



# The West Lancs Letter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
WEST LANCASHIRE LIGHT RAILWAY



ISSUE 39 OCTOBER 2023

## Another month, another gala...

This time it was the turn of our working engines, a generic term applied to our diesel, petrol and electric locomotives. We have more than twenty of these in various states of readiness - the Gala in late September featured no less than thirteen in operation.



These small engines ran freight trains up and down the main line, inbetween normal passenger services.

Here a pair of Hudson Hunslet diesels take a train over the king point at Beconsall, with 20HP 1963/1939 leading and 21HP 4480/1953 *Pathfinder* bringing up the rear.

At Delph, Ruston and Hornsby 40HP diesel 339105 waits for a clear line to take an engineers' train back to Beconsall.





Taking on water is our stalwart loco *Irish Mail*, which operated the passenger services during the Gala, alternating as motive power with our large Hudswell Clarke mines diesel.

Leyland and District Amateur Radio made a welcome return to the Gala, operating their 'Railways on the Air' programme and making contacts world-wide.



Another attraction in the marquee was a live-steam model railway, featuring a slow-running geared locomotive, complete with large flywheel. More scenery will be added over the winter period.

The Railway Trust's AGM was held in the marquee in September, and was well attended by our members.

On the 'top table' Secretary Charles directs a question to Treasurer Martyn regarding the accounts. Still in the black, fortunately.



Taking a break from examining the AGM paperwork, the 3 J's (James, James and Joseph) inspect a sheaf of photographs taken from a rather suspicious-looking brown envelope. Hopefully train-related.

Ann, spouse of treasurer Martyn, had a significant birthday recently, and celebrated it with a party at the Railway.

Local group the Wanderers provided the music, and there was a rather special cake, in the form of a birdwatching hide.



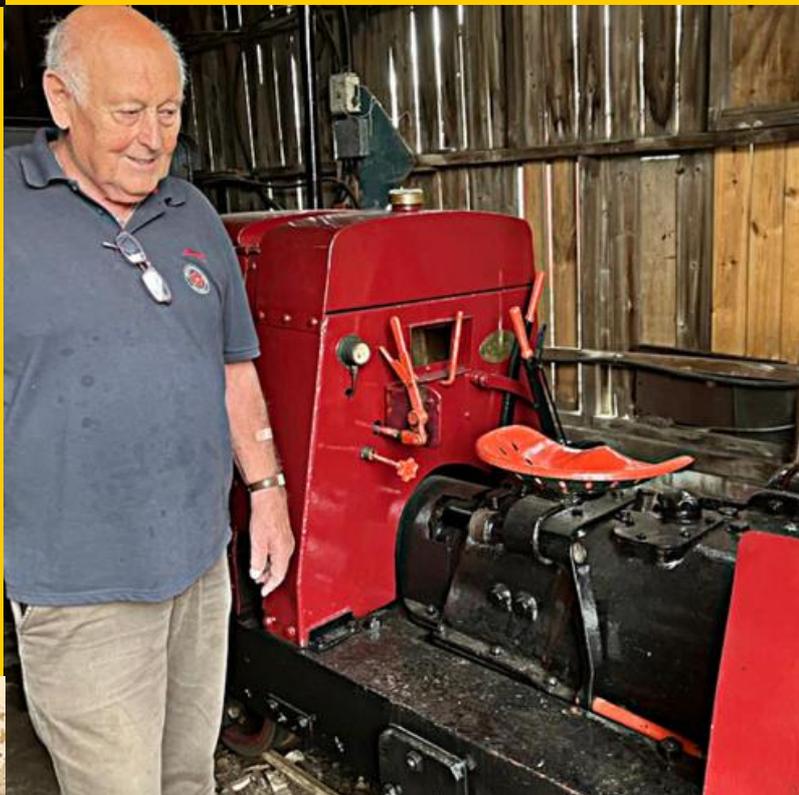


What could be better than a vintage Morris 8?

Clearly it's a whole group of them, who visited the Railway recently, along with their owners.

One of the Morris Men was Melvin Ashcroft, who had an unexpected reunion with our Ruston and Hornsby locomotive *Tawd*.

A good half-century ago Melvin operated the clay excavator at Thorgoods Quarry at Burscough, filling trucks pulled by *Tawd* and other locos. To say it was a surprise to see *Tawd* again was quite an understatement!



Another group of visitors were from the Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society.

Their mission is to promote the history and significance of the Rainhill Trials of 1829, when the Stephenson's Rocket won the competition to find a locomotive suitable to run on the new Liverpool and Manchester Railway.



With work on *Sybil* nearing completion, attention has turned to getting *Montalban* back into service.

Here Keith and Gordon repair the fixing for one of the gauge glasses.



Another project finished - Barry shows off the new mobile bookshop, displaying a range of second-hand books on railways and other topics.

Better weather protection was a key factor in the design - no more books dampened by a passing shower!



Work on the Lister buffer beam weights continues, with Bob and Dave preparing to drill the holes for the attachment bolts.

A portable drill with a magnetic clamp was used, to avoid having to lift the weights up to the drill table - 'heavy' doesn't start to describe them!





More progress on the access coach, with the top part of the brake gear completed and ready for painting.

Paul gets elevated and applies the brush.

*Sybil* steams! Not signed off for passenger traffic yet, but a recent test run in the yard confirmed the loco is almost ready for service.



The evidence is plain to see - *Sybil's* pressure gauge, carefully restored by Keith Nicholls, shows the new rivetted boiler is fit for purpose and ready for action.

**Future events  
coming thick  
& fast!**



 **Pumpkin Sunday ~ 15th October**  
**West Lancashire Light Railway**  
Hesketh Bank PR4 6SP

Free Pumpkin with every  
Child Ticket  
Frequent Train service,  
Trains from 11.30 to  
4.30pm  
Childrens playground ride  
Tearoom open for tea,  
coffee, cake and hot food



 **Spooky Steam Halloween Specials**  
**West Lancashire Light Railway**   
Hesketh Bank PR4 6SP

**31st October  
2023**  
**5.00, 5.30 pm**  
**6.00pm and**  
**6.30 pm**



**Hot Food and  
Drinks  
available**

**Book online**  
[www.westlancsrailway.org](http://www.westlancsrailway.org)



**West Lancashire Light Railway**  
**Santa Specials**  
3rd, 9th, 10th, 16th and 17th December 2023



**Tickets go on sale 1st October 2023 @ 9.00am**  
[www.westlancsrailway.org](http://www.westlancsrailway.org)



And finally...

Have you seen our smart new site notices?

Two are on the toilet block and the big blue one is at the main entrance. Together they welcome visitors, tell them all about the site, its locos, rolling stock, and activities, and encourage them to sign up as a volunteer!

The image on the front page is of Harry Montgomery, in the cab of *Clywd* during the Working Engines Gala. *Clywd* is over seventy years old - Harry is a little younger.



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](mailto: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.

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