



The West Lancs Letter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST LANCASHIRE LIGHT RAILWAY



ISSUE 36 MAY 2023

West Lancs chair visits No.10!

Mike Spall found himself in unfamiliar surroundings recently, inside No.10 Downing St. The occasion was a reception for Local Charity Champions, hosted by Stuart Andrew MP, Minister for Charities.



The invitation was arranged by our local MP, Katherine Fletcher, to recognise the work done by the Railway in preserving our narrow gauge heritage and involving the local community in our activities.

Later Mike spoke of how honoured he was to attend on behalf of the WLLR, and pleased to hear the Minister for Charities acknowledge the fantastic work done by charities and their volunteers.

Mike's visit included a tour of the House of Commons - unfortunately cameras were not allowed inside No.10, but this shot shows Mike in his best suit waiting to enter the hallowed portal. 'Nice garden' was the succinct sound-bite.





A Coronation celebration

The Railway celebrated the coronation of King Charles III in style over the bank holiday weekend.

As well as all our usual attractions, a special Coronation tea was available, served by liveried waiters.



And our Mines Hudswell didn't miss out, decorated overall and with a 'Duke of Lancaster' headboard to emphasise the county's links with the Crown.

Friendly Engines at West Lancs

Our April special event was Friendly Engines Day. Two steam engines were in operation, plus our Mines diesel, all wearing friendly faces.



Drive a diesel - into the shed!

An added attraction was the opportunity to drive a diesel, on this occasion our Ruston & Hornsby loco *Tawd*, which has been at the Railway for over fifty years.

Here Andy provides the expert tuition, before they set off towards the loco shed, in reverse.

Sybil makes a first appearance

The day also marked the public unveiling of Quarry Bagnall *Sybil*, if only in model form. The diorama represents the loco working in Dinorwic quarry around a hundred years ago.





Another first!

Not the most obvious cause for joyous celebration, but quite possibly the first cyclists to use our new cycle racks appeared recently.

Unfortunately their review of the new facility didn't appear on Tripadvisor, either because the system failed or because they didn't write one.

St George and the Welsh Dragon!

Sunday April 23rd was St George's Day, a fact that did not go unnoticed at West Lancs.



Down and out in the woodworking shop

Opportunities to see our chairman laid out on the floor are few and far between.

On this occasion Mike is fitting the step supports to our new access coach.

An exchange of boilers

Some heavy lifting at the Railway recently as *Joffre's* boiler returned after assessment at Johnson's engineering works at Banks.

The next stage is to plan and cost the required remedial work on the boiler.



Stage two of the operation was to load up Montalban's boiler for despatch to Johnson's.

Fortunately the work required is likely to be limited to repair of a weld on one of the boiler stays, so *Montalban's* return to service should not take too long.

Questions, so many questions

Why is Arthur cleaning up a cast iron seat frame? Could it be a seat to go on Joseph's restored stone wagon? Are we at long last to have a deluxe inspection trolley with first-class seating accommodation? Time will tell...





Cobbles needed!

We need setts/cobbles like these, to finish off the area around the new ash pit.

If you have any to spare, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Paul Smith at engineering@westlancsrailway.org.

Thank you!

We make rockets!

Our multi-talented workforce can do almost anything!

It is actually a wooden pattern made by Alan Frodsham, the starting point for a new cast metal blast pipe for *Sybil*.

But I'm sure Alan could make a rocket if he put his mind to it...



The chicken returns...

Following a mention in West Lancs Letter No.35, the Editor has been deluged by at least two requests for a better view of our Easter Hen, specially modelled for us by Barry Pike.

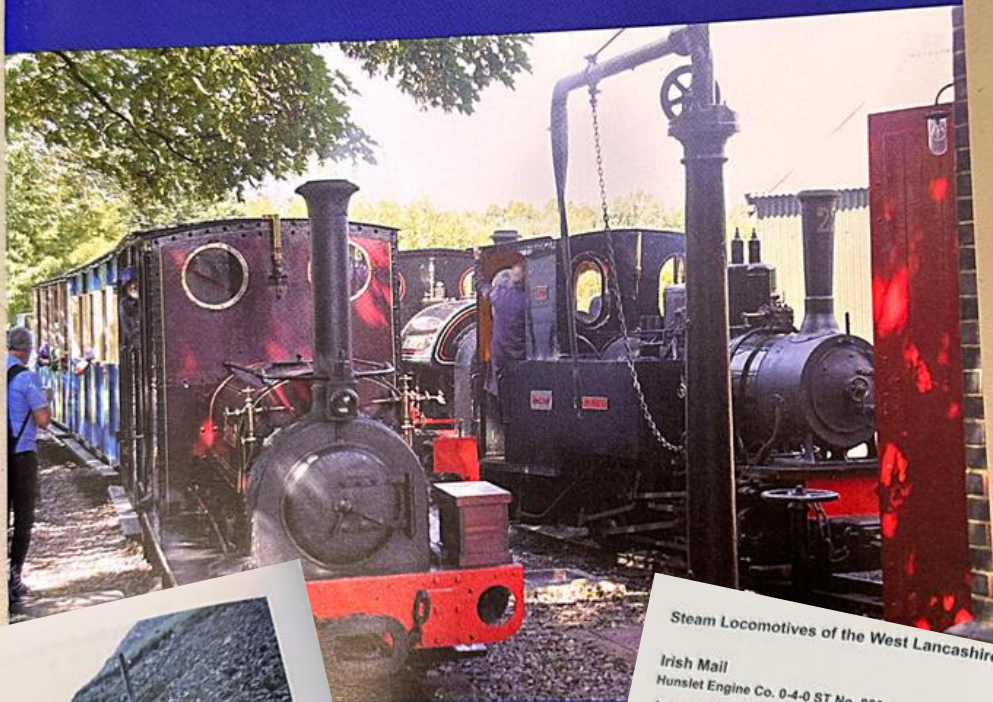
So here he/she/it is:

Out
now!

West Lancashire Light Railway

Guide Book

A brief history and stock list



Alice, Hunslet 780/02 out of the engine shed and awaiting positioning to go down the first incline on Australia Level. Graham Fairhurst sat on the running plate.
Photos: M.J. Smith



Alice heads down the incline with unknown, Graham Fairhurst, Jonathan Whitehead, Ann Rimmer - now Smith, (the photographer's future wife) and Paul Smith peering into the saddle tank. Photo: M.J. Smith

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Steam Locomotives of the West Lancashire Light Railway

Irish Mail

Hunslet Engine Co. 0-4-0 ST No. 823 of 1903
Arrived 18.12.1969
Restored 1980

Ex Dinorwic Slate Quarries, Llanberis, North Wales

Originally built with a full cab. Later removed to allow access through quarry tunnels and low structures. Named no. 6, then named after the quarry owner Charles Assheton Smith's racehorse that finished 2nd in the Grand National in 1913 and 1916. Finished working in the early 1950's on Australia level at 1650ft above sea level. Boiler transferred to Alice, HE 780 of 1902, later rescued by the WLLR.



Joffre

Kerr Stuart Co Ltd. 0-6-0 WT+T No. 2405 of 1915
Arrived 14.10.74
Restored 2012

Built for use in WW1, based on a French Decauville design for the French Government Artillery Railways, one of 70 built. Named after the French General Joffre, as the locomotive class name. Used during the war and during the reconstruction of war damaged Flanders. Sold to the Carrières de la Vallée-Heureuse et Haut Banc Hydroquent, Rinxent, Pas de Calais, France, a limestone quarry. Believed to be out of service circa 1950. Currently the boiler is out of ticket, requiring work.



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2023 edition now available in the shop!



And finally...

Jean David, chairman of our twinned railway *Le Chemin de Fer de Rillé* has been in touch to offer a warm welcome to West Lincs members and supporters visiting their part of France this year. They would be delighted to see you!

The AECFM (aecfm.fr) is about 40km west of Tours in the Centre Loire Region.

You can download their latest newsletter [here](#).

The image on the front page is of Mike Spall, West Lincs chair,
at the famous front door with our local MP Katherine Fletcher.



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 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

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](#).