

THE WEST LANCAS LETTER



The Newsletter of the West Lancashire Light Railway

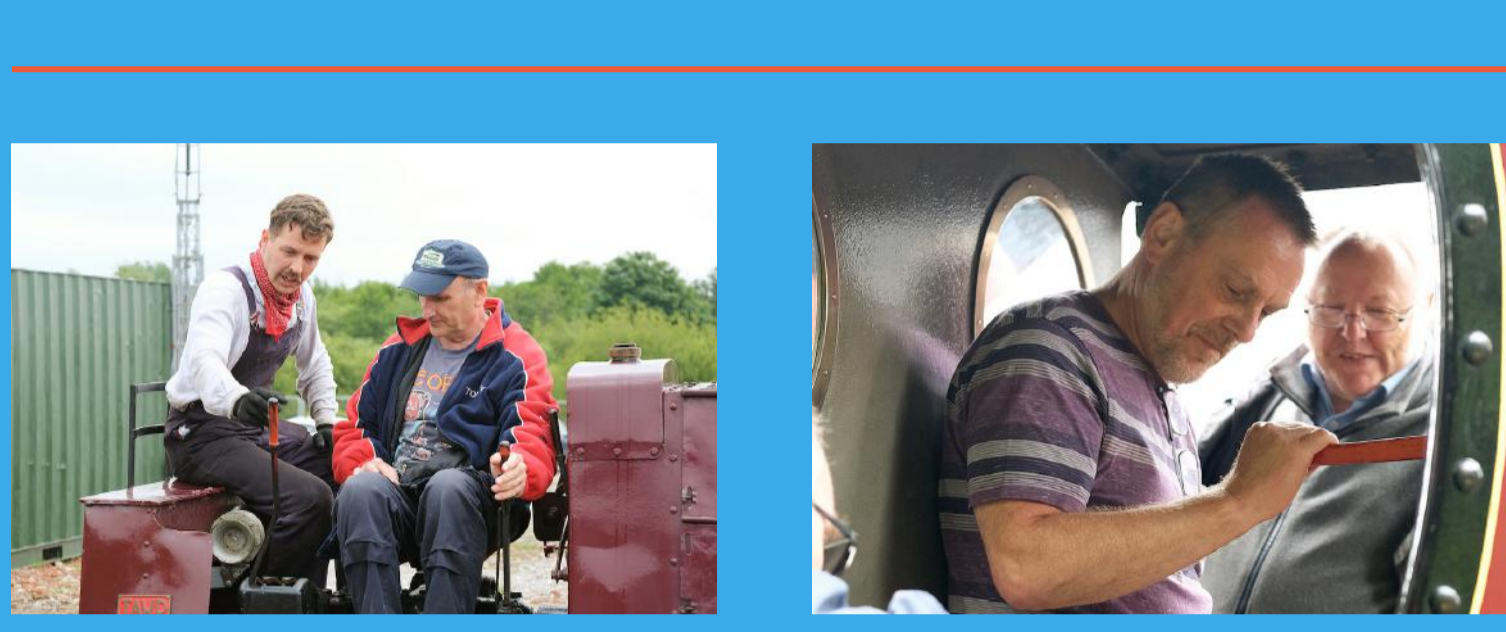
WELCOME to West Lancas Letter No.20!



Visit by Katherine Fletcher MP

Saturday 4th July was a special day. Not only was it our annual Volunteers Day but we also welcomed Katherine Fletcher, our local Member of Parliament, on her first visit to the Railway.

The MP demonstrated not only a good knowledge of all things mechanical, but a genuine interest in all that has been achieved here by our brilliant volunteers. Highlight of her visit was a turn as driver on *Irish Mail*, on the return trip from Delph to Beconsall. A memorable day, topped off by a number of visitors interested in joining us as working members.



Volunteers Day saw a good number of potential members coming to see what we are up to. All were given a run-down on past history and current activities, plus a guided tour of our facilities and a chance to sample the cafe's strawberry-and-cream scones. Hands-on participation was encouraged, with some very positive feedback received.

And if you couldn't make the day, it's not too late - come and say hello on any Thursday or Sunday, we would love to meet you and show you what running a heritage railway is all about!



More visitors! Chairman Mike welcomes members of the OOR Society at their visit on 16th July. *Joffre* and *Irish Mail* were in steam, drive-a-diesel was in operation and shed tours were laid on, with a busy shop and even busier cafe. As a bonus, a plant stall was arranged and a display of 16mm scale models set up, including a miniature version of our venerable carriage shed. A good time was had by all!



Recently we hosted a birthday party for the grandson of Paul Smith, one of our trustees. As you can see, Spiderman featured in more ways than one...

GRANT AWARD NO.2!

In the last issue we announced receipt of an award from the Government's Cultural Recovery Fund. This time we can reveal we have been awarded £10,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It will contribute to a number of improvements.

- making the Railway more accessible to visitors and staff with disabilities, by providing an access ramp for our new wheelchair-friendly railway carriage, new gardening tools for use by our special needs volunteers, and a site accessibility survey by a disabled persons' advocate,
- boosting our work with schools, by providing information packs for teachers and pupils, and allowing us to install new storyboard interpretation panels and improved welcome signage,
- providing competency and asset management training, food hygiene courses and digital membership records training,
- extending and improving site wi-fi coverage, with live streaming to our website, and
- funding professional help for revision of our business plan.

We are very grateful to receive this funding - it will make a real difference to making the Railway more welcoming and the staff better trained.

HOPS - NOT JUST A BEER FLAVOURING

Volunteers at the Railway may have seen correspondence relating to a new computer system being adopted by West Lancs. The Heritage Operations Processing System is a multi-purpose piece of software which allows us to maintain rosters, competence records and other documents all in one place. It will replace a variety of mainly paper-based systems which are no longer fit for purpose, given the increasing complexity of the records we have to maintain.

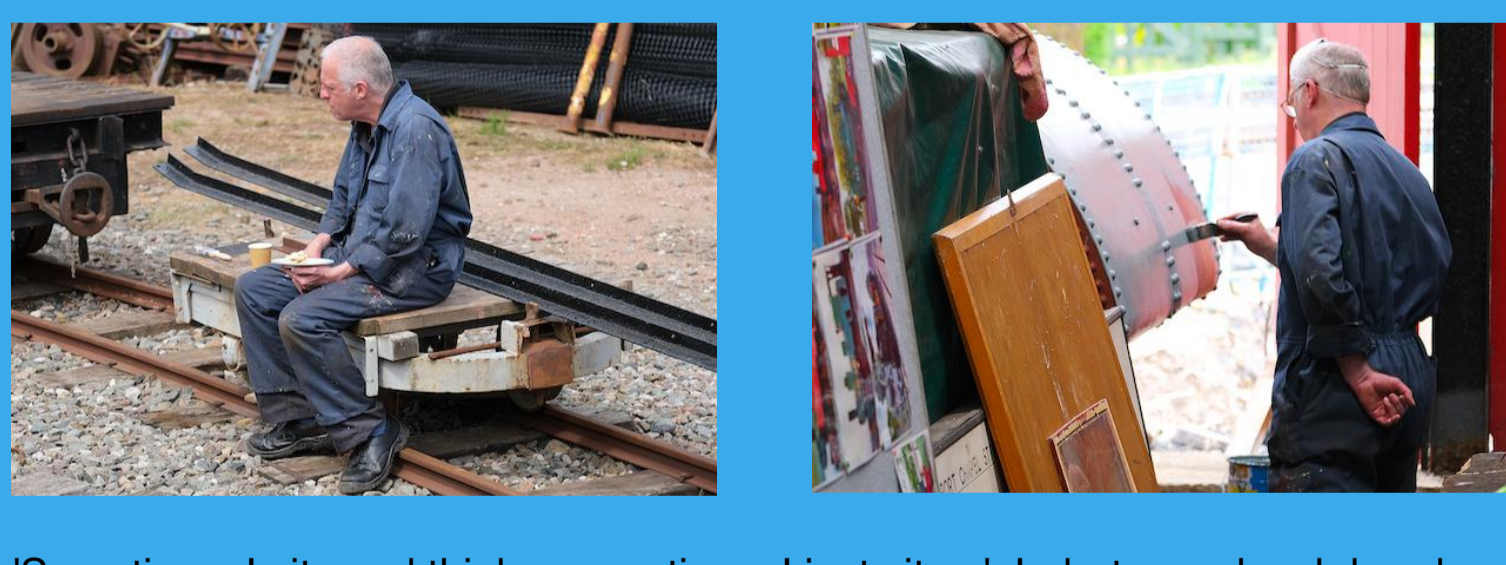
Glenn Clarkson is taking the lead on this important development, and is working hard to customise the system to our needs and input all the data. Once complete it should simplify record-keeping, generate rosters more efficiently and produce reports demonstrating compliance with the many and various legal requirements which apply to us. Not glamorous, but essential!



Our new Princess and Pirates Day has been moved to Sunday 25th July. In the meantime, preparations are in full swing:



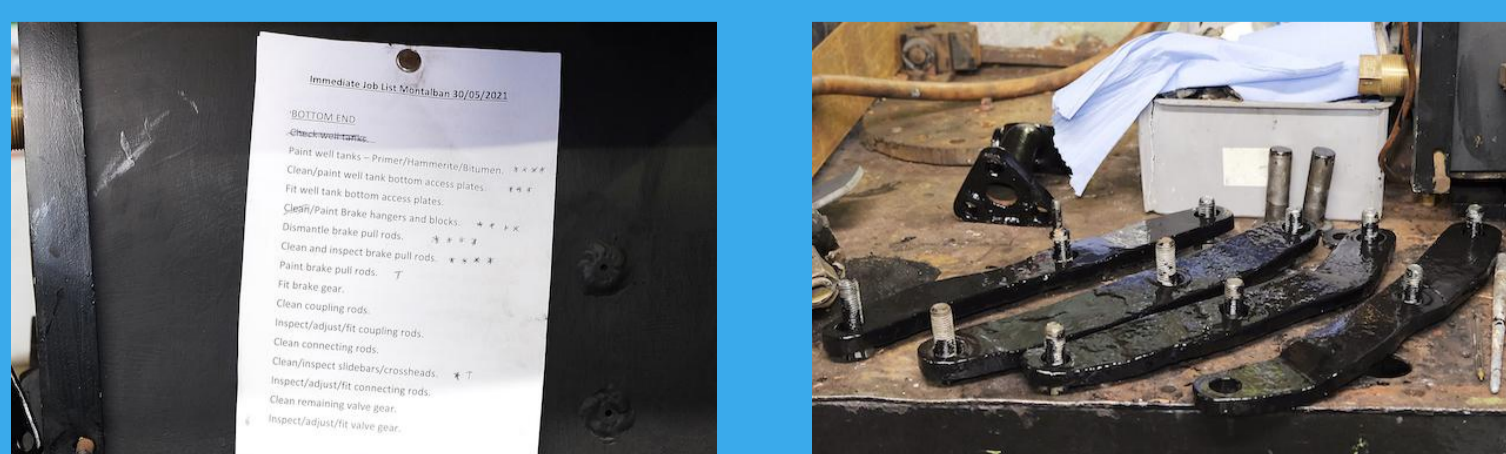
Question: "How many does it take to paint a pirate ship?"
Answer: "Three, a worker, a supervisor and a quality controller".
But which is which?



'Sometimes I sits and thinks, sometimes I just sits...'. In-between lunch breaks, Clive the Colourist expertly applies another coat of paint to Sybil's water tank.



A new addition to the display shelf in the shop. A pair of original gauge-glass valves from Kerr-Stuart 'Tattoo' Class locomotive No.7 of the Corris Railway, removed during their recent visit. Sold to your editor as a fundraiser for the new Corris 'Falcon' loco, being built by Alan Keel of Lea Line, Ross-on-Wye.



If you have lots of jobs, make a list! This one is for finishing off Montalban's overhaul, and as you can see, one is already crossed off!

West Lancashire Light Railway
4th June 2021
By Colin Kennington

And finally, a member of the local OOR Society group made a short video of trains operating during their recent visit. It gives an excellent showcase of the variety of stock we can run. The link opens in a new browser tab.



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