

# WEARDALE RAILWAY

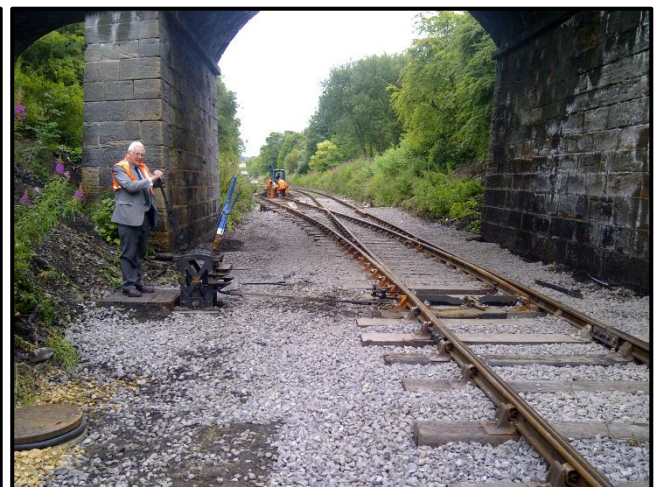
**NEWSLETTER No. 57 : 1 AUGUST 2011**

## **BISHOP AUCKLAND – NEW CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ANOTHER FREIGHT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RAILWAY STEAM SERVICE SUSPENDED FOR LOCO REPAIRS**



**Bishop Auckland – Latherbrush Bridge. On the left a view looking towards the station with the RMS gang engaged in slewing the track under the bridge to provide room to install the turnout to the new siding. On the right a view in the opposite direction showing the area for the turnout. Both Photos : July 10 by Trevor Horner)**

- **BISHOP AUCKLAND INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS UNDERWAY :** The first two stages in the work to provide a siding to a relocated platform at Bishop Auckland (west) have been completed. First came some slewing of the existing track adjacent to Latherbrush Bridge (this is the bridge you can see just to the west of the platform at Bishop Auckland). This repositioning will introduce a straight length of track in which the turnout to the siding could be laid. This trackwork was done on the weekend of July 10th. The actual turnout installation was done over the weekend of July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> July. It is now clamped out of use until the next stage of the work is completed - which is to lay the track to the new platform and then the erection of the platform itself. Amended drawings for the new platform and connecting path to the Network Rail platform have been produced by John Lambard and Mark Bailes following resolution of various land ownership issues, by Steve Raine. Design work for the new layout was done by Trevor Horner and the work carried out by RMS track division of WR majority shareholder, British American Rail Services. See photographs on this page.



Two weeks later, over the weekend of 23, 24 July the turnout was installed, on the left looking from, and on the right towards, Bishop Auckland with Operations Manager, Donald Hearth trying out the groundframe. The operation caused much interest from people using the footbridge at Latherbrush, most of whom were very impressed by how a small band of workers could achieve such a heavy task in only two days. Congratulations go to RMS for a well planned and executed operation, carried out in a very professional way. (Photos : L : Trevor Horner, R : Steve Goodwin)

- **WOLSINGHAM BRIDGE REMEDIAL WORKS : Trevor Horner reports :** Bridge 15 adjacent to the Wolsingham Depot is to have an ecological survey carried out prior to planned remedial works to protect the bridge piers. It is hoped to carry out the work later in the summer. The survey is a requirement of the Environment Agency to ensure that we will not disturb any endangered species or their habitats. Method Statements for the work are in the final stages of development for submission to the EA following discussions and guidance from Richard Maughan. These will be supplemented by Hydraulic Modeling data provided by Mark Bailes to provide backup to our proposed works. It is expected that works will be carried out in late August/ early September before the embargo period, because of fish spawning, commencing in mid September.
- **HISTORY CORNER : TRAINS TO EASTGATE :** When could you last book tickets on a through train from Darlington to Eastgate? The answer is not 1953, when regular passenger trains on the Weardale line ceased – until restored in May 2010. British Railways ran tours from Darlington to Eastgate in 1977 and 78. Cameron Tye one of the Colas Class 66 drivers (and a Trust member) pointed out a link to a website where a series of photographs are posted. The photos were taken by Alan Lewis who has given me permission to reproduce some of them here. You can view the full set via this link : <http://www.flickr.com/photos/pinzac55/sets/72157619639848109/>

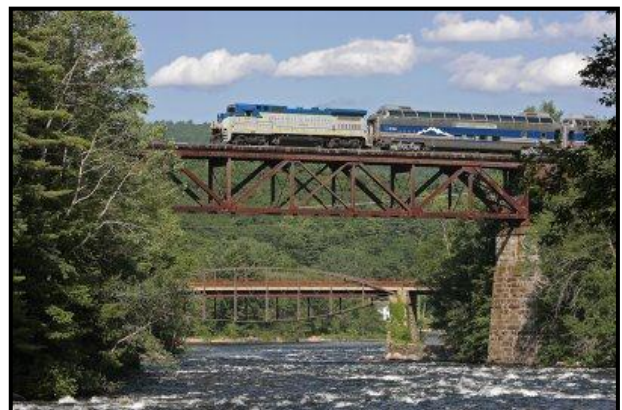


Taken in 1977 and already closed to passengers for 24 years this view shows that Eastgate station still had lamps, clock and signal frame box.



The 4 car 101 DMU stands in Eastgate station on 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1978. The return fare from Darlington was £2. ( Both photos : copyright Alan Lewis. )

- **IOWA PACIFIC OPENS NEW PASSENGER RAILWAY :** Passenger services commenced on the Saratoga and North Creek Railway on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, making it the 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa Pacific railway to have a restored passenger service (The others are the Colorado Scenic, the Arizona Eastern, and in the UK the Dartmoor and Weardale Railways). The line lies 150 miles north of New York city and as well as providing local links there are connections with Montreal & New York Amtrack services at Saratoga Springs. There are plans developing to operate Ski trains to the Catskill mountain resorts and commuter services to the State Capital, Albany, as well as potential freight opportunities .



The train on the Saratoga and North Creek Railroad was hauled by GE Dash 8 No. 8524 and composed of two double deck dome coaches, left at Saratoga Springs and right crossing the Sacandaga River which enters the River Hudson beyond the second bridge. ( Photo left : The Saratogian , Right : John Sesonske )

- ANOTHER FREIGHT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WEARDALE RAILWAY? :** On July 12<sup>th</sup> Durham County Council planning committee approved a plan to extract 2.5m tonnes of sand and gravel, over 16 years, from a quarry at Low Harperley, between Witton le Wear and Wolsingham. The plan was put forward by the Sherburn Stone Company and the site, which would create 15 jobs, would then be turned into a nature reserve with lakes suitable for fishing and other recreational pursuits. A processing plant would be built so the materials could be crushed and graded and the plans envisage building a loading bay so that the products can be transported to their destination via the Weardale Railway. Although volumes are unlikely to be of the size of the current coal operations it does potentially represent a very useful traffic flow to the line. Preliminary discussions between Sherburn Stone and the Weardale Railway are underway.



DCR 56311 at Clay Cross Junction, Derbyshire with a Derby – Grimsby empties on 8<sup>th</sup> July (Photo Phil Sangwell)



56311 on its first freight train for DCR – a Grimsby to Cardiff scrap metal working seen here near Tamworth on 12<sup>th</sup> July (Photo Ben Wheeler)

- DCR ON THE MOVE :** As the pictures above show, July saw the first revenue earning freight run by one of DCR's Class 56 locomotives. ( DCR : is an affiliate of British American Railways, the Weardale railways majority shareholder) . Also in July 31601 has been engaged in driver training for DB Schenker based at Warrington Arpley. One of the BARS class 56 locos will be attending the Nene Valley Railway's three-day diesel gala between Friday 30th September - Sunday 2nd October 2011. BARS / DCR will be supporting the 'Railfest 2012' event at the National Railway Museum (York) and will be hauling exhibits to / from the event. This event, billed as the biggest ever Rail Festival, takes place between Saturday 2nd June and Sunday 10th June 2012. Ben Wheeler, one of whose photos is shown above, has opened up a website to cover all BARS/DCR activities, you can access it at : <http://bars-blog.weebly.com/>



Views of the works underway at Latherbrush, Bishop Auckland (Photos : left : John Askwith, right : Trevor Horner)

Derek Snell - welcome back, see below ( Photo : Ruth Carroll)

- TICKETS PLEASE :** July saw the return of Derek Snell, one of our longstanding TTI's after a long absence due to a family illness and bereavement. Derek always keeps the passengers entertained with his photos of the railway and his stories.

- **STEAM HERITAGE PLANS DELAYED** : As this issue was being prepared we have just learned that No 40 has had to be withdrawn from service for some repairs to the connecting rods. This will involve some new castings and machining which means it is not yet possible to give a definite date for No 40's return to service. We are targeting early in the week of August 7<sup>th</sup>, but please watch the website for further information. Meanwhile the diesel multiple units will maintain the service to and from Bishop Auckland. The good news is that after yet more sterling work by RMS we now have watering services available at Bishop Auckland so that once No40 is back up and running we plan to operate steam services to and from Bishop Auckland at the weekend as well the usual services between Wolsingham and Stanhope on selected weekdays. See next item also.
- **GROUP OPERATIONS MANAGER CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS : Mike Fairburn reports** : Following a review of progress on construction works and operational readiness, we are planning to commence regular weekend steam hauled heritage train operations from Bishop Auckland on the 16<sup>th</sup> August. This development is a major step forward for Weardale Railway CIC and all of the enthusiastic supporters who have worked for so long to achieve this ambition. However this development also brings with it the need for more staff to operate the railway and deliver the services that we provide to visitors to the area. So the message to all Weardale Railway volunteers is "Please contribute all that you can to the support the operational requirements of the railway in what will be a very busy and challenging period".



No 40 looking spick and span prior to its brief return to service in mid July. Painting and cleaning courtesy of Richard Maughan, Norman Swindle, Graham Richardson, Alison and Dan Philips. (Photo : Richard Maughan)



Former LME Jubilee Class 5690 'Leander' is due to visit Stanhope on 15<sup>th</sup> October on a tour from Newcastle ( See item below)

- **STEAM HAULED NEWCASTLE TO STANHOPE** : Seats are still available on a steam hauled tour operated by the Railway Touring Company from Newcastle via the former Blyth and Tyne Railway to Morpeth then the train heads south via Stockton and Darlington and thence to Stanhope. The planned locomotive is 'Leander' and the journey allows a two hour stopover in Stanhope. There is a Buffet Car for Standard and First Class passengers and for Premier Dining class a full English breakfast and a three course late lunch. Departs Newcastle 9.00hrs , due back at 18.00hrs. Costs - £59 Standard, £99 First Class and £149 Premier Dining. Reductions for juniors. Full details can be found at : <http://www.railwaytouring.co.uk/index.php/the-weardale-railway---151011.html>
- **WITTON LE WEAR (TEMPORARY) STATION OPENED** : As foreshadowed in the last Newsletter a passenger service was operated to a temporary platform at Witton le Wear over the weekend of July 9 and 10. The wooden platform we have employed at the Dale showgrounds was put in place on July 7 and operated successfully over the weekend. A special train carried guests from Stanhope to Witton le Wear for the opening ceremony which was performed by David Bellamy. As also mentioned in earlier Newsletters plans for a permanent station in the village are being developed.



Witton le Wear : On the left, the first train to the village on July 7<sup>th</sup> calling to test platform clearances and on the right the first passenger train to call since 1953 brought David Bellamy who was welcomed by Witton le Wear resident and WR volunteer, Kelso Yuill, resplendent in top hat and tails. ( Photos : L : Michael Wilkinson and R : Ruth Carroll.)

- THE NEW RULE BOOK AND OTHER CHANGES : Operations Manager, Donald Heath reports :** A total of six briefing sessions have now been held and my thanks to everybody who took the time to turn up. My particular thanks to David Butler who acted as the presenter at each session and to Andrea Davidson who made the arrangements for us to have the use of the room in the 2D offices at Crook. So, when is it going to be introduced? This will happen just as soon as we receive the new lineside signs from the RNLi and Steve Goodwin has been able to get them erected. The signs should be at Stanhope by the end of July but there is a slight problem over the supply of the steel posts to support them on. I am hoping that this can be resolved quickly so that Steve will have the wherewithal to start putting them up early next month. In a separate note at the end of this report I will give more detail of the actual operational changes which will then be introduced.



Two more views of the Witton le Wear Fair weekend .On the left a train about to arrive on 9<sup>th</sup> July and on the right a classic coach was used to bring the special guests to Stanhope station to catch the special train. ( Photos : L : John Askwith, R : Ruth Carroll)

- CLASS 66 NAMING CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT STANHOPE STATION :** On 2<sup>nd</sup> August a special naming ceremony will take place at Stanhope Station. One of the Colas Class 66 locomotives which currently haul the coal trains from Wolsingham will be named before a group of invited guests from the Weardale Railway Company and Trust, DCC, UK Coal and Colas. The name for the locomotive was selected by a vote of pupils from Wolsingham College. During the ceremony the community rail services will operate to and from the down platform.

Edited by Gerry Mudd, with thanks to all contributors – As ever all contributions , photographic or otherwise are welcome as are comments and suggestions.

30 JULY 2011

- **NEW RULE BOOK – CHANGES IN OPERATING PRACTICE – SUMMARY : -**
- The first change concerns the existing wooden train staffs which are supplemented by paper tickets when necessary: these will be replaced with aluminium train staffs which will have metal tickets integral with them. Each staff will have two tickets attached to it - a circular one for down direction working and, at the other end, a square one for up direction working. Where the direction of movements alternate then the tickets will remain fixed to the staff and the driver will carry the full staff with both tickets in either direction. Where there are two consecutive train movements to be made through a particular section the driver of the first train will, having seen the staff with the ticket for the opposite direction of travel attached to it, travel through the section using the metal ticket as his authority to be in the section. Once the first train has cleared the section, the second train will use the staff (with the ticket for the opposite direction attached to it) as his authority to travel through the section. On arrival at the far end of the section both drivers will hand the ticket/staff to the control agent who will join the ticket back to the staff making it ready for a movement in the opposite direction.
- The second change concerns the arrangements for unlocking the padlocks on the ground frames. Currently, the wooden train staff has a key attached to it which will unlock the padlock(s) of any ground frame in the section to which the staff applies. With the new staffs this feature will be changed in that each ground frame padlock will have its own key. As, normally, there will always be a control agent on duty when a ground frame is to be used he will be in possession of the relevant key. With the exception of the Scotch Isle ground frames the keys will be kept in the control office when not in use whilst those for the two Scotch Isle frames will be kept by the Wolsingham Depot Manager.

**PRESS RELEASE : Chicago, IL – July 26, 2011 – Iowa Pacific Holdings announced today that its subsidiary Saratoga and North Creek Railway (SNC) successfully began rail passenger services between North Creek, NY and Saratoga Springs, NY on Saturday, July 23, 2011. SNC operates regularly scheduled trains stopping at several intermediate stations between the endpoints, and connects directly with the Amtrak Ethan Allen Express at Saratoga Springs. Days of operation are presently Thursday through Monday.**

**SNC is the first privately operated, for-profit, regularly-scheduled intercity passenger rail service started in the United States in over 40 years. While there are numerous privately operated tourist railroads, SNC is operated as a true passenger railway, meeting a stronger set of regulatory requirements for equipment and operations. SNC operates over track saved from abandonment by two New York governments, Warren County and the Town of Corinth, which upgraded the track to enable the passenger operation. SNC is financially responsible for maintaining the track to the current level, and is exploring further improvements to the track. In addition, as a fully-integrated passenger railway, SNC provides operating and on board staff, track. In a sells tickets, maintains equipment, and markets the service.**

**“We are grateful for the assistance and cooperation of Canadian Pacific, and all the local, state and federal agencies in launching this service,” said Ed Ellis, president of SNC. “In particular, the Federal Railroad Administration provided several members of its staff who were very helpful in developing and implementing our startup plan for this new service, and ensured that all regulatory requirements were met.”**

**The new train service features full-length dome railcars, which offer spectacularly views of the upper Hudson River along the way. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, served on china, on white tablecloths, is available in dome class. Coach class is also available, and SNC’s modern, air-conditioned coaches provide a quiet, smooth ride. “On the SNC, it’s always a nice day for a train ride,” said Steve Torrico, General Manager of the line. “Our goal is to provide a comfortable, on-time trip, with top notch customer service. Early reaction to our staff and our train is very positive.”**

**Iowa Pacific is a privately-held company that owns seven railroads in seven states, plus two railways in the United Kingdom.**