



Wensleydale Railway Association Volunteers Newsletter

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 5th May—Induction Course 9.30am at Leeming
Saturday 30th May—Induction Course 9.30am at Leeming
Tuesday 2nd June Volunteers meeting at Bedale Station – starts 7.15pm

NEW GENERAL MANAGER

I am delighted to say that the Wensleydale Railway plc has offered Kevin Powell the post of full time General Manager, subject to agreement of contract. This is after a long recruitment process which was assisted by the WRA (thank you to John Mazzucchi) and he is expected to start on 11th May.

Kevin lives in York and has 24 years experience with British Rail and Train Operating Companies, particularly GNER. He is looking forward to learning from everyone about how we work and would like each department to be thinking about its main challenges at present and what it is seeking to do to help the railway grow and thrive. Safety will be top priority and Kevin will be challenging everyone to highlight ways to maintain and improve safety in everything we do.

The new management structure was approved by the plc Board on April 27th and many of the posts are now filled permanently or temporarily. We still need more civil engineers to come forward for management and advisory roles.

There are many thanks to give but there is not room to do it in this edition but I would briefly mention Colin Brown who is seeing us through until Kevin starts. Colin will then assume his new advisory role.

John Ozleton ceases to be the Acting General Manager from end of April and I must record great thanks to John for undertaking a phenomenal job. John will still be with us voluntarily working on the Western Extension.

With so much change in management and a short gap between post-holders we all need to be 100% vigilant on health and safety. Please everyone think through carefully every thing you do and discuss with colleagues & managers to ensure that nothing slips through the net leading to an accident during this period of change.

Ian Sesnan

FROM GENERAL MANAGER

My stint as Acting General Manager has now come to an end and this will be my last contribution to the newsletter, in that capacity.

I want, simply, to thank everybody in the organisation for the help and support given during the last 6 months and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we develop the future Wensleydale Railway.

Regards & best wishes

John Ozelton

WANTED!

The kiosk at Northallerton Station is desperately in need of some more volunteers. In the early days, there were 9 volunteers as well as Audrey, the paid member of staff who is in charge. A few other people have come and gone and 6 of the original 9 remain.

Although Audrey has valiantly come in to work when not really well and others have done extra shifts when necessary, we shall shortly be down to 5 or 6 volunteers in total and we are all getting older! There is a real possibility the kiosk would have to shut for a day, or days, if sickness and holidays of staff coincided. This could result in loss of regular customers and problems with suppliers.

I can recommend working at the kiosk. I started there when the WR got the franchise in 2001, and have always enjoyed being part of the kiosk team. I also like the work situation on a station that can be very busy.

Could you, or do you know someone who could spare 3 or 4 hours a week or a fortnight to come and join us and help put our staffing level on a better footing?

Jean Mottershead

ROLLING STOCK

The month of the coach(es)! Most of the month has seen repairs and restoration of 5 of the plc's mk2a coaches, which now have a new livery - 'custard and cochineal', new insignia and names inspired by WDTG family members, apart from the original Sarah which is retained.

RSG have concentrated on 5304, one of the first 4 coaches to arrive in December 2002, which had essential window and seat repairs in early 2003. As it was then in tatty Regional Railways livery it was used as a test case to decide the shade of red which 4 other coaches, but not 5304, carried. As a result it remained in store on the south headshunt until early this month, when it was added to the train for this coming weekend's diesel-hauled specials for the Leyburn Food and Drink festival. Further seat, window and door repairs and cleaning has been carried out. WDTG have repainted all 5 coaches, thanks due especially to Tim Williamson, who has usually worked for 6 days every week! Other activities include the fitting of new safety notices to the plc's blue 117 buffet trailer; the repainting of the roof in grey undercoat of FSDG's 117 DMS; and a preliminary inspection of Harry Needle's class 20 diesel loco, 20 166, which arrived from the Battlefield Line at Shackerstone on the 24th April. This has revealed a faulty radiator which will need to be replaced before the loco can be used.

Barry Wetherell

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

The volunteer of the month is **Joe Skimming**. Joe has been in the forefront of the work at Leeming for Operation Spring Clean, including completely re-plumbing the toilets and, often on his own, doing many of the maintenance and improvement jobs in the shop and buffet. He is regularly at the station, behind the counter or attending when required at special days. Recently, he has become the back-up trainer for the induction courses and has joined the team installing a Bar in one of the main-line coaches. Overall, he puts in an enormous amount for the benefit of the WR. Congratulations to Joe and all of our thanks for what he does for the WR.

250 CLUB: Winners for May draw: 1st Peter Chapman £66, 2nd Ken Wood £33, 3rd Michael Mitton £16, 4th Ken Monkman £10
Peter Blakey

MONTHLY POSTERS

Each month Peter Williams, our web editor, produces an A4 sized colour poster of the next two months' activities, which is e-mailed to all Yorkshire and Humberside tourist information centres. A fair number of them find room to display it for us, and even where it is not displayed, it still acts as a reminder to the TIC staff.

Could YOU display the poster anywhere, or arrange for a shop or other local business to display it for us? Remember that our business depends upon attracting as many visitors as possible and everyone who sees the poster is a potential visitor.

You can find a link to the poster on the home page of the Wensleydale Railway website, in one of the blue boxes in the right hand margin. Alternatively, click on this link if you are reading an online version of this newsletter:

<http://www.s161194075.websitehome.co.uk/wensleydale/wr327.pdf>

COMMUNITY RAIL WEEKEND

This will be on Saturday and Sunday June 6th and 7th. In addition to ticket concessions for the general public, there will be a special effort to attract new Members of the WRA and especially new Volunteers. On each morning, interested persons will be given an introduction to the railway, its history and plans and will travel as an accompanied group (free of charge) on the train from Leeming to Redmire and back. To do this, they must pre-register through the Office or

Email Volunteers@wensleydalerailwayassociation.com

Please try to advertise this event with anyone you think might be interested in joining us

COACH No.5369 and THE WENSLEYDALE BAR

This coach, one of our mklla vehicles, was extensively vandalised a couple of years ago which included much internal damage as well as being graffiti painted externally. Being easily accessible it was subsequently used by the local kids as a meeting place. Joe Skimming and I, helped by a whole host of others, are working to get this coach back in the serviceable fleet. The interior has already been cleared of rubbish (including 7 wheelbarrow loads of broken glass!) and interior floor and panel repairs are underway. The north side has already been repainted and the south is ready for our hard working painters to get to grips with. Most of this is being funded by WDTG members.

We are fitting this coach with a bar (the working title is The Wensleydale Bar) so that we will have a smart, professional servery for beers wines and spirits on our special event and charter trains. Our target is to have the coach useable, even if a little basic, by 20th June and we fully intend to meet this target. Further enhancements will follow as time and funds allow.

If anyone has any bar fittings such as optics, stands, mounted corkscrews etc (but not glasses at this stage please) or anything else bar related which they would be willing to donate we would be very grateful. Please contact Nigel or Joe via Leeming Bar.

Later in the year you can join us on what is now a very smart train for a beer and see what we've been up to!

Nigel Park

WELCOME

A warm welcome to the following new volunteers who have recently completed their induction course:- Jonathan Brown, Carol Moffat and David Elliott. We very much hope that you enjoy working with us.

RELAY BACK ISSUES

Can you help raise funds for the Wensleydale Railway? We are looking for copies of specific Relay Back Issues to sell to raise funds for the Railway. Perhaps you may have copies of the Issues we are looking for and would like to donate them to the Railway. The Issues in question are 1 - 9, 11, 12, 14 and 26. If you would like to help, email

relaybackissues@wensleydalerailwayassociation.com

or phone Paul Kenyon at 01748 824249.

UNIFORMS

Those requiring orders should contact:-

Michael Mitton - Tel. 01609 748326

Email:- uniform@wensleydalerailwayassociation.com

Post - Rose Cottage, Great Fencote, Northallerton

DL7 0RX

Deadline for contributions for the next newsletter is 31st May. Send to:-Philip Smith Tel 01609 774733

Email

Volunteers@WensleydaleRailwayAssociation.com

IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION

The following has been received from PHIL KIRKLAND

Dear friends and colleagues,

On 12 April 2009 next, here at Nexus Tyne and Wear Metro we begin a new era when under DfT and ORR guidance, Metro Maintenance will become part of the new: Nexus Rail.

This is an exciting time as we commence ‘Metro re- invigoration’, the complete rebuild of the system over the coming nine years at a cost of up to £320 Million. Many of you will by now have learned of and understand the pressures, response times, deadlines and performance targets I work to, as well as the many unexpected challenges! The maintenance and reconstruction programmes for track, signalling, telecommunications, power supplies and overhead line all fall within my sphere of responsibility – life just got a whole lot busier!

With that in mind, the very difficult personal decision to step back from supporting some of the railway causes and projects dear to my heart has had to be made. Naturally, Wensleydale Railway is top of the list, but because of the increasing personal commitments to Nexus Rail, my fear is that the risk of disappointment and letting people down is now too great.

In recent weeks I have made only fleeting visits to the railway and have not been able undertake any meaningful contributions.

Great care needs to be exercised also in my dealings with industry professionals, suppliers and contractors, many of whom will be seeking to work on Metro re- invigoration contracts which may cause me a ‘conflict of interest’, something that would be wholly unacceptable to me and my Directors. In recent weeks I have become concerned that a number of industry partners directed to me for general WR enquiries actually think I am an employee of Wensleydale Railway which is of increasing concern.

I am therefore formally advising you of my intention to step back into the shadows from where industry influence and support for Wensleydale Railway can be encouraged at a more discreet but senior level.

On my behalf then, would you please convey this decision to all your staff, volunteers and members at the earliest opportunity – with a request that the steady flow of general personal email and telephone communications be closed down.

Where advice or guidance of an urgent technical nature is needed, I shall always try and assist but cannot guarantee availability or rapid response. Likewise, the existing relationships with railway professionals and suppliers will continue, but I cannot guarantee to be available as a facilitator.

However – I shall not disappear!

Where possible it is my intention to visit and support you all, and to listen enthusiastically about all your new plans and current successes, even if it is only a fleeting visit en route to/from York.

One remaining request to be fulfilled though -

Would you be so kind as to thank everyone at the railway for their personal support, hard work and friendship over the recent years which has ensured the project moved forward safely, but at speed. The warmth of the welcome and immediate friendship is what always attracted me to the railway in the first place; don’t ever let that change please! I look back at those late nights tipping ballast, tamping and repairing level crossings in the dark after a full day at work and still wonder just how did we ever do it? But then we did didn’t we!

Yours very sincerely,

Phil Kirkland
Head of Rail Infrastructure Engineering
Nexus Rail