

B1 NEWS

Newsletter of the Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust

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On a grey and overcast 17th March 2024, 1264 stands in the yard at Ruddington ready to receive visitors on to the footplate. The event was part of a GCR and GCR Nottingham '125 Anniversary Open Weekend' celebrating 125 years of the opening of the Great Central Railway London Extension. Photo courtesy of Alf Bousie.

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Engineering update

Steve Andrews

First some good news. When I was at the Llangollen MPD mess room having breakfast, I was talking about moving all the tools, spares and castings from Grosmont to Ruddington and that hiring a van for 2-3 days was a bind with the time pressure, risk of damage to the hire van, loss of deposit, who pays, me or the Trust etc? Chris Hill said, “buy my van as we’ve bought a larger one”, so I made the decision there and then to buy it.

The problem is that we have a 30 foot container at Grosmont full of tools, spares, an epic amount of castings, a lot of heavy stuff and all the back up needed to maintain and keep a loco running.

I estimate that we will need 12-15 trips to move everything as you need a day to drive to Grosmont, load up and drive back: a 12 hour round trip. You wouldn’t get back in time to get to Ruddington as the gates are locked at 6pm. The tools and spares are valuable, so you need to unload them another day in an ordered manner, not just dumping them and sorting it out later.

Years ago, when we moved from Barrow Hill, I had an 8x4 trailer, Steve Robb had a van and Paul Kaufman had a Range Rover and an even bigger trailer and even with all those resources it still took a year to shift and organise everything, including moving donated industrial pallet racking. It can be quite fraught transporting heavy, rusty loco parts in cars but if anyone fancies helping us, please let me know. It can be even more problematic when we have to load a loco chimney into a boot using a forklift truck. It’s also tricky driving up the steep hill at Esk valley with a heavily laden vehicle.

To let you know, I purchased the van, taxed and insured it and the Trust will be paying me back over the course of the years or when we have moved everything. Steve Robb has obtained insurance for us both to drive it. We also have breakdown cover which will take us home rather than just to the nearest garage otherwise it would be a 300 mile return trip and then a 40 mile return trip to Ruddington. The insurance is for Trust use only and not a runabout for me or for work associated with my other loco 3802 as Nick Gilbert, who owns 3802 with me and has his own company, uses his works van and also has a Land Rover with a six-wheel trailer. Altogether, purchasing the van works out as the most cost-effective way of moving everything from Grosmont and for any other work associated with the Trust.

I have come across a second-hand pallet racking firm at Meadow Road Netherfield, which was well hidden away but they do narrower racking which is 600-900mm which will fit in our containers. They have delivered the racking to our containers, and it will be erected by the tender working parties. The racking has cost £1320, enough to fit out both containers but unfortunately one of the containers still has stuff in it despite an agreement that it should have been emptied within three months. Our 20 ft workshop container, in the back field at Grosmont, will be moved in the next few months. The coach spares that are in this container, will be moved into one of the storage containers. There needs to be some reorganisation so that everything is in one place and easy to access.

The piston rod hydraulic crosshead splitter is in my workshop for attention. We need to take out the crosshead small end pins as they need to be replaced. We also need to split the pistons from the crossheads as two new piston rods are needed. The left hand side crosshead also needs to be repaired. This work will be carried out at Tyseley so the van will come in useful to transport the items.

All the tools needed to do the work on the tender are still at Grosmont. The days of storing loco parts on pallets outside are long gone and now have to be kept safe in a container otherwise they will disappear. This happened with our TPWS control unit and a pair of side cab windows which cost £1100 to remake. I have two crosshead splitters for sale, but loco groups and motive power depots are still heating them up and damaging them with sledgehammers. This wastes time and money, and it takes the loco out of traffic so it can't earn any revenue.

Just to give you an idea of what is involved in a trip to Grosmont in the van. Steve Robb arrives at my house at 07.30, we load up and leave at 07.45 having already checked the tyres, oil and windscreen wash earlier in the week. I fill the tank up to the brim with diesel from the Gulf Garage which is family owned and is better quality diesel. We stop at Ferrybridge services for a comfort stop and arrive at Esk Valley, Grosmont at about 11.30. We then have to find the duty fitter to open the gate and phone the signal box to cross the yard. The other gate has to be unlocked and then the van is parked as close as possible to the container.

The van is loaded with heavy items first, with lighter items on top and we are soon up to the 1800 cwt limit. We then lock up, wash, drive through the first gate, find the duty fitter to unlock the next gate and then phone the signal box for permission to cross the running line. We then drive up the Esk Valley and up the steep hill to Pickering. Sometimes we stop at Thompson's fish and chip shop on the A64 near York and then drive back to Derby. It's now about 6.30-7.00pm having done a round trip of about 300 miles. Later in the week or sometimes Sunday, we drive to Ruddington and unload in an ordered manner. In terms of volunteer time, it's 22 g hours to Grosmont and back and 16 hours to Ruddington, that's 38 hours of volunteering a week between us. This is to enable work to start on the tender. Unfortunately, this isn't a matter of just moving a few items from Grosmont which could be put in the boot of a car but has to be done methodically and not just occasionally. We need to be well organised and have the right tools and equipment, We can't just borrow everything and unfortunately railway preservation can no longer be done on a shoestring budget.

Now onto work that's been carried out on the loco. The footplate step covers that fit in front of the cylinders are being modified so that the curved angle can be welded on to its subframe bracket. The whole assembly can then be unbolted in one piece so as not to leave the frame bracket hanging down so that you bash your head on it when taking out or

replacing the piston valves. The regulator handle is stuck on the regulator rod and needs a good cooking with gas to remove it. The oil warming tray needs to be taken off so a new steel one can be made. The regulator handle and the reverser handle will be taken the "Home of Chrome" at Nottingham and satin chromed.

We will start to remove the tender beading by grinding off the rivet heads and punching them out after which we unbolt the handrails. The lamp brackets and conduit clamps need to be measured up, a drawing made and the brackets and clamps carefully ground off. The lamps will be modified for 20mm conduit, new switches fitted, all of which will be metal not plastic. This will mean that they won't break or wear out. They will also be converted to LED bulbs. Also, the footplate steps, handle and dome cover need to be carefully ground off. The water filler, which was replaced a few years ago is in excellent condition and will be reused.

The railtour years

Mike Cobley

As part of the history of the Trust and as we approach our 50th anniversary, who can remember the series of railtours to help fundraise the loco restoration? The group had changed the name from the Rolling Stock Society to the Thompson B1 Loco Society, before forming the current Trust. A few of the original group had travelled on other trips with the old 'M&GN Days out with a Difference' including a visit to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. We then chartered half a coach to go to the celebrations at Shildon in 1975. During the journey home it was agreed that we should consider a tour to retrace the route that 61264 had operated over its 20-year working life. Peter Aylett formulated an itinerary offering different motive power and some unusual routes. We also had a useful contact within BR, John Davis, who worked alongside some of the special trains staff.



On a foggy 15th October 1977 'Peak' 45042 stands at the head of the Thompson B1 Locomotive Society's 'North Yorkshire Express'. Photo courtesy of Mike Cobley.

The first TBLS Railtour ran on Saturday 8th May 1976 as the 'Three Way Special', the Master Cutler from Marylebone to Nuneaton, then a reversal to travel to Leicester then the Midland mainline to Sheffield.

Retracing our steps, the North Country Continental ran through Loughborough to Syston, turning east to Melton Mowbray and Oakham to arrive at Peterborough. It then journeyed onward through March, Ely and Newmarket to Ipswich and then the rarely used North Junction at Manningtree, which many ardent 'line bashers' were desperate to travel over to arrive at Parkeston Quay.

Sitting on a bench on the platform to welcome the train was George French and he revealed the package he was carrying – the original 61264 smokebox numberplate, which he had bought when the loco was withdrawn for the princely sum of 14/6d delivered to Parkeston Quay station.

The train then ran on the B1's former heyday route returning as the Scandinavian into Liverpool Street. Tickets for the train were fully booked at a bargain fare of £4.95 for a total of 495 miles. The trip was so popular that it was run again in September 1978 with a further relief train in October.

In October 1976 it was the Dinting York Express, repeated in April 1977. In August that year we travelled again to Dinting then onwards to Keighley. On a foggy Sunday the North Yorkshire Express left St Pancras bound for Chesterfield, Masborough, York, Northallerton, a reversal at Battersby to Grosmont for NYMR and on to Whitby.



A youthful Steve Andrews refixes the headboard to 37022 ready for departure from Battersby. Photo courtesy of Mike Cobley.



*Enjoying a drink at Grosmont are some of the founder members of the Trust. From left to right facing the camera are Mike Sanders, Robin Aylett, Peter Aylett and Robin Mitchell
Photo courtesy of Mike Cobley.*

The following tours were then organized:

01.04.1978 South Devon Express.

13.05.1978 Cambrian Express.

27.05.1978 Dinting York Express - London St Pancras to York & back via the Woodhead Line using 45120, 76015 & 76028.

16.09.1978 Three Way Special 2 - London Marylebone to London Liverpool St via Manchester Picc & Harwich Parkeston Quay using 25061, 25245, 40186, 76025 & 76028.

14.10.1978 Three Way Special 3 - Using 25040, 31273, 40024, 40067 & 76049.

10.03.1979 Joint Line Railcruise - London Marylebone and back via Derby, Birkenhead, Shrewsbury & Birmingham New St using 20030, 20082, 20155, 20174 & 40106.

28.04.1979 Cambrian Express 2 - London St Pancras to Aberystwyth & back using 40106.

26.05.1979 North Yorkshire Express 2.

20.10.1979 GN & GC Railcruise - London Kings Cross & back via Cleethorpes, Sheffield Victoria, the Woodhead Line, Manchester Piccadilly, Lincoln Central & Grantham using 31304, 40067, 76008, 76023, 76027 & 76029.

- 24.11.1979** Gricers Heaven - London Euston to Liverpool Lime St and back via Manchester Vic, the Woodhead Line, Preston & Birmingham New St using 25056, 25070, 25198, 25242, 40188, 76027, 76028, 81016 & 85033.
- 30.03.1980** The Yardmaster - London Kings Cross to Hull and back using 47120.
- 26.04.1980** Glasgow Discoverer.
- 26.05.1980** Rainhill Excursion - London Kings Cross to Manchester Victoria and back using 47011.
- 06.09.1980** Cock o' the North - London Kings Cross to Edinburgh Waverley using 55018 *Ballymoss* & 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier*.

Fundraising update

Dave Horton

At the time of writing, our combined bank balance (Trust and Ltd Company) stands at around £171k, recently boosted by a very generous legacy of just over £10k from the estate of a member whose name we are presently not at liberty to disclose, but to whom we are very grateful indeed.

Income from membership, share purchase and 150 Club stands at £1629 per month (£19,550 per annum). Membership currently stands at 202 members so our income per member per month is £8.06.

Our big recurring costs at the moment are storage of the loco at GCR(N) at £5200 per annum, and insurance which this year stands to cost us a whopping £11,141 to renew but we are urgently seeking alternative quotations because other loco restoration groups don't pay anything like as much as that.

With an overhaul bill before us of £750k, it doesn't take a genius to realise that it's going to take us a very long time to pay for it at the current rate of income.

Whilst we have a good amount of money in the bank to get started, it would be nice to have the certainty that we can completely fund the overhaul within our lifetimes!

For the sake of argument and round numbers, let's say we need to raise a further £600k to completely fund the overhaul.

The table below shows what that amounts to per member per month, and per member per week, for overhaul timescales ranging from 3 to 10 years.

Number of members		202	
Funds to raise		£ 600,000	
Number of years	Average per member per month	Average per member per week	
3	£ 83	£ 19.04	
4	£ 62	£ 14.28	
5	£ 50	£ 11.42	
6	£ 41	£ 9.52	
7	£ 35	£ 8.16	
8	£ 31	£ 7.14	
9	£ 28	£ 6.35	
10	£ 25	£ 5.71	

The modernisation of our membership structure in the last few years has considerably improved our monthly income in percentage terms; it is up about 85% from what it used to be. We remain very grateful for those who have upgraded to 'Bronze' (£6 per month), 'Silver' (£12 per month) and indeed 'Gold' (£64 per month). But in absolute terms, we're still nowhere near being able to overhaul the loco in a satisfactory timeframe.

Whilst we are still actively looking for grants and lottery funding etc to fill the substantial funding gap, getting money from such avenues is by no means guaranteed.

We are now also regularly attending galas again, and trying to encourage more membership there and online, so don't forget (if you are a social media user) to 'like' our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/61264loco> and share any posts etc to encourage new interest.

But as ever, there is no 'fairy godmother', no 'magic bullet', and at the moment our success or otherwise depends predominantly upon the generosity of our members.

So, it is never easy to ask for more money, but our plea to members is quite simple.....

Can you give more?

We don't in any way want to make this mandatory as we know that not everybody is in a position to afford it, but you can see from the table above that a relatively modest amount from everybody per week / per month would secure our funding stream such that we could have the confidence to place orders for the big work (in particular the boiler repair) safe in the knowledge that we can pay for it when the time comes.

We would like to suggest a figure of **£10 to £15 per week**, if you can afford it, but in fact any increase would be gratefully received.

We will automatically upgrade your membership to the appropriate 'Silver' or 'Gold' depending on the amount you choose to give.

If we can achieve that sort of regular giving from most members, then we would get into a 'positive spiral'; more money can be spent, progress will be quicker, we will have more to show for it, it will attract more members and hence we'll have more income to sustain us.

It's a big ask we know, but without doing something different, we could be faced with the prospect of taking 20 years or more to overhaul the loco at the present monthly rate of income, and remarkably it's already been out of traffic for 4.5 years.

Of course, we certainly wouldn't be alone amongst custodians of ex-Barry locomotives that have already had one or more active periods in preservation, only to find it takes longer to do the second or third overhaul compared to the original restoration; as an example, 34039 'Boscastle' took 20 years to restore from Barry condition and yet it's now been 24 years since it last steamed at the Great Central. Let's not end up like that.

So, dear members, this wasn't intended to cause depression, but please - **dig deep**.....and thanks as always!

If you would like to discuss or change your monthly payment arrangements, please contact Dave Horton:

E-mail: secretary@thompsonb1.org

Mobile: 07739 023316

Address: Green Cottage, Lower Tysoe, Warwickshire, CV35 0BY

GCR Gala weekend

Dave Horton

A dozen or more people turned up to clean the loco on Saturday 9th March, in advance of the GCR 125th Anniversary weekend on 16th/17th March. Having gone uncleaned for the best part of 4 years, she was made to look a whole lot more presentable. With a few noble exceptions, it was all new faces – very encouraging to see. Let us hope that it signals the dawn of a new era for the loco, with a new generation of enthusiastic followers keen to get involved.



Cleaners hard at work on 9th March. All photos in this section courtesy of Dave Horton.

The GCR 125th Anniversary weekend gave the Trust a welcome boost. The loco was placed on display outside at Ruddington adjacent to Platform 2, where visitors could access the cab; there was a steady stream of people, all interested in the loco, our plans for it, its history and its relevance to the local area. Nearly £500 was raised in donations and regular social media updates generated 80 new followers and 'reached' an incredible 26,000 people according to the stats!

David Lewis, one of our members and volunteers on the stand, again graced us with his superb 5" gauge model B1 no. 61003 'Gazelle' on display (complete with miniature Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust headboard). The model loco also gave rides round the NSMEE club track on Sunday.



The loco on display at Ruddington during the 125th anniversary weekend.



The 5" gauge B1 no. 61003 'Gazelle' owned and driven by David Lewis giving rides and promoting the Trust on the NSMEE track, Sunday 17th March.

GCR Open Extravaganza

Dave Horton

The sales team were out in force again at Quorn for the GCR's 'Open Extravaganza' weekend on 11th and 12th May.

Whilst it wasn't the busiest of events, a fine display was put on featuring our new information boards, plenty of 'swag' for sale, and fronted once again by David Lewis's superb 5" gauge model B1 no. 61003 'Gazelle', which never fails to attract interest and draw people in.

As always, a tremendous thanks must go to Wendy and Lee Ibbotson for organising the whole thing; they deserve a medal for getting up at 3am on the Saturday and trekking all the way from Dorset to Leicestershire! Thanks also to David Lewis for lending his loco and sticking around the entire weekend with Wendy and Lee to engage with people. These events may not raise thousands of pounds, but they are still well worth doing to keep us 'in the public eye' and to spread the word about what we're doing.

A very respectable £118 in donations was raised as well as lots of social media interest generated. As if to illustrate this fact, Wendy reported at the AGM that we had a reach of 7,000 (ish) from our Facebook posts, but in the last 90 days (at the time of writing) our reach (content from page interactions seen) had reached a staggering 86,277, with 'unique impressions' (the number of times our posts were actually on people's screens) standing at 179,155. A small video update posted on the morning of Sunday 12th May about the work ongoing at Ruddington by Jonny and team had had 14700 views at the time of writing!



Wendy, David and Lee on the stand at Quorn.



Lee and Wendy with David and his 5" model of Gazelle.



The 5" Gauge model of Gazelle with full sized 8F No 48305 in the background.

Tender working parties

Jonny Johnson

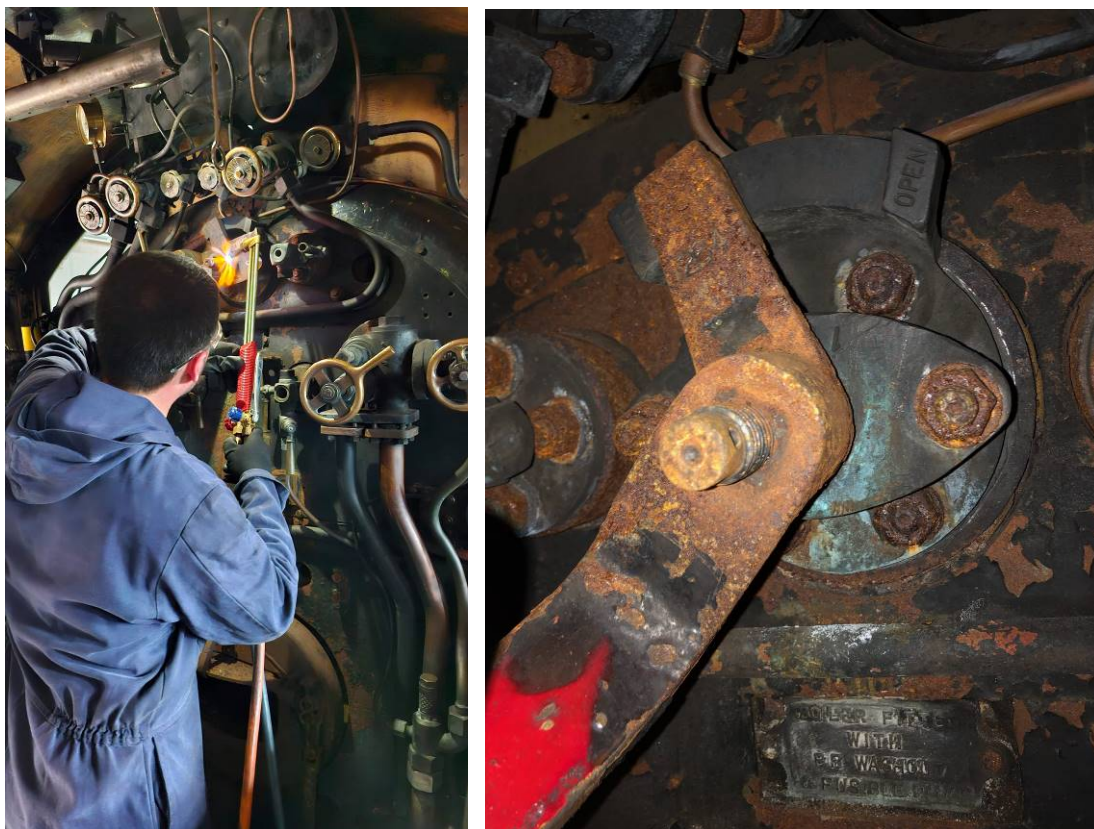
Another working party took place on Saturday 11th May, marking a small milestone in that we finally started taking the loco apart!

In attendance were Steve Andrews, Steve Robb, Simon Brown, Jack Sharpe, Philomenah Holladay, Jonny Johnson and a young lad called Mo, sadly we didn't catch his surname.

Both the Steves, assisted by Simon and Mo, made excellent progress with sorting out the containers. Most of the racking is now up in the closest container to the shed and another van load of tools/equipment has been unloaded and sorted following delivery from Grosmont.

One of the jobs on the loco was to remove the dish tray - this is the little shelf just above the firehole door, which is used to keep the oil fillers warm and to place the loco crew's tea brew cans upon.

The regulator handle and stuffing box assembly were also removed, by Jonny and Philomenah. As can be seen from the pictures, nearly 5 years outside in the open without any use meant this was a longer job than expected as it was all seized solid. With a lot of heat and careful use of a crowbar, hammer and wedges, the handle was eventually parted from the loco.



Jonny Johnson applying heat to the regulator handle with the close up photo showing the extent of the corrosion/seizure all too obvious, making the removal of the handle quite a battle.



Jack Sharpe removing the pin in order to liberate the water filler lid. The lid/hinge assembly has been salvaged and will eventually be restored to the new tender tank.

On the tender, Jack Sharpe and Steve Robb had equal fun trying to remove the tender water filler lid and components, which you could also tell hadn't been removed in a long while and exposure to the elements had caused the main pin to seize up. In the end the pin had to be cut using an angle grinder to get the lid off. However, this lid is the first item salvaged for eventual use on the brand-new tender tank.

Thanks to all who turned up to help.

The next restoration working parties are scheduled to take place on the following dates:

- Saturday 13th July
- Saturday 14th September
- Saturday 9th November

TBLT 150 CLUB

Stephen Harris

Prizewinners 2024

2024	Special	£50	£30	£30
January		104 P Morrell	145 M Rogers	114 J Whitfield
February		79 J Whitfield	71 A Naylor	61 F Carter
March	£100 12 A Camp		49 S Barrington	143 M Rogers
April		158 L Ellis	145 M Rogers	7 D Wellington
May		171 A D Smith	162 A Naylor	141 D Westbury
June	£100			

Come and win up to £200 and support your B1 at the same time!

Subscribe to the 150 Club and have a chance to win one of three cash prizes each month, with an extra two prizes in December.

You can subscribe £2 each month for each number, by standing order or annually by cheque for £24 for each number.

Please contact Stephen Harris at 7 Church Lea, Tavistock, Devon PL19 9PS or on 01822 618395 or by e mail at stephenharris@hotmail.com to subscribe or increase your subscription.