



The West Lancs Letter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST LANCASHIRE LIGHT RAILWAY



ISSUE 35 APRIL 2023

Welcome to the start of a new West Lancs season!

First train departure!

After three months of no service trains, the first passenger train of the season departs Becconsall.

It was a cloudy start, but the sun soon came out and many visitors came to enjoy a ride behind *Irish Mail* and coffee and cake in the tea-room.



Not 1, but 2

Easter arrived soon after, the very next weekend in fact, with not one but two Easter bunnies and a very tall cockerel, resplendent in red and yellow feathers



It's all down to training...

And to make sure all were ready for the new season, more than 40 volunteers came to our Training Day - an impressive turnout!

After a classroom session, staff took turns operating a train, headed up by *Montalban*.





Another Sybil milestone

They're coming thick and fast now. Keith oversees a steam test, to check the integrity of the boiler and its fittings in working conditions.

Fire in the hole!

The business end of the loco, seen from underneath through the firebars.



We have ignition, at this time

The pressure starts to mount, an encouraging start to Sybil's new career at West Lancs.

The gauge was refurbished by Keith Nicholls, who scribed the faded dial markings back into full legibility.

Rails on the move

More than a dozen years ago we salvaged some rail from Leyland Sewage Works.

Plans to use it haven't come to fruition, so two large lorries came to take it to a new home on the Bala Lake Railway. Nothing is wasted amongst the narrow gauge fraternity!



Wagon restoration teamwork

Behind the workshop, and well out of the way of train operations, Father and son Alex and Joseph work on cleaning up parts for Joseph's stone wagon.

Many hands make brushes work

Our friends from Preston Day Services make short work of the platform fence repaint at Becconsall.





A new sign - 1

Barry shows off our new road sign for the start of the 2023 season.

Amazing that he can keep smiling, knowing that the chicken suit awaits...

A new sign - 2

Question:

How many West Lancs volunteers does it take to put up the level crossing sign?

Answer:

All five of them, the sign was heavy metal!



IRRS visit

The Irish Railway Record Society was our first group visit of 2023, shown here alongside *Irish Mail* (of course).

Ruston & Hornsby loco *Tawd* ran a drive-a-diesel service, whilst on display was battery loco BEV C6765, which worked in Northern Ireland.



Trainspotting treasures

The social aspects of the Railway are an important feature of what we do at West Lancs.

Recently we met at the Hesketh Arms in Rufford, to hear a talk from Glenn on steam in the north-west.



Infrastructure upgrades

Jackie refreshes the paint on the platform fence at Becconsall, while Mike builds a raised floor for the tea-room marquee.

The finished article - for now

With marquee erected, firmly attached to the new floor and with a smart new access ramp, the tea-room is full, and overflowing onto the picnic benches outside. We need something bigger...





Workshop ways - 1

'I've got a good hold on the steering wheel, now where's the accelerator pedal?'

Cameron gets to grips with the radial arm drilling machine, making parts for the access coach brake gear.

Workshop ways - 2

Joseph and Gordon assemble the main steam pipe for *Sybil*, another step towards completion of the restoration.



Workshop ways - 3

Your strongest muscles are in your legs, as Clive demonstrates when relocating an obstinate ash pan on *Montalban*.



And finally...

A fine example of heritage transport showed up in our car park recently.

At a mere 85 years, this Morgan 4 is not quite as old as our steam engines, but looked quite splendid in its 'original unrestored' condition.

The image on the front page is of Neil McMurdy, one of our original schoolboy founders, on the occasion of his 70th birthday.



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With the Railway now open for the new 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

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