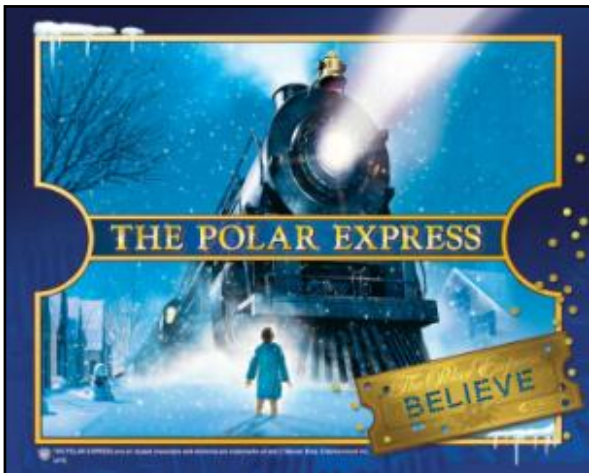


# WEARDALE RAILWAY

**NEWSLETTER No 61 - 27 MAY 2012**

## **NEW PLATFORM LOOP COMMISSIONED AT BISHOP AUCKLAND WR STEAM LOCO No 40 GOING FOR 10 YEAR OVERHAUL NEW STATION WORKING SYSTEM DESCRIBED**

- **POLAR EXPRESS TO ARRIVE IN WEARDALE** : Ed Ellis President of Iowa Pacific, the Weardale Railway majority shareholder, recently announced that his UK holding company –British American Rail Services (BARS) - has been awarded the exclusive UK rights for the Warner Brothers Polar Express franchise and it is his intention to start operations in the winter of 2012 on both the Weardale and Dartmoor Railways. More details in a later section of this Newsletter. Meanwhile here is a taste of the last years Polar Express from IP operated Saratoga and North Creek Railway.



The Polar Express logo from the 2004 3D film



Passengers boarding the Polar Express at Saratoga Springs Station in December 2011 – note the children in pyjamas ( and anoraks ! ) Photo : John Bazan, New England Rail.

- **WR STEAM LOCO No 40 TO GO FOR OVERHAUL** : At the scheduled Annual Inspection held this week the Boiler Inspector decided that the loco could not be considered fit for further service because of the degree of corrosion of the firebox crown. As the Loco only had a further 5 months to go before its 10 year ticket expired, the Trust were already in discussion with the boiler-smiths who had been appointed for the next overhaul. Arrangements will now be made to try to bring forward this work. Whatever the result No. 40 will be out of action for at least 9 months. The Company is developing alternative plans for haulage of the Heritage services. More details in the next issue.
- **141 PACER UNIT RETURNS TO LLANGOLLEN** : The two car diesel unit 141113 was one of the two 141 units which provided the mainstay motive power for the community service trials last year. Although privately owned it was part of the Llangollen Railcars fleet and it is to the Llangollen Railway that it returned earlier this month. It will be one of five diesel units which will be part of a 'Railcars Gala' on the weekend of June 23/24 before moving to the Midland Railway at Butterley. 141113 is one of the first 20 second-generation units built in 1984 as replacements for the ageing 1950s built fleet. It was unique amongst Class 141 in being fitted with Cummins engines and Voith gearboxes, rather than the conventional Leyland/SCG layout.

- WEARDALE RAILWAY YOUTH TEAM EXPANDED TO TWO GROUPS :** David Million reports : Recently we have received an increased number of applications to join the WRYT and as a result we are now up to 26 members with at least another 4 pending, and whilst this is excellent news, it does result a capacity problem. The WRYT coach project was commenced a couple of years ago when membership was much lower, at that time the training room section of the coach was adequate for our needs, however, it is now not possible to comfortably and safely accommodate a team of 26 in a room with a capacity of 17, therefore, I have decided to split the group into 2 groups, new members and established members. Established members “Group 1” will meet on Friday evenings at Stanhope (as now). New members “Group 2” will meet on Saturday evenings at Bishop Auckland (all new members are from the BA area or east thereof) The new arrangement will allow the newer members to focus on different training material more relevant to new members, such as the Rule Book, route knowledge and Track Safety.
- SPONSORSHIP OBTAINED FOR WRYT MODEL RAILWAY PROJECT :** David Million reports : Through my contacts at Bishop Trains we have secured a sponsorship deal with Bachmann for the WRYT model railway project. Bachmann have kindly agreed to provide the WRYT with a range of items for the layout including track, scatter, buildings etc from their samples supply. The Bachmann collectors club newsletter will be coming along, probably in June, to cover the handover Work should commence on the new layout shortly after the handover.



Just too late for inclusion in the last edition, two photos of the points which complete the run around loop at Bishop Auckland. On the left, looking east along the ‘main line’ and on the right looking west from the end of the platform line. Taken on May 1st . The groundframe was then installed and the loop was first used in regular service the following weekend by No 40 on the normal heritage service . ( Photos : Trevor Horner.

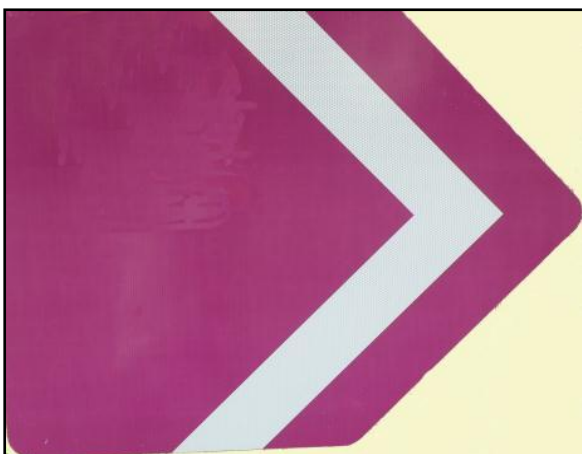
- WR CIVIL ENGINEER ‘RETIRES’ – & REPLACEMENT ANNOUNCED :** Trevor Horner who has worked as Civil Engineer, both on a part time ‘staff’ basis and as a volunteer since the first stretch of the line was reopened reports : - “This Newsletter gives a good opportunity for me to advise you all that I have now officially relinquished my position as Civil Engineer for Weardale Railway. I’d like to thank the many people, both volunteers and employees, who have helped me in my role over the last 6 years or so. I will be continuing to offer technical help if required and to volunteer in a range of duties which I can choose to suit myself. My successor is a gentleman named Brian Green who is more than capable of filling my place – I trust that he will be similarly supported for as long as he is with us. Brian is a “local” guy, originating from Durham but now living in the York area. His background is similar to mine, having worked his way through the ranks of BR’s Civil Engineer’s Department to become Zone Track Engineer for Network Rail based at Manchester. Along the route to this he undertook the roles of Works Supervisor at Newcastle, P Way Maintenance Engineer at Stockport and spent 3 years as a Senior Safety Auditor for BR and Railtrack. Following “retirement” from mainstream involvement he moved into contracting and consultancy work, which he still undertakes from time to time.
- WRYT MEMBER TO CARRY OLYMPIC TORCH :** Jordan Parker, longstanding junior and now Youth team member has been selected to carry the Olympic torch – this will be in Langley Park on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 5.46pm.





Passing fields of ripening rapeseed and trailing white exhaust No40 heads for Wolsingham on its morning journey from Bishop Auckland on May 17<sup>th</sup>. ( Photo : Keith Moorcroft )

- FROM HS1 TO THE WEARDALE RAILWAY: NEW SIGNS APPEAR :** Steve Bissell reports: Some new lineside signs have recently been introduced on the railway. All train crew and operating staff have had a full briefing of course but the observant amongst you may have wondered what the purple sign means. The Weardale Railway is operated with train staff sections to ensure that we only have one train in each section at a time (very important especially on a single line). However it is very restrictive if we have to have the train staff in order to do any shunting at say Stanhope or Scotch Isle. We are now working a system of ‘station limits working’ and have provided additional STOP boards and have marked a ‘limit of shunt’ beyond which a train must not pass unless in possession of the staff. These purple signs are in use on the mainline railway, for a similar purpose—in situations where the line is worked without trackside signals two examples are the HS1 Eurostar route into St Pancras and the ERTMS trial in Wales So we are embracing a very up to date concept in a very simple way. ( In a later article, Operations Manager Donald Heath explains the new operating method and all the new signage that has been introduced in more detail .)



The new ‘Limit of Shunt’ sign as erected at both Bishop Auckland and Stanhope stations ( Steve Bissell )

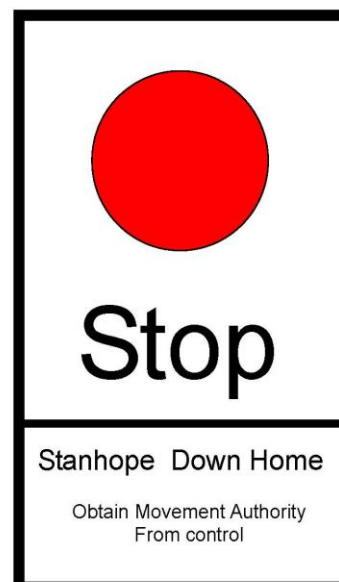
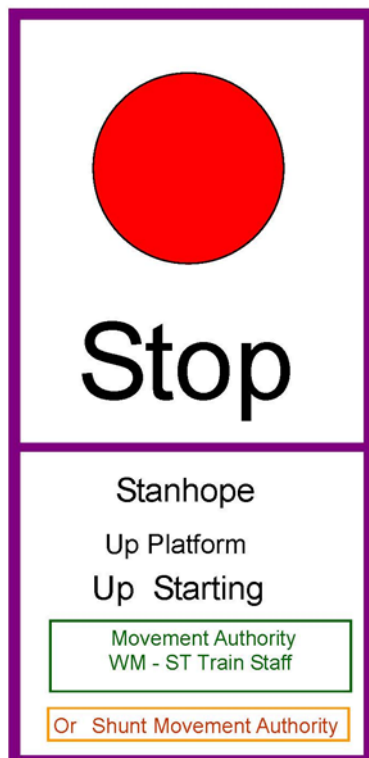


The 122 ‘Bubblecar’ mentioned in the last Newsletter is now stabled at Wolsingham Depot, seen here May 20<sup>th</sup>. (Photo : John Askwith)

- **THE NEW OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES : A WEARDALE RAILWAY SOLUTION :** Elsewhere in this Newsletter we have shown one of the new signs adopted to facilitate station shunting movements – these are part of a whole new operational methodology which the railway is now introducing. As it important we all fully understand these procedures, Operations Manager Donald Heath explains below why we are doing this and how it will operate. This method of working we believe it will also be of interest to general readers as well as the operating volunteers and staff.

## STATION LIMITS WORKING AND NEW TRAIN STAFFS

- **WHY THE CHANGE? :** Station limits working has now been introduced at Bishop Auckland West and at Stanhope: it will be introduced at Scotch Isle just as soon as the last 2 line side signs are erected. At a later date - but before the "War on the Line" weekend in the middle of July - it will also be brought in at Wolsingham station. This alteration to the basic operational methodology of the railway provides it with the flexibility that having a fully signalled railway would have without the costs of installing signals, building and staffing signal boxes and then having to maintain all of the equipment.
- **THE EXISTING CAPACITY LIMITATIONS :** As you all probably know, a driver must have a staff (or a token/tablet/ticket) for the section concerned to be on a single line. This simple system ensures that there are no "corn field meets" as our American friends would say. However, its very simplicity creates problems at the ends of sections because with the staff section running to the middle of the station, you may only run an engine round a train or carry out shunting if you hold the staffs for the sections each side of the station. In short, the capacity of the railway is very severely limited as a train can not shunt/engine run round whilst another train is occupying the section either side of the station concerned. For example, No 40 could not run round its train at Stanhope whilst the 141 was in the section - either going to or coming from Wolsingham.
- **STATION LIMITS WORKING :** To overcome these capacity problems each station is now provided with STOP boards in the form of fixed line side signs. Drivers already have to seek authority from Control to enter each section, they now have to seek authority to pass the STOP board. As previously, the movement authority is recorded in a special pad by the driver so that he has a record of exactly where he has authority to proceed.



- SHUNTING WITHIN STATION LIMITS** : So as to permit shunting moves etc, at each station is the stop board on approach is positioned sufficiently far from the station to allow a safety margin from the furthest point that a shunting move would run to into the section towards an approaching train. This point is known as the limit of shunt and the Weardale Railway adopted the mainline railway symbol - the horizontal purple arrow – used on lines with radio or cab signalling. Within the confines of the passing/run round loop at each section end there is a stop board at the end of each line forming the loop in both directions. In order to pass this Stop board the driver must have either the train staff plus the authority of control to proceed through the section or a specific shunt authority from Control which will allow them to run up to the purple ‘limit of shunt’ marker. To complete the picture we have two more signs. Firstly : - Each stop board at the end of a staff section protecting the station - known as the home stopboard- is preceded by a fixed distant board this warns the driver that he is approaching the home stop board and is placed service braking distance from the home stop board (i.e. the distance from which the train can stop normally when travelling at permitted line speed. The second sign marks the point at which the train is clear of station limits,( this is usually fixed to the back of the home stop board) and its purpose is to tell the train crew when the rear of their train has passed the limit of shunt. Train crew report to Control when the train is ‘ clear of station limits’ which allows Control to authorise further shunting within the station area if required.



**SECTION CLEAR MARKER**



**FIXED DISTANT SIGNAL**



**LIMIT OF SHUNT MARKER**

- SECTION WORKING WITH TRAIN STAFFS** : Until now the safety of the line has been ensured using simple wooden train staffs supplemented on occasion by unidirectional paper tickets. These have allowed two trains to follow each other through the section one after the other once the first train has cleared the section. The wooden train staffs have keys attached to them which unlock the groundframes at the ends of the sections and also any crossing gates/ barriers in the section. Whilst this method is very safe having been tried and tested for well over a century now, it can be improved upon by the simple action of replacing the paper tickets by a very limited number of metal ones, as described in the following sections
- THE NEW METAL TRAIN STAFFS** : Each section is provided with a metal train staff with the names of the end points of the section engraved upon it. One end is square in cross section and the other end is round. At the extremities of each end is a socket (cylindrical hole) into which a small shaft can be inserted. Each staff has four metal tickets attached, these tickets are directional – square for the up direction of travel and round for the down direction of travel. The top name is the entry station and the bottom is the exit station. The train staff itself is inscribed with the up direction entry station on the square section and the down direction entry station on the round section. The square section will only fit into one end and similarly the round section will only fit into the other.



- **THE SAFETY BENEFITS OF THE NEW TRAIN CONTROL STAFFS :** Drivers can see at a glance whether the section is clear - he must have the staff with all 4 tickets attached to it, or if he is the first of two or more consecutive moves through the section must see the complete staff (with all the tickets) and then be given the first ticket. If he is the second to move he must see the staff complete – minus the first ticket and then be given the second ticket etc. The presence of two tickets for the opposite direction of travel is proof that no train can be coming in that direction – a fact that cannot be definitely guaranteed using a paper ticket. It is intended to introduce the new staffs in early July, before the War on the Line event.



The new train staffs in the course of manufacture

- **SOME OTHER POINTS TO NOTE :** As a result of the provision of the new staffs the keys for the ground frames and level crossings will no longer be attached to the staff but will be held by the control agents/crossing keepers who will be in position at the frames/crossings to work them as required. The existing wooden staff for the one train working section between Bishop Auckland and Bishop Auckland West with the key attached for the Connecting Line Groundframe will remain unchanged. This is to emphasise the difference in through working to Network where ticket working does not apply and every train in that section must be in possession of a staff.



The new Bishop Auckland Groundframe : On the left Roly Johnson stands beside the frame outside his own workshop. His was the mechanical expertise behind the splendid refurbishment of the frame and the complete installation. On the right, the frame installed on the 4 & 5th May and 1 to r : Trevor Horner, Roly Johnson (both WRT), Neil Campbell, Ricky Mills and Brian Mills all of RMS. Also assisting were Michael Patterson Jeff Smith, Cory Dolphin and Shaun Burton. (Photos : Trevor Horner )

- **THE WEARDALE RAILWAY ON BBC :** As mentioned in the last issue, filming took place over the Easter Weekend as part of a programme to tie in with a new BBC series covering “The Great British Story”. This series started on BBC 2 on Friday May 25<sup>th</sup> at 9pm and continues thereafter at similar times. The tie-in programme which includes the WR item is to be shown on BBC One NE & Cumbria on Tuesday June 12<sup>th</sup> at 10.35pm. It can be seen live outside of the North East & Cumbria on Sky Channel 975, Freesat Channel 956 and will also be available for the following 7 days on the BBC iPlayer. As we mentioned in the last Newsletter this includes an on board interview with WRT Board member & archivist John Askwith, plus action footage of No 40.

- FIRST AID TRAINING FOR WR VOLUNTEERS :** An important part of operating any facility open to members of the public is the ability to respond to any medical emergency. Ruth Carroll . WR Volunteer Coordinator reports : “ A good day was had by all on the First Aid Course on 4<sup>th</sup> May . It was nice to meet up as a group somewhere away from the railway. It was held at St Catherine’s Centre Crook. There were 8 people on the course and 6 of them were from Weardale Railway. The volunteers that attended were myself, Rebecca Ashton, John Hargreaves, John Hill, Tony Slack and Peter Baker. The course was arranged by Bishop Auckland College. The teacher was Thirza Turner and the material was prepared by Jeff Doidge. Both of these were from the company Industrial Safety Training. They covered CPR, how to put someone in the recovery position and how to deal with wounds and bleeding. I am pleased to say that we all passed the course with flying colours.



Instructor Thirza Turner bandages a head wound at the First Aid course attended by WR volunteers. (Photo : Ruth Carroll)



The completed work on the east end of the Bishop Auckland loop with the ground frame and ballasting completed. (Photo : Trevor Horner)

- NEW GROUNDFRAME INSTALLED AT BISHOP AUCKLAND :** Trevor Horner reports: Installation by the RMA Project Team began on the 4<sup>th</sup> May under the direction of Roly Johnson, who gave guidance on positioning the various cranks and rodding runs. Work progressed at a good pace and by early afternoon on the Saturday we were able to test the installation using the 08 shunter, which was on duty at BA to assist No 40 running round its train. The GF was duly “signed in” by Steve Bissell following an inspection on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May. Final ballasting was completed during the weekend of 19/ 20<sup>th</sup> May and various tidying items were undertaken. A further section of track was added at the east end of the platform line along with a buffer stop. As the finished photo shows this is an installation finished to a very high standard and one that all who have been involved with can be most proud
- HERITAGE RAILWAY FATALITY HIGHLIGHTS THE SAFETY ISSUE :** Tragically our introduction of a regular safety item in this Newsletter has been overtaken by events. Operations Manager, Donald Heath writes :- “Many of you will already be aware that there was, recently, a fatal incident on a neighbouring heritage railway. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to everybody involved and I have already written to my contacts in that organisation. Although we do not yet know all the details there are some important reminders we must take note of :- Firstly, never, ever, attempt to go in between vehicles until all movements have definitely stopped. This includes not crossing from one side of a track to the other when a movement is coming towards you. Secondly, before you attempt to go "in between", ensure that you have a completely clear understanding with every driver and other operational staff in the vicinity that everybody knows what you are going to do and have confirmed to you that they will not move/attempt to move any traction unit/rake of vehicles until you tell them that you are clear of the vehicles which you are going to go in between. If we always adhere to these two simple rules we should remain safe and I look to you all to do just that, please, at all times.





BARS subsidiary DCR Class 56 , No 56311 in action on the Network. On the left hauling 55019, 47812, 31601 & 31602 through Attenborough on 17th May 2012 en route to the Nene Valley Railway and right seen near Tamworth on 12<sup>th</sup> May working the scrap train empties from Cardiff to Derby. Photo : left , John Birks and right via BARS Blog website.

- DCR ACTIVITY UPDATE :** The Weardale Railway depot at Wolsingham often sees visitors from the BARS owned Devon & Cornwall Railways (DCR) loco fleet. There are photos elsewhere of some recent DCR operated trains and here we give some highlights of activity during the current month. DCR owns 6 Class 31's, 3 of which are operational and 6 Class 56's of which 3 are operational. 56091 is currently under repair at Wolsingham. DCR operated several Network trains hauling scrap metal from Stockton and Shipley (near Bradford) during the month and was also contracted to haul stock to and from diesel Galas at the Nene Valley, the Great Central (N) and Nene Valley Railways. DCR will also be responsible for hauling stock to and from the upcoming Railfest at the NRM in York next month. 56311 is already in a Railfest livery (on one side!) in preparation for this event. Three DCR locomotives are planned to attend the event.
- MORE POLAR EXPRESS :** Ed Ellis, Iowa Pacific President on his visit to Weardale earlier this month outlined some of the key features of the Polar Express operation . It is intended that the two trains per night will be operated travelling from Bishop Auckland, where a temporary gift shop and ticket office will be provided. Passengers then join the train and are served hot chocolate and biscuits. Passengers are told the story by on board performers as the train proceeds to the North Pole – a lineside 'set' (about 5 miles away in real miles) where Santa boards and travels back on the train. Coaches and motive power will be from sources external to the WR – aiming to provide accommodation for up to 600 passengers. Planning for this operation, which will also be replicated on the Dartmoor Railway is already underway. More news in subsequent editions. An introductory evening for volunteers was held at the Weardale Outdoor Centre on the evening of April 27<sup>th</sup>. This was an opportunity to see the film, and to watch clips of existing US operations. Debra Goodman, Director of Special Events for IOWA Pacific was also on hand to answer questions and to give us the benefit of her experience of the Polar Express



A big day for the G5 Group : May 12<sup>th</sup> saw the public launch of the newly completed G5 Boiler at Rail Restorations North East in Shildon. It is the largest standard guage steam engine boiler to be built in this country for the last 45 years. Both photos from the G5 website : <http://www.g5locomotive.co.uk/>