



The West Lancs Letter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST LANCASHIRE LIGHT RAILWAY



ISSUE 38 AUGUST 2023

The big event of the year!

The first weekend in August is our Summer Gala, although this year the summer weather was a bit mixed. Fortunately this didn't put visitors off, and we had a good turnout on both days.



Our gala wouldn't be the same without a visiting engine. This time it's *Ashanti*, a Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 well tank locomotive, normally based at the Apedale Valley Light Railway.

The photo shows *Ashanti* being loaded at Amerton Railway after guesting at their Steam Gala, ready for the trip north to West Lincs.

Photo: Nathanael O'Connor



Safely arrived at West Lincs, *Ashanti* is soon doing what she does best - making steam!





Paying a welcome return visit was the Pianola Man, entertaining loco crews and visitors alike with vintage tunes played on an almost-a-hundred-years-old pianola.

The Beer Tent is always a popular feature of the Gala, with a choice of local cask ales and bottled beers.

Here landlord Rob deploys a very special bottle opener, made up of assorted plumbing fittings.



With so many activities going on multi-tasking is sometimes required to get it all done.

So Rob steps outside the beer tent for a moment to feed the Bat the Rat Apparatus, to the delight of a young batter.



The rain on the Saturday meant slippery rails, a potential problem on the gradient into the carriage shed. So Andy and David deploy the sand cans to improve loco adhesion.



Success! A train of four diesels and one electric locomotive negotiate the slope up to the shed, with all twenty wheels firmly planted on the wet track.

Adorning our car park was another form of vintage transport, providing local tours courtesy of Merseyside Transport Trust.

For bus enthusiasts, it's a 1957 AEC Regent V, carefully restored and in full working order.





And at the end of the day, a well-deserved barbecue for all the volunteers and helpers. Alan and Gary demonstrate their al-fresco culinary skills.

These last two gala photos are by Nigel Valentine, a freelance railway photographer.

This one shows *Ashanti* emerging into the sunshine from the woods at Delph, pulling a well-laden train back to Becconsall.



The gala was a rare opportunity to photograph this trio of locomotives side-by-side.

Nigel's photo highlights the differences in design between the three narrow-gauge locos. It also shows we haven't forgotten who's 120 this year!

Princess and Pirates

Another of our special events, now in its third year and more popular than ever. It was officially opened by the Hesketh Bank Rose Queen, seen here meeting one of our visiting princesses.



This year's event was well attended, despite a torrential downpour towards the end of the day. This is what we love to see - lots of people enjoying themselves at our Railway!

Throughout the day our trains were besieged by a particularly horrid band of pirates, not afraid to use water-based weaponry in their attempts to capture our passengers.

Fortunately our valiant train crews were up to the challenge, and returned fire with good effect. And no visitors were even slightly dampened.

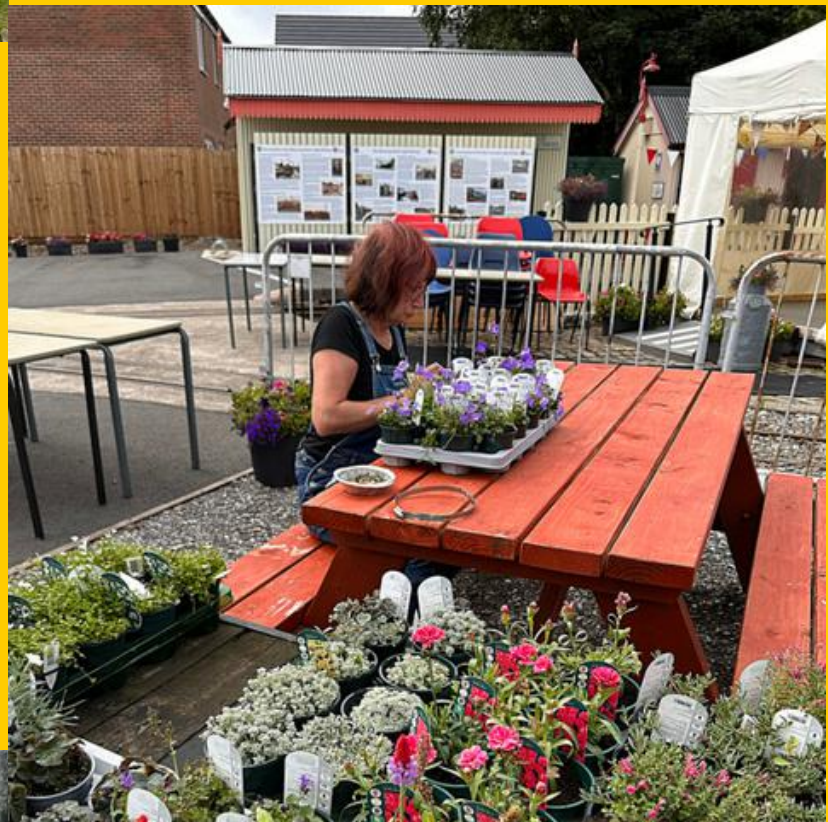




Recently our neighbours Booths food store held a three-day flower show, featuring displays from a number of local organisations.

Our contribution was a planted-up clay tub, originally from Henry Alty's brickworks. It was a four-man lift to get the tub onto the trolley, ready to trundle it across to Booths.

And talking of flowers, we have our own plant stall at the Railway, selling quality plants at affordable prices. Here Jill does a quality check on a new delivery.



Good to see Gordon back at the Railway after his re-plumbing job, breaking himself in gently with a little light loco restoration, followed no doubt by some modest housebuilding and low-key tractor maintenance.

Just published!

Short Axle

The Journal of the West Lancashire Light Railway Trust

Issue 2-23

July 2023



In this issue

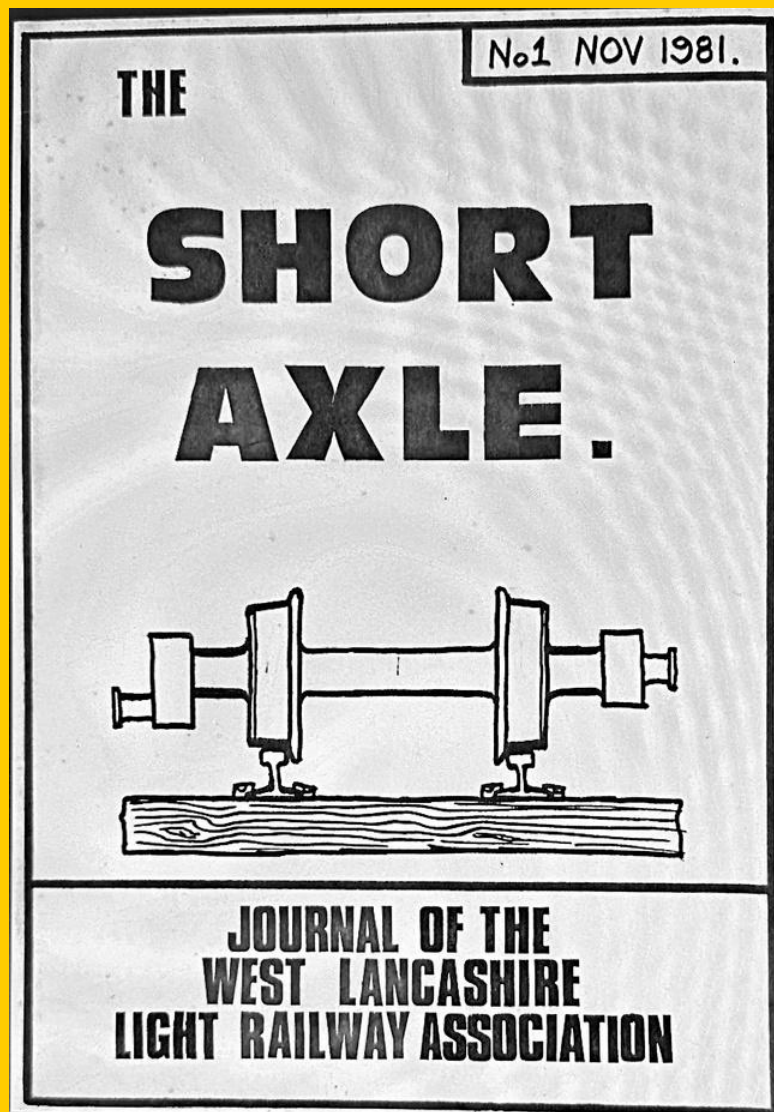
Links with Southport
From the Archive
Visit to Embassy Railway
Electric loco restoration
Book Review
Early Track at WLLR



<https://www.westlancsmilway.org>

Price £4.00





And finally...

Did you know that our in-house journal *Short Axle* has been going since November 1981?

Many of the issues are available online via these two links:

1981 to 2000 : <https://tinyurl.com/ShortAxleA>

2001 - present : <https://tinyurl.com/ShortAxleB>

The image on the front page is of Howard Ford, on his first day rostered solo as a WLLR guard. Howard is no stranger to guarding, having worked in that role at the slightly bigger East Lancashire Railway.



BUY OUR ADVANCE ANYDAY DISCOUNT TICKET!
Valid for all trains, including special events, except Santa Specials and Halloween. No expiry date - use whenever you like!

Click [HERE](#) to buy

With the Railway now busy running trains in the 2023 season, we need more volunteers to help run our services and to maintain and improve our facilities.

If you would like to help, please contact Mike Spall at:

chair@westlancsrailway.org

The West Lancs Letter is published by the West Lancashire Light Railway Trust, a UK registered charity. Our contact address is: Station Rd, Hesketh Bank PR4 6SP.

To unsubscribe, email webmaster@westlancsrailway.org.

For more information on what we do, visit our website westlancsrailway.org and our Facebook pages [facebook/westlancs](https://www.facebook.com/westlancs) and [facebook/groups/WLLR](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WLLR).

If you would like to join our growing band of members, you can do so online [here](#).