

WEARDALE RAILWAY : NEWS UPDATE : No.35

23 MARCH 2010

WOLSINGHAM PASSING LOOP TO BE REINSTATED MORE DETAILS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE ANNOUNCED MORE STEAM AND HERITAGE DIESEL HAULAGE IN 2010

- **WOLSINGHAM LOOP - AT LAST !:** With the pending arrival of the community rail service and the need to prepare to handle freight trains , the long awaited construction of a passing loop at Wolsingham is now planned to take place in the next two months. The loop will allow a greater degree of flexibility in handling the extra trains and enable a much speedier run around for both steam and diesel hauled trains at Wolsingham. See photos below.



Soon to be a thing of the past ? No 40 arrives at the Wolsingham depot entrance , leaves the coaches and moves forward (left) and then backs into the headshunt whilst the Sentinel – prepares to go forward and pulls the coaches back past the depot entrance
(Both Photos : D Scott)

- **MALLARD AND TORNADO AT SHILDON :** On June 23rd Mallard, the record breaking A4 class locomotive built by the LNER will be hauled from York to Shildon by the new build Tornado . Mallard has been located at the NRM at York since 1975. It will stay at Locomotion for an unspecified period. Steve Davies, director of the NRM, said: “It’ll be quite a sight to see two of the most of famous locomotives in the world heading up the East Coast Main Line together.” Tornado and Mallard will leave the NRM site on June 23, with full details announced nearer the time. For more information see nrm.org.uk
- **NEW WEARDALE TOURISM WEBSITE :** The Weardale Visitor Networks new website went live in early March. It is still under development, see it at <http://www.discoverweardale.com/> . It will cover Dales attractions , shops, places to stay and places to eat, etc. The home page features a photograph of No 40 crossing Broadwood Bridge.
- **TV COMPANY TO FILM ON THE RAILWAY :** The fourth series of the ‘George Gently’ detective stories, will be filmed in the North East. Previous series were filmed in Ireland, although the stories are set in the Northeast. The Weardale Railway will be the setting for one of the scenes and the Company will be providing No 40 in guise of a BR engine, with the ‘blood and custard’ coaches. Filming will take place in late April probably to the west of Stanhope. More later
- **COAL LOADING FACILITY AT WOLSINGHAM :** Closing date for written submissions was March 16th. Durham County Council are now studying the Planning Application and the Railway is responding to their requests for information and clarification. All things being equal the planning hearing should be held in mid to late May. Thanks to everyone who wrote in to support the application.

- **THE NEW COMMUNITY TRAIN SERVICE : LATEST NEWS :** Details of the planned new train service to connect the Dale to the Network are still being finalised. The service will operate between Stanhope and Bishop Auckland, not Shildon as was indicated earlier. Provisionally the basic service will be 7 return trips per day, Mondays to Fridays, with 5 trips on Saturdays and 4 on Sundays. It will be worked by the 141, with another unit being planned as backup . Target opening date is May 23 with plans for a special reopening day ceremony on the previous day. Again more details in future issues of the Update.
- **MORE STEAM AND HERITAGE DIESEL HAULED TRAINS IN 2010 :** To complement the community service the Heritage service will be revamped to utilise both steam and diesel hauled coaching stock . It is intended that the revised timetable will indicate which days are planned to be steam hauled and which diesel hauled. As a start it is intended now to run No40 on eleven days in April. (April 2nd to 11th inclusive and April 29th)



Mothers Day : No 40 passes Rogerley –heading for Stanhope
(Photo : J Lewins)



Footpath crossing near Witton le Wear after the erection of signs
- there are six required in this case . (Photo : S Bissell)

- **PERIODICAL OPERATING NOTICES – CLARIFICATION :** In the last Update a reference was made to new procedures to handle Operating Notices . To clarify, the notices will be issued every quarter and the content of them will be transferred to the Railway's General Appendix at intervals of about every 3 years or so. The reason for the extended interval is that the General Appendix is a printed document which will be issued to all operating and outside engineering staff and costly to produce. (D L Heath)
- **WEARDALE CHARTER FROM NEWCASTLE, DURHAM, AND DARLINGTON: JUNE 20**
: Just a reminder that this tour , operated by North East Railtours is now booking. The first two charters on the line were booked out –so if you do intend to go best not leave it too late .The tour will be Class 47 hauled, top and tailed, Mk 1 stock with a Buffet Car . Details below :

NORTH EAST RAILTOURS : 0191 252 3774 : billmiller@tiscali.co.uk : or at 30 Glendale Avenue, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear, NE26 1RX
FARES : From Alnmouth, Newcastle, Durham, 1st Class: £39 (Child £30) Standard: £29 (Child £20)
From Darlington : 1st Class : £29 (Child £20),. Standard 1st Class : £19, (Child £10)
Make out Cheques to W S MILLER , and enclose a SAE for tickets which will be forwarded 7-10 days before the trip

- **WOLSINGHAM : RAILWAY JOBS FAIR :** In cooperation with Groundworks North- East and Job Centre Plus, the Railway hosted a Jobs Fair in Wolsingham Town Hall on April 16th. This scheme under the Future Jobs Fund can provide over a dozen jobs to local candidates and help the Railway cope with demand for the planned increase in both freight and passenger services . Over 50 candidates were interviewed and the Railway will work with the two organisations to develop a shortlist. Thanks to Arthur Temple for initiating this process.

- **BROKEN BANKS : SITE SURVEY :** The long running subsidence area at Broken Banks between Escomb and Bishop Auckland has been remedied by reprofiling, reballasting and relaying the track. However, in order to establish the causes of the subsidence and define a longer term solution, the Railway has engaged the services of the British Geological Survey (BGS) to study the site. They have engaged a contractor to drill three boreholes to examine the underlying geology. The work took place in mid March.



Broken Banks : Borehole drilling to examine the subsurface Geology (Photo : A Gregory)



Mr Hobbs and Dr Foster from the BGS with Mr Palmer from BARS affiliate RMS Ltd. (Photo A Gregory)

- **STANHOPE CAFÉ GETS ITS SPRING CLEAN :** Kath Wood reports : A well earned break is just what the doctor ordered after a really hectic run of Santa Specials, but no, the new season is once more upon us and there is no rest, as they say, for the wicked (I often wonder what I did in a previous life!!). With the first event of season under our belts we are looking forward to the next. We were not idle in the two week shut down last month. Thanks must again go to Doug Collins and able assistant Ian Jowett for a quick clean and re-decoration of the kitchen area. It's looking bright and clean again ready for the tonnes of bacon butties and mountains of cakes which will no doubt be cooked in there again this year.
- **STANHOPE STATION SHOP ALSO SPRING CLEANED :** Thanks must also go to Mike Rapp who kindly spent much of the two weeks stripping (hang on don't get too excited!) and cleaning all the shelves and walls in the shop, and together with Michael Smith (husband to our shop volunteer Helen) and Neil Ritchie, did a little bit of DIY and well, I must say it's all looking bright and clean in there too. (K Wood)
- **JUNIOR CLUB : PROJECT 5226 :** Work continues on renovating ex ScotRail coach 5226 into the new home for the Junior Club and the team are at the point of starting to rebuild it following the removal of all of the redundant seating, under carriage equipment, damaged wall panels and flooring. Sheets of metal have now arrived so that bodyside repairs can be done and an order is being placed for wood sheets so that the interior can start to take shape. New furniture has now arrived with blinds and carpets ordered and stored ready for fitting. Train company East Coast Main Line have donated two large train picture boards for the coach which became surplus to requirements at the end of the GNER and National Express franchises. The picture boards, which are both 18 ft long once fitted, and were previously displayed in the East Coast training centre at York will be used on the internal walls of the coach which replace the north facing windows.
- **DEPOT NEWS :** Preparatory work continues to get the depot area ready to develop a coal loading facility should the planning application be approved. Work has recommenced on the Trust owned Mk 1 coach 'Nina'. It will be restored to its previous open configuration, all the original Pullman style fittings having been retained. As mentioned elsewhere the WRjc coach is also undergoing restoration

- **VEGETATION CLEARANCE :** Kevin Hillary reports - The Sunday Gang have in the last couple of weeks been disposing of a large amount of boscage which was cut down about 2 years ago. This is in the Engineman's Terrace area to the east of Witton-Le-Wear. It was estimated to amount to some 10 ton in weight. There were one or two local people who came along to congratulate us on the good work, this is the type of thing that makes all the hard work worth while. See before and after photographs, below.



Enginemans Terrace , looking towards Wear Valley Junction. Two views: on the left taken in 2008 and on the right, the same view taken in mid March 2010 after clearance work by the Sunday gang and the team from RMS. The hut on the right provides a reference point. (Both Photos : J Lewins)

- **CAFÉ ACTIVITIES AND STAFFING :** Kath Wood reports : I don't think I've done so much baking so early in the year before what with the two charters and Mother's Day event it's been a pretty busy start. Cream Teas went down particularly well last weekend ably served by Joan Carrick, Dawn Percy and junior assistant Lauren – who also helped the evening before to make the sandwiches.... and guess what girls – it's all to do again for Easter. I am also happy to introduce our “new Nigel” our permanent member of cafe staff – Mel – who has started with us this weekend. Also much thanks to our regular cafe volunteers, Joan Armstrong, Jean Eccles and John Armstrong, and shop staff John Chatfield, Mike Rapp, Helen Smith, Robin Easton, David Scofield for their help. If you would like to come and join in the fun kathwood_95@hotmail.co.uk
- **PROJECT CONNECT :** Work is continuing on remedying the track tasks identified by the Network Rail inspection team to bring it up to the standard required for freight trains. One other item on the critical path is completing the work on the various service ducts at Witton le Wear level crossing . This will involve some relaying of the crossing itself and is also part of the works needed to be completed before the DCC lineside footpath to Low Barns.



Witton le Wear Level Crossing from the west, with new signage in place and on the right works to divert a BT cable (Both Photos : S Bissell)

- **FROM YOUTH TEAM TO SECONDMAN :** Dave Million reports that on Sunday 7th March 2010, WR Youth Team member, Ben Riley, was the first ever member to be a secondman. Ben assisted driver, Alistair Gregory, bring 73139 from Wolsingham dept to Stanhope station with a special ECS service.



WRYT member Ben Riley gets to grips with the buckeye coupling
(Both Photos : D Million)

Ben in the secondman's seat upon arrival at Stanhope.

- **MORE SNOW: THIS TIME IN THE ROCKIES :** Weardale Railway sister Company, the Rio Grande Scenic Railway in Colorado experienced some testing conditions for its 'Winter Wonderland' trips to the La Veta Pass in the Rocky Mountains. Over a foot of snow fell before this weekends trip, but resulted in seven foot drifts. Iowa Pacific Company President, Ed Ellis, was on board and sent these photographs, below and has also uploaded a video of the train charging the drifts. See it at this location on YouTube : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDy9mOLgBjs> . Also Photos below



View from the cab as the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad s 'Winter Wonderland' train as it heads up the La Veta pass in the Rockies.



The front of the SD90MAC 43 unit 116 after it had ploughed Through the drifts (Both Photos : E Ellis)

- **MOTHERS DAY : JUNIORS AND YOUTH TEAM :** Club & Youth Team members were out in force helping out. 2 members ran the model railway display whilst a further 2 manned the fund raising stand "Collector's Corner", others were kept busy helping out in the buffet car, in the cafe at Stanhope and with operational roles.

Edited By G C Mudd : 23 March 2010 : Comments , suggestions, contributions welcomed.

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