

# Newsletter

North Tyneside Steam Railway  
Association

No. 67; Summer 2011



Registered Charity no. 508092



We don't often get the chance to photograph our locos in bright sunshine, because of their orientation on our line. However, this photo is of Peckett Loco ACC No. 5, Jackie Milburn, which made a guest appearance in its home town, Ashington in June this year. The loco spent 4 days at Woodhorn Museum, where it appeared for the annual Miners' Picnic. More photos inside.

*Photo: Bob Stapley.*

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## NORTH TYNESIDE STEAM RAILWAY ASSOCIATION

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Secretary: Bob Stapley (also Newsletter Editor)  
Treasurer: Keith McNally  
Other members: Mark Beresford, Michael Darling, Ken Hedley, Roly Kay, Ian Taylor, Michael Wortley

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Welcome to the summer edition of your newsletter.

Two recent events are reported in this edition. First, another educational visit for members and volunteers was organised in June. This is becoming an annual event, and on this occasion we paid a visit to the South Tynedale Railway at Alston, in Cumbria. Those of us old enough will remember that the Alston Branch used to run south from Haltwhistle, on the Newcastle—Carlisle line, until it was closed by BR in 1976. Nowadays it is possible to travel down the valley from Alston for a couple of miles, to Kirkhaugh, with a further extension to Lintley planned.

Just a few days later, our Peckett loco ACC No.5, *Jackie Milburn* returned to its home town, Ashington to participate in the annual Miners' gala. This is the third occasion when one of our locos has been away from home, loco A No. 5 having visited the National Railway Museum at Shildon, and Beamish Museum in recent years. It's now very pleasing to see this loco back in service at our railway.

Many thanks to members Colin Bowman and Sid Leighton for their coverage of the Alston event, and to Laura Brannigan and Roger Darsley for the article/photos from Ashington.

Both of these articles include lots of photos, and the same can be said of Roger Darsley's article on rail in the USA, so this time we have more picture viewing than reading material.

An article from Ken Hedley from the Blyth area, and some interesting pics from Michael Darling complete this edition.

Enjoy your newsletter, and don't forget—I'm always on the lookout for articles and photos.

## *Chairman's Report*

In the last issue I reported on the progress of the loco "Jackie Milburn" the loco has now been re-painted and fully lined out by Keith McNally assisted by Norman Swindle. What an excellent job they made of it, they both spent many weeks, at least six or seven, perfecting its paintwork.

The loco was transported to Woodhorn Museum for the Miners' Gala weekend and it stayed on display under the pit head winding gear on a length of track laid by Rohan Ramayake, Alan Carlin and volunteers from the Association. Volunteers also were on hand over the long weekend to answer questions from the public and explain about the Loco. All in all a very successful visit as the Loco was of course back in the place where it spent its industrial working life on the Ashington Colliery system. The Loco is now safely back at Middle Engine Lane working trains most weekends.

So far it's been quite a busy season for visitors let's hope it stays that way until the season ends.

Tyne and wear Museums and the North Tyneside Council have reached an agreement with a new partner a training company called PDL. They run courses to NVQ level on track laying and maintenance and will be building classrooms behind our Portacabin and laying concrete sleeperead track on the waste ground behind the pathway to the platform. I'm sure we'll make them welcome.

### **Carriage and Wagon News**

The SLO coach is now in the Carriage Shop having the west side re-painted Norman Swindle is on top of the job and was applying the first coat of Midland Maroon Gloss when I last spoke to him,

*Malcolm Dunlavey*  
*Chairman NTSRA.*

*Farewell to Steam at North Blyth, by Ken Hedley*



The last steam loco to operate at North Blyth in July 1967 was J27 65789. One of its final duties was to proceed to Morpeth then on to the Rothbury line, which was now closed and was being lifted. It picked up the engineers train loaded with the lifted material, which it took back to Morpeth, then returned with empty wagons ready for the next day. As there were no run round facilities it had to propel the train all the way to the site.

After completing this operation, it went with the guards van to North Blyth, where it remained till the end of steam there. It was then transferred to Sunderland where it remained till withdrawal and eventual scrapping.



The upper photo shows it passing through Meldon station with the headboard still in situation, with the loaded train.

The lower photo shows the loco at South Blyth.

*Steam Loco Pics from Shildon, by Michael Darling*

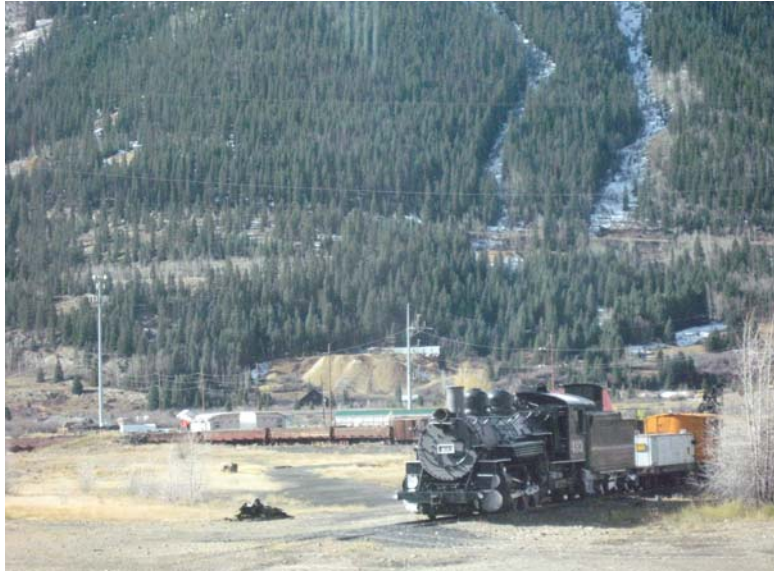
Upper: GWR Hall Class "Olton Hall" dressed up as "Hogwarts Castle" raising steam at Shildon in preparation for a Harry Potter Rail Tour. In front of it is the Mallard awaiting its journey back to NRM York to go on display in the Great Hall to replace the ill fated Flying Scotsman.

Lower: the J21 owned by Beamish undergoing a cosmetic restoration at NRM Shildon. Once completed it is to move to Kirby Stephen to take part as a static exhibit at their Station Gala.



*Photos from the USA, by Roger Darsley.*

More photos appear on pages 10, 11 and 19. Roger's article on rail in the USA appears on pages 14–18.



Durango and Silverton Railroad K37 class 2-8-2 493 at Silverton depot. Behind are the spoil tips of the last mine to be worked, which closed in 1991, and then row upon row of conifers up the side of the mountain. Photograph taken on Sunday 29th October 2010.

Below: The same loco at Silverton [plus R.R.Darsley!] on Sunday 29th October 2010. While the DSSR terminated at Silverton there were other railways that continued further into the mountains such as the Silverton Northern RR and the Silverton, Gladstone and Northerly RR.



## ***Ashington No. 5 goes back to its roots***

Mid June saw a momentous occasion for our recently restored steam engine 'Jackie Milburn'. As a requirement of the Heritage Lottery Fund when the engine, formally known as Ashington No. 5, was restored back to its former glory it was to be returned to its and its namesake-Jackie Milburn's former place of work, Woodhorn Museum. There seemed no better opportunity to do so than as part of their annual Miners' Picnic celebration.

Woodhorn having only a narrow gauge railway meant first a track was required for the engine to sit on which was constructed with the help of our track maintenance technician Alan Carlin the day before the engine's arrival. The engine then followed and when unloaded was situated near the pit wheels where it was to be destined originally for 4 days, but as it turned out due to bad weather and vehicle logistics, just over a week.

Despite the rain our band of association members braved the elements to answer questions and give out leaflets to the 1,014 visitors who attended the Miners' Picnic event on the Saturday. A further 608 people would have seen the engine over the other three days of its planned residence at Woodhorn and amongst them included Jackie Milburn's son, Jack, who stated it was "...fabulous to have it back here at one of the pits where it used to operate..." and commended volunteers for their dedication during its restoration. We also got our moments of fame featuring in various local newspapers, and a snippet on the BBC's Look North.

Despite certain set backs and its slightly extended visit the trip was a great success and a fantastic opportunity to show off the hard work of our volunteers, and excellent asset we have at the Stephenson Railway Museum. Staff members at Woodhorn commented on how many intrigued visitors had asked about the engine, and where it had come from- it was so popular they even wanted to keep it as a permanent fixture!

Thankfully, however, the engine is now firmly back on NTSRA track and back in use for passenger operations.

***Laura Brannigan***

*Peckett Loco ACC No.5, Jackie Milburn, at Woodhorn Museum*



Above: Leaving the Museum for Woodhorn, on Wednesday 8th June.  
Photos: Laura Brannigan



Above: Thursday 9th June: the loco waiting patiently for the visitors due at the weekend. Photos by Bob Stapley

Below: Note the change in weather two days later. These photos, by Roger Darsley, show the loco with part of the museum in the background.





The afternoon train in the turning Y at Silverton on the Durango and Silverton RR with class K36 2-8-2 480 in charge. Photograph taken c1.00pm on Sunday 29th October 2010.



South West Lumber Mills Inc. 2-6-6-2 Mallet no.12 built by Baldwin in 1929 is at the pioneer Museum, Flagstaff on Wednesday 27th October 2010. The timber company also donated 2-8-0 no.17 [built 1917] to Flagstaff and it is plinthed near the station.

*By Roger Darsley*



Durango and Silverton RR class K36 2-8-2 480 in the gorge of the Animas River on its way down to Durango in the afternoon of Sunday 29th October 2010.

*Educational Visit to South Tynedale Railway, 4th June 2011  
(For captions, see opposite page)*



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## *Educational Visit to South Tynedale Railway, 4th June 2011*

Captions for photos on page 12

1. NTSRA members milling around Alston station, prior to the departure of the train.
- 2 and 3 The train, awaiting departure at 1100. 1952 diesel loco “Naworth” is leading.
4. Association member Roly Kay, carrying out an inspection.
5. 1967 Diesel loco “Cumbria.”
6. 1957 0-6-0 Polish loco “Nakło”
7. 1948 0-4-0 Loco “Helen Kathryn”
8. The train at the present-day terminal station, Kirkhaugh.

Photos 1, 2 and 4 by Sid Leighton. Photos 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 by Colin Bowman

Once again, the Association arranged an educational excursion for members and volunteers. This enables us to learn how other railways operate whilst at the same time enjoying a day out. This year the excursion was to the South Tynedale Railway, in Alston.

The 2 feet gauge railway occupies part of the former BR branch, which left the Newcastle–Carlisle line at Haltwhistle, and followed the river South Tyne for 13 miles to Alston, the terminal station. The line closed in 1976.

We had arranged to tour the workshops and sheds, prior to trav-

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elling on the train to the present-day terminal at Kirkhaugh, and what an interesting tour it was. The stock owned by the railway is very impressive, and we felt that the sheds themselves were nothing short of being a museum.

After the tour, we boarded the train, hauled by diesel loco “Naworth” for the 50 minute round trip through some very attractive scenery to Kirkhaugh. At Kirkhaugh, the extension further down the valley to Lintley was clearly visible.

We all found the set-up at South Tynedale very impressive and interesting, and some of us have vowed to return for another trip, when the extension is complete.

We would like to thank South Tynedale for making us so welcome, and in particular Brian and David for giving us such a fascinating tour.

For further details of the railway, visit the very comprehensive website, <http://www.strps.org.uk>.

*Colin Bowman*

### *USA Coast to Coast*

I recently travelled with a group holiday from Britain on a US coast to coast tour that is increasingly popular with British holidaymakers despite the current adverse rate of exchange. Brian Dotson, Editor of the SLS Journal, was also in this party. We travelled on several Amtrak trains, on the Durango & Silverton, the Grand Canyon Railway, and where ever possible [this was a family holiday!!] visited museums and sampled city metros along the way.

Our first introduction was to New York’s Grand Central Station, which is truly magnificent as a concourse, as are major stations

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elsewhere such as Washington Union, Chicago Union, and Los Angeles, but Metra North rail passengers are treated to dark underground platforms with grimy walls. Underground departure areas are always depressing and put off all but captive commuters from travelling. Apart from the stations we were surprised by the significant amount of iron and steel used in the architecture of the railways. We are used to stone, brick and, latterly, concrete in viaducts and bridges but in the opening up of the vast land mass it was entirely logical to use iron and steel. It was fascinating to see the work being do on replacing the rail bridge across the Mississippi at Burlington, Iowa with the new steel span on pontoons upstream with a pusher tug in attendance.

Amtrak's Northeast Corridor is the nearest to a UK main line with regular spacing of stations, good double track, and a frequent fast service. We travelled on Train 155, a semi-fast hauled by a venerable class AEM7 Bo-BoDE no. 916 but saw the streamlined class HHP8 locos and the Acela high speed sets. By UK standards we found station stops and recovery times long. Amtrak have just issued an ambitious plan for the Northeast Corridor in which top speed would reach 200 mph and average speed between New York and Washington would be 137 mph halving present journey times. The cost would be \$4.7 Billion/year over 25 years.

We have very little that approximates to the US long distance cross country trains and our passenger trains have always been given precedence whereas in the US the cross country Amtrak is at the mercy of the freight schedule. We were told that if a train was under an hour late it could be considered on time. One conductor showed us how to calculate the running time and the recovery time. Compare the time between two towns in each direction - the shortest is the running time and the difference is the recovery. The South West Chief was consider to

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be the worst timekeeper that we travelled on but had improved over 2009. It was on time for us despite the speed restriction recently introduced because of the state of the track in Colorado and New Mexico. Haulage of each train was by two slab sided Amtrak 'Genesis' class PA42DC Bo-BoDE.

All our trains were clean and any faults or temperature alterations were rapidly dealt with by the 'mechanicals'. Several times our party were in the last coach and we discovered the joy of the window in the end corridor connection which allowed us to see where we had been and photograph without the double glazing reflections. Coach class was very comfortable, much more space and comfort than on an aircraft. We were disappointed with roomettes on the Superliners. We found them very cramped and the average European is said to be less bulky than the average American. The bedrooms are much better and worth the upgrade [perhaps!]. The bottom bunk was big enough to be a double bed though it made access to the sink difficult. The shower unit was enterprising but difficult to use - the instructions are sublime! 'You may find it more convenient to shower sitting down' - on the toilet. The bunks were comfortable but the top deck of the large US loading gauge means you can sway a lot on indifferent track!

The coach attendants varied from the competent to the cheeky and the superb. The restaurant car staff were different. We were warned that the staff tended to have attitude and the warning was fulfilled. Our first crew treated us like five year olds and throughout it was clear that the System was always more important than the customer. Our last experience was breakfast approaching Los Angeles. Breakfast was from 5am to 6am for an 8.15 am arrival even though at that point the train was running an hour late. Nobody wants to get up for breakfast at 5 am. The explanation was that everything had to be cleared and accounted for. Apparently this needs two and a quarter hours. We thought

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that the system needed changing but when we got to the door at 5 am we found the crew sitting with their backs to us and we had to wait until they decided they were ready to open. Charm school graduates they were not!

Our poorest timekeeper was the Coast Daylight which boarded on time and then waited to depart for one and an half hours which time it never made up. The conductor told us they were having to wait for the late running Amtrak train 763 from San Diego [two hours late] and that this was most unusual. Someone high up must have pulled considerable rank? All our Amtrak trains were full and passenger numbers for Amtrak are up by 7% despite the depression.

Freight is definitely king and we got used to the regular procession of freight trains; coal, oil, containers and double stacked containers with multiple locomotive consists on the front middle and rear of the train. The consolidation of lines into major blocks meant that the black and white of the Norfolk and Southern and the blue and orange of the Chessie System [CSX] gave way slowly to the orange and yellow of the Burlington, Northern and Santa Fe, some of whose locomotives were still in the BN green and black, and finally to the yellow and grey of the Union Pacific.

Class variations are notoriously difficult for the newcomer but we could manage the difference between a GP38-2 and an SD70ACe by the end of the trip. There were odd locomotives in other colours, mainly the blue of GMTX, a locomotive leasing company and there was one Canadian National locomotive that was a lot farther south than we expected. A lot of rail side communities still have plinthed locomotives from the end of steam in rather variable condition. The best was at Galesburg, Illinois where Chicago, Burlington and Quincy S4 class 4-6-4

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3006 is preserved in a bay platform with coaches, with the tender under a water pipe as if the locomotive was just about to fill up and go.

The journey from Silverton to Durango hauled by 2-8-2 480, the first K36, was truly magnificent though the first snows of winter almost kept us from reaching Silverton. Our only regret was that when we reached Durango everyone wanted to go home. There was a handsome offer of a visit to the locomotive shed when everybody had finished their duties but that proved too late for our itinerary. We were hoping for a classic FA4 consist on the Grand Canyon Railway but the B type FA4 had a FH40 up front. It was however another great ride.

We took short trips on subways and metros in New York, Washington, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco. As with metros in UK and Europe the first challenge is to manage the ticket purchasing system, different on each system. Our greatest experience was travelling on the Loop on the Chicago Elevated where our most helpful station staffer ever was the gentleman at Merchandise Mart station.

In Museums, we paid homage to 2-4-0 'John Bull' at the Museum of American Life, and to South West Lumber Mills' Baldwin Mallet 2-6-6-2 at the Pioneer Museum, Flagstaff but our most interesting museum was that of the San Francisco Cable Car system which includes the total winding operation, the workshop and car barn. Although we were in San Francisco over the weekend and chatted with folks operating the 'F' tram line, we did not manage to travel on the 'Boat' car from Blackpool.

It was a wonderful holiday, with friendly people and good weather.

*Roger Darsley*

*Final USA Pics, by Roger Darsley*



Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad class S4 4-6-4 3006 plinthed [with a train!] at Galesburg, IL. Wednesday, 20th October 2010.



Grand Junction Railway 2-8-0 29 plinthed at Williams station Tuesday 26th October 2010.

**NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS' PICNIC**  
**at WOODHORN**  
**Sat 11th June 2011 10-5pm**



Join us for a good old fashioned family day out  
Craft Fair • Balloonatic • Clog Dancing • Brass Band  
Folk Music • 2 for 1 Entry to Videogame Nation  
Face Painting • Jackie Milburn Steam Locomotive



Directions: Just off the A189 east of Ashington, Northumberland  
(follow the brown signs to Woodhorn rather than your satnav!) Parking All day: £3.00

WOODHORN, Museum and Northumberland Archives, QEII Country Park,  
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[www.experiencewoodhorn.com](http://www.experiencewoodhorn.com)

The handbill advertising the Miners' picnic, with our Peckett loco dominating! Reproduction with kind permission of Woodhorn Museum.