

# WEARDALE RAILWAY

**NEWSLETTER No.50 21 JANUARY 2010**

## **WORK PROGRESSING ON THE WOLSINGHAM LOOP**

**WR OWNERS NOW GRANTED NETWORK WIDE OPERATING LICENCE  
COAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS AGREED WITH NETWORK RAIL**

- **WOLSINGHAM DEPOT LOOP/ HEADSHUNT** : There has been intense activity over the last month on the area of the headshunt alongside the main line which is being extended eastwards and will eventually form a loop such that coal trains can pull into the depot and leave the main running line clear. This has involved considerable vegetation clearance ( thank you Sunday Gang) followed by some substantial earthwork carried out by Depot staff and RMS. While these engineering works were being progressed passenger services were confined to the Wolsingham – Stanhope part of the route for six days in mid January. Photographs below and elsewhere in the Newsletter show the work in progress.



Two views of the work in progress extending the headshunt between Wolsingham Depot and Scorch Isle. On the left looking eastwards showing a stretch of the new track in position and on the right a view looking west towards the Depot showing the earthworks in situ for the next stage of the extension. (Both photos : Norman Swindle)

- **EASTGATE : OFFICIALS CONFIRM FURTHER PLANS FOR SITE** : The Task Force, which includes Durham County Council and landowner Lafarge, has sent out a newsletter to reassure residents they still plan to regenerate the site. Meanwhile, Lloyd McNally, Lafarge Project Manager, said: “Lafarge aims to stay involved in the project until we feel satisfied that our commitment to leaving some form of legacy for the dale is being achieved”. Councillor Neil Foster, cabinet member for Regeneration and Economic Development, said: “We are continuing to work closely with Lafarge to ensure that the development of Eastgate goes forward and I would like to think that we can still work towards maximising the regeneration benefits.”
- **RUTH ON TV AND TWITTER** : Many of you will have seen Ruth Carroll working as a volunteer, recently for example she was spotted helping out Santa in his Grotto, Ruth is also an excellent photographer and video cameraperson - some of her photos are included in this Newsletter. Ruth has also set up a Weardale RailwayTV site on Youtube and you can see her latest video and experience a virtual footplate ride on No 40 operating a Santa Special. See it at : [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v\\_D9pjuoJP4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_D9pjuoJP4) . Now Ruth has taken over the Weardale Railway Twitter site from Clive Elsdon who set it up about a year ago, during which time it has gathered over 900 followers. So thanks to Clive for his pioneering effort and lets welcome Ruth and see if she can break the 1000 followers level.

- **BARS AFFILIATE NOW LICENCED TO OPERATE ON THE MAIN NETWORK** : One of the prime objectives of Iowa Pacific's UK business strategy was to obtain for its UK Affiliate a licence to operate trains on the main Network . On December 24<sup>th</sup> The Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) granted the Company a licence to operate freight services, the full press statement is shown below. The application to operate passenger services is also currently being considered by the ORR. Taken in conjunction with the recent acquisition of Hanson Traction and its loco fleet the company is now targeting to be in a position to operate services on the Network by Easter this year.



- **PRESS STATEMENT** : Devon and Cornwall Railways Ltd. (DCR) is pleased to announce that the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) has granted the company a licence to operate rail freight services, effective 24 December 2010. Ed Ellis, president of DCR, said "Issuance of this licence reaffirms the UK's commitment to competition amongst open-access freight operators. We are pleased that the ORR has, after careful evaluation, enabled DCR to take the next steps toward implementing our strategy of becoming an effective, responsive operator focused on atypical and innovative flows in the UK rail freight market. We look forward to working with customers, Network Rail, and other interested parties to develop freight operations." DCR is a subsidiary of British American Railway Services, Ltd., which through its subsidiary Rail Management Services also has interests in mainline and shunting locomotive hire and maintenance, as well as track infrastructure construction and maintenance. Railway operational subsidiaries include Weardale Railways, CIC, and Dartmoor Railway CIC.



Iowa Pacific affiliates battle with the winter on two continents : On the left No 18 of the Rio Grande Scenic Railway heads over the La Veta Pass in the Colorado Rockies , on the right the Weardale Railways 141113 pulls into Bishop Auckland in picturesque winter conditions. ( Photos : L – courtesy RGSR. R –D Scott) There is a spectacular video of No 18 climbing the Pass on January 15<sup>th</sup> – see it at :- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zl5onvRvt2E>

- **NEW TIMETABLE LEAFLET BEING PRINTED** : As mentioned in the last newsletter the community service timetable has been modified to better fit the low season demand. This has necessitated a new timetable leaflet which should be in circulation soon and will also include the new fare structure where the day return fares have been superseded by the same 'Anytime' fares. The timetable will cover the period up to May 21 which is the date the national Network timetable changes take place. With the loop at Wolsingham in place a revised pattern of services will be possible from May onwards to better cope with the summer leisure and shopping market. Excluding the Santa period the trains carried over 15,000 passengers from the inauguration of services in May 2010, during which time our 141 units travelled 55,000 miles on what has been a pioneering privately run community service.



- G5 PROJECT MOVES AHEAD :** The Class G5 Locomotive Company Ltd, whose members include WR Trust Directors Steve Raine and Mike Wood, is in the process of recreating a former North Eastern Railway G5 Class 0-4-4 tank locomotive and has completed work on the bogie. Although the group endeavoured to keep work on the locomotive based in the North-East, its steel tyres had to be imported from South Africa. Secretary Bernard Morris said “It is a very complicated piece of equipment and far more mechanically intricate than the bogies on most other locomotives. It has been a long process, so we are very pleased to actually have it finished.” The bogie will be on display at Locomotion: The National Railway Museum, in Shildon, County Durham, until early March, where it will be accompanied by a short display exploring the history of the Class G5 locomotive and the group’s project. Mr Morris added: “This is a pretty unique project. Tornado has been built and is successfully running, but this is more of a local engine. The intention is to run it on local heritage lines, such as Weardale and Wensleydale, and any other lines based in Durham, Yorkshire and Northumberland that are willing to hire it.” For information about the group and the project, visit : <http://www.g5locomotive.co.uk>



A Class G5 0-4-4 locomotive, originally built in Darlington, in service in BR days.



Former WR Director Dave Foxtan examines the recently completed bogie for the new build G5 – see news item.

- COAL PROJECT UPDATE :** Work has continued in preparing the ground for the building of the coal loading siding and pad as shown in the accompanying photographs. In this work we have had assistance from a new team of Groundworks employees. Many of the bricks and some of the stone has been sold to the Beamish Museum. The Groundworks staff have been instrumental in cleaning, stacking and wrapping the bricks for transport. Commencement of new building works awaits approval of the planning conditions documentation which we have submitted to Durham County Council.



Work in the Wolsingham Depot continues in preparation for its joint use as a freight terminal for loading coal. The photo on the left shows the buildings which had to be demolished to make way for an extended siding, on the right a view looking towards the ‘Gun Barrel’ shed after the buildings had been cleared. ( Photos : Norman Swindle)

- **No 40 : COMPLETES SANTA SEASON – WHATS NEXT? :** After successfully completing all its scheduled runs over the Christmas /New Year period, No 40's next scheduled operating period will over the February Half Term week ( February 19<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>) on the usual Heritage timetable between Stanhope and Wolsingham. ( Full details are on the Project website : <http://www.weardale-railway.org.uk/> ) As you will see from photos elsewhere in this issue No 40 is still proving useful, this time on works trains – standing in for the Class 73 . The Trust Board has decided it would be wise to bring forward a complete re-tube of the boiler prior to the next Annual Inspection, due in May, as this could put the loco into a better position to obtain a full or even an extended certificate. The tubes have been ordered and should arrive early February and will be installed in the interval between the February Half Term and Easter steam operations.



Heritage trains operated on January 2nd, Driver Malcolm Simpson (centre), Mark Eccles and James Percy one of the Youth Team members now volunteering as cleaner. (Photo : S Watters)



Mark Venning enjoying his footplate ride experience on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> – he had won this in a competition held in 2008 –and has waited patiently for his ride. Mark has also made significant contributions to the No. 40 Fund. (Photo : J Askwith)

- **2011 PASSENGER PLANS :** A lot of work is going on behind the scenes to progress plans for stations at both Witton le Wear and Witton Park. These both involve funding and planning considerations which all take time so no hard and fast dates can be given. No 'quick fix' is possible such as we used at Bishop Auckland West, as any new building would have to take place next to an operational railway which brings into play a whole raft of regulatory requirements which can be time consuming as well as being costly. We are also in negotiations to make a more passenger friendly arrangement at Bishop Auckland to transfer passengers with the Northern Rail Darlington service. The severe weather in December made it very difficult for passengers, especially senior citizens, to walk between the platforms. As mentioned elsewhere the community service timetable will be revised in May this year to reflect summer traffic patterns and it is intended to run the steam Heritage services during all school holiday weeks plus summer weekends. It is anticipated that plans for summer charter services can be confirmed soon. Further marketing initiatives are also under consideration, following on from January's £1 Senior Return fare offer to or from Bishop Auckland. (Details of this are on the website).
- **JUNIOR CLUB & YOUTH TEAM : FROM TRUST CHAIRMAN :** David Scott sent the following letter to WRJC organisers Mike Wilkinson and David Million : "I would like to send congratulations and thanks on behalf of myself and the Directors of the Weardale Railway Trust for the performance of all the Juniors, and yourselves, over the busy Christmas and New Year period. With the conditions over December being very difficult to say the least, the Juniors were always there and ready to help. Passengers, always without prompting, praised the politeness, appearance, hard work and enthusiasm of the team. . I am sure that without the Junior Club we would have had great difficulty in giving the service that we required for the Santa Specials. WELL DONE and keep up the good work." David Million relayed this message adding the following comments : "Both Michael and myself continue to be extremely proud of the Junior Club and Youth Team members and the great work that you all do. Achievements that you should be very proud of. I regularly receive fantastic comments from staff, volunteers and passengers about the work you do, your appearance, politeness and professional approach to your duties."



- **COAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS AGREED WITH NETWORK RAIL** : Donald Heath reports : “The physical work which is going on has been reported elsewhere. However, the planning for the operation of the coal trains is still continuing and a major milestone was reached just before Christmas when agreement was made with Network Rail as to exactly how we are going to receive and despatch the coal trains from Network Rail onto the Weardale Railway and vice versa.” Donald’s summary account of how it will work is given at the end of this Newsletter.
- **SANTA SEASON : FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER** :David Million reports : Thank you to all of the staff, volunteers and Junior Club members who helped make this year’s Santa Special event the best so far. Whilst we experienced some challenges due to the extreme weather conditions, as a team we managed to run every train, carrying more than 3400 passengers overall. The introduction of a First Class offer and a connecting train from/to Bishop Auckland was very well received, unfortunately we were unable to provide the planned Christmas Market due to recent changes by the local authority but we will be looking to see how we can overcome this hurdle for Christmas 2011. As with all special events, we are always looking for more volunteers to come along and give a helping hand. If you are able to give a little of your free time please feel free to contact me to find out a bit more.



Two more progress photos from the Wolsingham loop worksite. On the left showing the early stages of building up the embankment at the Scotch Isle section Board with the Farm in the distance. On the right looking back towards the depot showing the length of the loop section. ( Photos : John Lewins )

- **MARKETING MANAGER : A FAREWELL AND AN HELLO** : After a hectic Santa season during which they carried the major burden of work involved in handling the Santa and catering side of the operation, Wendy and Clive Elsdon have decided they needed to cut back on their volunteer time commitment as Joint Marketing Managers. Clive will still plans to be involved with the Marketing effort. They both deserve all our thanks for their very significant efforts in what was our busiest Santa season ever and judging by the passenger feedback one of our most successful. David Million, General Manager, announced that he has appointed a new volunteer into the role of Marketing Manager. “Andrea Davidson who is an Employment Engagement Officer with Durham County Council is joining us. Andrea is heavily involved in grant applications that we are progressing including funding for our proposed Apprenticeship Scheme and brings with her extensive business development and marketing experience, particularly within the local area.” Andrea lives in Crook and has a long association with Weardale. She hopes that her marketing and sales background will enable her to help the Weardale Railway realise her vision of it supporting a more sustainable economy in the Dale by developing new initiatives and partnership working with both the local communities and organisations operating within the Dales area .
- **SUBSIDIES FOR WEARDALE MOTOR SERVICES MAY BE CUT** : Proposals to cut the subsidies for late evening services ( after 8pm weekdays) and all day Sundays in Weardale are up for consideration by Durham County Council in April. On the section between Bishop Auckland/Crook and Stanhope, one or two evening services could be affected, depending on the day of the week (there are extra services on Friday and Saturday nights) , and seven services on a Sunday. Upper Dale services are similarly having subsidies cut as is the Stanhope Town service between Bondisle and Crawleyside.

- DARLINGTON – BISHOP LINE NOW A DESIGNATED COMMUNITY RAILWAY :** The following item appeared recently in Rail News : “The Darlington to Bishop Auckland rail line has been designated as a community rail service. Operated by Northern Rail, and known as the Bishop Line, its community status will enable communities along the route to become more involved in how the rail service operates. The line connects Darlington with 3 significant rail related locations. The first is North Road, which not only houses a railway museum but is where 60163 Tornado was constructed. Next is Shildon, home of the National Railway Museum’s outreach centre and finally Bishop Auckland itself, where passengers can transfer on to the Weardale heritage railway for a ride to Stanhope.” This designation means the Bishop Line joins other lines such as the Whitby – Middlesbrough line which can possibly lead to enhanced support and funding for further community involvement.



141113 on a Community service alongside No.40 on a Santa Special on the final service on December 24<sup>th</sup>



Santa with his team of helpers on December 24<sup>th</sup>. On the right Ruth Carroll, next to her is chief Santa organiser Wendy Elsdon with her daughter, Kate. (Both Photos : David Scott )

- OPERATIONS MANAGER’S REPORT ON THE NEW TIMETABLE :** “The introduction of the new timetable with effect from January 4<sup>th</sup> has made a major reduction in the number of people required to run the railway on a daily basis. Although the shifts are now slightly longer than they were before, it is possible for every job to be covered by one person each day rather than the need to have two people in all of the operating department posts apart from the Duty Manager. I recognise that this means that certain people will not get as many turns as they had previously but I would ask that you are patient because we will most certainly need even more people once the summer timetable starts in May and, also, when the coal trains start running. In the meantime, when you are on duty and a new volunteer is assigned to you for training purposes, I shall be grateful if you would kindly take every opportunity to show these individuals exactly how the railway does run.” Donald Heath.



Two photos of a works train hauled by No 40 during the engineering possession on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at a location between the depot and Scotch Isle during construction of the extended headshunt. (Photos : Ruth Carroll)





08 Class Shunter in Wolsingham Depot for traction motor change on 19<sup>th</sup> January- owned by BARS affiliate RMS it will be returned to Teesport on lease (Photo : Ruth Carroll)



Witton le Wear crossing – a wintry scene taken by Dave Scott in December 2010.

- **NEW ROLE FOR WOLSINGHAM DEPOT** : The acquisition of Hanson Traction included the use of its loco repair facility at Washwood Heath near Birmingham . As part of the reorganisation following this acquisition, the loco repair and maintenance of all BARS owned locos will be shared between Wolsingham Depot and Washwood Heath. The first of two Class 08 shunters has already arrived at Wolsingham. A fuller report on the new organisational structure of which the Weardale Railway is part will follow in subsequent Newsletters.
- **SPECIAL REPORT – COAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS** : Donald Heath reports : The physical work which is going on has been reported elsewhere. However, the planning for the operation of the coal trains is still continuing and a major milestone was reached just before Christmas when agreement was made with Network Rail as to exactly how we are going to receive and despatch the coal trains from Network Rail onto the Weardale Railway and vice versa.
- In essence, the existing staff section between Bishop Auckland (which actually means the east end of the Bishop Auckland Network Rail station) and Scotch Isle will be split into two new ones, Bishop Auckland (Network Rail) and Latherbrush Bridge, and Latherbrush Bridge to Scotch Isle. The section of line between Bishop Auckland (Network Rail) and Latherbrush Bridge will become known as the Connecting Line and that section will be long enough to hold the length of a coal train.
- At Latherbrush Bridge, there will be a groundframe and a connection leading into a new bay line which will have the Bishop Auckland West platform repositioned alongside it. In normal circumstances the groundframe will be set from the bay platform line onto the main line and vice versa with the groundframe being unlocked to permit the connection to be reversed so as to allow a move from the Connecting Line onto the Weardale Railway proper or from the Weardale Railway onto the Connecting Line. The purpose of this arrangement is twofold:
  1. It permits a coal train to be accepted from Network Rail whilst a community rail service train is running either to Bishop Auckland West or from Bishop Auckland West towards Wolsingham; and,
  2. Likewise, it permits a coal train to be held clear of the Weardale Railway community rail service even though Network Rail might not be able to accept it onto the national network at the time that it arrives at Bishop Auckland (Network Rail).
- Each of these sections will have their own train staff with the train staff for the Bishop Auckland (Network Rail) to Latherbrush Bridge section normally being held in Shildon signal box and that for the Latherbrush Bridge to Scotch Isle section being held when not in use at Wolsingham Depot. The groundframe will be operated by a shunter who will be sent from Wolsingham to work it when an incoming train is expected or an outgoing train has been despatched from Wolsingham.

Edited By Gerry Mudd : Comments, suggestions, corrections and contributions to :- [gcmudd@ntlworld.com](mailto:gcmudd@ntlworld.com)

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