

LEISTON WORKS RAILWAY

NEWSLETTER



SPOT THE LINE!

Look closely and you'll see it hidden in the undergrowth where it was before Trevor and his gang got their hands on it.
Full story inside.

NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

Lots of very good news to report this time in a sense that we're really moving forward. Although there are the usual red tape delays in progressing some of our activities, these are generally not surprising and hopefully will be sorted in good time.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Our first AGM was held in Leiston Community Centre on 20 November and was very well attended. We were able to move things on a number of fronts - most especially in approving the LWR Constitution. Lord Cranbrook, who was the original inspiration for purchasing and restoring the old track-bed, gave a speech at the end of the meeting congratulating us on the excellent progress we've already made. It was also great for the Committee to have a chance to meet and chat with members over tea and coffee at the end of the Meeting.

CHARITABLE STATUS Following approval of our constitution at the AGM and thanks to the very hard work done over the past year by James Richards who is now our secretary, LWR has now become a Registered Charity (No 1149897). One important outcome of this is that we've been able to benefit from several donations made to us through the Charities Aid Foundation cheque system. Also, we'll soon be able to benefit from Gift Aid, which - having charitable status - we should also be entitled to and for which we have applied to HMRC.

We've enclosed with this Newsletter an important one-off form for you to sign and return; so that, as long as you remain a tax-payer, you'll not have to fill in any further forms declaring your entitlement to this.

RAILS & SLEEPERS A leap forward! Thanks to the very generous support of David Buck, we've obtained most of the necessary rails and sleepers. More about this later in the Newsletter from Trevor; but the prospect - subject to approval of our planning application - of being able to re-lay the line in the coming months does seem a very exciting major development. Also, due to the incredible support from so many in sponsoring a sleeper we're already well on our way towards being able to pay off the entire loan for this part of our project. Stephen has more about this later in the Newsletter.

However, we'll still have to pay a considerable sum for ballast and for haulage. Clearly, once winter is past, we'll begin to re-engage in hands-on restoration work. If you are interested in helping, please contact Trevor on 07999 668597.

TRANSPORT TRUST LOAN As you're probably already aware, the purchase of the old track-bed was made possible through the incredible generosity of several donors

and a loan of £5000 from the Transport Trust. The good news is that we've now been able to repay this loan in full thanks to further generous donations from several Leiston residents as well as a further donation from one of the original track-bed purchase donors. We are also grateful recipients of a £1000 grant from the Suffolk County Council via Councillor Richard Smith's Locality Budget as well as £300 from Leiston Business Association as a share of the proceeds from the Leiston Christmas Fair.

PLANNING PERMISSION The next major stage for us is to apply to Suffolk Coastal District Council for permission to re-lay the track. We are optimistic this will receive approval, especially as Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council has kindly agreed to submit it on our behalf. However, we need the input of Adnams, because the application includes the section of the old track-bed which runs through the garden of the Engineers' Arms. Adnams is currently applying for registration of its title and, until that happens, we're on hold - but optimistic.

IS ANYTHING EASY??

A new milestone was reached in mid-December with the purchase of the railway track required for relaying on our track-bed.

It was brought to our attention that there was some railway track on a site in Ipswich that was being cleared and that it might be worth approaching the demolition contractor to see whether it would be possible to purchase enough for our requirements. It was agreed that there could be a sale- at the right price - so it was in mid-November that Trevor Wrench and LWR member Dick Sheppard went to the site armed with a long tape measure to see if there was enough of the right type of rail (95lb bull head) - as used originally in Leiston, so that what we would relay would be authentic. After spending some 4 hours wandering around the overgrown sidings and struggling to get through the densely growing silver birch saplings that were all over the site, it was agreed that there was sufficient track for our project.

The next obstacle was to determine how we might be able to pay for the line, if and when a price could be agreed. This is where LWR member David Buck from near Windsor stepped in with an offer of an interest free loan specifically to purchase the required amount of rail. Trevor and David worked out what would be a sensible price and David kindly offered to negotiate for us with the contractor. An agreement was eventually reached, and it was decided that Trevor would go to the site when the track was being lifted by the contractor to make sure all was well.

So, in early December, Trevor along with John Keeble went to Ipswich to see how things were progressing - and a very good job that they did so - as they found that the track was being lifted with the fishplates still bolted to one end of the track, thereby resulting in many of these being broken off or badly bent. So Trevor and John spent the rest of the day

unbolting and removing as many of the fishplates as they could and only just managing to stay in front of the gang lifting the track. The contractor had agreed to lift and stack the track panels ready for us to collect. With this eventually completed, Trevor marked the required number of panels, so that everyone involved knew what was what.

Because of the short spell of time that we'd been given to remove our track from the site, it was decided to hire SC Fabrications Ltd, a specialised haulage firm based near Norwich, which had a trailer with a self-contained crane, which was capable of both loading and transporting the 60ft panels. When Trevor, John and the lorry arrived at the site a few days later, it was discovered that - due to a misunderstanding amongst the demolition contractors - three of our 60ft panels had been broken up. This was very disappointing; but all was not lost, as the component parts were still on site.

Consequently, in addition to loading the complete panels, we also had to pick up 6 lengths of 60ft rail and 69 loose sleepers. This involved a lot of extra work lifting and stacking the sleepers on the lorry - one at a time! Also, unfortunately, due to the way in which the contractors had dismantled the track panels, more than half of the chairs on the dismantled sleepers had been broken and all the keys which held the rails onto the chairs were missing. So, although we now have all of the rail we need and most of the sleepers, we still need to acquire approximately 100 chairs and 140 keys.

The LWR would like to thank David Buck not only for his interest free loan but also for his social skill and patience in what turned out to be some very difficult negotiations with the contractor. Many thanks must also go to Steve, the lorry driver for SC Fabrications, who went out of his way to help us with the difficult loading and transport of the track; and also to Tony Readhead for allowing us to store the track panels at his farm.

Trevor Wrench

SPONSOR A SLEEPER CAMPAIGN UPDATE: firstly a big thanks to everyone who has sponsored a sleeper. This campaign - an idea initially suggested by LWR member Wendy Holgate - is continuing to be extremely popular with the many local residents who want to help the LWR progress this restoration project. A frequent decision has been made to choose a sleeper number which has special significance for the sponsor, for example, in memory of the date of birth of a loved one. And many others have chosen to dedicate a sleeper to a family member who worked at Garretts.

At the time of going to press with this Newsletter, an incredible total of 170 sleepers have been sponsored out of the approximate total of 220 needed to complete Phase 1 of our project. Once again we are enclosing a "Sponsor a Sleeper" form with this issue, which you are welcome to use. If you have access to the internet, then do look at the LWR website to see which numbers are still available. Alternatively please feel free to phone me, Stephen Ginger, on 01728 831 902 and I'll be pleased to talk to you and let you know.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership has continued to increase, but the time has now come when it needs renewing. To cover the rising costs of printing, stationary, stamps, etc it was agreed at the AGM to increase the standard subscription - but only by £1 and we do hope you'll continue to support us.

Though many of you will have already received notification of this by email, we are enclosing three different coloured forms with this issue which we hope you will complete as appropriate. They are:

Membership Renewal

Gift Aid Declaration

Sponsor a Sleeper

Do please sign and return all of these, where appropriate, if you're a taxpayer, as it'll increase the value of your subscription/donations to us by at least a fifth.

This issue of the Newsletter and the enclosed leaflets will give the appropriate postal addresses for contact with us, which unfortunately were omitted in the past, for which we do apologise. We appreciate that many do not have an email address and certainly a postal address will be necessary for sending a membership renewal cheque. However, if you're local, then please feel free to deliver by hand - just as we do with this Newsletter - to any of the following Trustees' addresses:

Christine Fisher, Roosters, Blythburgh Road, Westleton IP17 3AS

Stephen Ginger, 69 Central Road, Leiston IP16 4DD

Denis Gahagan, 10 Crag Path, Aldeburgh IP15 5BP

Trevor Wrench, Briarwood Farm, Judith Avenue, Knodishall IP17 1UY

REVIEW OF EVENTS

THE LAST DANCE (WITH BRIAN NICKELS MUSIC)

A very successful fundraising event took place on the evening of Saturday 10 November 2012. This was a joint venture between the LWR and Leiston St. Margaret's Football Club at their venue in Abbey Road, Leiston. Tickets went on sale a few weeks before the night and such was the demand that they sold out very rapidly and, as a consequence, left many late bookers very disappointed.

The reason for this was simple. For many local people, Brian Nickels disco was what they grew up with. Going in their youth to his discos for a social night out evokes very fond memories and, as this was to be Brian's "retirement dance", a lot of them wanted to be there for a last piece of the action and thus enjoy a nostalgic evening reminding them of their youth.

The evening captured the best of popular music from over the past 40 years and was hugely enjoyed by all. Many thanks to everyone who brought draw prizes for the raffle - both supporters of the LWR and Friends of St Margaret's Football Club. Overall, the evening made a total profit of £911. This was split on a 50/50 basis, thus providing each organisation with a total of £455.50. Both are very grateful for this support.

LEISTON CHRISTMAS FAIR

We were delighted to be invited by Lisa Sharpstone of Leiston Business Association to have a stand at the Leiston Christmas Fair on Saturday 1 December 2012. This we set up together with other local groups in Old Post Office Square. We spent the day in cold, wet and very miserable weather; but this didn't hamper the spirits of the people of Leiston who came out in force - soaking (no pun intended!) up the atmosphere and enjoying plenty of the entertainments, side stalls and Yuletide fun. Children went to see Father Christmas in his grotto, which was set up in the "living van" in the Long Shop Museum just across the road.

Whilst we had an excellent response from a number of people who decided to sponsor a sleeper as a Christmas present, we also hope that one day you'll be able to see Sirapite pulling Santa in a brake van down the old railway track from Buller Road to the Museum. So, watch this space!

The Leiston Business Association kindly made us one of the several local beneficiaries of the proceeds of this Christmas Fair and we were delighted - along with the Leiston Scouts - to be invited to a ceremony and photoshoot on Thursday 24 January, held in the Alde Valley School Sixth Form building in Waterloo Avenue - previously Leiston Middle School - and to be each presented with a cheque for £300.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2ND SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY EXHIBITION & MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

We have been invited to have a stand at this event to help promote the LWR and continue with our "Sponsor a Sleeper" campaign. It will be held on Saturday 4 May from 10am - 5pm and Sunday 5 May from 10am to 4pm in St. Edmund's Hall, Cumberland Road, Southwold, IP18 6JP. We are very pleased that we will be joined for this event by LWR Member Michael Radford who has a splendid "N" gauge layout of Leiston station set in the 1950s including Garrett's Station Works and the shunting lines which went round the works site. Included in his layout is an excellent model of the Garrett's steam shunting locomotive "Sirapite" which can be seen doing its work on the model layout!

We'd be delighted to see as many of our members as possible at this event, which should make an interesting day out for you. Admission is Adults £3, Children aged 4-15 £1.50 and free for under 4.

FURTHER FUNDRAISING EVENTS AND IDEAS FOR LWR

In order to help boost the funds of LWR, we're also planning to sell at any future event "anything railway related"; for example, model railway items, railway magazines, children's railway toys, etc. So, we are asking members, if they have any railwayana which they might like to donate to please contact Stephen Ginger on 01728 831902.

We already have two fundraising events planned for this year, so please put the dates in your diaries now. The first will be a Quiz Night with Pat Challis - an event which proved so extremely popular last year. This will be held on Friday 5 April in Knodishall Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. Tables for 6 people must be booked in advance by Monday 1 April. The cost is £6 per person (including supper) but you do have to bring your own drinks. Tables can be booked by phoning Stephen Ginger on 01728 831902 or Jim Girling on 07800 500 278.

The second event we are planning is a Transport Archive Film Evening, which will be largely railway focused, including some local footage. It will be presented by Jim Cecil and will be held at Knodishall Village Hall on Friday 11 October starting at 7.30pm. The entry fee will be £5 for LWR Members and £6 for others. More details to follow later.

And finally, we still need new fundraising ideas and help from Members. One idea is for us to hold our own model railway exhibition. So, if there are any Members who might be willing to help us put together our own exhibition, then do please get in touch.

Stephen Ginger



A momentous moment in December 2012.
Unloading the LWR track panels near Leiston.

CONTACT US BY PHONE, EMAIL OR WEBSITE

Chairman: Denis Gahagan 01728 452267
Membership Secretary: Christine Fisher 01728 648413
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Suffolk, IP17 3AS
Track Clearance Contact: Trevor Wrench mobile 07999 668597

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