

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



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EDITORIAL

Well, where do I start! After such a long wait it is immensely satisfying to see the Q6 back in traffic. Elsewhere in this issue Richard Pearson, quite rightly, goes into some detail on the final few days and the triumphant return.

Whilst this was happening the K1 was completing its marathon stint at Fort William, ending the season with no less than 71 trouble free outings on the Jacobite. By the time you read this the locomotive should be in use on the NYMR.

However, whilst these achievements are of great significance and a tribute, once again, to the hard working volunteers of the NELPG, they are rather overshadowed by developments concerning *Blue Peter*. The NELPG has been engaged in long running discussions with the Drury family and other parties with a view to seeing the A2 fully overhauled and back on the main line but, until now, not in a position to publicise developments.

At a meeting on 17th October between representatives of the NELPG, NYMR and Ben and Rupert Drury, a basic understanding was reached whereby *Blue Peter* is going to be overhauled and, on completion, see use on the NYMR and on the main line, the latter under the auspices of the NELPG.

This a dream scenario for the Group; the Committee and the Drurys were keen to see the A2 back on the main line, where it belongs, but finding the right solution to secure the long term operational future of the engine has proved a challenging task. However, a way to achieve this has now been identified by the NYMR, working with one of its benefactors. Most crucially, this will involve a public appeal, to finance the A2's overhaul by contractors. The success of the appeal will be critical to getting the A2 back in traffic, and to the time it takes.

This understanding therefore forms the basis for realising the long held dream of seeing *Blue Peter* back in steam, and to hopefully engage new enthusiasts of all ages. Furthermore it raises the enticing prospect of witnessing a now achievable line up of A1, A2, A3 and A4! With all this in mind, there is an encouraging sense of urgency by all parties to make this happen as soon as possible. Exciting times indeed, and whilst there is still more detailed work to be done before the final arrangements can be announced, as Rupert put it, watch this 161 ton space!

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LOCOMOTIVE REPORT by Richard Pearson, Martin Lloyd & Neal Woods

J27 NO. 65894

During August a start was made with removing the concrete from the smokebox to allow removal of the blast pipe so we could gain clear access to the front tubeplate for burning out the tubes. After quite a few evenings chipping away at the stubborn concrete the blast pipe was eventually removed. A start was then made with burning out the tubes, the first being removed on the 27th September. Our plan is to hopefully have all the tubes out before Christmas and we will then make a start on dismantling the outside of the boiler in readiness for removing the boiler in the spring.

A preliminary estimate of the costs of the overhaul as a preparatory exercise towards fund raising has been carried out. It is likely to be in the region of £240,000.



After removal of the first tubes a shot taken looking backwards from the front tubeplate towards the firebox. Visible in the foreground are the boiler tubes, the large diameter pipe top left is the internal main steam pipe which takes steam from the regulator to the cylinders. The small pipe on the RHS is the steam supply pipe to the blower ring from the valve in the cab; the firebox and roof stays are visible in the distance (Richard Pearson)



*Philip Lewis cutting tubes in the J27 firebox on 22nd September
(Richard Pearson)*

Q6 NO.63395

Following the first steaming in July most of August was spent snagging and making final adjustments before we could start running in. The big day eventually came on Wednesday 29th August when the Q6 backed down to the station under its own steam for the first time in over 25 years; we then ran three light engine trips up and down the line as far as Beck Hole fitting in between the NYMR's service trains. The first trip was run at a steady 15mph with a stop at Green End to check bearing temperatures; all was stone cold so we continued running. By the second trip we had progressed to running at 20 mph and then later 25mph and still all was stone cold. Following the first days running the engine returned to the shed for examination; the only mechanical fault found was a blocked cylinder drain cock valve that was soon cleared.

The following morning when the boiler had cooled slightly the NYMR undertook an examination of the firebox and they unfortunately found a small leak on a flue tube. It was then decided not to press ahead with the days planned running in, but to allow the boiler to cool and nip up the leaking tube before the leak got any worse.

With the tube successfully nipped the running in continued the following week with 5 days of running in, at first with runs in between trains up and down the bank to Goathland, and then, with all going well, on the second day the engine was attached to the back of service trains and allowed to do a bit of work banking the trains up to Goathland. With things still going well on the third day (5th September) we decided it was time to go a bit further, so this time the engine was attached to the back of the first service train for a trip to Pickering. At Pickering the Q6 was then taken off the back of the train before it had a chance to pass through the platforms. Then, once the service train had gone and with the station to itself, a gauging run was conducted around every part of the station to check platform to loco clearances, together with a run to the New Bridge loco stabling point, again to check clearances. The engine then returned to Grosmont at the head of an afternoon service train. The noise from the chimney as the Q6 was opened up for last half mile of the climb through Newtondale brought smiles to our faces that gave us all face ache for days! On return to Grosmont and after this longer and faster period of running, a few of the bearings were found to have warmed up slightly, but the only real areas of slight concern were the cross heads. After examination it was decided that all they required was a bit more running in to allow the newly machined white metal a little more time to bed in.



*The Q6 bursts through the banner at Grosmont station on 6th September
(John Hunt)*

6th September was another big day for the Q6 as this was the day when the engine would officially go back into service following overhaul, with a special train organised for the press and invited guests. The special train ran to celebrate two things: firstly the re-entry into service following the

overhaul and secondly as a celebration of the 40th anniversary since the end of steam in the North East of England. Steam had officially finished on 9th September 1967, so the 6th September 2007 was as close to the official date as we could get as the NYMR were operating a Thomas event on the actual anniversary and it just seemed inappropriate to celebrate on this date with plastic face on the engine. The special train consisted of two teak coaches and only ran as far as Goathland; preceding the run there was a short speech by our Chairman giving thanks to all those that had helped during the overhaul, followed by a departure that broke through an anniversary banner. The engine carried three headboards; on the top lamp bracket the appropriate 'The North Eastern' board, in the middle of the smoke box a giant replica Silksworth blue star in recognition of the famous blue star special which had originally been hauled by our J27 65894 on the second to last day of steam on 8th September 1967, and the third headboard was carried on the bottom middle lamp bracket. It was a date board done in the style of the date board carried on the original blue star special, but this time the date read 1967-2007 to mark 40 years since the end of steam in the North East. The press loved all the blue star hype and the story of the occasion so much so we got a good 3-4 minutes coverage on the Yorkshire and North East Look North evening news, driver Martin Lloyd and fireman Alan Wilson even got speaking parts, and Chairman John Hunt looked very professional during his interview. Following this two coach special the Q6 went on to haul an afternoon service train to Pickering banked by A4 *Sir Nigel Gresley*.



On 6th September Richard Campbell (l.), Richard Pearson and John Graham (r.) enjoy a cup of tea in the company of NYMR PLC Chairman Neil Clarke (l.) and NYMR General Manager Philip Benham (r.)(John Hunt)



22nd September and a group of NELPG working members from Hopetown, who in their youth all worked for BR and fired on Q6 engines. They are Brian Howe of Consett, Derek Norris of West Hartlepool, Brian Swales of Darlington and Neville Barlow from West Auckland sheds. Memories Galore (Tom Snowball)



63395 departs from Goathland on 6th September (John Hunt)

The next big day for the Q6 was on Saturday 22nd September when it hauled another special train, this time for the NELPG volunteers that had put in so much effort and hard work during the long overhaul. The opportunity was taken on this train to give a number of volunteers a ride on the footplate; the smiling faces said it all, another day when everyone went home with face ache.

The Q6 then played a starring role in the NYMR's Autumn gala, running the first train of the first day double headed with the K4 *The Great Marquess*, other runs saw it double head with 53809 and the Super D 49395 as well as a few solo runs. On the last day of the gala the Q6 was seen on a freight train the first time in many years.

K1 NO. 62005

The K1 completed its Jacobite season on Friday 5th October, its 71st day in traffic! This must be a record for any preserved locomotive on the main line; if the positioning moves are added on, together with the NYMR's Whitby trains and the May Three Dales railtour, the total rises to a formidable 88.

Other than a broken engine spring suffered before Glenfinnan and which caused curtailment of that day's Jacobite, the K1 has proved very reliable with only routine maintenance required, together with two washouts and a number of water changes during the season. However, there was an unusual occurrence during the photographic charters when the steam brake failed to operate. Diligent work by the support crew diagnosed a small particle of dirt in the diaphragm, which was cured by the simple expedient of dismantling, cleaning and reassembly.



62005 and 45407 pause in the rain at Garelohead on 13th October to obtain the Garelohead – Helensburgh Upper RETB token (John Hunt)

The K1 returned safely to Carnforth with 45407 on Saturday 13th October and then moved from Carnforth to Grosmont on Monday 15th October. It was used with the K4 on Whitby trains during the LNER week at the end of October.

J72 No. 69023

The J72 boiler is currently in store outside our Hopetown workshop waiting a decision on who will repair it and where. During the summer we sent out tender documents to several well know boiler repair contractors asking them to quote for the repair; one of the contractors declined to quote as their workload meant they couldn't take on the J72 in the foreseeable future. The other contractors have made site visits to examine the boiler and we are now awaiting the quotes. We hope to be in a position to make a decision on the boiler once we have all the quotes in which should be before the end of October. We hope the boiler will be finished within 6-9 months but this obviously depends on the contractor.

The slide bars have now been fitted, in preparation for their alignment to be checked by Richard Campbell. Because the cylinder block was removed during the overhaul the position of the sidebars has changed slightly and the fitted bolts that fasten the sidebar to the frame stretcher will have to be renewed to correct a slight misalignment.

The pistons have been to Great North Steam in Darlington to have the ring grooves skimmed; while they were carrying this out it was discovered that one of the pistons was bent on the rod and after a few checks this was diagnosed as a bent piston rod. It would have been impossible to safely machine the piston in this state so it was decided to split the piston from the rod. This has been done and the rod is currently on Teesside with a company that specializes in straightening armature shafts.

Reassembly work is progressing on many other fronts on the locomotive with current work areas being the rear sands, drain cocks, blast pipe, cab doors and the rear and front buffer beams

A2 No. 60532 Blue Peter

The A2 is still on display at Barrow Hill roundhouse and will be one of the stars at the LNER gala weekend of 9th – 11th November.

The more important news is outlined in the Editorial. It is hoped that the A2 will be moved from Barrow Hill to a restoration base in the not too distant future.

WORKING PARTIES

The regular Monday and Thursday evenings continue at Hopetown on the J72 and the J27 as well, when time and labour allow. If you want to join them and help on the J72 and J27 at Darlington, day or night, please contact **Fred Ramshaw on 01325 377306** or **Terry Newman on 01642 654675**. Please try to turn up if you can. The phone number for **Hopetown Carriage Works** is **01325 382155**. However, there may also be work on the Q6, at Grosmont, and to this end there can be mid-week and weekend working parties – if you can help at Grosmont please contact **Richard Pearson on 01642 659461 (or 07779 366796)** or **Fred Ramshaw on 01325 377306**.

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THE JACOBITE

As reported elsewhere the Jacobite season ended on Friday 12th October. By all accounts it has been a resounding success, especially the seven days a week running in July and August, with the Saturday trains particularly well filled. On many days the seven-coach train was full to capacity. The K1 performed most competently throughout the season and sincere thanks to all those who made up the support crews to ensure that this happened. As for 2008, watch this space...!



Another view of the K1 heading the Jacobite on 1st October, this time in a superb setting alongside Loch Eilt (Ed Hurst)

K1 RAILTOUR – ‘THE TEES-DON EXPRESS’

In view of the non-availability of 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* a planned railtour from Middlesbrough to the open day at Barrow Hill is now to be double headed by the K1 and the K4. Both locomotives were due to appear at the event but were travelling light engine and support coaches. Now they are making the same move, but with a train in tow. The date is Friday 9th November (it should have been run on the Saturday but engineering works in the Barrow Hill area preclude this).

No – you aren’t dreaming – Past Time Rail really IS going to double-head LNER ‘Moguls’ No.61994 *The Great Marquess* and K1 No.62005 together on a main line railtour, in their distinctive BR livery, for the first time ever! If you only travel on one steam charter train this year, this unique one-off trip to the fabulous LNER Steam Weekend at Barrow Hill Roundhouse, has to be THE one.

The train starts from Eaglescliffe and picks up at York – and anyone who has heard or seen either of these pedigree 2-6-0s at work individually on the West Highland line this summer, will know that it just doesn’t get any more gutsy or red-blooded than this! Not since 1994 when they double-headed ‘The West Highland Line Centenary’ train has this ‘dream combination’ roared together – and it could be a long time before it happens again. Tickets are expected to be snapped up very quickly.

Barrow Hill’s 2007 Gala event will be a veritable powerhouse of LNER steam – bringing together for the first time in preservation the two surviving B1s, Nos.61264 and 61306 *Mayflower*, B12 No.61572, A4 No.60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. V2 No. 4771 *Green Arrow*, A2 No.60532 *Blue Peter*, J21 No.65033, D11 No.62660 *Butler-Henderson*, plus the K4 and K1 – this really isn’t an event to miss. So that Gala visitors can enjoy the K4 and K1 too, we’ll be leaving them at Barrow Hill for the weekend– but we’ll take you home again via the East Coast Main Line. If you want to be able to say in the years ahead ‘*Ah yes – I was there*’, then dally no further – secure your seats now by calling us on 01543 411971.

Timings are Eaglescliffe dep. 08.48, arr. 18.50; York dep. 09.57, arr. 18.01; Barrow Hill arr. 13.10, dep. 16.30. Fares are Adult Standard Class £68, Junior £34; Adult First Class £98, and Junior £49. Bookings and further details from **Past-Time Rail Ltd. P.O. Box 49691 London N8 7YS**, telephone: 01543 411971, or on their web-site www.past-timerail.co.uk.

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS by Colin Smith

New members joining us since the last issue are :-

Mr. M. Joyce from Hartlepool
Mr. D. Robinson from Bradford
Mr. S. Robinson from Darlington
Mr. P. Smith from Darlington
Mr. O. Sutherland from London and
Mr. A. Whitehouse from Holmfirth.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC CHARTER

On Friday 9th November it was planned to use the Q6 on a freight train between Grosmont and Pickering purely for the benefit of NELPG members. Because of the K1 railtour on this date, the charter has been brought forward to Wednesday 7th November. The Q6 will run facing north (for the first time) hauling the freight train in the morning and again in the afternoon between Levisham and Goathland. The cost to NELPG members is £25 per person and the number of participants is limited to 20. Any member who is interested in this charter should contact John Hunt as soon as possible.

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MEMBERS' DINING SPECIAL

This has always proved to be very popular but this year the 109 seats were snapped up in just three days, an unprecedented response. Unfortunately it was not possible to increase the capacity of the train.

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OLD RAILWAY BOOKS,VIDEOS, ETC by Derek Norris

This is an appeal to anyone that may have old books or videos of railway subjects that they no longer use to donate them to us. We have a small stall at Hopetown on our monthly open days where we try to sell items to help in the J27 appeal. Please send items to Hopetown. Many thanks in anticipation!

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J27 APPEAL AND FUTURE FUNDRAISING by Dave Pennock

Operating behind the scenes and appointed by the main Board is a fundraising sub-committee comprising Dave Pennock, John Marsland, Richard Pearson and Colin Hatton. The task of understanding how charities can think of new areas for fundraising is now beginning to bear a little fruit. Key recommendations studied include:

- Continue members J27 locomotive appeal. The success to date is a tremendous boost to the prospect of returning the J27 to steam as soon as possible following the J72 completion.
- Liaise with the Heritage Lottery Fund regarding 3rd grant application.
- Improve the NELPG website to include:
 - How others may help and give to the NELPG
 - Classify areas for giving but not limited to: donations, subscriptions, charities aid foundation, legacies, payroll giving.
 - Update regularly in relation to needs, funds raised and news of funds will be utilised.
- Apply to trusts and foundations for funding support consistent with their grant award objectives.

J27 Locomotive Appeal

To-date the projected total is heading towards £41,000 from subscriptions donations and now the sale of the John Wigston's J27 print. Further applications for a monthly subscription or direct donation continue to be welcomed and if received by 31st December 2007 will entitle the subscriber to be included the 2008 AGM Prize Draws. The eligibility for inclusion in up

to three tiered draws is dependent upon the amount subscribed. The proposed 2008 prizes are to be similar to those offered in 2007. An application form can either be printed from the Group's web site or via post from the treasurer.

All prizewinners of the 2007 draw have now been distributed. Those who are earmarked for a NYMR footplate ride await the confirmation of a specific date to travel. The prizewinners for the 2007 draw were:

Draw 1: Subscribers donating a minimum of £10 / month or £240.

Steam Railway Magazine subscription: P A Bates, G Fairbairn

Wensleydale Railway Family Ticket: H K Hedley

NYMR tickets: R Jackson, J C Butler, J M Hall,

NE Focus Exhibition Booklet: B V Limb, J Hunt, P J Crossland, P Proud, A M Skidmore, S N Pearson, J A Dalton, R A Clark, D I Sargeant, K R Mason, C Smith, D Heath, C J Davidson.

Draw 2 Subscribers donating a minimum of £15 / month or £500.

West Coast Railway Jacobite tickets: R S Yole.

NRM Tour + Yorkshire wheel; P Proud, C R Brookes.

Bachman J39 model: J A Patmore.

Steam Railway LO Pro Camera bag: G A Fairbairn, B Orange, N Brown, D Heath, P Elsdon, M Bray.

Steam Railway Video: R A Pearson, C J Lawson, A Campbell, J D Adcock, M Hoyle.

Draw 3 Subscribers donating a minimum of £20 / month or £1000.

NRM Shildon Footplate experience: D Heath, A Campbell.

NYMR Footplate ride: K R Mason, N A Swindle.

Teesside Airport Flight: O D W Smith.

Weardale Railway Cab Ride: A Wilson, D Pennock.

65994 Smokebox Number plate: E R Nott.

Bowes Railway footplate day: C Manuel, M Bray.

Beamish Museum family ticket: P Stoddart, P Proud.

We are naturally grateful to the organisations mentioned above for their generosity in providing the prizes at no cost to the NELPG.

Fundraising initiatives

Heritage lottery Fund

During September the J72 Heritage Lottery Fund Grants officer Emily Greenaway was given a conducted tour of progress on 69023 by Fred Ramshaw and Dave Pennock.

Topics discussed included the work on the cylinders, motion and paintwork. The boiler was viewed and the pending refurbishment contract noted. A good response was given to the viewing area relating to our display, the visitors book and monthly opening of the workshops.

Of interest was the age range we attract (Fred indicated we do have some younger lads coming along and we are always wishing to encourage new starters, we even have had one lady so far). The transference of mechanical skills was also noted.

Emily was pleased to see Q6 launched and recognised our success. In terms of our long term funding needs we were able to note the hiring of our locomotives does not cover the 10-year restoration costs. We have a need for external funding of between £25 - £30k per annum. The HLF are aware of our J27 appeal and we were encouraged to consider a third application in 2008.

Foundations and Trust Grants

John Marsland has identified five foundations which we intend to approach for funding support in the near future. Additionally we are applying to The Gannett Foundation, which is associated with the parent company of the Northern Echo group of papers. It is our first foray into this territory and we hope such future applications will give us an income of approximately £5,000 per year.

Publicity

A great amount of effort of late has been invested in press and magazine publicity of the Group particularly by Richard Pearson and Bryan Orange. Firstly in Steam Railway magazine the J27 was featured in the 40th Anniversary of the ending of North East steam.

Secondly the Q6 launch which attracted BBC Look North, the railway press and local newspapers. The fundraising spin off is often difficult to quantify but it does raise the Group's profile amongst museums and local organisations that we have a fantastic heritage story to tell.

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Q6 BOILER HISTORY by Chris Cubitt

The boiler on the Q6 is No.4061, which was completed on 19th May 1950. It was originally fitted to 63450 of Neville Hill shed, later transferred to Selby on 27th January 1952. At the end of that year, on 20th December, the boiler was renumbered 24251.

As part of the traditional way of interchanging boilers as locomotives went through the works for overhaul, this boiler then went onto 63441 of Blaydon shed on 14th May 1954, then 63398 of West Auckland on 4th January 1963. 63398 was later transferred to Thornaby on 2nd February 1964, then just four months later, on 21st June, to Tyne Dock. Finally, boiler 24251 was fitted to 63395 when it was the last Q6 to be outshopped from North Road Works at Darlington on 30th September 1965.



The way it used to be! 63395 takes a solitary brake van up Seaton bank in August 1967.

Earlier 63395 had received a new boiler, No.24332, on 8th March 1961 but this was transferred to 63398 on 12th August 1963. Both 63398 and this boiler were scrapped at W. Willoughby of Choppington, Northumberland in November 1965, a fate that was fortunately spared 63395 and 24251.

LETTERS

Dear Mr. Hunt,

BLUE PETER

I write to express my support for and hope that whatever negotiations are ongoing over the A2 there is a prospect of a further period in steam. *Blue Peter* fully repaid my modest financial input last time round and I would certainly subscribe again.

A recent mention in a National railway magazine prompted me to check that I was on the outing of 13th September 1997. I did not need a stopwatch on that day to savour the experience of ascending to Shap summit as if the incline did not exist. Truly an awesome performance that I feel privileged to have witnessed.

Many thanks to all those who keep NELPG at the forefront of excellence.

Yours sincerely,

G. Stevenson,
Stamford.

(Ed. – this letter was received some months ago but it seemed appropriate to publish it now since in all probability it echoes the sentiments of many NELPG members and steam enthusiasts in general)



A taste of things to come? 60532 Blue Peter at Beckhole (John Hunt)

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The winter season of meetings got off to a good start on Friday 12th September with Alastair McClean giving a fascinating talk on the last main line steam in the World. Forthcoming meetings are:-

Friday 9th November 2007

THE NORTHERN BELLE by Sam Woods

Friday 14th December 2007

LNER ROUTES NORTH OF THE BORDER IN THE 1950S AND '60S by Stuart Sellar. Stills and movie footage of the ECML and Waverley routes.

Meetings are held at the Railway Athletic Club, Brinkburn Road, Darlington, commencing at 7.30 pm. Further details appear on the NELPG web site.

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COVER PICTURES

Front: 62006 crosses the causeway at the west end of Loch Eilt with the Jacobite on 1st October.

Back (top:): The K1 as 62011 (62005 actually carries the boiler off 62011) heads the photographic charter between the top tunnels on Beasdale bank on 29th September.

Back (bottom): 62005 with the Jacobite in the classic location of Glenfinnan viaduct on 1st October (all Dick Manton)



First time round - 60532 Blue Peter freshly outshopped at ICI Wilton in December 1991 (John Hunt)

