

QUEENS MESSENGER

ROYAL DEESIDE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Welcome to our very first online newsletter for the Royal Deeside Railway Preservation Society. In our new look format we hope to continue to keep all our members continually up-to-date with the latest going-ons at the railway, as well as adding some extra stories and other railway related information. We hope you enjoy our new look newsletter and look forward to seeing you all on trains soon!



MEET THE NEW COMMITTEE

NEW

As some of you may be aware, a new committee was formed last year with a range of new faces.

While James West is still standing as Chairman and Allan Jones still as our Secretary, we would like to welcome on board Paul Gunning as our new Vice-Chairman, Colin Fitzpatrick as Treasurer, Anne Fitzpatrick as our lovely new Membership Secretary and Gavin Chandler as a New Volunteer Contact.

We hope we all can wish them a warm welcome and all the best as we endeavor to move our railway forward in the coming months and years.



HER MAJESTY'S PASSING

It is only fitting that we should acknowledge the passing of Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II, in our aptly named Queens Messenger. Her Majesty was born in April 1926 and upon her passing in September 2022, her reign of 70 years marked her as the longest serving monarch in British history. As was known, the Queen enjoyed the escapes from royal protocols and found herself drawn to the beauty and peace of Balmoral here in Aberdeenshire, with the Deeside Railway becoming synonymous with the Royal Family. What may not be known however, was that the Queen herself rode the final ever Royal Train service from Aberdeen to Ballater before the closure of the line for good.

The history of the Royal Family is etched into the very being of the Deeside Railway, for it carried multiple members of royalty, including the Shah of Persia and Czar Nicholas II of Russia. The generosity of the Royal Family can be felt in our preserved railway, in the form of our Birkhall carriage, which was wonderfully restored using significant sums that were donated from at the time Prince Charles himself. We here at the Royal Deeside Railway pass on our deepest sympathies to all the Royal Family members and wish all the best to His Majesty the King



SANTA SPECIAL REPORT



It's that time again! Santa took time out of his hectic schedule to thrill our passengers on our Santa Specials for 2022. With more tickets available than last year, smiles and laughter, singing and dancing were all afoot as children and adults alike made their way on our Santa Special to meet the famous man with his red suit and bushy white beard. After leaving our train, filled with carolling singers and toasty hot chocolate, passengers then made their way through our Winter Woodland to find and meet Santa in his Grotto and receive an early Christmas present.





Although Santa took time out of his busy schedule, there is also massive thank you to all the volunteers who made the time to help set up and deliver another hugely successful Santa Special at the Deeside Railway, bringing with it joy to all the families who joined us. But without our volunteers none of this would be possible, so thank you to all those who helped, and of course we hope you all had a wonderful Christmas together and a Happy New Year.



BRIDGE OF BENNIE UPDATE

The Bridge of Bennie has been a project that has been in the works for a few years now, and it has unfortunately been a slow process in order for us to get the bridge open to the public.

Due to some issues over the last 12-18 months, a survey of the structure has been carried out to check if it is safe for us to resume with building works. However until we have this information we currently will have to keep the Bridge of Bennie on hold.

This means that the completion of the Bridge of Bennie is going to take even longer than originally planned.

With other projects coming close to completion and some vital maintenance works planned, a completion date for the Bridge cannot be certain, but we at the RDRPS are still committed to the full installation and opening of the new bridge, allowing the Society to continue our plans to expand our railway into the town of Banchory.



**HAVE YOU VISITED OUR SOCIAL MEDIA?
FOLLOW US ON:
TWITTER/FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM**



AND DON'T FORGET TO TAG US AND COMMENT ON HOW MUCH FUN YOU HAD!!

RIVERSIDE HALT / WEST LODGE UPDATE

One of our major projects that is coming close to completion is the opening of our brand new station Riverside Halt. This will be a single station platform and the first station opened since the Milton of Crathes and the first on a running railway line since Dee Street Halt all the way back in 1961! We currently have our buffer end in place at the current end of the line, marking it as the furthest piece of rail both in the Royal Deeside Railways existence and since the line was originally built.

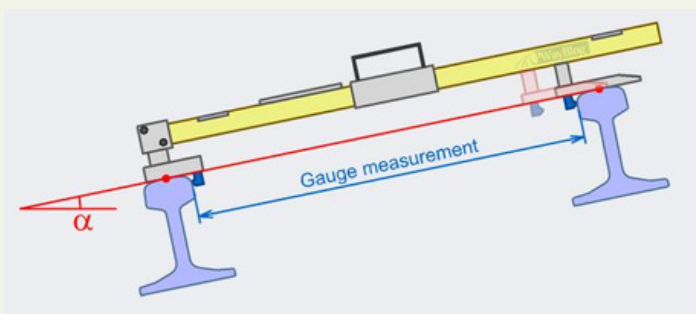
Although we have some final track work to complete and some more upgrades to our station to comply with evolving legislation, the Society is very hopeful of opening our new station sometime in 2023. This will mark a huge achievement in the history of the RDRPS and will allow us to run trains from one station to another.



So what's left to do? Well it might not seem much but it will require a lot of hard work, dedication and skill to finish off. We have a few more track panels to place, including new points/switches and literally multiple tonnes of ballast, which then needs to be packed in tightly under the sleepers.

When packing in the ballast, we need to check both the height and gauge of the track, making sure it is within a very, very small margin before we can actually say the track is ready. This can take time and a lot of effort, but the time spent will help us in the long run, with less maintenance and a smoother ride for our passengers.

With our track down on the main line, we will have our main line running through our station but, we will also have a new loop line to allow our engines to de-couple and re-couple making for a more authentic train ride, with our locomotive always leading in the direction of travel.



MAIN LINE TRACK MAINTENANCE

As well as finishing off West Lodge, some important maintenance work needs to be completed to the main running line. This involves all our volunteers favourite activity; Jacking and Packing. This will allow us to run services more effectively and safely for both staff and passengers. Most of this work is directed from the Milton of Crathes end and is some of the older sections of track we have, which understandably needs a little looking after from time to time.

But wait, you ask, what's jacking and packing? Well, apart from being the favourite activity for all our volunteers, jacking and packing is one of the most essential pieces of work needed on a railway, not just heritage but all railways. Before a track can be used for rail traffic, all lines must be placed in a specific range of gradient/height, gauge and cant/crosslevel.

The gradient of the railway dictates the smooth running of services while traveling on the rails. When placed properly, rails should be generally as flat, moving up and down the ground as linear as possible.

The gauge of a railway is dictated by how far apart the rails are from each other. The most common gauge of rail you'll find are Narrow, Broad and Standard, with railways in the UK being Standard gauge, this is the form that we also follow at the Deeside Railway. The gauge is important because all wheel sets of a train are built to fit a specific gauge, so it means we need to get the distance right to actually allow our trains to move on the Deeside Line.

Finally the Cant. No not that can't, this Cant. The Cant of a railway is determined by the difference in height between each set of rails. For trains to run smoothly, rails should Cant only when running round corners, helping trains travel round these bends. This helps reduce the wear on both the train and the rails, help distribute load across both rails and ultimately make a smoother journey for passengers.

So what does this all have to do with Jacking and Packing? Well this involves us lifting the track using railway jacks and packing ballast underneath the sleepers. This allows to modify the gradient and cant, while we are using chains to pull together the rails and then bolt them into place. Although main line rails have fancy machines to do all this work for them, we try keep to the “old ways” of doing our railway and all our work is done by handheld machines and the determination of our volunteers.

Ultimately this helps ensure our railway for future years, but also helps improve our delivery of service to our passengers, as fundamentally this is what we do it for, to offer an authentic, safe running railway in the heart of Deeside.

HOPS

While we may be a heritage railway, we are always open to new ways that can help us move forwards towards our goals as a society. Recently we have introduced and implemented our new online system called HOPS. No, we can assure you, that is not HOPS as in the beer, HOPS is an online management system designed to help Heritage Railways like ourselves plan and deliver our services. Set up back in 2009 by an ex-railway employee, HOPS is now the go to for most Heritage Railways throughout the UK.

HOPS in the future will hold our rosters for staffing, information about the competence of our staff and other railway related information that will be viewable for all who are part of the RDRPS. Last year we used HOPS properly for the first time to do the rostering for the Santa train service – volunteers would submit their availability and preferences and then HOPS worked out the roster and published it online. Knowing we are all human and we can be forgetful, HOPS automatically sent each volunteer a reminder two days before their ‘turn’.

HOPS now gives us an opportunity to create a reliable, 24-hour source of operational information to which everyone has access. It is early days, but it has the potential to improve the efficiency and professionalism with which we run the Railway.

HOPS

Heritage Railways

In order to access HOPS you will need a password and username. If you have not already please feel free to contact Allan Jones at: secretary@deeside-railway.co.uk



THE RESTORATION OF THE SANDERSON



One of the hardest workers at our railway has been our ever-present Sanderson. Used for everything from moving track, digging up dirt, or to keep Keith sheltered from the wind and snow, our Sanderson has been an integral part of many things we do at Deeside and so it was only fitting that she was lovingly given restoration by some of the engineering department, and she looks factory new!

All in all, the Sanderson was given a complete repaint of outside of the forklift in her signature Sanderson Yellow, replaced hose reel for auxiliary functions, fabricated new quick release mechanism for her bucket, installed new vinyl's all over to match her original ones, repaired the door trims, resealed her roof, installed a new (much more comfortable) seat, installed a mirror for better visibility when moving backwards, fixed front wiper blade, signed and completed her yearly inspection, replaced some damaged and old hoses, cleaned up, repaired and repainted her bucket and finally replaced her damage steering hydraulic hose.



This work took many days to complete and thank you to Gray Forklifts for allowing our Sanderson to take up much needed floor space and allowing the team to use their facilities.

Effectively having a brand-new machine in the rail yard will go a long way in helping the Deeside Railway achieve its goals over the coming months and year. Well done to all those who helped get her back into shape!

On the 24th February 1923, unbeknown then, the world's most famous steam locomotive was born and recently celebrated her 100th Birthday. The Flying Scotsman, built by London North Eastern Railway (LNER for short), broke records in hauling the first ever, non-stop service from London Kings Cross all the way up to Edinburgh, as well as becoming the first UK steam loco to reach 100mph!

THE MOST FAMOUS OF THEM ALL?



Built in Doncaster Works, at the “cheap” cost of just under £8000, she would proudly stretch to 70ft in length and weight only 97 tonnes.



Designed by a Scotsman, Sir Nigel Gresley, and retired from main line working duties in 1963, she would travel as far as San Francisco in the US to Perth in Australia. Upon her return to the UK, the Flying Scotsman would perform special tour trains around the country, gathering new and old steam and train lover alike, with crowds pouring to stations to catch a glimpse of the most famous locomotive in British history.

WANT TO BE A TRAIN DRIVER?

Have you ever fancied being a real-life steam Train Driver? Or what about a Diesel Driver? Not keen on the driving, that's ok, what about becoming a Train Guard?

We are always on the lookout for people who would be interested in becoming a key part of our operational team on railway days. Being a Train Driver or a Guard is a hugely exciting and once in a lifetime role that many people wish they could do, and at Deeside Railway we are encouraging anyone who has an interest in these roles please feel free to contact Allan Jones at secretary@deeside-railway.co.uk.



HOW TO KEEP UP TO DATE

So what's the best way to keep up to date with all the going on at the railway?

Join us on our social medias , where you can see regular updates of weekly work we carry out at the railway, including train days, charters, engineering work and permanent way working.

Browse our website, keeping you informed of all train working days and any special events we have on.

Why not keep up to date with the behind the scenes work?

Head over to the *Volunteer* section and select *Members Area* where you can keep informed on all the committee details in our Society Committee Meeting , where our committee members work to continue to grow our Deeside Railway.

WWW.DEESIDE-RAILWAY.CO.UK

