

WLLR Newsletter no. 9

Spring 2012

A successful season

Our 2011 season was successful. Income from ticket sales was up by 17%, income from shop sales and catering increased by 21%, and income from Santa ticket sales increased by a massive 34% (in spite or because of the lack of snow?). Well done everybody concerned (Santa not least).

Work on site

In January work commenced on clearing the site for a substantial extension to the woodwork/diesel shed, and installation of a turntable and ash pit. At the same time Cameron completed the (almost) single-handed installation of a point and additional siding at the back of the shed, a notable example of the difference one volunteer can make. Well done Cameron! And special thanks also to Gordon and Graham for their sterling work with large and small mechanical excavators.

This year's AGM will be held on Thursday 3rd May. Time and location to be confirmed.

Cheetal

The West Lancs Light Railway has negotiated the long term loan of Fowler 0-6-0WT 15591/1921, *Cheetal*, which is currently at Armley Mills Industrial Museum in Leeds. Originally built for Karachi Port Trust, then latterly with Upper India Sugar Mills in Khatauli, the loco has not been restored since being brought back to the UK in 1985 and is in need of considerable engineering work to restore it to working order. (It is not known to have worked since 1981).

Note: This is not for release to the general public or Railway Media at this point in time

The 'Joffre'

Work on Kerr Stuart 0-6-0T + WT ' 2405/1915, acquired in 1974 and under restoration since 1995, will be named by Steve Davies, Director of the National Railway Museum, at a ceremony at Hesketh Bank on Sunday 22nd July. Originally one of 70 'Joffre' locomotives, of which five are known to have survived, this one will also bear the name *Joffre*.

Hallowe'en

Although more visitors would have been welcome, our first ever Hallowe'en event was a great success, enjoyed alike by visitors and volunteers. Many thanks are due to everyone who participated. We owe a special debt to John Simm who devised, organised, and delivered the event. We will be hosting another Hallowe'en event in October 2012. It remains to be seen whether our publicity, enhanced by photographs of this year's goings on along the line, brings in more visitors than it frightens off!

BBC Children in Need

Many thanks to all who took part in the annual event to raise money for the BBC Children in Need appeal, on November 20th. We collected £285.65, and small but significant increase on last year's £259.20. What can we do to reach £500 next year?

2012 events

Next year's calendar of special events is as follows:

Friendly Engines - 1st April

Teddy Bears - 6th May

'Joffre' naming - 22nd July

Gala Weekend - 11th & 12th August

Autumn Steam Gala - 7th October

Hallowe'en - *Saturday* 27th October

BBC Children in Need - 11th November

Santa Specials - 15th & 16th, 22nd & 23rd December

In addition, on 29th April the Railway is to be visited by a number of Morris Minors, brought to us by members of the Morris Minor Owners' Club.

Sadly, poor visitor numbers have led to the abandonment of the Diesel Freight Days, although this event, which was launched in 2009 and repeated in 2010, was greatly enjoyed by ourselves and by the visitors who did come.

News from our colleagues in France

The Rillé railway enjoyed a successful season in 2012, recording 5,500 visitors on the 40 days on which the railway was open between the end of April and mid-October. The railway has a growing membership of 143, of which about 50 are 'active' members. They estimate that members contributed 600 working hours during 2011. (We probably ought to be recording equivalent information for the West Lincs?)

I didn't know this before, but apparently the Rillé runs 1, 3 and 5 day training courses on steam locomotive driving, which attract trainees from all over France. Training courses provided in 2011 occupied a total of 50 days. Details can be found on their web site, www.trains-fr.org/aecfm – look for 'stages vapeur'.

Current projects include construction of a roundhouse, and an extension of the line – the extension is expected to open in May 2013. Rails have been obtained from a closed standard gauge line. Three Decauville diesel locos were expected to arrive this winter, courtesy of the Association des Amis du Musée Decauville. Work continues on restoring a large ('grosse') ex-

Rumanian 0-8-0 steam loco. Recently it has been hauled over the entire railway to check clearances.

New members

Welcome to the following new members:

Mr R.M. Bailey – Parbold
Mr M Chivers – Leyland
Mr S. I Davies – Nottingham
Mr. N.Eaton – Warrington
Mr P. Geering – Southport
Mr & Mrs Hart – Southport;
Mr C. Hughes – Aughton
Mr & Mrs Lowe – Southport
Miss E.Patrick – Selby
Mr B. Percival – Liverpool
Mr & Mrs Procter – Preston
Mr T. Shannon – Skelmersdale
Mr. M. Matanie – Millom
Mr & Mrs P. Adams - Leigh
Mr. B. Bartlett - Blackpool
Mr. P.J. McCluskey - Parbold

Volunteers needed

All members are warmly invited to get involved with the running of the railway. We depend entirely on volunteers, and there are many kinds of work to be done – something to suit everyone. In the last year or so we have struggled because of a shortage of steam locomotive drivers, so if you have always dreamed of being an engine driver, here's your opportunity. (First you have to learn to drive diesel locos – we've got plenty of those for you to practice on). There are jobs to be done inside as well as out, in the workshops and along the line, at home as well as on site, with or without getting your hands dirty.

Everyone can help to make the railway better known, and we would like more people to come forward to help take our display stands to model railway exhibitions and other events. For younger people in particular, we can offer what amounts to an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering. Come and join in - a friendly welcome awaits.

Last but (so far as I am concerned) not least, I would be relieved and delighted if anyone else could take over the editorship of this newsletter. There is plenty of scope for improvement! More news, more frequent issues, more photographs.....

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