

WEARDALE RAILWAY

WRCIC NEWSLETTER No 55 - 11 JUNE 2011

FREIGHT TRAIN TRIALS LATER THIS MONTH
FIRST COAL TRAINS EXPECTED TO FOLLOW SOON AFTER
STEAM IS BACK : No 40 RETURNS TO SERVICE

- **No 40 BACK IN SERVICE** : Looking good in the summer sunshine No 40 returned to active service on Sunday 29th May and covered all its scheduled runs over the next seven days. Seen here hauling ‘Nina’, the buffet car and the brake second coaches and captured by John Lewins near MP 8 with the morning Wolsingham – Stanhope train on the 31st May



- **FREIGHT : FIRST TRIALS MID JUNE** : Two trial trains with wagons, will be operated later in June on dates to be confirmed. They will be hauled by Colas and utilise the usual 100 ton coal wagons, although in this case not with the full complement of 21 wagons. Some test loading may take place. If these trips are successful then regular services will commence in the following week initially at the rate of three trains per week It is understood that these early trips will be to and from Scunthorpe.
- **BISHOP AUCKLAND STATION DEVELOPMENTS** : Some time back it was mentioned that a plan was being developed to provide a direct linking footpath, trackside, between the WR platform and the Network Rail platform at Bishop Auckland and cut out the lengthier walk around the adjacent buildings which passengers have to use at present. Completion of the project involves legal agreements between WR, Network Rail, Northern Rail and an adjacent landowner. These are progressing well as all parties want it to happen – we hope to have positive news within the next month. It is hoped that these works will also tie in with some significant developments at the Network Rail station.

- **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT** : Volunteer Co-ordinator Ruth Carroll was co-opted onto the Board of the Weardale Railway Trust at the last Director's meeting. In this capacity she will be working with WRCIC Marketing Manager Andrea Davidson to increase the profile of our volunteer recruitment effort. One of the first activities will be a recruitment drive for the Trust and Junior and Youth Club at the Fathers Day event in June 19th. This will also be the day on which there will be a vintage vehicle display at Stanhope Station.
- **WOLSINGHAM DEPOT PROGRESS REPORT** : As photographs throughout this Newsletter show, work on the depot reconstruction and the freight loading area has progressed at a rapid rate since the last Newsletter. The long siding to accommodate the 21 wagon coal trains is now complete, as is the new access road ,the turning circle for the lorries and the loading pad. The pad area is separated from the 'Gun Barrel' shed by a protective barrier. There remains the inspection by County Planning Department officials to check we have complied with all the planning requirements and the gauging of the newly installed points at the east end of the loop after which the Depot will be ready to receive the first freight train. See item elsewhere in this Newsletter.



Members of the RMS Locotec team have recently been occupied in remodelling the Wolsingham Depot to accommodate Freight trains. These photos show a test train being backed into the newly extended siding and up to the buffer stops. In the background (right) is the access road leading to the loading area. (Photos : Jeff Smith, RMS)

- **NEW No 40 VIDEO POSTED** : A new video has been posted on Weardale Railway TV showing some of the hard work that went into the recent repairs and the initial trial run to Witton le Wear before the engine returned to service on May 29th. Ruth Carroll who has set up the YouTube site reports : "I am attaching the link to the latest You Tube video. It shows some of the tube replacement work on the Number 40. It also shows the cleaning done by some of our Junior Club/Youth Team in preparation of the Teddy Bears Picnic event on Sunday 29th May. The level crossing in the photo is Witton le Wear where Number 40 travelled to yesterday to do the test run. It is nice to see Reg Kemp back driving after being away for a while due to ill health. A very big thank you to all the Volunteers and Weardale Railway/ RMS staff who helped in the long process of repair." VISIT :- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui76hw2afDA&feature=share>



No 40 on May26, the first day back in steam with the guys and gals who helped it happen (shown in action on the Right). Steve Race, Maintenance Manager on the right and Ruth Carroll on the left. (Photos : Ruth Carroll)

- **COLAS CREWS ROUTE LEARNING ON WR :** Colas, the freight operating company who have been appointed by UK Coal as their haulier from Wolsingham have initiated route learning trips with their own locomotives on the route from Scunthorpe to Bishop Auckland. The first run was on June 1st and was followed by others on the following days. In the next week the Colas crews travelled on the regular community service trains to learn the WR section of the route. The loco on the 1st June was 47749 – see photos elsewhere in the Newsletter. It seems likely that the freight trains may be operated by some newly acquired Class 66 locomotives – running initially to and from Scunthorpe. (Thanks to John and David for info and photos).



Colas rail Class 47, No 47749 made a route learning trip from Scunthorpe to Bishop Auckland on June 1st, Seen on the left at Shildon, heading south and on the right in Bishop Auckland station (Photo : David aka 'Black Hat')

- **GROUP OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO EXPAND :** Garcia Hanson, Commercial Manager of the BARS Group of companies reports that Devon & Cornwall Railways (D&CR) have made several moves of its Class 56 and Class 31 locos over the network between assignments. . On the 28th May 31 190 and 31 601 powered the Leeds to Southend Air Show special. On the 25th June the same pair will power the Birmingham Tame Bridge Parkway to Penzance special for Pathfinder Tours. This is a 10 coach train. See Photos elsewhere in the Newsletter.
- **COUNTY DURHAM HIGH SHERIFF TO VISIT RAILWAY :** Roger Howell, the newly appointed High Sheriff of County Durham was sworn in at Durham Crown Court in March this year. Mr Howell, who lives near Castle Eden, has set as one of his objectives of his year in office is to visit projects throughout the County to find out what good things are being done. He has expressed an interest in the development of the Weardale railway and the importance of this to the future of the Durham Dales. He will be visiting the railway on Wednesday 15th June accompanied by his wife Margaret, and Lord and Lady Foster. (Thanks to Sue Snowden for this information)

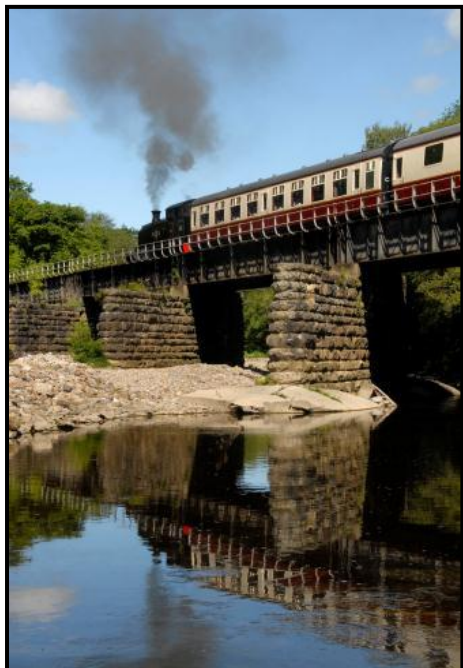


With its D&CR logo on display, 56311 moving away from the Great Central (N) railway before heading back to the BARS Depot at Washwood Heath on May 31. (Photo : Ben Wheeler)

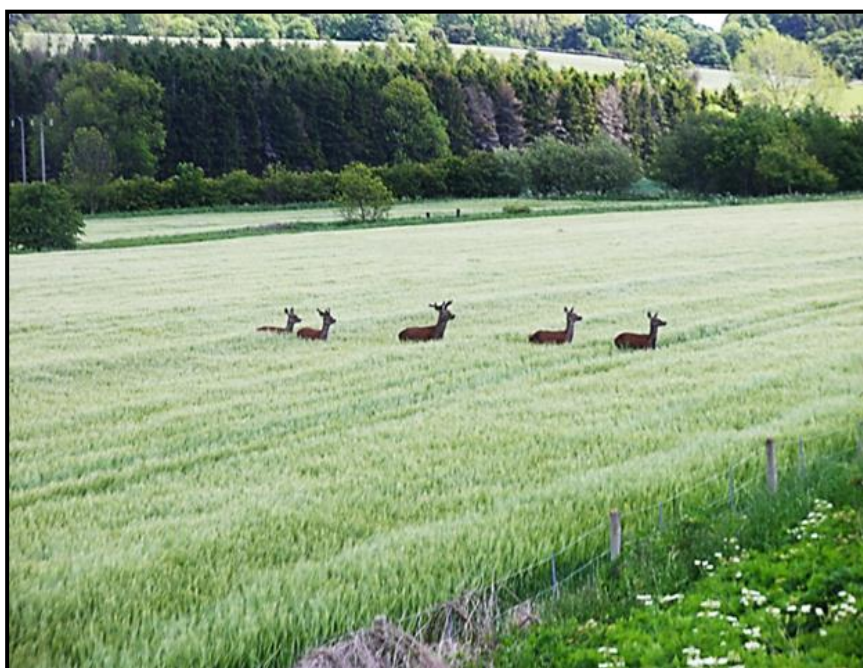


No 40 arrives at Stanhope with the morning train on May 29th (Teddy Bears Picnic day) (Photo: John Askwith)

- FIRST FREIGHT FOR BARS GROUP :** In the last Newsletter (Number 54) reference was made to the first freight operation by BARS subsidiary Devon and Cornwall Railways being operated under a licence via the Hanson Traction acquisition. The movement was carried out under the Freight Operating Licence which D & CR was granted in December 2010. Additionally a Network Rail Track Access contract was signed recently. This was the culmination of many months of work by BARS management and employees and opens up the ability of the Group to operate freight trains across the whole of the UK rail network. First operations were company locomotive positioning moves, plus 3 revenue earning moves of other peoples traction around the UK.



No 40 crossing Wolsingham Bridge on 2nd June (Photo : John Lewins)



WR wildlife : Photographed from the DMU on 31st May by David Scott

RIO GRANDE SCENIC RAILROAD NEWS : The RGSR is one of seven US railways owned and operated by Iowa Pacific who also own the majority shareholding in the Weardale Railway .Ed Ellis, Company President reports “ At this years opening we dedicated two former Illinois Central Club Cars. This is the first time these two cars have been side by side in their original livery in over 40 years. Both ran on the City of New Orleans a premier Chicago – New Orleans streamliner. It was a great ceremony. We had the “Pageant of the Trains” where the two trains pulled up one at a time into the station as stories were told about them. Then, people who had actually ridden the “City of New Orleans” back when the Illinois Central ran it (before Amtrak) told their personal stories about the train. We christened each car with a bottle of champagne, and they were dedicated by the local Alamosa priest. Then we all went for a train ride!”



Ed Ellis , Iowa Pacific and Weardale Railway President seen at the Dedication of two former Illinois Central Club Cars, restored by IP owned Rio Grande Scenic Railway- see news item .Photos : Phil Bleacher & RGSR website)

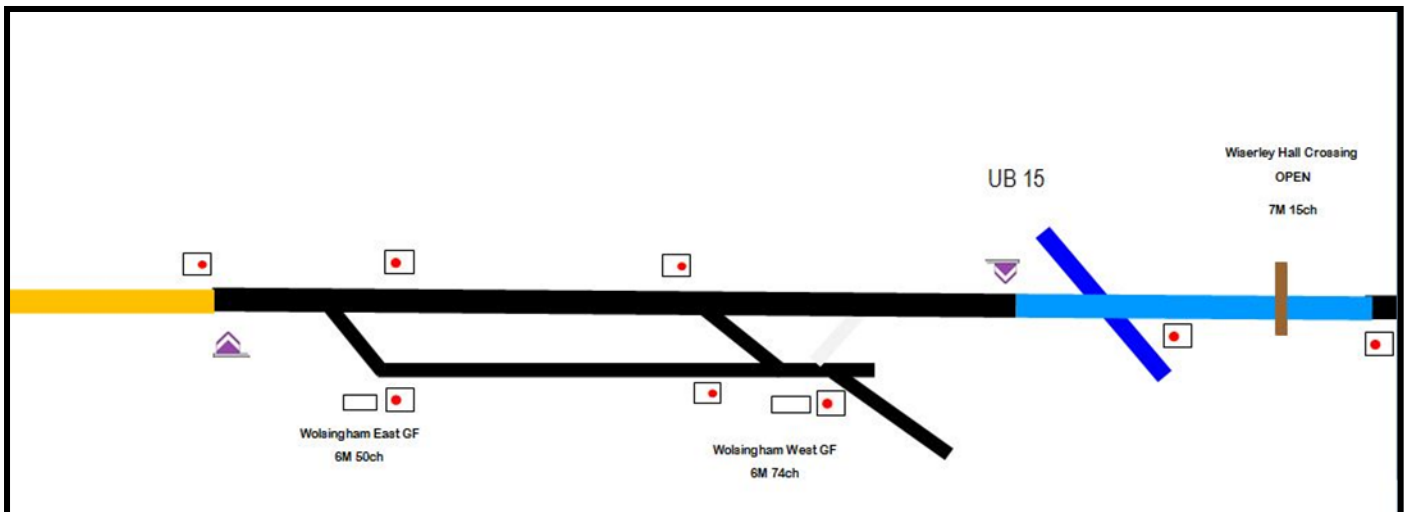


No 40 standing in the Scotch Isle loop on June 4th. When fully operational this loop will speed up turn-arounds at Wolsingham. (Photo : David Scott)



WR General Manager on a railmans holiday at the Rio Grande Scenic RR –seen here with Earl Knoob, a recent visitor to Weardale. June 10th at Alamosa Colorado. (Photo : Dave Million)

- CAN YOU HELP ?– WITH MICROSOFT PUBLISHER :** Are you proficient at manipulating Microsoft Publisher? Steve Bissell our Track and Signalling expert would like your assistance if you can offer some time. Steve writes : “As part of the on-going changes and developments the new control office has now been provided with a ‘mimic Diagram’ on which the controller can plot the positions of trains using magnetic markers. Thus far this is only an interim version of the art work pending feedback from the controllers about the design and features. A small section is shown below. the diagram has been drafted in Microsoft Publisher and printed on a wide printer and assembled in several sections to fill the board. If there are readers of this bulletin who are proficient at manipulating Publisher drawings they might be able to assist in honing the diagram and making detailed amendments. If this is you and you need something to fill your time please contact Steve Bissell – he can be contacted via : spb@wgs-rail.co.uk



A portion of the track diagram referred to in Steve Bissell’s item re Microsoft Publisher.

FROM THE EMAILS : “Why no inclusion of the everyday services in the national rail timetable? Surely it would be a good thing to be there?” Graham Stevenson (formerly Crook Toy & Model Shop)

Editors reply : “Yes it would be good to be in the national TT - but first you need to know your times at least 6 months in advance and we are not there yet - until we get the times of the coal trains from Network Rail we can't issue a TT for late June this year ! Second, we are in the long involved process of applying for and hopefully getting, a network passenger operating licence (we have just recently obtained a freight licence) - once we have it then we can join ATOC (the train operating companies group) and then we have right of entry to the National TT.”

- **INFRASTRUCTURE WORK CONTINUES** : Work to complete the railway to receive and load the coal trains continues apace. Work in the depot itself is essentially complete and we await final confirmation from DCC that planning requirements have been met. Attention of the RMS crew now moves to some track maintenance tasks before work begins on the siding and new platform at Bishop Auckland later this month, as mentioned in the last Newsletter. The scale of the work in the Depot can be judged from some of the accompanying photographs.



Photos taken in the Depot between June 4 and 6. Top left, coal loading equipment . Top right the view to the depot entrance and lower left the view into the depot at the corner – the DMU is parked in the loading siding. Lower Right : the laying of the loading pad area adjacent to the Gun Barrel shed. (Photos : David Scott)

- **NEW WR RULE BOOK BEING INTRODUCED** : Briefing sessions are already underway for operational staff and volunteers in the use of the new Rule Book which has been rewritten to cover the railways new role as a freight and passenger carrier with additional infrastructure in place. The first session was held in Crook 2D on June 7th and others are being held up to June 13th. It is targeted to introduce the new Rules on June 19th.

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11 June 2011