supporters -

As we complete 2010 and look back, it was an amazing year! The Weardale Railway was open to Bishop Auckland for the first time, and Stanhope was visited by mainline steam and diesel charters, in addition to the regular services staffed to a great extent by you, the volunteers.

On behalf of BARS I would like to express my appreciation for the many hours each of you donated to making this railway come alive in a way that no other heritage railway has done in the UK. Community services, heritage steam services, Santa Specials, War on the Line, and many other special events have brought Weardale Railway into the public eye across the land, with great effect.

Now we are poised on the edge of a new chapter, with the return of freight services for the first time since closure. The approval of the coal terminal will result in new revenues for the railway and will enable us to continue to develop the heritage side of the railway.

In addition to coal, what will 2011 bring? I asked Santa for more steam trains, and for the Polar Express to come to the Wear Valley in 2011. We will see whether he will grant my request.**

Thanks again for everything.

Ed Ellis

*** See separate item on the Polar Express.**



Heading Home : No 40 returns to Wolsingham on the afternoon Santa special December the 18th. (Photo : J Lewins)

- SANTA SEASON UNDERWAY :** By the time you read this there will be just one more Santa train to run – on the morning of December 24th. Up to the time of going to press we had operated every train from the start of the service on November 28th. No 40 has performed well pulling the five Mk 1 coaches. By the final week all seats had been sold and interestingly the first tickets to sell out were the First class seats in the ‘Nina’ coach, followed by the ‘book a compartment’ option, both of which are sold at premium prices. So it looks as if it has been a very successful season, made possible by the efforts of staff and many volunteers – special mention must go to Clive and Wendy Elsdon who have masterminded the ‘Santa’ part of the operation, to David Million for as well as day job(s) spent long evenings maintaining the booking plan and ticketing for the trains and also to all members of the Junior club and the Youth section who worked really hard on the trains and now also in operational jobs in the depot, on the engine and at level crossings.



Two photos from John Askwith commemorating what just may be Donald Heath's final driving turn – on the left with General Manager, David Million and on the right with Steve Race, Maintenance Manager.

- GENERAL MANAGER, MALCOLM DEAN LEAVES RAILWAY :** It is with regret we record that Malcolm has resigned from the Company. In his short but hectic period with the Railway he has helped establish and operate the very demanding Community service and must have worked on just about every operational job in the process and at all hours of the day. As well as this he has helped prepare the Railway for the even more critical times ahead as we move into a trifold operation of Community, Heritage and Freight services. A farewell dinner was held in Bishop Auckland on December 13th, attended by representatives of both Company staff and Trust volunteers. Tributes to his role have been paid by Staff, Volunteers and the Junior Club. We wish him all the very best for the future. Effective immediately David Million, currently Project Manager was appointed General Manager and for the immediate future will combine both roles.
- NEW TOURIST MAPS FOR WEARDALE STATIONS :** Tourism budgets in the North East have suffered from the recent cutbacks – but Durham County has launched a new initiative which focuses on attracting visitors to the towns in the area, including Stanhope and Bishop Auckland. Melanie Sensicle, chief executive for Visit County Durham, said “Visitors to Bishop Auckland can visit Auckland Castle and Deer Park, Binchester Roman Fort and Escomb Saxon Church. and Stanhope has the Durham Dales Centre, Weardale Railway and nearby a wonderful attraction at Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum. But the town maps do not simply highlight the attractions each town has to offer, they also tell visitors about places of interest nearby.” The maps contain information about what to see and do, where to stay, shop and eat and contain stories about the history and heritage of each town. Copies of the maps are available at Stanhope station and both leaflets also show clearly the location of the Weardale Railway station. Read More <http://www.journallive.co.uk/north-east-news/todays-news/2010/12/07/putting-itself-on-map-61634-27779073/#ixzz17SGKdb9n>

- NEW PATTERN OF SERVICES IN JANUARY :** Effective January 4th 2011, a new pattern of services will be implemented to reflect two considerations. Now the Company had had time to assess the results and loadings of the first seven months of services it has decide to modify the timetable by curtailing the early and late services to and from Bishop Auckland. Loadings on these services in the late Autumn and Winter do not justify their operation on a regular basis. Additionally during the next few months there will be a need for increased line possessions to facilitate the infrastructure works necessary to accommodate the freight trains expected to start in the second quarter of the year. Management will revisit the community service schedule at that time once the pattern of freight services is clear. The new service pattern will be supplemented during school holiday times on selected days with a twice daily Wolsingham to Stanhope and return heritage service. The new Community service provisional timetable is appended to this Newsletter. **Final version will follow.**



No 40 approaches Bishop Auckland With the special train on December 16th. (Photo : J Askwith)



DMU 14113 in the platform at Bishop Auckland on the 29th Nov. at the start of the heavy winter snow period (Photo D Snell)

- STAFF, VOLUNTEER WORKING TIMES AMENDED :** To fit in with the new train schedules the pattern of shift working will change, such that it will be possible to operate the services with just one full shift per day as distinct from the three shift pattern previously employed. The shifts will be of 8 hours with the exceptional duty extending to 9 hours and commence at between 8.30 and 9.30 depending on location and likewise finish between 16.40 and 17.30 with exceptionally an extension to 18.40. Donald Heath who is working the details of the new rosters has this message for all who have helped with the 2010 operations : “, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you who have contributed to the operating function during 2010 for your fantastic effort and for the excellent work which you have done. It really has been a tour de force and, on behalf of the three General Managers which we have worked under during this period, please do accept this as a mark of theirs and my joint appreciation.”
- EASTGATE PROJECT UPDATE :** Lafarge, who own the former Cement Works site at the terminus of the Weardale Railway have published an update on their views for the future on the Project website. In it they state that although One North East have withdrawn their funding they still believe that it may be possible to progress the Renewable Energy Village, albeit in a more pragmatic way and probably at a slower pace, at least initially. They state that : “Within the next month or so, we hope to have 'signed up' two potential occupiers Others, including Inov-8 (the major, off-road sports company currently located in Crook), Weardale Railway and the possible operator of the tilapia fish rearing operation continue to express a real interest in moving onto the site. Based on our experience of similar projects elsewhere, this represents about the level of interest we would expect at this stage. Now that outline planning permission has been granted, meaning there is certainty about the acceptability of the uses in the master plan for the site, we would expect more potential developers and occupiers to start coming forward. The full statement is available at : <http://www.weardale-works.co.uk/>

- **BARS LOCO BACK ON THE MAIN LINE** : Alistair Gregory reports that the BARS owned class 31, 31601 is back in action on the main Network. You can see and also hear it in full throated action on the Midland line near Harpenden hauling a Network Rail special train on : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BfD0kVMaCM&feature=player_embedded#
- **G5 NEWBUILD CONTINUES TO PROGRESS** : The latest G5 Newsletter contains news of further progress in the ongoing project to build a completely new G5 Class tank engine to the original North Eastern Railway design. Work on the bogie is complete and it is now located at Shildon where it is on display and also where it will be painted. Meanwhile the boiler has gone back to Great Northern Steam where it passed its latest Lloyds inspection. The last of the stays are being fitted followed by the main steam pipe and front tubeplate. More information at <http://www.g5locomotive.co.uk/Newsletter%2006.pdf>



Santa time again : left, the band playing on the platform at Stanhope and on the right No40 on the afternoon train to Stanhope, both taken on 12 December (Photos : J Lewins)

- **SPECIAL TRAIN FOR FREIGHT OPERATORS –WITH No 40 TO BISHOP AUCKLAND:**
On December 16th No 40 made two return trips to Bishop Auckland from Wolsingham and one trip to Stanhope carrying representatives of the main UK rail freight companies. As well as observing the link with the main Network they were able to observe the Weardale Line and the arrangements being made to accommodate and load the trains at Wolsingham. The train comprised two coaches topped and tailed by No 40 and the Class 73. Hospitality was provided by including the buffet car in the formation.
- **SANTA FEEDBACK :** We solicit feedback on the services by leaving forms in the carriages, however we also receive unsolicited comments via the Trust website, here are a couple :-

I just wanted to email to say thank you for a wonderful trip on the Santa Express on Sunday 5th December. I attended with three adult members of my family along with my 3 year old niece and we all had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. All of the staff and volunteers were extremely polite and helpful despite the bitterly cold weather!

Once again thank you to all involved and I will be recommending you to family and friends for future events.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and great New Year.

I look forward to seeing you in 2011. K T, Darlington

I would like to thank you for a fabulous experience yesterday. Our family had an amazing time. Your young volunteers were incredibly polite, helpful and friendly. We could not thank them enough. Every one working together helped create an unforgettable experience, with memories to treasure for a life time. This was the first time we have used the railway and the Santa express, from our experience yesterday we will be using the railway more frequently and Santa Express will be a new Christmas family tradition. Please thank everyone involved, especially the youngsters working on the first class carriage. J H-M

- THE POLAR EXPRESS – A POSSIBLE UK FIRST ?** : Ed Ellis in his message in this Newsletter refers to the possibility of operating a version of the Polar Express in Weardale next year : Here is the text of a press statement on this years operation of the trains in the USA : “The Polar Express Trains running in Lubbock, TX and Hood River, OR, on the rails of Iowa Pacific’s railroads have proven extremely popular this year, with an increase in ridership of 60% over 2009, and all trains are sold out in Lubbock for the remainder of the season. Over 50,000 tickets have been sold in total. “With three dome cars and two coaches operating on our Polar Express on the West Texas and Lubbock this year, many more families have experienced the magic of this Christmas event,” said Neil Bagaus, Manager of Special Events for Iowa Pacific. I have really enjoyed the smiles on the children’s faces, and our entire staff has enjoyed putting on the show. The Mount Hood Railroad in Hood River, OR is another Iowa Pacific railroad running Polar Express this season. The Oregon train has two dome cars, a parlor car and several coaches. We invested in improving our coaches and our Santa’s Village this year, and we’re getting a great reaction from our guests,” said Ron Kaufman, General Manager of the Mount Hood. To us this is a clear indication of the economic recovery,” said Jack Dapkus, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Iowa Pacific. The dome and parlor tickets sold first, and we had strong coach sales as well. It’s great to see people coming out for the holidays this year.” Iowa Pacific owns and operates six railroads in the United States, and through British American Railway Services, operates two railways in the UK.



Finally after all the snow laden photos here is one from our US Affiliate Company, the Arizona Eastern Railroad. It looks as if we have another Broken Banks situation developing. (Photo : Ed Ellis)

Edited by G C Mudd : EDITORS NOTE : The next edition will be Number 50 – this Newsletter was started at the request of the Weardale Trust Board as a means of keeping volunteers and supporters in touch with happenings on and plans for, the Railway. The Railway has changed a lot over the two years of this publication and maybe it is time for the Newsletter to change. Initially we received a useful amount of feedback and suggestions – there has been little such feedback recently – which just may mean everyone is happy with it as it is. But any suggestions for improving or adding to the newsletter would be welcomed.

TIMETABLE FROM TUESDAY JANUARY 4TH 2011 UNTIL SATURDAY MAY 21ST 2011

MONDAY TO FRIDAYS - Tuesday 4th January 2011 until Friday 20th May 2011

			H		H	Q
BA NR	arr	0859		1121	1321	1624
BA West	dep	0915		1135	1335	1635
SI	dep		1110	1200	1400	1700
WM	arr		1120		1425	1705s
WM	dep	0948	1130	1208	1408	1430
SE	arr		1010	1155	1230	1430
		ECS			H	H
SE	dep	1030		1235	1300	1520
WM	arr				1320	1550
WM	dep	1050		1255	1325	1610
SI	arr				1335	1540
SI	dep	0845	1100	1305		1525
BA West	arr	0910	1125	1330		1615
BA NR	dep	0925	1140	1340		1630

Key:

BA NR denotes Bishop Auckland main line station, time of Northern Rail services arriving/departing

BA West denotes the Weardale Railway station at Bishop Auckland

SI denotes Scotch Isle

WM denotes Wolsingham

SE denotes Stanhope

ECS denotes empty coaching stock

H denotes runs from 21 to 25 February, 18 to 22 April, 25 to 29 April and 2 May

s denotes stock to set down only

Q denotes this train will normally go straight from Bishop Auckland into the Wolsingham depot and all the timings below that only apply if the 1635 from BA is conveying passengers from Wolsingham, Frosterley or Stanhope

SATURDAYS - 8th January 2011 to 21st May 2011

			H		H		H		Z
BA NR	arr	0904		1121		1316		1520	1758
BA West	dep	0920		1135		1335		1535	1810
SI	dep	0945	1110	1200		1400	1510	1600	1835
WM	arr		1120			1520			1843s
WM	dep	0953	1130	1208		1408	1530	1608	
SE	arr		1015	1155	1230	1430	1555	1630	1905s
		ECS							
SE	dep	1030		1235	1305	1435		1650	Z
WM	arr				1325			1709	H
WM	dep	1050		1255	1330	1455		1710	1740
SI	arr				1335			1710	1745
SI	dep	0845	1100	1305		1505		1720	1755
BA West	arr	0910	1125	1330		1530		1735	1935
BA NR	dep	0923	1140	---		---		1800	

ECS denotes empty coaching stock

H denotes runs on 26 February, 23 & 30 April

s denotes stock to set down only

Z denotes only runs on heritage days and will, in the down direction, only run beyond Scotch Isle Depot if there are passengers to be conveyed for Wolsingham, Frosterley and/or Stanhope

SUNDAYS - 9 JANUARY TO 15 MAY 2011

			H		H		Z	Z
BA NR	arr		1020		1219		1431	1646
BA West	dep		1030		1230		1445	1700
SI	dep	0845	1000	1055	1255	1410	1510	1725
WM	arr		1010			1420		1733s
WM	dep	0853	1030	1103	1303	1430	1518	---
SE	arr	0915	1055	1125	1325	1455	1540	1755s
					H		H	Z ECS
SE	dep	0920		1130	1200	1330		1550
WM	arr				1220			1620
WM	dep	0940		1150	1225	1350		1640
SI	arr				1235			1645
SI	dep	0950	1200			1400		1655
BA West	arr	1015	1225			1425		1620
BA NR	dep	1029	1240			1449		1645
								1656

ECS denotes empty coaching stock

H denotes runs on 27 February, 24 April & 1 May

s denotes stock to set down only

Z denotes only runs on heritage days and will, in the down direction, only run beyond Scotch Isle Depot if there are passengers to be conveyed for Wolsingham, Frosterley and/or Stanhope