



THE WEST LANCS (NEWS) LETTER



Welcome to the second West Lincs Letter!

People seemed to like the first edition (thanks for the support!) so here's another one, to keep you up-to-date with what's happening at Hesketh Bank. And as you can see, the neighbours have been busy, clearing the old brickworks site ready for the groundworks for the new housing estate. Our entrance looks a bit different, and will change more in the coming months, but we will still be here and open for business!



Since the EGM in January, we have been busy progressing the purchase of our land, and finalising the plans for fundraising to pay back the loans. The boundaries have been agreed in principle, and we have started to remove encroaching vegetation and tidy-up the storage areas, some of which go back a very long way...



The chairman leads from the front on the chain track gang.

The New Year is a busy time for the Railway, as suddenly all the jobs to be done in the close season need finishing off in the few weeks before the Railway re-opens to the public. Trackwork is an important element of this, replacing sleepers, levelling the rails, re-ballasting and tamping, to ensure a smooth permanent way for the trains.

And talking of the new season, our Publicity Committee met recently to review the plans for our Special Events in 2019, details of which are on the website. Our publicity officer Phil Pacey has retired after many years of service - we welcome Roy Evans as his replacement in a vital role for the Railway.



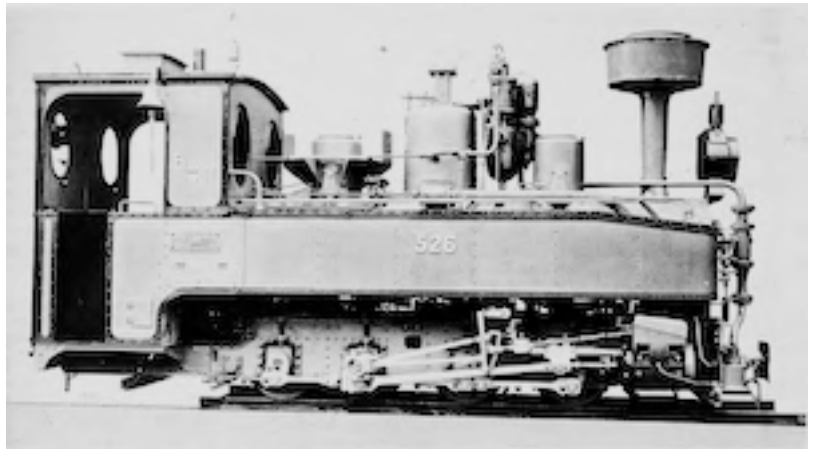
Roy engaging the attention of some Big Hairy (but friendly) Bikers



Cameron in his element, extending the headshunt at Becconsall

A loco is reborn...

Restoration is what we do, and now it's the turn of Jonathan Whitehead's Brigadelok DFB 913, built by Henschel in 1916 for the German Army. It's a large 0-8-0 loco, with steerable front & rear axles to cope with sharp curves. 2573(!) were built, the largest European narrow-gauge class. After service in Estonia, 913 was one of 17 of the class moved to the Sena Sugar Estates in Mozambique.



DFB 526, similar to 913 but with additional water lifting gear



Sena was a huge site along the River Zambezi, with rail systems of 50cm, 2ft & 3ft gauge, and employing up to 20,000 people. 913 had a 'colonial' roof fitted, also racks for wood fuel. Sena was effectively destroyed in the civil war, after which the UK's Peter Court brought back a number of Fowler ploughing engines, followed by 23 locomotives, including 913, which were offered for sale.

913 on arrival at Hesketh Bank, after a quick repaint

Initial restoration at Hesketh Bank proceeded in fits and starts, with the boiler spending time on the Isle of Wight, and the cylinders and wheels holidaying at the Ffestiniog's Boston Lodge and Minfordd yard. Now however the cylinders are away for machining, and a start is due this year on the tanks and the boiler at Johnsons of Banks. The intention is to restore the locomotive to ex-works DFB condition.



The water tanks on the move, January 2019

Thanks to Jonathan for the information and the two photos above.

A few words from the Chairman:

'Our 2019 season is rapidly approaching, and we still have plenty of work to complete before the first operating day (a Drive-an-Engine special) on 30th March. We would be delighted to see as many volunteers as possible come down and lend a hand with our pre-season preparations. Come along any Thursday afternoon, or Sundays from 10.30. 2019 also sees a significant milestone in the history of the railway with the purchase of the existing land from Altys, securing our future. We expect completion very soon. £250,000 is a huge sum for us, but we have managed to secure this through donations and loans, following our Business Plan issued for the January EGM. We have had excellent subscription sign-up so far from our members but we still need more, either as subscriptions or donations. If you can give, we would be very grateful - details are on the website. And don't forget the Gift Aid form, if you can, 25% extra to the Railway!

Wishing you all a great 2019 season. Best regards, Mike.'

And finally, another plug for West Lancs members to join the members' section of the website at westlancsrailway.org. It's not long before Alan Frodsham starts to look for crews for the first weeks of the 2019 season. If you would like to volunteer (*and why wouldn't you - 'fun' is not the word!*) it would help Alan if you sign up on the website.

And if you're not a member of the Railway, the website has details of how you can join us. Whether you are able to volunteer or not, your support will be very welcome.

And very finally, the 'Look and Listen' section of the site now has a set of sounds of some of the engines and machinery in action. A touch geeky perhaps, but only a little, they do actually sound quite good! More are threatened once the season starts, which is very close now, Sunday 31st March being our first public running day. See you there?

Derek Pratt

Way past the track stop at Delph, where only the bravest may go, a rare shot of freight traffic on well-worn rails. Note that the workers are not roped together - our volunteers fear nought!

