

Britain's Great Little Railways

Newsletter 86



September 2022



BGLR News – Letter from the Chairman

Dear Members

Most of you will have recently received an Email from Steve Oates the CEO of the Heritage Railway Association regarding our group membership of the HRA.

I was initially contacted by Steve Oates back in May 2021, where he had expressed concerns that HRA members were leaving the HRA and joining BGLR as a way to reduce their membership costs and still have access to the HRA Interrail passes and the safety / corporate information that the HRA produce.

He also made a comment about BGLR possibly becoming part of the HRA specifically for the railways below the remit of the ORR. I believe that the ORR almost mandate that railways included in their remit are members of the HRA.

The Directors and Officers had an online meeting with Steve Oates and one of his other Directors where the real justification seemed to come forward in that he felt our membership was too cheap. We had originally been set in a nominal category with 4 voting points by the Corporate Membership Secretary part of the Member Services Committee, since disbanded by Mr Oates.

He wanted us to specify what we thought our membership fees should be, which we felt was a rather strange way for a Trade Organisation to operate.

After some discussions he came back with a proposal to treat us the same way as all of the other members of the HRA whereby it would be turnover based but not BGLR's turnover but that of each individual member.

This new Group Category was put to the HRA Spring 2022 Meeting and unfortunately was accepted. There were a couple of clauses included in the Group Category in that any members of the Group who were members of HRA directly were not "charged" a second membership fee (at the time this would have accounted for about 10 of our members), however the major issue is the HRA definition of turnover as this includes all of each Railways "Group" turnover, so this would include any income from tickets, tearooms/cafes, shops etc. but the definition of group income also included any income from Engineering Services, car parking, grants, bequests, so potentially the turnover definition for some of our members could include entrance to Stately Homes and Gardens or Garden Centre turnover and possibly even model railway production companies.

When we looked at the potential numbers involved, it looked to be pushing us to either a Category 7 (£2 - £3.5M Turnover) £1350 annual fee or a Category 8 (£3.5M + Turnover) 0.1% of Turnover (subject to negotiation) which would indicate a figure of around £3500 annual fee.

We were planning to bring this to the Autumn General Meeting to allow the members to vote on our continued membership of the HRA on the new terms but the HRA decided that the new membership category was to be backdated to the start of this year and then terminated our current membership, with an option to re-join on the new terms.

We are finalising the location for the Autumn Meeting but the proposed date will be Wednesday 12th October 2022, more details will be circulated in the near future.

Regards

Iain Dinnes

Chairman
Britain's Great Little Railways
www.bglr.org

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Great Laxey Mine Railway

Raad Yiarn Meain Mooar Laksey

As mentioned in a previous article, we have had problems with one of our engines. It was identified to be a crack in the steam valve chest, attempts were made to repair this, but they failed because the metal was too thin. Result is that we need to have a new casting made, more expense!!! Whilst the engine was stripped down it was identified that it also needed 2 new pistons, new valve spindle rods, bearings for the coupling rods and linkage for the mechanical lubricator (and a few other things). So, the engine will be out of action for a while.

Being on the Isle of Man, our constitutional situation is different to the UK. We are one of only three Crown Dependencies and as such we have as the Monarch's representative a Lieutenant-Governor (we are



not big enough to have a Governor-General). Earlier this year a new one was appointed, Sir John Lorimer, and he is very active in finding out all he can about this island. On his recent visit to the village of Laxey, he came down to the railway and was treated to a ride, and a lecture on the history of the railway. In the photograph you will notice that the roof of the carriage is painted purple to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, you may also notice red poppies on the side of the carriage - these were placed to commemorate miners who had died in the First World War.

During the summer we have had groups from two primary schools down at the railway. They were informed about the history of mining in the area, the reasons for the railway, and were then treated to a run up the line. Luckily, we had good sunny weather for both days.

One of the highlights of the season was the arrival of the Branch Line Society for a tour. Most of you will know what this involves. We arranged a special evening for them and spent the next two hours shunting engines and carriages hither and thither. We had to run each engine and carriage over each length of track, when you hit the back wall of the shed that is far enough. Great fun was had by all



Our resident author, Edith, has published her 3rd (and last!) children's book based on the railway. It is printed in both English and Manx Gaelic, so is an easy read for those learning Manx. Books are available on-line.

We seem to be nearly back to pre-covid levels for visitors, which is good and a major help towards funds. For us it has shown our reliance on visitors to the island for custom, furthest away so far this year was a gentleman who was a senior figure in the Namibian railway system, he was offered a volunteer form, but unfortunately said that he could not make Saturdays. *Colvyn Quaggin*

Fancott Miniature Railway

Our new wheelchair carriage, manufactured by Denver Light Railway Ltd, was delivered to the railway on Sunday 15th May. We then spent some time commissioning the carriage to enable it to be used on the railway. We checked width and height clearances around the track, tunnel and station areas, some of the



mainline gravel boards had to be moved and pegs cut down in height. Lineside vegetation also need trimming back in a few places together with propping up some overhanging trees. The wheelchair restraints have been upgraded to the J hook system with inertia lap and over the shoulder seat belts supplied by Koller Engineering Ltd, which is more user friendly. The carriage came with quick release vacuum fittings which has in turn caused us to update all our vacuum fittings, see below.

and came along and presented us with a cheque for £500 on the same day the carriage was delivered, so they were able to see where their money had been spent.

On the 2nd of July we were able to use the carriage for the first time. A lady came along to the ride on the railway 10 years ago for her 70th birthday and she asked her family to bring her back to celebrate her 80th birthday. We are very proud to be able to offer rides on the railway to even more people.

Quick release vacuum fittings were supplied with the new wheelchair access carriage and these were not compatible with the current push-on fittings we were using on the railway. We took this as an opportunity to upgrade all our vacuum fittings. We purchased more of the same range of fittings for our existing carriages and locos to replace the unreliable push-on fittings. Locos and carriages now all have female fittings and are linked together with a connection pipe with male/male fittings to enable any combination of carriages to locos to be put together. This has upgraded our vacuum system, helped to reduce vacuum leaks and maintain vacuum in the carriage reservoirs. Herbie and Phonix are also having vacuum pumps fitted as the part of their overhaul/refurbishment.

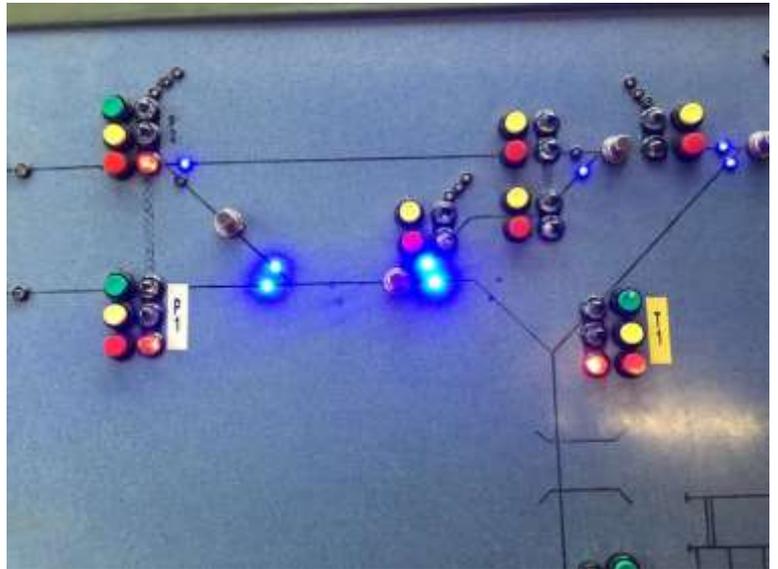


Signalling

all our current signals can now be operated from the new panel in the signal box making the old temporary panel, which has lasted for a good number of years, redundant.

The next phase will be to incorporate point motor operation and interlock that with the signals. The majority of the cabling has been laid in underground trunking and now needs the last few cables pulling through before final connections and testing can be carried out.

This will allow train movements to be fully controlled from the signal box making it easier to control multiple trains and visiting engines.



Davanna

we have been having trouble with her for a while when raising steam due to a leak through the smoke box. This was investigated and it was found that the faceplate the door sealed against was bowed. Further poking about revealed the faceplate was made of two pieces of plate, one located inside the smokebox and the other being the faceplate. Moisture had got between the plates causing rust to form and force the plates apart, which in turn caused the leaks.

We sent her off to Denver Light Railway Ltd for the smokebox faceplate to be fixed and also for new springs to be fitted to improve the ride, replacement of the injectors and to fit outrider footpegs to give drivers more room on the footplate.

Phoenix has also gone to Denver to have new springs fitted for the front wheels to improve the engines ride, as the original springs no longer had much effect. The engine will also be fitted with a new vacuum pump, refurbish the tender handbrake and the control panel in the cab.

New Projects

Level Crossing - The track section at our level crossing needs to be replaced due to poor condition of the sleepers and concrete area. The current track has been reinforced to allow trains to continue running. We have made up a replacement track section, photo on the left, to allow us dig out the existing concrete and old track down to the solid foundation. Then replace the track with the new section and secure. Then re-concrete to allow vehicle access to inner field for parking.

Ballast bunker

Our pile of ballast needs to be re-sited to improve the appearance of the site and level crossing/signal box area. An idea has been put forward to build a three sided, wooden bottomed bunker from scrap timber from the pubs old picnic tables and railway sleepers.



The ballast was requested to be delivered in jumbo bags but unfortunately was delivered loose and tipped onto the inner field access road, which meant it had to be moved by hand and digger to its current location by the steaming bays.

Events

We are hosted a visit from Railtrail Tours on the 22nd July, as part of their Chiltern Hills Steam, rail and Ale tour <http://ow.ly/6BwK50Jglm1>. Our visitors are having a buffet meal in the Fancott pub and then rides on the railway. We intended to steam Davanna, to be in keeping with the theme of the event, but due to the hot dry conditions we had to rely on our Mardyke loco, Dark Star, instead. Everyone had a goodtime, so we are hoping for a return visit in2023.

We began our school summer holiday Wednesday service from the 27th July to 31st August and children from Keech Cottage Hospice, together with their carers and family members, will be joining us for train rides. We can now offer increased access to the railway with our wheelchair access carriage.

The Fancott pub held an event on 26th June in support of the NHS workers, there was a BBQ and live music and the railway supported the event by giving NHS workers train rides for £1. Our friends with the fire appliances were also on site.

Our 1960's weekend was held on 9th and 10th of July saw the railway decorated in a psychedelic style. We also had the Iveco incident command vehicle, Dennis fire engine and a RTW bus to explore, one of only 9 in the country as well as a selection of classic cars to view.

Our Jubilee weekend events ran from Wednesday 1st June, as it was a school holiday through to Saturday 4th June. We were to run on Sunday 5th but rain stopped play. Our locos were displaying Jubilee headboards and the railway was decorated with bunting and "royal visitors"



Plans for the future -

We have ordered two new points to be built for container sidings from Denver Light Railway and they are due towards the end of the year. This will allow the track to be laid into the container during the railways closed season. Once the sidings have been declared operational, we will be able to store the wheelchair access carriage and new guards carriage in the container.

New bogies for our ballast truck have been ordered from CMD Engineering. The current bogies causes the truck to derail, they are not sprung and have a dubious profile on the wheels. The old bogies will not be going to waste; we have donated them to one of our members who is proposing to use them on a small truck he is currently designing.

We have also ordered an additional guards' carriage. This together with signalling and point control will get us further towards two train operation.

We have several new volunteers; Tyler has been a regular Sunday passenger at the railway, buying an unlimited ticket and challenging himself to get the maximum number of rides in in the afternoon. His record currently stands at 18 rides!

It was suggested to him that he might like to join us on the railway and after explaining what would be expected of Tyler to his parents, he joined us for his first "duty" on Sunday 10th July. It's a great opportunity for him to learn some new skills!

Jamie and Kian have also joined us recently and have been spending time being mentored on the various jobs and roles at the railway in order to fully know our working procedures and the responsibilities that go with them.

Kian has his own YouTube channel as "The Railway Enthusiast" featuring the FMR and may other railways so he can often be seen filming around the railway.



Jim Flanagan bough his Scamp loco down to visit the railway at the end of May, picture below, and everybody had a great time, volunteers and passengers riding the train a like, that he returned for again for the day on 21st of August.

One of our members has a keen interest in Scamp locos and is hoping to organise a grand gathering of Scamp locos at the Fancott next year. So, watch this newsletter or our Facebook page for details



The Fancott held a visiting loco event over the August 26/27/28th bank holiday weekend; it was also the railways 26th Birthday. Our volunteers had organised a small party after the railway had closed for the day and presented Ron with a special FMR cake.



Several owners bought along their locos along, so great thanks to Nick Burton for bringing his 0-4-0



Tinkerbell, Wolfhound, George Coles for bringing his Deutz Benzolok C XIV F Fritz and Geoff Dickens new build CZ LOKO. We also took the opportunity get out own Stafford loco, Davanna, in steam which ran successfully and also ran double headed with Wolfhound.



At our working party last week we staged a bit of a magic trick!

There is the container was.....



now its gone!!.....

Brilliant way to hide the container and the surrounding junk with a giant camouflage net!

And finally

We ran our last school summer holiday service on Wednesday on 31st August, so are back to running at weekends only. Keech Cottage Hospice joined us again for the summer Wednesday bringing along some of the children in their care together with family members and carers. Our wheelchair access carriage was greatly appreciated and has proved a great asset to the railway as it has been used most weekends and every Wednesday.



Forthcoming events

Teddy Bear picnic day/weekend on September 24/25th

Halloween trains will mark the end of our regular service for the winter period. Spooky trains will be running on the evenings of October 29/30th from 18.00 to 21.00

Santa specials will be held over 2 weekends depending on demand, initially we are offering 17/18th December with the possibility of putting additional trains on for the weekend of 10/11th December. *Rob Winskell*

Brickworks Miniature Railway

A sad note.

We have had to say a sad goodbye to John and Jill Fletcher, both stalwarts of the Brickworks Museum and the Railways on site for some twenty plus years. They will both be missed!

The way forward.

However the world moves on, the whole of the museum's new track is now complete and tested. (Well we have run a couple of locos all the way round and we haven't found too many challenges to be sorted). You



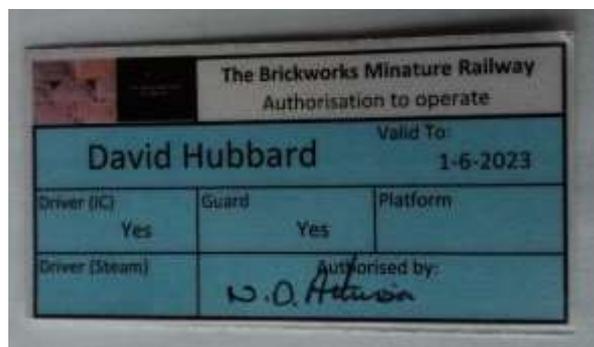
know what it is like when you have spent 2 plus years getting it all together, you can be too close to pick up any small niggles and flaws. Hence it has been really good to welcome Wally and Deana Pearson to the Brickworks Miniature Railway as their great experience has been really useful at picking out the parts of the track that need a little "adjustment". I have to admit that it was a little disconcerting seeing all the sections of track and track bed sprayed with a yellow spray. However, Wally soon got us all working together as a team and we have already adjusted the bottom half of the new track, corrected any faulty camber and we should have the rest completed by the time that this is published. We are looking forward to the official opening this summer, I believe that Grant Shapps is unavailable, but Rod Stewart and Pete Waterman haven't yet answered our requests to officiate, so while we watch this space! We don't stand still at BMR and we have also got on with the many other jobs on site, including

installing and painting fencing around the track bed.



In the meantime

The old track has been in use since the start of the 2022 season and we have actually moved into the 21st century with the miniature railways own electronic terminal, the only problem being that any rail donations seem to be going into the Museum's central fund! The funds raised have been used to help develop the whole rail system as well as contributed to the disabled access carriage, but there is still a long way to go until the full £6,000 cost can be found. The old track was also used at the end of May for a full day safety training for the majority of the rail team volunteers. It was run by Phil Boswell and observed by our own Health and Safety trustee adviser Neil Atkinson. Andy Elford has even produced some rather fetching BMR "Authorisation to Operate" cards, which keen volunteers carry with them always



Finally a vote of thanks

I would like to thank all the members of other groups in BGLR that helped BMR out with copies of their training documents and I would especially like to thank Kara Tombling for the copy of Bentley Miniature Railway Combined Training Document that was sent to me. By the time that this is published there should be a Brickworks Miniature Railway booklet! A thanks again to all, here's to our new track's first fare paying passengers. *David Hubbard*

Crewe Heritage Centre



We had a few jobs to finish before we opened for the start of the 2022 season. We built a display unit for our BGLR leaflets.

We renewed the passenger crossing at Old Works station.

We painted our turntables.



We were glad to see things returning to normal at Crewe Heritage Centre after two extraordinary years.

Jenny, our resident steam engine was pulling full trains as people got out and about again.



In mid-August we were able finally to introduce a new locomotive to our miniature railway. We now have a class 66 locomotive on long term loan courtesy of Dan and Ian Ralphs.

Before we could run the locomotive on our railway, we need to have air brakes fitted to the tender of 66789 to be compatible with our rolling stock. As ever this project was delayed due to the pandemic.

The arrival of 66789 came just in time as Norcliff our resident workhorse needs a bit of TLC and is currently in the cable hands of one of our engineers. Hopefully we will have Norcliff back to full health before our season ends at the end of October.



Finally, the miniature railway has its own pages on the Crewe Heritage Centres website. We are looking to update this with the locomotives that will be on duty when we are open. You can visit the site at www.crewehc.co.uk/chcmr *Mike Lowcock*

Rhyl Miniature Railway

You could not have predicted it, first a global pandemic, then more recently a heatwave and erratic coal supply.



Rhyl Miniature Railway seems to have been a net gainer from the covid epidemic. When we were closed, we received grant support, including when we lost most of the 2020 Santa season. When we have been open the caravan sites around us have often been pretty full, and that in turn has brought customers to us. These high volumes of demand have enabled us to keep our train fares low, at £3.00 for adults and £2.00 for children during 2022.



We have now been in our building Central Station for 15 years. During March 2022 we fitted a new partition and improved displays for shop sales. Now we want to add an extra turnout to change the use of tracks internally and display better our historic railway equipment whilst it is not in service.

Our locomotive *Joan* has been in use for two seasons now with its new firebox. Locomotive *Michael* has returned from Denver Light Railway where the boiler has had a ten year overhaul. It is now being reassembled and will be back in steam next year.

During 2022 we have been able to grow our collection with two acquisitions from Austin Moss at the Windmill Farm Railway. During May we purchased his various parts of Bassett Lowke 4 wheeled carriages, we think these are the same or similar to the carriages from when our railway first opened. They do present some challenges regarding conservation, possible restoration and operation, and we are still scratching our heads about them at the moment.

During June we purchased another Albion class 4-4-2 *Billie*, meaning that our charitable Trust now owns four Albion class locomotives and has a fifth one (*Billy*) on a recurring loan. *Billie* worked on the Dreamland Miniature Railway at Margate between 1922 and 1979, so we shall restore it in its DMR identity. The loco chassis looks very encouraging as Austin had had the wheels re-tyred. The boiler is serviceable, according to our inspector, but the loco has not seen use in public since 1983.

We hope to steam *Billie* also during 2023. That's the plan, but it could be a while longer to complete it fully, considering our workload and the amount of adventure involved with this locomotive which is still new to us.



We had the same 2022 ups and downs as other railways. We found that our locos steam satisfactorily on E coal, but at the moment we are hoping that the supply of steam coal from Ffos y Fran will start up again. We started a few minor line-side fires and during the hottest spells we ran diesel only. It is ironic that with four steam locos in working order we still rely on one passenger diesel (*Clara*) – but fortunately it has not let us down.

The number of staff and volunteers running our railway is still very small by comparison with the job in hand. We have started work on raising the roof line of our tramcar vehicle, as the present timber body is near life expired, and we would like to make it easier for our customers to get in and out of. As with all railways we have plenty still to do. *Simon Townsend*

Moors Valley Railway

Since our last article for BGLR, we were blessed with a very busy Easter period, and our Easter Train Trail, where you spot the lettered Easter Eggs from the train to spell a word and win a prize, was very well received by our younger passengers.



This was followed in May with our Visiting Loco Weekend which saw 7 visiting locomotives from across the UK running on our railway, including 3 of the ever popular Tinkerbelle class locos.

Work is also in hand on improvements to both our Lakeside and Kingsmere stations including new hard standing areas, new level crossing gates, the removal of the old Emmet shed and the 2-foot gauge coach, and the re-organisation of the remaining exhibits at Kingsmere station. This has resulted in a more open feel to the station and this has been well received by the public. The 2-foot gauge coach has gone to join our loco Emmet at the Old Kiln Light Railway in Surrey.

In June, and for the first time in 3 years, we were able to run our Grand Summer Gala. Over the weekend we had all of our 15 operational locomotives in steam, full size and miniature traction engines, vintage cars, radio controlled military models, and a model railway exhibition in the coach shed. The weather was



kind to us, and whilst the event was smaller than in previous years it was well received by visitors and exhibitors alike. We are already in the planning stage for next year's event.

June also saw the start of our daily operation which now goes straight through to early September. Ahead of this we took to opportunity for some track maintenance, including significant track re-alignment, new pointwork and track replacement at our Woolsbridge loop. The opportunity was taken to use recycled plastic sleepers as these are less susceptible to rail creep and should last longer than the wooden type. Further track replacement is planned later in the year.



As mentioned previously, our coach refurbishment programme is also going well, with new design bogies fitted to the first set. We have also produced replacement wooden bodies for the same set and these will be fitted later in the year.

Our workshop has been kept busy completing a 10-year overhaul and boiler re-tube of Tinkerbelle class loco, Frederick. The works included springing adjustments and a repaint before the loco was returned back home to the East Anglian Railway Museum.



Guinevere also received a boiler re-tube as part of its 10 year overhaul, and here the opportunity was taken to fit balanced wheelsets. This is achieved through a mixture of holes in the steel wheels, and balance weights welded to the wheels. The result is a much smoother ride and less damaging to the track.

Finally, as we prepare for our busy summer season, we have been evaluating the various options for coal supply in light of the temporary closure of the Ffos-Y-fran coal mine in South Wales, and the impact to the availability of our normal Welsh steam coal. We trailed many different types of coal with mixed results, before deciding on Wildfire as

the best option. This does require a slightly thicker fire and likes to be kept hot but other than that does not seem to produce any more ash or clinker and steams well, particularly in our bigger engines. We are

yet to complete trials on the smaller locos and we may have to consider breaking up the lumps into something smaller for these. *Paul Ash*

Evesham Vale Light Railway

The 2022 season has seen a reset to 2019 figures, which we did expect, although revenue has increased due to a fare increase, at the same time we stopped offering tickets for seniors, which were a small percentage of our total passenger numbers.



We relaid a further 100 metres of new rail in June, the next section will be 150 metres of rail and 2 new points into our main station, due to be relaid in October / November.

The biggest problem this year so far has been the hacking and suspension of our Facebook account, which meant we had to start from scratch losing 5000 followers, we are getting back but have only just passed the 1000 mark.



Monty returned to service just in time for Easter, and the boiler has been certified for a further 10 years, the problem with the tubes appears to be due to poor quality material, and I've learnt of several boilers built about the same time having problems.

Our Gala in July featured Bonnie Dundee from the Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway and Powys from the Rhiw Valley Light Railway, with Bonnie Dundee being the oldest loco to visit us, and Powys being a sister to our own Dougal although they have never been seen together.

The event was the first without the heritage transport show, which was becoming increasingly difficult to resource, but we still carried over 500 people each day.

Unlike many Railways we were able to continue to operate our steam locomotives, although we stopped running mid afternoon due to the extreme heat affecting our Drivers.

We have opened the booking line for Santa and have had a good response with over 600 tickets sold so far.
Adrian Corke

Eastleigh Lakeside Steam Railway



One of the highlights of the last few weeks, on the weekend of 18th/19th June, was the railway's tribute to the 'Golden Arrow/Fleche d'Or trains of the Southern and British Railways' eras, and the steam age of the SNCF. The railway was very fortunate to be able to welcome back Neil Simpkins' superb Nord Pacific No: 3.1192 to represent the French section of the train. Eastleigh's unrebuilt Bulleid Pacific No: 21CI 'Channel Packet' and 4-6-0 Lord Nelson, No: 850 'Lord Nelson' provided the motive power for the British trains. It was hoped that the work on rebuilt Bulleid No: 35004 'Cunard White Star' would have been completed in time for this event but, sadly, this was not possible. The presence of the Nord Pacific proved to be a tremendous draw and it is to be hoped that it will grace Eastleigh's rails again in the future.



The Nord Pacific was not the only Simpkins' locomotive to visit Lakeside recently since their 10¼" gauge Great Central 8K 2-8-0 No: 102 was present for the 'Family Fun Weekend' on the 9th/10th July. This locomotive will



stay at Parkway for the Great Central Weekend on the 5th/6th/7th August when other GC Engines from the Simpkins' stable will, hopefully, be present.

Several ELSR locomotives have spent time away at other railways around the country. Two of the 10¼" gauge Bullock locomotives No: 1001 'The Monarch' and No: 2006 'Edward VIII' were at Ropley Miniature Railway and Stapleford respectively, whilst 7¼" gauge 2-6-2 No: 10 'Sir Arthur Heywood' was at Weston Park and Moors Valley. Presently, 0-4-0 Romulus, 'Sanjo' is at the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway's 7¼" gauge line in Porthmadog.



Apart from the Simpkins' locomotives other engines have had a sojourn at Eastleigh most notably 'Megan' from Weston Park. D801 'Vanguard', which was on loan to ELSR from Hastings Miniature Railway, has now become part of Lakeside's stock and another former Hastings locomotive, D48261 'Thunderbolt III' was bought by a consortium of volunteers and now resides at Eastleigh.



Of course, everyday activities continue apace most notably the replacement of life expired wooden sleepers with new plastic ones, the on-going routine maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock and the work of restoring 'Western Queen'. *Article and photos by Lionel Kay*

Top: Unrebuilt Bulleid 2ICI 'Channel Packet' heading back to Parkway (2) Nord Pacific No: 3.1192 rounding the curve towards Parkway, (3) Nord Pacific No: 3.1192 leaving Monks Brook Halt, (4)'Channel Packet', Lord Nelson and

Nord Pacific line up at Parkway Station, (5) &Bottom- Locomotives including GC 8K No: 102, Atlantic No: 1908 'Ernest Henry Upton' and Bullock No: 1002 'The Empress'

Thompson Park Railway

Our season started on the first Saturday in April and the weekend started of well. The Easter period was soon upon us and we had trains running from Good Friday until Easter Monday. We pride ourselves on running several free events during the year and our first one is always the last Sunday in April when we

leave donation only buckets at Bank Hall Meadows station.



One of the reasons we started our free rides Sunday was to attract people to the park and railway. Free rides Sunday also gives families chance to ride our little railway at very little or no cost. We hope that doing this will also attract people back again. It was decided to add another free rides event this year and on the last weekend in June we gave free rides to any NHS worker and their families on production of their NHS pass. This again was quite successful.



The next free rides day was our Teddy Bears picnic which we always run on the last Sunday in July. Bring a teddy to the party and get a free ride. It's surprising how many adults still have Teddy Bears!. July sees us open the railway on Wednesdays when the school holidays start and we stayed open until the schools reopen in September.

Our final free rides day was the last Sunday in August when we ran our Super Hero Sunday. Turn up in any sort of fancy dress as well as super heros costume and you get a free ride on the railway. Its got so popular now that even adults take part. The railway has once again been featured on BBC Radio Lancashire Helping

us promote our NHS weekend. We were live on Wednesday 22nd June during the morning programme.



Finally, one of our recent traditions is to run our final weekend of the year, which is the last weekend in September as a charity weekend and all the weekends takings are donated to charity. Last year we donated £1000 to the Air Ambulance. The decision on this years charity will be taken at our society meeting in September. Finally after Covid our lollipops are back and this year so far we have gone through 18 jars of lollies. *Mike Bailey*



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