

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



NO.259

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EDITORIAL

This edition of the NEWS contains a letter outlining the costs and extent of the impending repairs to the K1. Hopefully the expenditure will receive the approval of the membership at the EGM. If not, the K1 will not necessarily be back in traffic for next Spring. This locomotive IS the ‘goose that lays the golden egg’ and is the only one of our locomotives that is financially in the ‘black’. The Q6 is still in the ‘red’ after its major overhaul, as is the J72 and the J27 appeal, notwithstanding the generosity of members, is a long way short of the total needed to fund the current overhaul.

The K1 could be ready to roll again and truly ‘fit for purpose’ for a good many years to come by next April, and set to earn another six figure annual sum, so essential to keep the Group’s finances sound. In doing so it helps to ensure that there is a good financial base to help towards the overhaul and maintenance our other locomotives.

Elsewhere the J72 has been a busy locomotive, fully realising the aims of bringing it to as wide an audience as possible. After its recent flurry of activity it is set to do some work on the NYMR, including the possibility of working Santa specials. In the New Year it is scheduled to visit the ColneValley Railway as well.

The Q6, too has been in regular service on the NYMR clocking up a healthy mileage with only routine maintenance.

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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

Work on the J27 has primarily been concentrated on the tender and the engine frames. On the tender the platework has been needle gunned down to the metal surface to remove the paintwork and rust in order to ascertain its condition. If sound it is being given a coat of protective paint masterminded by Nigel Hall; if not it is to be replaced.

The inside of the tender tank is also being descaled and cleaned out in readiness for protective painting.



Roland Bingham needle guns the top of the J27 tender at Hopetown on 9th September (Colin Smith)

The frames, too, have received similar attention, having been cleaned down and are starting to be painted. Two new cab sides have been cut to size.

Q6 NO.63395

The Q6 has been giving sterling service on the NYMR and has only been stopped for boiler washouts and, recently, for the changing of two springs.



63395 leaves Levisham with a Grosmont – Pickering train (David Warren)

K1 NO. 62005

The K1 is presently at Carnforth awaiting the outcome of the EGM. All the small and flue tubes have been removed, as has the right hand cylinder.



The K1 stands inside Carnforth depot on 30th September awaiting the result of the EGM (Colin Smith)



*The K1's right hand cylinder removed and showing the two exhaust ports
(John Hunt)*

The right hand cylinder is now at Cast Iron Welding where a meeting was planned for the week beginning 4th October to discuss and agree the repair.

J72 No. 69023



*The J72 makes its first revenue earning run at Tanfield on the evening of 29th
September (Colin Smith)*

The J72 has been out and about of late! From Shildon it went to the Tanfield Railway at Marley Hill, where its visit coincided with some splendid weather as the accompanying pictures illustrate.

From Marley Hill the locomotive moved back to *Locomotion* at Shildon for its big event over the weekend of 25th/26th September.



The J72, D49 246 Morayshire, FR No.20, 4468 Mallard and the J52 1247 outside Locomotion on 26th September (Dave Pearson)

After Shildon it moved to the NYMR where it was used as station pilot at the Railway's autumn gala over 1st, 2nd and 3rd October; on the 4th it was moved to Loughborough to star at the GCR's gala. After that it was due to return to the NYMR.

Only minor work has been required on the engine; whilst at Shildon it was weighed by NYMR staff, and it also had a boiler washout. A custom made tool box has been made for the cab. The rear damper linkage has been repaired to stop it from automatically closing when it was supposed to be open and the sanding valve has been repaired.

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 J27 and the K1 frames. If you want to join them and help 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**.

With the K1 boiler and tender, as well as the support coach, at Carnforth working parties may also be required here as well. **If you can help at Carnforth please contact Martin Lloyd on 01642 316258 (or 07970 851895)**.

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EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING – FRIDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2010

Notice is hereby given that there will be an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held at 7.00 pm on Friday 8th October 2010 at the Darlington Club and Institute (Northgate Club), High Northgate, Darlington. The purpose of the meeting shall be to consider and vote on the following motion:-

That the NELPG Committee be authorised to undertake such repairs as might be deemed necessary to return K1 62005 to main line condition and be empowered to spend the appropriate funds in order to achieve this aim”

An estimated cost and breakdown of the repairs is included with this issue of the NEWS and further information will be given at the EGM.

Any member unable to attend the EGM can make written representations but these must be received by the Secretary at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

ARCHIVE CORNER by Chris Lawson

Contributions

Only one contribution to report in this issue. From Andrew Scott who has been given a copy of John Coiley's (a predecessor Director of the NRM) October 1978 'Moorlander' railtour brochure, together with the duplicated timing sheet, along with his manuscript notes of the day. Andrew feels, and I agree, that this should go into the archive, along with the originals which it already contains.

Many thanks to him for this contribution, which is 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 – following its successful workings over the August Bank Holiday 'Open Weekend', the Q6 boiler was given a visual inspection by the Insurance Company's Boiler Inspector in September. This was passed without difficulty, and the mud hole doors and washout plugs replaced in preparation for a steam test prior to the Q6 next working – the first ever NELPG Members Special on the NYMR to be run on 31st October, the day after the fourth AGM of the Group.

Back at Thornaby, a new left hand side little end brass was made for the J27, the crosshead pin ground and hardened, and both refitted on Sunday 20th September to complete the mechanical repairs on the engine. Renovation of the tender was also underway, with replacement of some badly corroded plates, all surfaces descaled and primed with red lead paint. The cab roof was also prepared for resurfacing with bitumastic felt, and the fusible plugs in the firebox replaced. A brick arch was constructed on 4th October.

Arrangements for storage of the J27 under cover at ICI Billingham were confirmed, but no date finalised for the transfer of the engine and tool van, both remaining at Thornaby for the time being.

Elsewhere – the AGM Special on the NYMR on 31st October was announced. To be worked by the Q6 nonstop from Grosmont (dep 14.00) to Ellerbeck

summit, it would stop at Goathland for an hour on the return, and arrive back at Grosmont at 16.20. Comprising three coaches, it was hoped it would be strengthened to five by the arrival of two BR coaches from Doncaster. NELPG members not belonging to the NYMR would be able to travel provided they signed an indemnity form since the line was still the property of British Rail. No fare was to be charged but donations to the cost of coal and Q6 restoration would be welcomed.

British Rail published the draft Light Railway Order for the NYMR, with any objections having to be registered by 2nd November. If none were forthcoming the way would be open for a transfer order to be made to the NYMR Company, enabling a public service to be operated.

And finally.....

The NELPG Sales Stall at the NYMR August Bank Holiday Open Weekend realised £35, while our participation at a Didcot Open Day raised £25. These encouraging results were not, however, echoed at Tyseley where persistent heavy rain brought a premature end to sales activities and gross takings of £3/10/- (£3.50)!

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THE FIRST WORKING PARTIES AT THORNABY by Maurice Burns

In Chris Lawson's column in NELPG NEWS when he looks back at 40 years ago the loco reports are very much as they are today – they concentrate on the engineering progress and the human stories rarely get told. The group picture of volunteers standing in front of 63395 at Thornaby triggered off a host of happy memories and perhaps its time to give a different type of loco report of things that could not be said at the time!

Of all the loco restorations I have been deeply involved in, including that of "Blue Peter" the one that stands out from them all is the restoration that led to the very first steaming of 63395 in 1969. It was to be the first by NELPG volunteers working alone and therefore a very special day for NELPG and those involved.

One has to remember the date is 1969. The last steam train on BR had only ran just over 12 months previously, the last Q6 had nearly been scrapped but we raised the money in 6 months and saved it and NELPG itself was just three years old. The atmosphere in the Group was often referred to as euphoric and indeed it was. The Q6 had been dragged dead from Tyne Dock to Hartlepool then to Thornaby and put undercover in the roundhouse. This was the last steam roundhouse ever built and it was then just only 11 years old. No charges were ever made for the movement or shed rent. The Groups base was originally Newcastle so except for a few people we had no volunteer numbers. I was just 22 years old as was Peter Hutchinson the only other Teesside volunteer and we had both just come out of our engineering apprenticeships, training as draughtsmen. Most people that came along to the first working parties were much younger than ourselves, some just 16 or 17 and from different backgrounds and our skills except those learnt in the training schools were nil. What we did have were bags of determination and confidence even if we had only seen a Q6 through a camera viewfinder! We had certainly never looked between the frames to see those wobbly bits and worked out how it all functioned.

We soon got to know some of the Thornaby shed staff starting at the top with the shedmaster Mr Young. They were sympathetic to our cause as was Jimmy Dean the mechanical foreman but we did occasionally get into trouble – more of that later. The main task was the boiler hydraulic and straight away the sheds last boilermith Joe Glass offered advice and in time we became good friends. Soon volunteer numbers increased and names that come to mind are Andy Teasdale, Dave Hancock, Dave Eadington, John Hardy, Terry Newman, Alan Higgett, Geoff Scurr, Viv Milburn, Roger Plane and Angela Frost. Other travelled for occasional visits such as John (of RAF fame) Boyes, Jeff Brand and Ian Storey. Of all the volunteers Peter Hutchinson took on a lot of responsibility with all the cab fittings, cylinder cocks, sand valves all ending up in his acid bath prior to refurbishment in his parent's garage in Chestnut Road, Eaglescliffe. John Hardy loved woodwork and what a great job he made of the inside of the cab roof and windows. We learnt very fast – we wanted to know everything. Joe would show how to take boiler tubes out, expand and bead tubes and we soon picked up the skills.

Our first ever NELPG volunteer hydraulic boiler test was on 63395 and as some will know it was an absolute shock when we discovered it had water leaking out of a fracture in the flange radius of the front tubeplate hidden behind the superheater header. What happened could not be told at the time but the implications of this were so serious – had we preserved the right engine? When we selected a Q6 to preserve we did know 63395 was one of the last through

Darlington Works in 1965 and we did have the BR boiler records which showed it to be generally OK except some flue tube leakage in February 1967 which was resolved. We did not have anyone with experience to do a “cold” or “in steam” exam which today looking back should have been done but that was how things were with volunteers with an average age of 21. In actual fact the tubeplate fracture could have been leaking steam behind the header for possibly six months but no one on Sunderland shed had spotted it due to its location behind the superheater header and it never appeared in the BR records. To think all the time enthusiasts were on Seaton Bank taking memorable pictures of 63395 it was leaking steam through the fracture in the smokebox but no one knew.

If NELPG had known about the fracture 63395 would certainly not have been preserved.

When we found the water leaking during hydraulic test at Thornaby one volunteer, I think it was Terry Newman said to me “Do you think we should have saved the other last working Q6 No 63387 from Hartlepool?” That hammered the point home but 63387 was no more – it had been scrapped. The seriousness of the situation was brought home to the committee when the boiler insurance company National Vulcan, the largest in the UK, would not allow a weld repair of the fracture. They insisted on a full tubeplate replacement which in 1969 no one in steam preservation had ever done. I made a trip to their head office in Manchester as a desperate attempt to change their mind – and failed. At that time the only people who could tackle such a job was the last remaining UK loco builder at Hunslet in Leeds but the cost of a new Q6 front tubeplate, boiler lift and full retube would be many times more than the loco purchase price and way beyond NEPG who had no income except from donations and sales. The Group now had a half restored locomotive that they could not now afford to restore to working order and was destined to be a static exhibit. That was not in our plans or in our dreams but a fact.

With our backs against the wall we looked, in desperation, at other insurance companies. We thought they would all have the same engineering judgement on the fracture. One, The Commercial Union had a boiler inspector who lived in Eaglescliffe. At a meeting in his home with tea and biscuits kindly provided by his wife, we explained with the help of the boiler drawings the problem and we saw a different approach because the design of the tubeplate flange that faced forward was a good design and safe to do a weld repair. The relief that someone would allow a repair was so immense and our policy with National Vulcan was promptly cancelled. On reflection a monumental decision for such young volunteers? None of this, for obvious reasons, has ever appeared in NELPG NEWS until now.

This critical period above required many phone calls to Insurance Companies to be made during normal working hours and in those days personal phone calls through the Company telephone exchanges were banned. I tried to bluff my way with the girls on the exchange and failed so ended up using a boss's phone with a direct outside line. He was away on business and thankfully I never got caught!

Some lessons were certainly learned the hard way in the early days none more so when a shed welder enthusiastically offered to weld the fracture in the front tubeplate. The fracture had been veed out for some 12" long and then welded up. The resultant hydraulic test however saw water leak out through pin holes in the weld everywhere. I paid the price and spend a whole day with a windy round nose chisel chipping out the bad weld. Another welder from ICI, with the correct certificates then redid the weld and the boiler passed its hydraulic test without problems. I never made that mistake again! Check the welder's certificates first!

With the fracture now fixed enthusiasm was sky high. Working parties were on Saturdays and it became tradition that we would go out to Thornaby and get fish and chips and bottles of Newcastle Brown Ale – we never thought about the implications of drinking beer on a BR loco shed and nothing was said! Now the empties we rarely taken back so in time there were dozens of bottles stored in a box van the Group had purchased and one day the plan was we would take them back. That day never happened as someone pinched them all! After a hard days work some of us would get a wash and brush up at home and head for the local Fiesta nightclub in nearby Norton. Happy days indeed!

After a while we knew everyone at Thornaby and we could unofficially help ourselves to anything in the stores, borrow the oxy- acetylene bottles, welding set etc. In exploring every corner of the shed we spotted in the maintenance bay for the 04 and 08 shunters hundreds of cast iron BR 1 and 4 brake blocks stacked four foot high that were left over from the days of steam. An approach to the shedmaster saw an unofficial agreement and they would just somehow "disappear" one night with no questioned asked. They disappeared, being delivered to the infant NYMRPS in a Gresley buffet car purchased in 1969 that just so happened to be passing through Tees Yard en route to Grosmont. These free brake blocks kept NELPG loco going for over 30 years. On weekends we even drove our cars past the foreman office and parked them near the engine and the running shed. No-one ever complained. Sometimes we took everything for granted to far and got into trouble. One that clearly sticks in the mind was when we cleaned up the Q6 tender behind the cab lockers and found the vertical sheet at the front of the tender badly holed. Well there were lots of large sheets

of steel plate some over 10 foot long – just the job. Ian Storey did a super job cutting the long curve for the top of the plate. When fitted it looked great. However the next day at work I had a phone call from the shedmaster “Can you pop in and see me at lunchtime?” So off I went but not sure what he wanted to talk about. I had been to his office many times before. One had to report to the reception on the first floor then when available one would be escorted into his office that overlooked the shed yards. He said he had spotted that on a large sheet of plate near the stores a huge long sweeping curve had been carefully cut out and it looked like nothing from a diesel. “Next time Maurice remember to cut the plate square then no one would ever notice the plate was missing”. That was so typical of the Thornaby staff – they were on our side.

It was at this time a very quiet, almost shy young lad joined in. He actually worked on the shed was not a photographer like most of us and seemed very keen on steam and he talked about T2’s and P3’s as if he had NER in his blood. His name was Christopher Cubitt. Now Chris became a great asset organising movement of engines such as when we used the overhead host to remove the Q6 chimney in the roundhouse. The John Boyes picture not only captures the action but also the huge steel structure of the roundhouse and crane framework. Those with an eye for detail will notice we volunteers wore ties at working parties!



One of the Thornaby working parties refits the chimney (John Boyes)

As the first steaming date grew near working parties were introduced in mid week evenings as we did have good working conditions, the roundhouse was floodlit, the engine was on a pit and of course wash facilities were available. At the end of the night we would go to the men only bar of the “local” pub, called the Bon Lea for a few beers. This was thankfully before the days of breathalysers! This pub was frequented by shed engineering staff, one of whom had the bright idea of making “coins” to fit the fruit machine. The landlord

however got his own back, because he left the “coins” in the machine and the practice soon ceased once the shed staff got them back as winnings!

We had fitted a brick arch in the firebox using proper firebricks (not concrete as today) that the Group had “acquired” from North Blyth Shed in 1967 and transported them all the way to Thornaby. Vacuum fitting was necessary for working on the NYMR but we had a problem. There were no Gresham and Craven LNER style ejectors and only the LMS pattern were available from scrapyards. Now the LMS ejectors were frequently fixed to the smokebox which would have done nothing for the graceful lines of the Q6. People felt strongly about such matters so we fitted an LMS brake system from Ivatt 2-6-0’s bought from Arnott Young scrapyards in Dinsdale, near Darlington. Other purchases were lengths of copper pipe for the steam supply which came from Hughes Bolckow ship breakers in Blyth. The installation did not follow the normal LMS layout but we fitted the ejector under the cab floor but what did we do with the exhaust? Well it went into the tender top and condensed and no one ever knew – unless someone forgot to put the tender filler lid back on! Crazy yes but we were young but it did work every time! Early pictures of the Q6 show it hauling passenger trains with no ejector exhaust pipe along the boiler. In 1975 a LNER G&C ejector was acquired, I believe from South Africa, and the system modified to the LNER tradition with a exhaust pipe to the smokebox.

As the first steaming drew near there was a problem. There was a BR steam ban in place anywhere in the UK so would we be able to steam the Q6? Yes of course and there would be no fee. Meeting with the shedmast saw agreement that Stan Hindmarsh, a great character, with young Chris Cubitt would be the official crew. As the highly polished engine with burnished motion and handrail (not sure whose idea that was!) moved from the roundhouse to the turntable all was well. No real problems at all. The engine was moved to a line to the east of the loco shed where every volunteer was given a go on the regulator and well deserved it was too.



The overhaul complete the Q6 steams out of the roundhouse (Trevor Ermel)

It has to be said the 1969 overhaul is nothing compared to the restoration work undertaken in later years but because it was done by such very young volunteers aged between 16 and 22 it was a major technical achievement safely carried out. We were so proud of what we had done and when the loco was back in the roundhouse stall a few volunteers left sat in the warm cab we did not want to go home. The resultant publicity put the NELPG in the spotlight and we have never looked back. Many of those young volunteers became lifelong friends and even with the passing of the years it is good to see NELPG current volunteers, be it somewhat older, still have that same drive and determination as all those years ago. Sadly Thornaby shed is now closed but the memories live on!



A truly evocative memory of Thornaby! Night time, June 1970 (Maurice Burns)

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MEMBERS' LUNCH SPECIAL

This will take place on Saturday 23rd October 2010 departing Grosmont at 12.30, arriving back at 15.05; the train was fully booked in just three days. The dining coaches will be attached to the normal service train where non-dining NELPG members can travel free on production of their membership cards.

PRECIS OF NELPG COMMITTEE MEETINGS

5th MAY 2010

5 committee members were in attendance.

An offer from Random House Publishing of discounts on the book *Slow Train* was declined.

A letter had been received concerning Albert Howson who, at 98, had recently been on the footplate of the K1 in steam at Shildon. He started at Shildon in 1927 and remembered the 1925 cavalcade and the first *Silver Jubilee* streamlined train. He drove the K1 on the 1967 3 Dales Tour and Locomotion in the 1975 cavalcade. It was agreed to make him an honorary NELPG member.

Regarding the NYMR's 'Working Safely with NYMR Volunteer Groups' document. It was agreed to send the NYMR a list of our ROs and advise that they do not require training.

Finance report was tabled and accepted.

The Q6 contract had been sent to the NYMR who have queried the sections relating to damage liability. We are not prepared to alter these as they have been inserted at the specific behest of our insurers. To be pursued urgently with the NYMR in light of the imminent return to traffic of the Q6.

60 HiVi vests were to be obtained at £4.95 each plus £2.20 to put NELPG on the back. These would be issued to individual support crew members who would then take responsibility for them. In addition 6 coats at £20.79 each plus £2.20 for NELPG on the back, and 6 Trousers at £8.95 each, were to be obtained.

J72 Recognition Event has been arranged for 12.00 on Friday 18th June at Locomotion.

Reported that the rail tour was now full and all watering arrangements were in place.

7th JUNE 2010

8 committee members were in attendance

The AGM of NELPG Enterprises was held. Directors and Auditors were re-appointed.

Notes of the NYMR meeting concerning water treatment were circulated prior to this meeting. NELPG Board to monitor NYMR progress against action points identified in notes and to write official letter of complaint.

Letter and donation received from A4 Locomotive Trust thanking NELPG for use of Deviation Shed.

Letters received seeking refunds for rail tour. Board decision that no refunds are to be given.

Letter received from a member regarding NER Autocar Trust. Board to investigate possibility of taking out corporate membership.

Catlin's insurance representative surveyed Hopetown workshops. Formal report from to be received within next few weeks.

Treasurer's report circulated pre meeting.

Request that all make efforts to keep mess room clean at Hopetown.

Meeting to be held with Darlington volunteers.

The pit in Deviation Shed now has a 1" groove in its centre and a hole has been created in wall of pit for water and electricity supply.

Request to be published in News for a volunteer to visit local schools.

Plans to put health and safety documents, ordering information etc on website for members only.

NYMR still disputing contract terms added by Blue Fin.

Board approved proposal to produce promotional DVD.

12th JULY 2010

6 committee members were in attendance.

The group has taken out corporate membership of the NER 1903 Autocar Trust. It was agreed that future meeting dates should be set so as to avoid K1 operating dates.

Discussions on locomotives are communicated elsewhere.

Awaiting feedback from Blue Fin risk assessor on Hopetown survey. December self-inspection report circulated prior to meeting. Testing firm to be organised for electrical checks

Noted that deviation shed is not being left clean by other users: to re-raise with NYMR and other loco owners as applicable.

Update on Deviation shed improvements provided to meeting.

Meeting to be held with Hopetown workers this evening.

Board requested draft terms of usage for website/internet for discussion.

Outline permission given for member Richard Jackson to give a presentation on the Group to other societies.

2nd AUGUST 2010

7 committee members were in attendance

Hopetown workers meeting/suggestions discussed with formal response to follow.

Board requested a monthly update on website progress.

Electrical equipment to be cleaned and checked off against PAT database.

External firm to test all portable kit when this has been completed.

Discussions on locomotives are communicated elsewhere.

A member, Nigel Hall, has volunteered to take over the caretaker role at Hopetown. Terms of reference requested by Board.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday 8th October 2010: **DRAKENSBURG FAREWELL 1995** by Ted Parker
NB Preceded at 7 pm by an EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Friday 12th November 2010: **WEARDALE RAILWAY UPDATE** by John Asquith

Friday 10th December 2010: **MEMBERS' SLIDES AND QUIZ**

Friday 14th January 2011: **INFANT N.Y.M.R. & LAST STEAM IN THE NORTH EAST** by Roy Lambert

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.

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COVER PICTURES

Front: 69023 near Andrews House with a coal train on 12th September (Dave Whitfield)

Back (top): 69023 pilots Twizzell just north of Andrews House on 12th September (Dave Pearson)

Back (bottom): 69023 poses with GNR J52 0-6-0 1247 at Locomotion on 25th September (Dave Pearson)

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