

The Potting Shed June 2023 No. 72



Our Buy-one-get-one-free on Bedding Plants sale is on 1 July from 10:00am to 4:00pm

Also available will be a variety of fuchsias, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, alpines, herbs, and hanging baskets

Refreshments. Railways.

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Editorial

This issue covers a period of much activity at the Nursery which results in a bumper issue.

The cement has been laid for the foundation of the new building. We have run a successful photo charter for railway photographers, and there have been several volunteer groups visiting. Bob Brook outlines the work undertaken by our Trustees and Directors.

Sales Dates

On 1 July the Nursery will open for its Buy-one-get-one-free on Summer bedding plants sale between 10:00am and 4:00pm.

The next sales day will be on Saturday 16 September, Heritage Day 10:00-4:00.

Ten Years Ago

The Potting Shed No. 19 from June 2013 was three pages of A4. The Nursery was to open for two days on the last weekend in conjunction with the Poppleton Garden Trail. Unlike our other sales days a charge of £3 was to be made for entry, although this gave entry to other open gardens in the village.

The Nursery was supplying plants for Langwathby, Appleby and Kirkby Stephen stations on the Settle and Carlisle line. Starbeck station was being supplied with plants for Starbeck In Bloom. On

June 14 plants were transported to Starbeck on the 12:15 York – Harrogate train. In attendance for the loading of the plants were volunteers from Starbeck, Northern's station manager Dave Norton and a journalist from The Press. This raised our presence in the local media.

Cementation

The story so far... Geoff Rafton aided and abetted by the railway group and visiting groups had prepared the groundwork for pouring of concrete for the foundations for the new building. A date was booked for the pouring and then someone hacked the computer containing the concrete orders and so the pour was off, you couldn't make it up. A new date was set up and the concrete was poured, see pictures elsewhere in this issue. A quotation is expected for the superstructure of the new building.

Photo Charter

Several months ago the railway group was approached about holding a photographic charter. None of the group had any experience of running a photo charter and the photographers were not very forthcoming about what they wanted apart for the possibility of a loan of a loco from Neill Clayton's Ripon & District Railway.

After much discussion your editor put together a programme of trains which would demonstrate the work undertaken by a narrow gauge railway attached to nursery. As the Ripon loco loan was uncertain until the day before the charter the programme was flexible to allow for its presence or not. June 15 was the booked day of the charter with 18 participants.

On what was one of the hottest days of the year so far several representative trains were made up:

1. A horticultural train
2. A "pole" train with red carpet and its poles
3. The push truck with plants.
4. The tipper truck containing soil.

On the day Neill could only bring *Wasp* a motorbike-powered wagon, which it was impossible to get operating. *LoweCo* hauled the first two trains round the loop at the Harrogate end of the Nursery in each direction interspersed with solo runs by the hand-pushed trolley and *Terry Stanhope*. The tipper wagon is too big to go on the track between the greenhouses *LoweCo* would haul it via the main-line straight, where it tipped its soil. *LoweCo* would detach go to the other end of tipper and haul it back via the main-line straight. This worked well although we didn't tip all the soil.

The horticultural and pole trains were combined and hauled round the system,

and the train further strengthened by the addition of *Terry Stanhope* and *Wasp*. This was the longest train run at Poppleton.

Finally a nice historic cameo was set up resulting from the presence of Poppleton volunteer Colin King's Enfield motorbike and Ripon engineer Adam's Morris Traveller car.

The day was very successful with glorious sunny weather and very favourable comments from the photographers.

Railway and building work

There is not much to report as most of the work is to do with activities reported elsewhere in this issue.

We are seeing the effects of the narrow gauge track having minimal or no maintenance since it was laid in the 1980s. One of the points at the York end of the site is needing attention.

A wagon turntable together with a bogie has been placed outside the engine shed providing an attractive display.

Poppleton Station Adoption

The station is looking fine now that the bedding plants are in and some of the permanent ones are looking a bit more mature. Many thanks to all who helped get them in.

The very hot weather has resulted in more bowser runs for additional water

and more watering than we would have liked.

Red seems fairly absent from our colour scheme due to the planted geraniums being white but they still look good.

We plan to top up and fill any gaps in due course.

We have not heard anything from Northern recently but we have received our money for this year.

A lot of litter and recycling (mainly glass bottles) was picked up after the Poppleton Beer Festival and some minor vandalism reported.

I have never known it in 30 plus years, but the May timetable had some mistakes in it which resulted in a couple of trains having to be retimed by a few minutes after it had been published. Northern have not put up a timetable on the station yet for the May changes! They usually do but never in a timely fashion.

We hope to turn our attention to the concrete POPPLETON sign on Platform 2 soon. It needs work to prepare it for painting.

LoweCo's sandbox covers

Sand stored in sandboxes is used by railway locomotives to maintain traction when the driving wheels of a locomotive slip on the rail head.

Sometime ago we received an email from John Browning, an expat Lancastrian living in Australia saying he had two original, sandbox covers from *LoweCo* and would we like them. John

had appropriated the covers when the loco was at Barton Upon Humber. John visited the Nursery in mid-June and presented the covers to Bob Brook. Bob is undecided whether the newly acquired covers will reside permanently on the loco or only appear on high days and holidays.



John Browning and Bob Brook with the sandbox covers.

The Roles of Director or Trustee of the Nursery.

Will you agree to being a director of Poppleton Community Railway Nursery Ltd? was a question asked of me and two others in 2008. It was something I did not expect and took some time to think about.

Now as the longest continuously serving Director and now Trustee of the Nursery, I feel it is time to share what I know about the roles and encourage others to take over some of the responsibility.

A group of railway managers, had agreed at the early public meetings in 2006, to get together and try to organise a community based project to take over the nursery when it closed. They had to set up a limited company, as that was the only way the owners of the site (Network Rail) would deal with the project. These managers became the first directors. But with the difficulties they experienced, they had all dropped out except Paul Salveson the Chairman. It was Paul, knowing we were still interested, who asked us, after we had a few meetings with him.

So after many problems we were up and running by 2009, but continued to have to face many problems in the first few years. Eventually the nursery was on more secure ground and it was decided, that we should try to become a charity, which required trustees to ensure we met our aims, and was financially sound.

What do Trustees/Directors do? Firstly none of the Directors/Trustees receive any remuneration, all work is done voluntarily. Secondly the Directors/Trustees are there to ensure the Company/Trust is run according to the rules of the Charity Commission and company law. In practice this does not normally require much except awareness of what is going on, and continual checking on: finance; following the aims of the charity; safety of volunteers

and visitors; obeying agreed policies, etc. Failure to do that could result in fines or prosecution. But do not fear plenty of advice is available. All the trustees have areas of responsibility. Most of the decision making at the nursery is done at the bi-monthly meeting which includes the directors and other appointed officials. This includes the budget and big spending decisions, agreeing and updating policies, and any particular major items. Therefore you don't have to be a trustee to be involved in decision making, all who take on various rolls have their say at the meetings. Thus taking responsibility for a particular area of the admin is a good way to learn what goes on and perhaps go on to undertake the full responsibilities of becoming Trustee.

Would I do the same again? Yes I have mainly enjoyed serving the Nursery and its people for the last 15 years. I wish I was younger and fitter and could start again but with the benefit of knowledge. I enjoy being involved and seeing the Nursery grow and improve, although I still see all the jobs to do. I would recommend that those who feel that they could help, to get involved, you have the help and friendship of a great bunch of people and you will benefit as well as the Nursery.

Bob Brook

Visiting groups



We are benefiting from visiting groups who perform much good work at the Nursery. Apart from horticultural work groups have painted the door to the S1 container and the inner and out gates of the Nursery. Remedial repair was also undertaken on the latter.

There are already the prospect of further groups in September.



...and finally

This is the tale of a load of soil. When the cement pouring described elsewhere in this issue was planned, it was envisioned that there would be excess concrete in the pumping pipe which could be used elsewhere at the Nursery. Holes were dug for filling with concrete and the soil

placed near the cold frames at the Harrogate end of the site. When the concrete was poured there was no excess concrete and the soil remained near the cold frames. While planning the photo charter a demonstration of using the tipper wagon was included in the programme and the soil was shovelled into the tipper wagon...only to be tipped back near the cold frames for the benefit of the photographers, the remainder being tipped the following day while clearing up. The soil was then put back into the previously dug holes. One of the Network Rail groups has placed concrete slabs on top of the soil to achieve the finish which was not possible from concrete.

Photo charter



Photos courtesy David Tillotson, David DeSmet, Robin Patrick. Bob Brook

Cementation



Left to right: the concrete making and pumping plant kit; the pipe; pouring concrete. photos: Colin King.

