

LEISTON WORKS RAILWAY

NEWSLETTER



NO TIME TO SIT DOWN!

John Keeble using a pneumatic spanner to remove some broken chairs from the sleepers. Full story inside.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 6th NEWSLETTER

You may recall a report in the October 2012 Newsletter that a flash flood in August 2011 had caused serious damage to the Engineers Arms. The damage subsequently took nearly two months to put right and necessitated temporary closure of the business. Inevitably this event resulted in the loss of many regular customers, and, as a consequence, the landlord, and LWR Trustee, Glenn Chandler and Jan, his partner, decided eventually to give up their tenancy. As members from in and around Leiston are probably well aware, the Engineers Arms has been boarded up for several months and Adnams has decided to sell the freehold.

This is a serious outcome for LWR, because the section of the old track-bed that links the section purchased by LWR in 2010 to Main Street runs through the pub's garden and car park. We purchased our section of the old track bed after an assurance from Adnams that a 100 year lease of the section it owns would be granted to LWR. We certainly would not have proceeded with our purchase without this assurance and consequently now find ourselves somewhat immobilised. Whilst over a year ago, we were ready and indeed offered to meet up to negotiate the terms of the promised lease with Adnams; we then had to wait for several months while the land was formally registered with Land Registry. This was because Adnams was unable to locate documents showing its formal ownership of either the pub or its gardens.

The strip of land that runs down the east side of the Engineers Arms is essential to the proposed heritage restoration of the works railway. Consequently, the decision to put the pub on the market has come as a great shock to us all on the Committee. Since our last Newsletter in February, we've been pro-active and worked very hard to try to negotiate a deal with Adnams, whereby it will sell us the section of the old track-bed running down to Main Street through the garden and part of the car park. Adnams has been and still is very supportive of our project, although quite rightly it has to do what it believes is best for its shareholders. Hence, discussions with the brewery are ongoing and hopefully we will be able to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. But reality will be in the action and outcome rather than words.

Whilst overall, we remain optimistic and continue to carry out both hands-on work on our own section of the track and fund-raising, these recent events also mean that we're nonetheless in limbo with regard to obtaining planning permission for the restoration and actual use of the railway line. We cannot pursue this any further until we are absolutely certain that we can have access to and the use of the entire rail track-bed from Buller Road right down to Main Street. So, we sincerely hope that this is not going to be the end of the line for us!

If there just happen to be any members out there who harbour a secret desire to own and run their own pub, now would be your chance to live the dream. Likewise, if any one thinks they could offer help or advice to the Committee, then please do contact us.

Denis Gahagan

THE HEAVY GANG

A very successful day was held on Saturday 11th May when a small working party and a large amount of machinery assembled at the site where our track panels are being stored. The aim of the day was to start dismantling these panels into their component parts, i.e. to remove the rails from the sleepers. This was to be very heavy work - hence the need for a lot of mechanical assistance - but it was also very necessary, as we will not be able to move a complete panel with the machinery available to us. That would require specialised equipment, as each panel, when it was delivered to us, was 60ft long and weighed about three and a half tons,.

Removing the rails from the sleepers also enabled us to start to unscrew the chairs that were broken by the demolition contractor in its removal of the rails from the site in Ipswich. Fortunately, we've been able to purchase 140 items which we need in order to replace those that were missing, along with 100 chairs needed to replace the broken ones.

Inevitably, with second-hand track panels that had been in situ for many decades, we are finding that some of the sleepers are so rotten that they are beyond re-use. Therefore, these will have to be replaced when eventually we relay the line.

On the same Saturday, a second working party continued to carry out the painstaking task of re-pointing and, in some, instances, re-building the boundary walls. These walls are on both sides of our track-bed for the majority of its length and are certainly starting to show signs of their uncared-for age. So a very big thank-you to all the members and volunteers for their dedicated work in these two hands-on activities.

Trevor Wrench

THE 2ND SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY SHOW AND MODEL RAILWAY

EXHIBITION: As you may recall from Newsletter Number 5, the Leiston Works Railway was invited to have a stand at this show. It was held on the Saturday and Sunday (4th and 5th May 2013) at St. Edmunds Hall in Southwold. There were plenty of eager people having a good look around on both days with particular interest shown for the fantastic model railway exhibits, including of course many of the Southwold Railway. This show was a great way for the Southwold Railway Trust to promote its cause as indeed it was for the LWR. It was also a good opportunity for both of our organisations to forge a link with one another.

We certainly had a great deal of interest shown for our exhibition with many people taking a look and asking plenty of questions about our project. Over the weekend we also managed to get five more sleeper sponsorships as well as selling some items kindly donated by LWR members.

Also joining us were LWR member Michael Radford and his wife Jacky who displayed their incredible "N" gauge model railway of 1950s Leiston Station and the Garrett Station Works and sidings with an excellent model of the Garrett shunting engine "Sirapite" busily going about its duties within the "Works" site! Also, there was the passenger train on the branch line that stopped at the station for people to get on the train to go to Aldeburgh, stopping again on its way back, ready to take people to Saxmundham! (Sorry, I seem to be getting a bit carried away here!) Michael has done an amazing job with his model, including putting my Dad Brian on the veranda of the signal box where he was the signalman there until the closure of the line.

I would just like to finish by saying a big thank you to the Southwold Railway members for inviting us to take part in the exhibition and for looking after us so well over the two day event. Thanks also to Michael and Jacky for the time and support they gave us.

Stephen Ginger

TRACTOR RUN: We were delighted to benefit from a tractor run, organised by David and Judy Geater and Richard White. The profits were shared with the Long Shop Museum. There were some great photos (and a report) of this event in the EADT.

QUIZ NIGHT: Pat's Quiz Night was right 'on track' to be another run away success! Once again, well known quiz organiser Pat Challis kindly held one of her fun quiz nights for the LWR on Friday 5th April 2013 at Knodishall Village Hall. We were able to get sixteen teams to this event who all battled it out to come first, which in turn gave us a fantastic financial result for LWR funds. Supper for the evening consisted of jacket potatoes with various fillings for people to choose from. There was also a very well supported draw with donations of draw prizes kindly donated by LWR members and friends.

Harry Dix and myself were in charge of collecting the answer sheets with Jim Girling and Margaret Butcher marking them and keeping score. Much to everyone's amusement, Jim occasionally burst out in a fit of the giggles. Now, if you know Jim at all well, you know he has an incredible sense of humour and it doesn't take much to 'activate' it and make him laugh! It turned out that he was laughing at people's wrong answers on the answer sheets - only Jim could get away with that sort of thing! The evening made a profit of £555.00 and thanks on behalf of the LWT Trustees must go to Pat, Margaret, Harry and Geoff Platt for all of their help in making the evening a resounding success.

LEISTON ENTERPRISE CENTRE COFFEE MORNING - PROCEEDS TO LEISTON WORKS RAILWAY

The LWR were approached by Leiston Enterprise Centre to assist our project in some way. It was Marilyn Reeves, the Administration Co-ordinator who got in contact with us saying that she and her colleagues would like to assist us with some voluntary help and kindly offering to organise a Coffee Morning to help us with our fundraising efforts.

This event is taking place at the Leiston Enterprise Centre, Eastlands Industrial Estate, Leiston, IP16 4US (postcode always handy for directions with the old sat nav!) This very modern 'state of the art' building is actually situated on the corner of the Industrial Estate with the frontage overlooking King Georges Avenue. The date for this is Saturday 29th June 2013 starting at 10.00 AM and finishing at 12.30 PM.

Marilyn and her team will be serving tea, coffee and soft drinks as well as

homemade cup cakes and sponges which they will have kindly made especially for the event.

To make this a fun event for everyone to enjoy, there will be plenty of other attractions to keep you entertained. A cake stall - donations from members would very much be appreciated, a draw - again draw prizes would also be appreciated and a few games including my 'Railway Game' - now that is worth a go on!

We will also be continuing with our "*Sponsor a Sleeper*" campaign - (by the way, have you sponsored one yet?) - and the LWR Exhibition.

Admission for this event is only 20p per person, so please come along. The LWR is very fortunate to have friends like Marilyn and her team who are willing to do their bit for us - so please support them if you can.

LWR SPONSOR A SLEEPER CAMPAIGN IS WELL ON TRACK!

The total number of sleepers, that should be enough to complete Phase 1 of the project, is now known to be 253. That will consist of 11 panels at 60ft, each having 23 sleepers per panel. At the time of writing this report, we now have 223 sleepers that have been sponsored which is an amazing result since we launched our campaign 15 months ago at the Long Shop Museum in Leiston on their 2012 Season Open Day on Saturday 31st March 2012. Once again a big thank you to everyone who has sponsored a sleeper.

Obviously we have a few more to sponsor, so it's still not too late to do so and, once again we have enclosed a "Sponsor a Sleeper" form, for anyone else who would like to still consider doing one. If you do have access to the internet, please go to our website - address on the back cover of this Newsletter - to see which numbers are still available; or, alternatively, please phone me on 01728 831902 and I'll be very happy to talk to you about this. Stephen Ginger.

TRANSPORT ON FILM: I know this is early to write about this event, but it will probably be too late in the next Newsletter. So, at least you can plan well in advance! The LWR will be holding what promises to be an interesting Archive Film Show at Knodishall Village Hall on Friday 11th October 2013 starting at 7.30pm. Tickets for this event are £5.00 for LWR Members and £6.00 for non-members. The Evening will be presented by Jim Cecil who has lined up a varied programme for us to enjoy on a transport theme, including - of course - some

railway films. Some of the items in the programme will be:

1. Two short sound films about the Rapier Factory which was based in Ipswich, and features the Railway around Ipswich Docks.
2. The History of Transport, a sound film made in the late 1950's telling the story of transport from the canal days, through to the railways and also on to road transport.
3. The local TV report (circa 1961) on the closure of the railway at Leiston and what affect it would have on the town. Included in the film is a lovely piece of footage of the Garrett Shunting Engine 'Sirapite'.
4. The nostalgic film 'Last Train from Aldeburgh.'
5. An interesting film made with sound around 1956 or 1958 about the Manchester Shipping Canal.

There are other films as well, but to tell you about everything now would rather spoil the surprise! Also during the evening coffee, tea and biscuits will be served and a draw will take place and once again draw prize donations would very much be appreciated. Tickets are available from Stephen (01728 831902) or Jim (07800 500 278).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

To help keep cost down for the LWR, we would like to send membership cards out with the Newsletters in the future. This may mean that it could take a bit of time before you receive your card.

We do hope members are happy with this arrangement. The cost of second class postage is now 50p which when added together for all members that have to be contacted by post, makes a good saving for the LWR, so it does make economical sense to post everything out together, thus allowing for this saving to be passed on towards the cost of the project.

If you have not received your Membership Card with this Newsletter, then this means, unfortunately, that - according to our records - your subscription is now overdue and your Membership will have lapsed with effect from 1 June. However, Membership Cards for any renewals made after this Newsletter has been delivered will be sent out with the next one.



The Heavy gang removing the rails from the sleepers.

CONTACT US BY PHONE, EMAIL OR WEBSITE

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