

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



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EDITORIAL

There is a very real possibility that on Friday 7th May, the day of the annual general meeting, three of our locomotives – the J72, K1 and Q6 will all be in steam. The latter will hopefully be seeing service on the NYMR but the other two will be at Locomotion, Shildon, the venue of the AGM. It signals the start of an excellent working relationship with the National Railway Museum at Shildon, with the J72 the resident working steam locomotive for the main summer period.

Significantly, too, all three locomotives have benefitted from a substantial volunteer input which has really stretched NELPG resources this winter. Whilst it is quite right that we should be proud of this achievement, the first time that three NELPG locomotives have been in working order since 2002, we do ask a lot of our volunteers and there is a limit to what they can realistically accomplish.

No sooner than we reflect on the return to steam of the J72, we expect a support crew of a least four volunteers to sustain the K1 at Fort William for no less than 16 weeks this season, no mean requirement.

The J72 may well hold the key to attracting new, younger volunteers to the Group. One of the essential elements of the granting of HLF assistance was educational. What better place to fulfil this aim than Locomotion. With steaming days and footplate experience, the Group will be providing explainers for the J72. Let us hope that some of those who choose to experience 69023 and listen to them, might come along to Hopetown or Grosmont and get some real hands-on experience of steam locomotives.

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The North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group is



LOCOMOTIVE REPORT by Richard Pearson, Martin Lloyd, Paul Hutchinson and Neal Woods

J27 NO. 65894

With our attention at Hopetown turned towards the J72 very little has been done on the J27 in the last few months; the only job to report is the removal of the mechanical lubricators. News on the new cylinder block is that the pattern shop has taken delivery of the wood and work has started on the new pattern.



*The J27 frames stand in Hopetown works awaiting overhaul on 7th February
(Colin Smith)*

When the J72 leaves Hopetown in April, the J27's tender will move in to the workshop, and we will then start on the cleaning and dismantling of the tender. We will, however, be limited in the amount of mechanical work we can do as we need to keep the tender mobile to allow it to be moved again to give access for when the wheel sets return and new cylinder block arrives in the summer.

Over in Northern Ireland, work on the wheel sets is progressing, although we now have a problem with the LH leading tyre. This is the same wheelset that required a new axle during the last overhaul in 1995 when the wheels were

pressed off the old axle and onto the new axle after the new tyres had been fitted. This work would normally have been done before fitting new tyres so giving the opportunity to machine the new tyres to run true to the axle centres. Unfortunately the LH tyre doesn't run true to the axle centre. The wheelset is still waiting our final inspection but with a wheel wobble of over $\frac{1}{8}$ " it will be impossible to re-machine a profile on the tyre without machining it and the other 5 driving wheel tyres down to almost the scrap size. Therefore we might have to replace this tyre with a new one, and then machine it to the same size as the others and re-profile.

Q6 NO.63395

Unfortunately, because of pressure elsewhere to get the K1's winter maintenance finished in time and get the J72 ready for its visit to Locomotion, the progress on the Q6 has not been as good as had been hoped. This is notwithstanding the herculean efforts of Maurice Johnson, often working on his own, but increasingly assisted by Chris Williams.



The two Q6 eccentric rods, showing the two halves of the eccentric straps on 9th March (John Hunt)

So much so, that the 'bottom end' overhaul is making good progress. Eventual detailed examination of the slide bars revealed that the top bars were satisfactory but that both bottom bars needed replacement. Both new bars have now been fitted and they just await final adjustment once the newly white metallised slide bar slippers have been machined and fitted.

The side rods have had the brasses remetalled, machined and pressed back into the rods; these in turn have now been refitted. On the connecting rods, the big end brasses have been remetalled and await machining, whilst the little end brasses are being renewed; the new material has been bought but still awaits machining.

The eccentric straps are being remetalled and will be refitted following machining. A return to traffic is expected by the end of April.

K1 NO. 62005

The work at Carnforth has gradually intensified as the movement to Shildon comes ever closer. Mid week and weekend working parties have become ever more regular, especially after the snows thankfully disappeared.



*Steve Hyman refits the front safety valve on the K1 at Carnforth on 10th March
(Colin Smith)*

The reassembly of the engine has generally gone quite well although we did have a slow period where nothing seemed to go right at the end of February and the beginning of March. We therefore had to put a few extra working parties in but we are now back on track.

The list of work carried out is comprehensive; the major job was the refitting of the driving and tender wheels on 5th and 11th February respectively. West Coast Railways has been very supportive and have examined the firebox tube ends and beaded them over where necessary, refurbished four of the boiler top handhole doors, replaced the exhaust drain in the smokebox, fitted the new smokebox door, replaced the bottom protector plate to the firehole door and replaced loose rivets in the frame stretcher adjacent to the ashpan.

Tasks completed by the Group's volunteers include the following:-

- Crosshead shimmed
- Injectors overhauled
- Regulator examined and overhauled
- Mechanical lubricator linkage examined and overhauled
- Steam brake ratchet and pawl replaced
- Tender axlebox brasses examined and retalled as required
- New steam sands valve and cap manufactured
- Cab seats repaired
- Side to side clearances on big end brasses improved
- Drain cocks examined and overhauled
- Safety valves given annual examination
- Snifting valve lapped in to prevent leaking by
- Cylinder relief valves cleaned and decarboned
- Tender brake blocks replaced
- Graduable steam brake main valve turned and lapped in
- Annual TPWS and OTMR maintenance
- NRN radio serviced and handset replaced

The first NELPG steam test was planned for Saturday 27th March and in view of the amount of work we have done it is expected there will be quite a bit of snagging to deal with afterwards, including the building of the brick arch planned for 3rd April. Hopefully the outstanding work can be completed before the insurance steam test planned for 15th April. We also have to weigh the engine and tender before leaving for Shildon; the movement is pencilled in for 23rd April. The K1 will go into the museum at Shildon for display the day after arrival.

J72 No. 69023

The J72 is now in the final stages of the overhaul and has steamed on four occasions at Hopetown including passing its insurance company steam test on 18th March. On 20th March the engine made its first public appearance in steam for 14 years when it gave footplate rides during the monthly Hopetown open day.



The J72 runs up and down the Hopetown running line on a rather damp 20th March (Richard Pearson)

The J72 first steamed at Hopetown on 7th February this being the initial static steam test to test the boiler and pipe joints and to set the safety valves. The engine then steamed a few weeks later on 26th February when it spent the afternoon under test moving up and down the Hopetown running line. Following this first running session we were able to draw up a list of things that needed attention of which the main problems were a blowing regulator and cylinder cocks that didn't fully close, all of which have now been repaired. Following running at the open day, we again have a list of jobs but now the list is getting smaller and only includes things like re-routeing and tidying up of pipe work and adjustments, rather than repairs.



*Ian Matthews painting the J72's left hand side tank on 6th February
(Richard Pearson)*

The biggest job still outstanding is the painting, the plan being to have the engine in full gloss before it leaves Hopetown for a five month stay at Locomotion, The National Railway Museum in Shildon. Final paintwork, completion of the lining, fitting of transfers, numbers and varnishing will then be done in the dry and warmth of the museum at Shildon. We have had an unfortunate set back with the painting; Ian Mathews has been putting in hours and hours of hard work but unfortunately, due to very low overnight temperatures, we had a reaction between the first and second coats of gloss on the LH tank. This meant that Ian had to start again by sanding back through these two coats, back to the undercoat but, hopefully, by the time you read this it will be back in gloss again.

The J72's move to Shildon is been planned for the week after Easter, hopefully before 9th April. Once at Shildon a number of days trial running will take place before the engine is cleaned down for the final painting. Although due to the museum's busy schedule and the arrival of the K1 and A1 *Tornado* it might not be possible to find the space or time to fully complete the painting until mid May.

The J72's first public steaming at Shildon will be at the museum's 'North East Giants of Steam' event planned for 1st, 2nd and 3rd May; full details of this event can be found on the NRM and NELPG websites. Over the bank holiday weekend the J72 will be on display, in steam, with the K1, A1 *Tornado*, V2 *Green Arrow* and Furness 20. The J72 and Furness 20 will both operate and share the steam service on the museum's running line, and entrance to this event is free. There will also be an early morning photo session on Sunday 2nd May without the crowds in the way, for photographers to see the engines being prepared. Engines will be moved where possible to take advantage of the early morning light and photographers will be allowed access to the sidings to photograph from positions not normally available. This is a ticket only event and tickets are only £5, so if you are interested in attending please contact Pam Porter, the museum's events officer, on 01388 771445 or via email at pam.porter@nrm.org.uk; tickets are on sale now and numbers are limited, so don't delay.

From May until early August the J72 will be used as the museum operating locomotive and it will work the museum's steam passenger service on 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 30th and 31st May, 5th and 6th June, 3rd, 4th and 25th July, and 7th and 8th August. These dates may be subject to change, as the museum reserves the right to change the programme, so if you are travelling a long distance you can ring ahead and check by calling the museum on 01388 777999.

In addition to working the museum's steam service, the J72 will also be in steam on Fathers Day, Sunday 20th June when the museum is offering people the chance to drive a steam locomotive. Did you ever dream of becoming an engine driver or are you just looking for a Fathers Day gift with a difference, here's your chance? Maybe you've already considered going on one of the driver experience courses offered by most preserved railways but always thought at several hundred pounds, they are just too expensive. Well here's your chance to have a go on one of the Group's locomotives for a fraction of what other railways' charge. For only £50 you can enjoy a half hour, one to one session on the J72, where you will receive instruction and be able to drive and fire the locomotive over the museum running line. Places are limited and certain conditions will apply, and reservations are now being taken on a first come first served basis. If you would like more information on this event or to make a reservation please call the museum on 01388 771439. By taking part in this event you are also supporting NELPG as a large proportion of the money raised goes back into Group funds.

We are now talking to several other railways that are interested in hiring the J72 for events in the autumn, and we also have two railways making enquires about booking the engine for events in 2011.

A2 No. 60532 Blue Peter

The A2 remains on display at Barrow Hill. There is no news to report on the future of the locomotive.

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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 will 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**.

There will also be regular working parties at Carnforth to progress the winter repairs on the K1. **Martin Lloyd** has kindly agreed to co-ordinate working parties and he can be contacted on **01642 316258, 07970 851895** or Email nunlloyd@aol.com

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THE BLYTH SPIRIT RAILTOUR

Railtours, Tunnels and Sunderland

The planning and routing of steam railtours often poses constraints on the planners and operators. Train pathing on main lines, the constraints from bridge and platform clearances and various weight restrictions all seem part of the 21st century railway which have to be negotiated to allow 19th century steam

locomotives to operate successfully. Permission to run steam via Sunderland has proved no exception and noted below are the ups and downs of trying to open up the Durham Coast route in 2010.

The Group's railtour in 2008, as a precaution, was diverted from its proposed run through Sunderland as the status of the 'Metro' tramway type insulation on the approaches to Sunderland station from the Wear Bridge was thought to be susceptible to heat and hence concerns expressed regarding the passage of steam locomotives under the wires.

The overhead electrification system, which also suffered from loose tunnel roof fixing bolts was however replaced in 2008 with a new contact beam arrangement. This change replaced the 'at risk' insulators and hopefully opened the possibility of running steam again through the tunnel.

The application for the 2010 railtour in December 2009 therefore included for a request to run through Sunderland and a run down the Durham Coast with the K1 on the basis that this initial problem had now been removed.

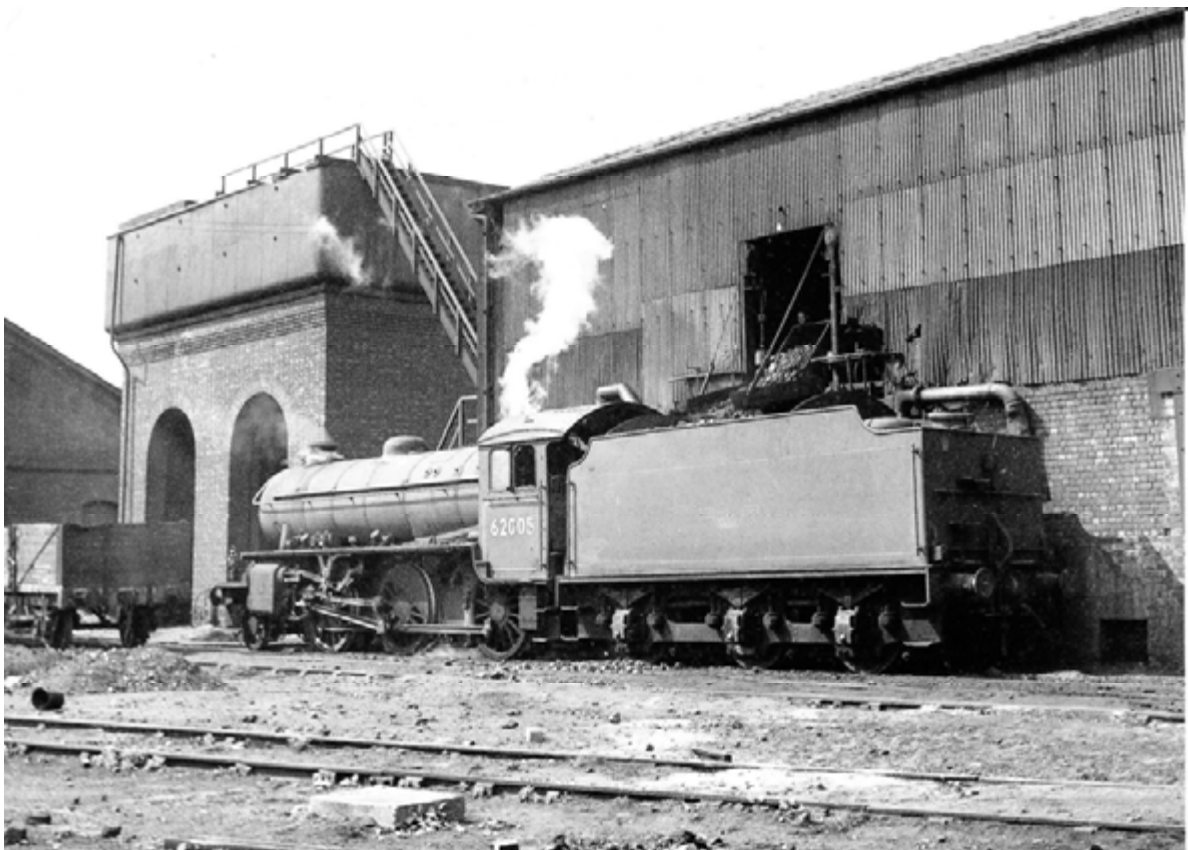
Electrically however the clearances from trains to the 1500V dc overhead contact wire are constrained by the space within the tunnel and the approval to run steam locomotives under the new wires was not necessarily guaranteed. Given the K1 is smaller than the maximum allowed vertical gauging height for locomotives, we presented a case to West Coast Railways to demonstrate 62005 ought not to pose a risk whilst running through the tunnel. Unfortunately Network Rail have now noted that Sunderland station is classified as an underground station with associated fire and evacuation alarms and they have declined permission for the K1 to run through Sunderland. Maybe in 2011 we could consider steam to Sunderland South Dock via Hartlepool to have another go at seeing the Durham Coast behind steam once more. Watch this space!

We therefore hoped that the varied route subsequently announced for the K1 would not diminish this year's route enjoyment. The proposal was for the train, diesel hauled, to pick up (and set down) passengers at Carnforth (pu 05.30 & sd 21.40), Skipton (06.30 & 20.10), Leeds (07.15 & 19.25), York (07.45 & 18.55), Eaglescliffe (08.45 & 17.37) and Middlesbrough (09.25 & 16.38). Here the K1 will be attached for the steam section of over 200 miles, with the onward run via Stockton, Stillington and Ferryhill, before a quick dash up the East Coast Main Line to Tyne Yard, where the locomotive will take water. The route will then take the train through Newcastle and up the ECML to Benton Junction where it will branch off onto the Blyth and Tyne line to Holywell, Newsham, Bedlington, and North Blyth. Here it was planned that the train would reverse, the diesel hauling the train to Ashington via Freemans, Winning, and Marcheys

House Junctions and, subject to confirmation, it was also hoped to continue as far as Lynemouth.

However, the section of line from the site of Woodhorn Colliery into Lynemouth is not part of Network Rail infrastructure and required the permission of owners Rio Tinto Alcan. Although a well argued case was put forward, RTA was unable to agree to our proposal.

However, it seemed that not all was lost because there was provision in the Network Rail Section Appendix to permit the use of the down line bi-directionally if Lynemouth signal box was shut i.e. we could have gone as far as the NR/RTA boundary, then returned to Ashington, where we could regain the up line. Unfortunately, the signal box at Ashington has just been closed and the associated signalling removed, whilst at the same time the bi-directional use of the down line has been rescinded. This means that the train can no longer go to Ashington or Lynemouth.



62005 takes coal at North Blyth shed in the summer of 1966 (John Hunt)

Instead, the train will reverse from North Blyth via Winning and West Sleekburn, through Bedlington to Newsham. Here the train will reverse again, the K1 leading, returning through Bedlington and taking the line to Morpeth. Here passengers can alight as there will hopefully be a break of around 60

minutes while the K1 takes water at Hepscoth. From Morpeth the K1 heads down the ECML to Newcastle and Darlington before turning left to Eaglescliffe and back to Stockton, where it will reverse for the final time, before reaching Middlesbrough. Here the diesel will be detached to make its own way to York, while the train departs Middlesbrough behind the K1 via Tees Yard where water will again be taken. From here there is a stop to set down passengers at Eaglescliffe, then a run to Northallerton and York. Here the diesel will be re-attached for the return to Leeds, Skipton and Carnforth.

The times shown are those that have been requested; final times and the route are subject to confirmation

The train will comprise standard class open coaches, with a buffet car selling light refreshments. There will also be an on-board raffle in aid of the NELPG's J27 restoration appeal.

Tickets cost £60. Bookings can be made by using the enclosed form or via the booking form on the NELPG website <http://nelpg.org.uk/> Telephone enquiries can be made on 0191 257 0980 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 09.30 and 20.30 ONLY.

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FUNDRAISING REPORT by Dave Pennock

With great disappointment we heard from the Heritage Lottery Fund that our application for a £50,000 Heritage Grant for the J27 has not been successful. The response letter from the HLF is attached and it principally notes budgetary reasons and limited learning opportunities within the project as key factors in the refusal.

In many ways we have to reflect that to date the HLF has supported the Group by £100,000 for the Q6 and J72 locomotives. What is difficult to digest in current climbs is that for a project valued at some £250,000 with such a solid volunteer base and track record has been classified as a low priority for funding. The ability for locomotive restoration projects to meet HLF criteria has become particularly difficult. As our work is principally the capital restoration of

locomotives for the enjoyment of others with essentially a 5 year restoration period with 10 years of operations.

The HLF award criterion assesses three key areas conservation, access and learning. For conservation we tick all the boxes. For access this is judged for the grant period only and hence the opening of Hopetown to the public helped in the J72 award. The significant change now applying is that of learning for which for our form of heritage work is not conducive to 'classroom' and involvement of the wider public. NELPG is not for example a formal museum to which we can open and easily provide public visitor facilities or necessarily have the spare resources to engage with for example, schools and colleges.

Within the bid we note the wider contribution to tourist railways and the local economies but the award scoring only assesses the restoration period and omits to consider the wider audience when the locomotive operates.

In conclusion we have to reflect on the reality now applying and reinvigorate our funding efforts. All is not lost we will continue to apply to trusts. A £20,000 application has been made to a potential source of funds and we of course remain appreciative of the considerable support to date.

The next meeting of the Fundraising Committee is in March and we expect to relaunch the J27 Appeal for a final push by the AGM in May.

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LOCOMOTION WELCOMES NELPG by Pam Porter

Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon is looking forward to welcoming two NELPG locomotives to the museum site. The J72 class locomotive 69023 will be the museum's operating locomotive in residence from May to August 2010, and will see regular use on the museum's $\frac{2}{3}$ mile running line over the summer months.

George Muirhead, Museum Manager at Locomotion said: *"We're delighted to have a locally built and locally restored steam engine running at the museum this summer. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the railway heritage of our region, and we hope that many people will come to see the engine and ride behind it on our steam train."*

What's more, museum visitors will also have the chance to drive the locomotive for themselves! For just £50, visitors will be able to enjoy a 'one to one' 30 minute session learning to drive the J72. Sessions – which must be pre-booked – are available on Sunday 20th June, and will make the ideal Father's Day gift!

The K1 62005 will also be visiting Locomotion, participating in a fabulous 'North Eastern Giants of Steam' gala event alongside another Peppercorn-designed locomotive – A1 Pacific No.60163 *Tornado*.

The gala event will take place over the Bank Holiday weekend of Saturday 1st May, Sunday 2nd May and Monday 3rd May. Visitors will have the chance to access the footplates of the K1 and A1 in light steam. What's more, the passenger steam train service will be provided by the J72 and Furness Railway No. 20, the oldest working standard gauge steam locomotive in the UK.

Railway and photography enthusiasts will have the chance to see all of these fabulous locomotives being prepared for the day ahead and in light steam at an early-bird photography session on Sunday 2nd May. Admission to this session, which starts at 7.30 am, is by pre-booked ticket only, and numbers are limited. Tickets are on sale now, priced £5.

Locomotion celebrates the region's railway heritage, and showcases around 70 heritage vehicles from the National Collection, including the Deltic prototype, the APT-E, and the iconic LNER V2 locomotive *Green Arrow*.



Goods train at Shildon 25-26 June 2005 (Anthony Coulls)

The museum has welcomed other NELPG locomotives in the past, including J27 class 65894 – and is looking forward to seeing NELPG friends old and new over the coming months.

For more information on events at Locomotion or to book tickets for the steam engine driving or photo shoot sessions, please call the museum on 01388 771439 or email locomotion@nrm.org.uk

(Ed - Pam Porter is the Events Officer at Locomotion - The National Railway Museum at Shildon)

Help required

The museum at Locomotion is hosting several school party visits during the K1 and A1's stay; as part of this the K1's footplate will be open to visitors for a few hours each day. For this we are required to provide two footplate explainers; the engine won't be in steam so you don't need any qualifications, just a bit of patience and be happy to talk to the footplate visitors.

During the May Bank Holiday Shildon Steaming Event the K1 will be in light steam outside the museum lined up alongside *Tornado* and *Green Arrow*. There will be a set of steps next to the locomotive for the public to access the footplate and we are required to provide two people to man the footplate, talk to visitors and look after the locomotive. Ideally we will have four people who can work in shifts to cover the locomotive, giving others the chance of a break and a look round the other exhibits.

If you can help in either respect please contact Richard Pearson on 07779 366796.

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ARCHIVE CORNER by Chris Lawson

Contributions

Since the last issue of NELPG News, archive contributions have largely concentrated on press cuttings. These have included one received anonymously about the P3 at ICI Wilton from the Northern Echo of 19 October 1971; a

number from Alan Grange on railway interests, one being a report of the Three Dales Railtour from the Northern Daily Mail of 22 May 1967, and another about the preservation of the J27 and Q6 from the same paper in January 1969; and a collectors booklet published by the Northern Echo in 1975 to commemorate the Stockton and Darlington 150th Anniversary from David Warren, which also includes pictures from his own collection. Bert Wraith has provided correspondence he received from NELPG (embarrassingly signed by your archivist in his previous role as NELPG Secretary!) on behalf of Newcastle University Railway Society about the draft NYMR Locomotive Hire Agreement in 1972, along with a copy of the programme for the Symphony in Steam film show at the Chingford Odeon on 9 December 1967

Many thanks to all for their contributions, which are very much appreciated. As usual though, if you have any items, no matter how large or small, related to the Group (and particularly of its early days) hidden away in your loft, cupboard or garage then please go and dig them out and let me know – but please give me a ring or drop me an email before sending bulky material by post. I can be contacted at ‘Autumn’, Wych Hill, Woking, Surrey GU22 0EX, telephone 01483 769584, or by email at chrisjlawson@btinternet.com . I look forward to hearing from you.

40 years ago (from NELPG Newsletters)

Locomotives – vacuum fitting of the Q6 was completed, along with all the mechanical repairs, leaving ‘only’ a large amount of repainting to be done. The decision to move the locomotive to Grosmont for the June 1970 Open Weekend was announced. This followed an approach by the NYMR for a large vacuum fitted locomotive capable of hauling a three coach train over the 6.5 miles from Grosmont to Goathland Summit near Eller Beck. How things have changed! It was felt that the arrival of such a locomotive would provide a big boost for both the NYMR and NELPG, with the publicity that would result; the downside was that until the Light Railway Order was granted, only NYMR members would be able to travel on the trains. The J27 was still waiting to be moved onto the wheel drops at Thornaby.

Elsewhere – delivery was taken of the goods van and repairs and modifications carried out to take all our tools and spares. The various machines and lifting equipment the Group had purchased were dismantled at their various locations and transported by rail to Grosmont, with the cost of the crane hire and rail transport involved proving much more than the initial cost of the items themselves. In all cases, including the purchase of the goods van, the costs were met by the money generated by the Sales Committee, showing the important role played by the sales team in those early days.

And finally.....

Confirmation came from the Charity Commission that the Group was eligible for registration as a charity. The form of registration, along with a certified copy of the constitution were lodged with the Charity Commissioners.

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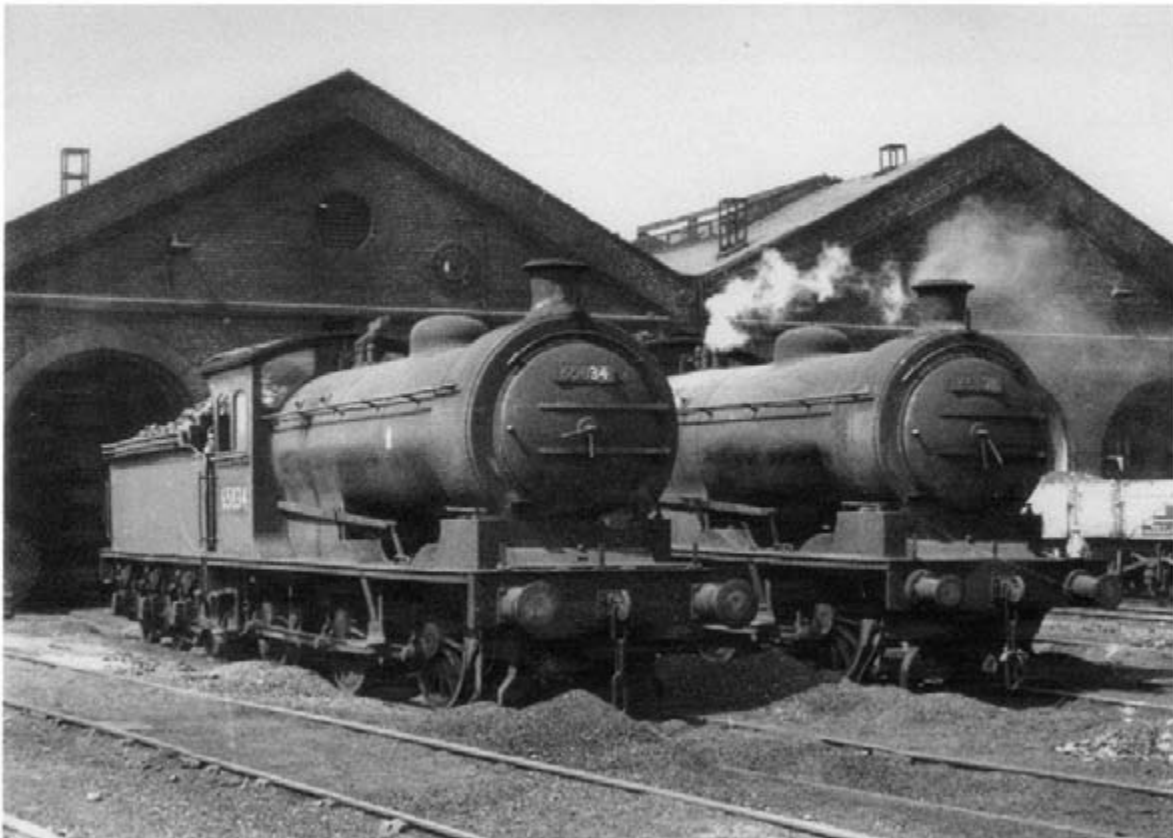
A NOSTALGIC JOURNEY ON THE BLYTH AND TYNE BRANCH by Ken Hedley

(Timed to coincide with the Blyth Spirit Railtour, this is an account of a rail journey on the B&T branch which Ken made in 2007 and was in the NTSR Newsletter. Ken hopes that it may be of some interest but laments that nowadays there is not very much left to see, as over the years the branch has lost most of its glory, with the demise of the collieries, power stations, steam sheds and Cambois diesel depot)

In the summer of 2007, I went on a train journey around the Blyth & Tyne branch organised by SENRUG, a local group which is trying to get the passenger train service restored on the branch after 45 years. This was the first time I'd travelled over the branch since 1975, 33 years ago, though having been through it twice on diverted main line passenger trains and during the hours of darkness in both directions. I joined the 13.54 fully booked 2 coach DMU train at Morpeth, the third train of three which were run and were all fully booked weeks beforehand, and left on time.

The journey to Newcastle via the ECML was uneventful as there have not been many changes and I have travelled from Cramlington to Newcastle frequently over the years. The train arrived at Newcastle, and after a wait of 15 minutes, while two main line trains departed for the north, we set off, retracing the main line to Benton Junction, where we diverted on to the B&T branch. The junction used to be a double line but has now been reduced to a single slip crossover, with the former double line reduced to single all the way to Newsham, some 6 miles away.

Over the section to what was Backworth Junction, the track has been completely changed so as not to conflict with the Tyneside Metro, which is running on the former B&T lines and over a flyover to avoid the new single line. My immediate impression was the amount of vegetation and trees that had been allowed to encroach each side, making it very difficult to identify many landmarks and locations. Another feature was the large number of houses that had been built on what was once wasteland so very little countryside could be seen. Between Backworth Junction and Newsham there were once 5 stations and 9 signal boxes with not a trace left of any, only the station house at Hartley remaining. The three level crossings at Holywell, Seghill and Hartley are all controlled by automatic barriers. All the colliery yards and waggonways, along with sidings, etc, have disappeared beneath grassy mounds and trees rendering the area featureless, save for the excellent views of the coastline between Hartley and Newsham.



J27s stand outside South Blyth shed in the early 1960s (NELPG Collection)

At Newsham, we came to the first signal box and controlled level crossing and where the line widens to double track. Once there were 3 signal boxes and a gate box here, Newsham North & South and the Isabella box (named after the nearby colliery) and Plessey Road gate box; now only the South box remains at this once busy location, with the North box, gate box and station demolished and houses built on what was the goods yard and sidings. The level crossing at

Plessey Road is controlled by CCTV, operated by the South box. It was here where the line diverged to Blyth and the former Isabella and Bates collieries, but this has also recently been lifted with only about ¼ mile remaining. There is no trace of the Isabella box, only the hand operated barriers, also on Plessey Road.

The impact of rationalisation is all so sad to see; however, what does remain is Railway Terrace, next to the line at Newsham South, which has many memories for me, as I lived there from 1935 till 1956 when the branch was in its heyday. Had it not been for the nostalgia, the journey so far could be classed as boring for anyone who had not been over the line in its heyday and knew how everything once was.

So far I had covered half the journey, from Newcastle to Newsham being approximately 13 miles, which so far had been a bit boring, most of the landmarks having disappeared beneath grassy hills which are flattened pit spoil heaps, and lineside foliage. Continuing on from Newsham, on the left we pass the site of New Delaval colliery, at which I once worked as a Bevin Boy for two years from 1947 to 1949, and which is now part of Blyth golf course. On the right was the Cowpen Isabella colliery, which is again just a grassy mound. The boundary between these two collieries was the railway line and the seams of coal beneath the line were never removed, as in pre nationalisation days they belonged to two different coal companies; New Delaval was Hartley Main and Isabella was the Cowpen Coal Co.

Just before we arrive at Bebside, on the left we pass the site of Bebside opencast exchange sidings and Horton Grange colliery (formerly Bebside colliery), of which no trace of either remains except for the colliery officials' houses opposite the Bebside Inn. There is no trace of Bebside station or signal box, but the station houses and a row of railway cottages still survive.

We now cross the Bedlington viaduct which was once a single track wooden structure, of which the foundations can still be seen, and arrive at Bedlington which has changed little over the years. The Furnace Way sidings, both North and South signal boxes and most of the station buildings and platform are still intact. The Bedlington A colliery, which was on the left, is now a housing estate. The line now divides, to the left to Morpeth and to the right to Ashington, which is the direction we take. On the left we pass the site of the brickworks of which no trace remains and carry on to West Sleekburn Junction, the scene of a serious collision between two mineral trains resulting in the deaths of a driver and fireman from my depot, in November 1958. Here the line branches off to Cambois, on which no passenger trains ever ran, and there were connections to two collieries, Bomarsund on the left and West Sleekburn on the

right; no traces of Bomarsund remain and West Sleekburn is the site of a waste recycling point.

We now carry on to Marcheys House Junction where a line branches off to the Cambois branch, thus forming a triangle with the line from West Sleekburn, and on over the North Seaton viaduct, which also replaced a wooden single line structure the foundations of which still remain. We now proceed past the former North Seaton station, no trace today, and on to Ashington where we terminated.

The line still carries on past Woodhorn Colliery Museum to the former Lynemouth colliery and Alcan smelter. The line off to the left at Ashington station, of which only the platforms remain, is the line to the former Ashington colliery but latterly only ran to Butterwell opencast coal site and is now disused and disconnected.

We now return to Bedlington and proceed to Morpeth; this line was once double track to Choppington but is now single all the way to Morpeth. We travel on to Choppington station (no trace) then past the site of Choppington and Netherton collieries (grassed over) then on to Hepscoth, where Ian Storey has his steam loco repair yard, and only the station house remains, then over the junction with the north connection to the main line and back to Morpeth. This part of the line from Newsham to Ashington is slightly less boring than from Newcastle to Newsham, but from Bedlington to Morpeth is featureless, a far cry from former times.

--ooOoo--

SECURING THE FUTURE OF OUR STEAM LOCOMOTIVES by Bryan Orange

As all you know, we are the proud owners of four steam locomotives, three of which are now in steam.

All of our locos are unique in that they are the only members of their class that exist. This position is attractive both to NELPG and other steam enthusiasts but is also financially onerous in terms of NELPG's stated objective of ensuring our locomotives are kept in full working order.

As each overhaul approaches, the cost of undertaking this key task becomes ever more expensive. All NELPG members are charged to ensure that we innovate to identify ways of supporting these ever rising costs in our determination to share our steam heritage with others long into the 21st century and beyond.

With your previous and current support, your committee has been successful so far in tapping new sources of financial sponsorship such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. However we can't guarantee that this source of income will continue to contribute towards our financial needs in the future as it does currently.

This sort of request is always a difficult one to phrase. Put simply, we would respectfully request that you remember NELPG when you are making your will. This kind of thoughtful and most appreciated donation will help to continue your NELPG steam locomotive contributions beyond your lifetime.

Many thanks for all of your past and current contributions to NELPG however large or small they are or have been. Your continued support in the future will ensure NELPG remains a highly respected and capable steam locomotive preservation group and that NELPG's locomotives continue to travel along the metals.

If you would like further advice then ask myself. A Legacy leaflet will be included in the next NELPG NEWS.

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS by Colin Smith

New members since the last newsletter are:-

Mr. J.D. Adcock from Potters Bar,
Mr. & Mrs. N. Bill from Sedgefield,
Mr. H.S. Clark from Bishop Auckland,
Mr. & Mrs. D.Clark from Morecambe,
Mr. P. Corduex from Stockton-on-Tees,
Mr. M. Fisher from Stamford Bridge
Mr. F. Heatley from Manchester,

Mr. P. Mason from Ashington,
Mr. N. & J. Pickard from Skipton ,
Mr. H.J. Sheldon from Coxhoe and
Mr. J.M. Simcox from Sheffield.

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PRECIS OF NELPG COMMITTEE MEETING HELD FEB 8th 2010 AT MIDDLESBOROUGH GOLF CLUB

9 committee members were in attendance

Congratulations expressed to all concerned on the steaming of the J72 for the first time in 14 years.

Committee agreed for monthly précis of minutes to be placed in Hopetown and Grosmont for viewing by working members, and published in NELPG News. Noted that the minutes of the meeting would need to be approved by Committee at the following meeting before the précis could be published.

Committee approved submission of NELPG endorsement of Aln Valley Railway planning proposal to Planning Authority

Committee approved proposal by Peter Shields to take over responsibility for supporting new members.

Safety meeting to be held one hour prior to next Committee meeting, to review risk assessments.

Headboard to be ordered for rail tour.

Forty seven windows in Deviation Shed replaced with hard, clear plastic, with the appearance of glass. Window frames to be painted early April following cleaning.

Committee agreed expenditure for path levelling, installation of drainage/electricity pipe, repair of guttering and excavation of 2 drainage channels in pit.

Hopetown, safety audit conducted over Christmas. No major problems noted.

Outstanding invoices to NYMR to be raise at loco owners meeting (w/e 20th/21st) and direct with NYMR.

Next finance sub-committee meeting 16th March at NRM. Prism bid submitted.

Members attended MLSO AGM. Decision taken to release water fund to WCRC for improvements to Appleby and Hellifield watering facilities.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10th March 2010.

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NELPG FUND RAISING by Bryan Orange

In 2007 in conjunction with the possibility of undertaking a second overhaul of *Blue Peter* the NELPG committee asked John Marsland and Dave Pennock to investigate potential sources of funding to support the project.

Unfortunately, whilst the *Blue Peter* fundraising and overhaul has not progressed, a more formal approach to fund raising for the other Group locomotives took over as the main focus. In the interim period John and Dave, in conjunction with the North East Museums Service, investigated how organisations could best address fundraising and where the NELPG could best target its funding needs.

The present sub-committee structure is a development of work associated with the J27 Appeal and has been strengthened in 2009 and is currently addressing financial strategy in addition to pure fund raising.

To ensure that the objectives of the NELPG continue to be met into the future, the NELPG committee set up a Fund Raising sub-committee to fulfil the following strategies:-

1. The scope of our fundraising is guided by the Group's 15-year plan for locomotive overhaul and the cash requirements arising from that.

2. There is no restriction as to where we may obtain these funds but we expect the majority to come from sources that understand, and are sympathetic to, our objectives.
3. Initial schemes have been member based and successful. However, they have limitations and our message will need to be given to a wider audience if the necessary funds are to be obtained.
4. Heritage Lottery funding remains a key part of our strategy and there is a strong chance that future applications will be successful because of our track record to date.
5. Website opportunities have been identified and will form an important part of our communication strategy.
6. Fundraising in past years has concentrated on specific locomotive appeals and a reliance on strong locomotive earnings. Our future success will depend on understanding the long term needs and developing a funding strategy to sustain the restoration of our locomotives in accordance with our stated aims.
7. Fundraising skills within the group are very limited; the development of these skills within the membership is essential.
8. Pro-active relationship building with donors and organisations is to be encouraged and developed.

Additional funding is needed to top up the hire earnings and enable continued regular 10 year overhauls of the locomotive fleet over the next 5 to 10 years.

The Fund Raising sub-committee consists of the following NELPG members:- Andrew Scott, Bryan Orange, Chris Lawson, Dave Pennock, John Marsland and Richard Wheeler. The sub-committee meets every 3 months at York and is working very hard to try to put in place actions to address the declared strategies.

The onus of our work is to identify the likely funding needs on an annualised basis for the future and to look to identify new sources of funding and vigorously follow these up as well as continuing to use tried and tested funding paths such as the HLF.

Presently the Group benefits from donations and regular giving from its members and have additionally received a total of £10,000 from several trusts. The sub-committee will continue to identify and apply for further support.

There have been some ups and downs in our applications so far and we have to compete for funds in a very competitive market place. As we and other Groups are learning there is no guarantee of Heritage Lottery support for every project.

Hopefully having a focused Fundraising Sub-committee means that we can give the necessary careful consideration as to how we adjust our approach to produce bids that, by meeting HLF's criteria, will be successful in gaining support for the Group's programmes.

John Marsland has been our key researcher on bid sources but John would welcome support in this task from, perhaps, an "armchair" member who would like to get involved – is anyone out there able to give this much needed and appreciated support please? In the first instance contact John on e-mail jmarsland72@hotmail.com to discuss what would be involved.

May I request that if any member has a "Big Idea" on funding sources that they contact me via e-mail (bryan.orange@ntlworld.com) or phone me on 07746 906146. Your ideas could well act as a financial lifeline as the Group works to continue to secure its future in an ever more difficult financial climate.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM Supplement containing the agenda, minutes of the 2009 AGM, Directors' reports and the 2009 financial accounts, accompanies this issue of the NEWS.

This year the AGM is being held at Locomotion, Shildon and will coincide with a special steaming of both the J72 and, possibly, the K1. The meeting itself will be held in the Collections Building. Members will need to access the site via Dale Road but don't follow the brown road signs as they will take you to the wrong end of the site, which isn't open on an evening; the accompanying map shows how to get to the site.

Members can arrive from 6pm which will allow 2 hours to see the J72 and the K1 before we move into the museum, for the AGM, the formal business of which will commence at 8 pm prompt.

This will be followed at approximately 8.30 pm by pie and peas, and then by general chat and a look round the museum; the site must be cleared 10.30pm.

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CALLING EX BR DRIVERS, FIREMEN AND CLEANERS

To celebrate the completion of the J72 overhaul, a thank you, and press launch of 69023 at Locomotion, Shildon is being arranged for a day in June.

If you worked on steam, or know someone who would qualify, we wish to invite ex BR footplate staff to come along and share memories of BR steam at the J72's launch.

Presently we are aiming to host the event on a Friday the likely date being on either 12th, 19th or 26th of the month.

To register interest please can you send either an E mail to Dave Pennock davepen@talktalk.net or contact him by phone on 01423 868138 before 30th April such that we can compile a list of those interested in coming along.

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THE JACOBITE

The K1 will once again be working the Jacobite service between Fort William and Mallaig, sharing the service with 45231 and 45407 (or 44871). 62005 and 45231 are expected to go up to Fort William on 13th May in readiness for the start of the season on 17th May. 45231 will start the service off and the K1 is expected to work the weeks beginning 24th May, 7th & 21st June, 4th & 18th July, 1st, 15th & 29th August, 13th & 27th September and 11th & 25th October. This year

the season has been extended by two weeks until 29th October. The train times are as before: 10.20 from Fort William, arriving Mallaig at 12.25, leaving at 14.10 and arriving back at 16.00. Fares are £31 standard return (£17.50 children) and £49 first return (£25 children). Details and bookings by ringing 0845 128 4681 or visiting www.westcoastrailways.co.uk

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday 9th April - **MOVING MONSTER LOADS** by Peter Sunter (of Sunters Haulage, Northallerton). The talk will be on his recent work moving large 750 ton, 11 metre wide, railway loads 700 km in Kazakhstan.

Friday 7th May – **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** *

Saturday 8th May – **THE BLYTH SPIRIT RAILTOUR** (see text for details)

The meetings take place at the Darlington Club and Institute (Northgate Club), High Northgate, Darlington, on the second Friday of each month (except when that day falls on a Bank Holiday), starting at 7.30 pm. Further details appear on the NELPG website. * *Please note that the AGM will take place at Locomotion, Shildon to coincide with the steaming of the J72 – see map on page 30*

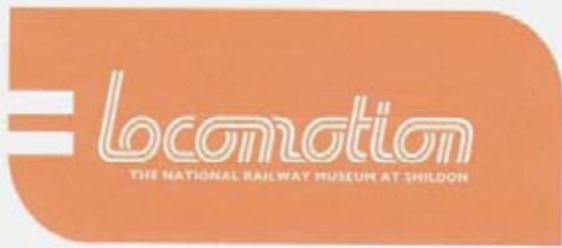
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COVER PICTURES

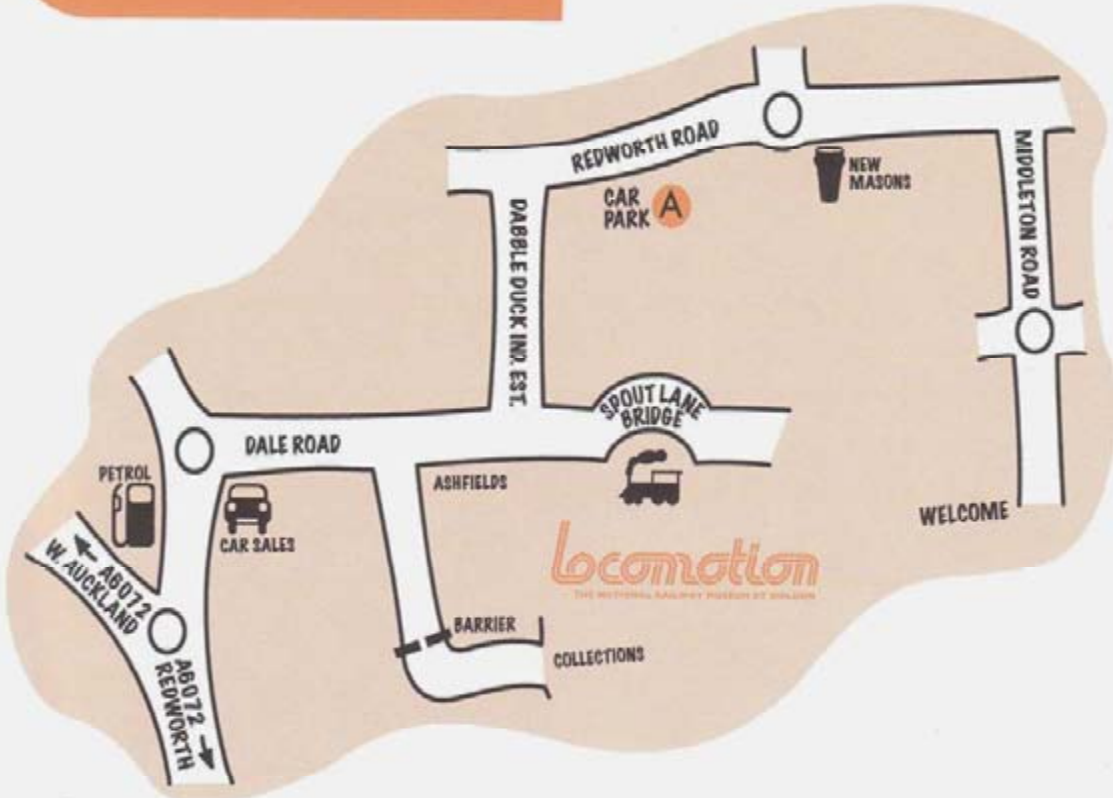
Front: The J72 propels the J27's tender up the bank outside of Hopetown in its first move since overhaul on 7th February.

Back (top): Nigel Hall starts to paint the new smokebox door on the K1 at Carnforth on 10th March.

Back (bottom): Richard Campbell oversees the rewheeling of the K1 tender at Carnforth on 18th February (all Colin Smith)



events car park



From Welcome

Go along Hackworth Close, then at the mini roundabout, turn left onto Middleton Road. At the T-junction, turn left onto Redworth Road. At the roundabout by the New Masons pub, take the first exit and continue along Redworth Road, passing Locomotion Car Park A on the left. Take the first left into Dabble Duck Ind. Est. At the end of the road, turn right onto Dale Road, then first left (signposted Dale Road Ind. Est.). Continue straight along past Ashfields yard, then through the barrier and turn left into the events car park.

From A1 Junction 58

Take the A68 and A6072 towards Shildon. At the roundabout by the George Reynolds Ind. Est., turn right (signposted Middridge) onto Redworth Road. At the mini roundabout (by Shildon Motors), turn right onto Dale Road. Continue down the hill, then take the last right turning before the railway bridge (signposted Dale Road Ind. Est.). Continue straight along past Ashfields yard, then through the barrier and turn left into the events car park.

Locomotion, Shildon, Co. Durham, DL4 1PQ t/f 01388 777999

full steam ahead!



Terry Newman and Richard Pearson are both ROs with 60163 Tornado; here they pose in front of the A1 after it had brought Prince Charles to the Museum of Science and Industry at Manchester on 4th February



Also in the limelight is fireman Darren Crone, seen here with driver Roger Barker (r) and 60007 representing the NYMR on a British tourism poster campaign aimed at foreign visitors (courtesy NYMR)

