



Vintage Carriages Trust

Members' Newsletter: December 1999

This *Newsletter* comes with Seasons Greetings to all VCT Members and their families and friends, and with the hope that the New Year will be a good one for All.

2000 Subscriptions

If you are a Life Member, or an Honorary Member, or if you Covenant your subscription, or if you pay by Standing Order – you should find your Membership Card attached to this Newsletter. (If not, please let us know!)

Similarly, if you have beaten us to it and have already paid your 2000 membership subscription: either you should already have received your card, or it's enclosed with this Newsletter. (And again, if not, please let us know!)

For everyone else: it's 2000 Subscription Time!!

We are still holding the annual subscription rate at the amazingly low figure of £4 for adults and £2.50 for Senior Citizens and Juniors. This allows you not only to receive your regular copies of this Newsletter but also concessionary fares on the Worth Valley Railway and special rates at any location where our stock is on loan, and last but by no means least free entry to our Museum at Ingrow. The Trust is very grateful to those who can manage to add a donation to their subscription. There is a saying "every little helps"—so anything you can give to the Trust at this time would be much appreciated!

It is worth remembering that if you pay Income Tax you may Covenant your Subscription (together with any donation you wish to make) over a period of four years, which adds 30% or so to the money received by the Trust, at no extra cost to you!

Would you please use the enclosed form to renew promptly – this will be of great help to the Trust!

Late news

As this Newsletter was being "put to bed" we were delighted to receive the news that the Trust has achieved FULL REGISTRATION under Phase 2 of the Museums & Galleries Commission Scheme. The Trust has been Fully Registered under Phase 1 of the Scheme since 1990. Phase 2 is much more onerous in its demands. Full Registration is important as an indicator of responsible management by many grant-making bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Area Museum Councils. We were particularly commended for our Disability and Education Policies which "were beyond Phase 2 standards."

"This has been one of the most eventful times in the history of the Vintage Carriages Trust."

How often do we write that at the beginning of our Newsletter – and yet every time it is true!

- The Annual Meeting has come and gone. We enclose a copy of the Minutes – and if you would like a copy of the Annual Accounts, please send a large stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary.
- *Bellerophon's* 125th Birthday celebrations was a highlight of the year.
- There was a great display of our Collection in use at the Worth Valley's Enthusiasts Weekend.
- Progress on the GN coach 2856 and on other parts of the Collection has continued apace.
- Last but by no means least the Trust has taken the great step of becoming an Employer!

After that build up, we will just for a change start with news of what is sometimes perceived as the less exciting but very necessary part of our activities; the cleaning and maintenance of the Collection and the building in which it is housed. Also news of our retail activities. Working on the principle that things are as interesting and exciting as you personally care to make them, we highlight that dedicated group of working members who are particularly connected with this side of the Trust. Some of them (not all) would shy away from the words "needle-gun" and "bogie" and "drawhook". They do however make a great impact on the Trust as they help in so many ways to look after the shops either at the Museum or at Keighley, welcome visitors at the Museum and show them around, and/or helping to sort magazines, price books – the list is endless. Not all of them have a great knowledge of railways, what is needed is an interest in people and a desire to help the Trust.

Our First Employee

On the cleaning and maintenance side the Trust Committee made the decision to formalise this very necessary work and take on an employee. We have always been fortunate in the willingness of so many to look after the everyday mundane tasks which have to be done. Laundering towels (thanks, Lesley), sorting the magazine room (thanks, Hugh, Bob, Brian and others), sorting the electrics and sound system (thanks, Grommitt – sorry; Philip – and of course Wallis: and welcome, Martyn) plus so many other activities. It was decided however that there are essential tasks in keeping the building clean and ready for visitors and the workshop easy and safe to use. This has become a much more demanding job and not one that volunteers, coming to pursue a hobby, have the time or inclination to carry through to the degree needed. So John Heaton, a Committee member (a post he has relinquished since becoming an employee) and an active working volunteer has been appointed as from 1st November as **Museum Caretaker**. Here, John writes of his initial reactions to his new job:

“A new visitor sees immediately things which those of us in the Museum at Ingrow regularly miss because we are used to them. The most noticeable part of this is dust and general clutter. So, a start has now been made on tackling the backlog of Museum and workshop cleaning. There have always been arrangements to keep the shop, mess room and toilets which are used by visitor and volunteer in reasonable order, and we thank Gillian Foster and more recently Rita Mellin for helping with this. Other areas have however been neglected, e.g. the museum walls, displays and our Collection of coaches which have acquired a layer of dust some of which no doubt dates back to our building works.

Now, I have been taken on to improve matters and a programme of heavy cleaning is under way. The workshop too will receive attention to its tidiness and cleanliness, but of course there is no need for me to keep the workshop tidy as all our volunteers are so good at putting things always and cleaning up after themselves... **we wish!** Some of my work will be involved with the restoration and maintenance

activities of the Trust. I am helping in progressing the work on the bogies of GN 2856 and I will be liaising with other coach caretakers to see where and how I can help with maintenance and restoration work. As a volunteer I am caretaker of the Metropolitan Brake coach, and am therefore interested to be involved in helping to sort a long-standing problem with the drawhook (the wear on the drawhook slot has to be rectified to avoid the hook turning in its slot when the coach is in use). The use of this and other coaches in the Collection on the Worth Valley and elsewhere throws up things which need attention. I hope to be able to build into my work a programme helping to maintain the coaches, also part of the job will include the cleaning inside and out on their return from use.”

John will take a lot of the burden off the volunteers in many areas, but he will not replace them and there is still a need for more active working members in all parts of the Trust's activities.

VCT Retailing Activities

Volunteer Hugh Beck writes of his experience in managing Keighley Shop and being the magazine room supremo...

“Keighley shop, in its revised form, continues to trade happily under the guidance of its team of volunteers – Johns of three varieties, Heaton, Oughton and Wallis, flying the flag regularly. Business has been showing a steady up-turn over the year, largely in proportion to the passengers brought to us by the Worth Valley Railway. It is even more affected by the length of the train being run! Short trains and DMUs do not bring an engine near to our door with its attendant audience. When the locomotive leaves on its run round we hope some of the audience then come and browse and buy. At the Museum the Magazine Room has now become the subject of reorganisation. Bob Stevenson and I have given much thought to storage, display and access. The magazines have always been a good source of income for VCT, and the easier it is to find the ones you want the more likely the customer is to buy. Storage in files rather than stacks is the new lay-out and we have found a source of magazines files which has enabled us to utilise space better and to simplify sorting and, hopefully, improve sales.

Magazines of the larger format (A4) are now stored by year in a file, and the smaller (A5) size are stored flat in boxes which are made from cutting down cardboard wine boxes. (Cheaper than the purpose-made and very effective!). When all are re-boxed a chart will be available to customers showing on which rack/shelf any stock item can be found. A guide price list is also in preparation, which will be available on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

Donations (sorry, we cannot offer to buy) of any magazines are always welcome, and we do thank all those who help in this way. Please, if possible, do try to deliver them to Ingrow. I do have two very willing helpers in Sam Dilworth and young James Garthwaite who are to be seen commuting from Keighley to Ingrow Station with boxes and a small attaché case. The sack barrow sees good use up and down Ingrow yard but magazines are heavy items and the yard is a long one, so save James' and Sam's legs and arms and bring them to the Museum if at all possible, and thank you in advance.”

VCT Postal Sales

There has been a marked revival of this side of the Trust's retail activity. Surprisingly hardware as well as books and magazines is selling well in this way. Other Trust-related retail items which may be of interest to members include the **first seven VCT-published postcards**: 1), *Bellerophon* on the turntable at Keighley; 2), *Sir Berkeley* and the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire coach in Ingrow Yard; and 3), a superb shot of *Bellerophon* approaching Oxenhope with the MS&L and the East Coast Joint Stock coaches. The cards retail at 25p each (5 for £1). A further set of cards produced by digital imaging are taken from photos in the J.H. Wright Collection. These are sepia prints of Midland Railway locos Nos. 2113, 2116, 1636 and 1641. These are 50p each.

Also available is a new range of VCT logo printed tee shirts at £6 and sweatshirts at £9. The printing rather than an embroidered logo accounts for the much cheaper price of these which come in all sizes from 'S' to 'XXL'. The VCT Teatowel at £2.50, and pens at 60p each, are still available.

Any of these items can be obtained by post, with the postage costs being added to all orders. Ring 01535 680425 (between 11 am and 4 pm) or write to VCT care of Haworth Station, or e-mail vct@mwdjcope.demon.co.uk.

Payment by cheque or by Credit Card: if by Credit Card, please quote your card number and remember also the expiry date – postage will be added to your order.

Carriage (and other!) Restoration News

News of the various on-going restoration projects can now include the Scammell Mechanical Horse. This vehicle you may remember is on loan to the Trust from Messrs Tate & Lyle. The years of building and other activities had caused the Scammell to be put to the bottom of the list of restoration projects. However the interest of Jim Pickles, and the addition of new members with specialist knowledge has led to a revitalisation of the project, as Jim Pickles now describes...

"Earlier this year the Committee looked in earnest at the Scammell 6 ton Mechanical Horse, residing quietly in the museum. All was not well. We had learned that the engine that Cyril Osborne had coaxed back into life was only on loan, and the paintwork was starting to peel – something had to be done. A heap of bits, which turned out to be approximately one and a half engines, was located, block numbers were found, and after much research Cyril started work on rebuilding an engine around the original engine block. Meanwhile, I commenced dry stripping the paintwork, a job that proved particularly difficult, both for myself and other members who were persuaded to have a go.

A fraction of an inch deep below the peeling paint it was



The Scammell tractor unit undergoing its repaint. Melvyn's dog waits patiently.
Photo: Melvyn Marchant

found that the paintwork was sound! Once again Vintage Carriages Trust struck lucky – we found Melvyn or more accurately Trevor did, a painter by trade. Melvyn quickly assessed the situation and advised that it would be alright to use commercial paint stripper to remove the old paint. Over the next couple of Saturdays, visitors to the Museum were treated to an outdoor demonstration of a strange thick liquid being spread over the Mechanical Horse, then five minutes later, with much crackling the paint curling up and falling off – mostly! Melvyn then began the task of preparing the bodywork, filling the wood, priming, rubbing down, undercoating, rubbing down, top coating, rubbing down, second top coating etc. etc. and the result? – *gorgeous!* Whilst the painting process was continuing, Cyril arranged for various engine parts to be sent away for machining, arranged for missing parts to be purchased, and then he assembled and fitted the original engine, corrected a damaged part of the suspension and made a start on the

trailer. He was not alone, he enlisted the help of his son Steve and anyone else who didn't get away fast enough.

There is still quite a lot of work to do on the Mechanical Horse before it is finished, but the transformation it has gone through in six months is amazing. So much so that an invitation has been received from the Mechanical Horse Club to ask if we as club members would exhibit the vehicle at the Classic Motor Show at Alexander Palace in London on the 17th and 18th March 2000 – so it is all systems go to get the vehicle finished and allow this to happen. It will be a true credit to the work of Cyril and Melvyn and others who have taken this restoration in hand."

Progress on **Great Northern Railway Coach No. 2856** has been very much more of the same for the last few months as a small (but happy, we hope) band of volunteers has removed the second bogie, partially dismantled it and have beavered away beneath the carriage cleaning the underframe.

With the benefit of experience the second bogie was removed more easily, but it still meant shunting all the vehicles out of the museum (twice) with all that entails! Once the bogie was out, stripping down commenced and the opportunity was

taken to develop a new system of recording what came from where. With some parts such as brake block pivot pins appearing up to eight times it is important to ensure that they are properly identified so they go back in the same place. Obviously many similar parts are interchangeable, but over time each will have worn slightly differently and much time and patience can be wasted having to try different permutations when looking for "best fit". We found this out the hard way with the previous bogie. So a large-scale plan of the bogie was drawn, in basic detail, and this was "gridded" along its obvious major components, along the solebars and stretchers, and along each axle and the pivot centre. The spaces between were then given a letter in one direction and a number in the other. Thus any component could quickly be given a tag with a two digit alpha-numeric series to indicate where it came from.

First to come off were the springs, both from the axleboxes and below the bolster. These were sent off to a specialist firm for examination, repair and re-tempering where necessary. This is a lengthy (and expensive!) job and needed to be started as soon as possible. Then one pair of axleboxes was removed, the corresponding wheelset released from the bogie and all the brake rigging dismantled. This is where the fun begins. It is really very satisfying to spend an afternoon scraping rust and old bitumen paint from the metal frame of a wheel and to end up very dirty. Seriously, the real object of the exercise is to clean off a century of varnish, paint, dust and rust to reveal bare metal or teak (in the wheel centres). Once this happy state of affairs is reached the rust treatment and layers of primer, paint and varnish can be put on. By early December one wheelset and half the bogie frame had been completed and work commenced on the other half. The wheelsets themselves are interesting. Both the wheel centres and the axle are stamped to indicate their ownership (GNR in

this case), an identifying number, the manufacturer, date of manufacture, pressure required to press the wheel centre on to the axle, etc. These details are being recorded as they are revealed. In one case the axle is stamped 1894, predating the carriage by two years. Another is stamped STEEL PEACH & TOZER LTD PHEONIX SPRING STEEL SHEFFIELD 9 12 1900. This shows how wheelsets were not necessarily reunited with the vehicle they were originally fitted to when undergoing maintenance. All the wheelsets on 2856 are found to have been fitted with copper bonding strips between the wheel centre and the outer rim, for track circuiting purposes, as the teak centres form an effective insulator.

Underneath the carriage the now accessible underframe beneath the third class end has been cleaned and treated with wood preservative. The drawgear has been taken down and the spring sent with the others for refurbishment. The recent acquisition of a hydraulic trolley jack made this job much easier. This spring is VERY heavy. Also underneath the carriage the original gas regulator has been refitted.

Internally the guard's handbrake column, now nicely painted black, has been refitted and the floorboards which were removed during structural repairs to the underframe, replaced. The brake van floor still retains some of the original hardwood slats which run from side to side of the vehicle. Most were removed when the floor was overboarded during departmental days but careful examination of the markings on the original floor revealed their length, shape and fixing positions. An order has been placed for oak strips of the correct size to replace them. The remaining strips have been lifted after careful identification and cleaned for refitting. Much thought was given to whether the floor (and slats) were painted. Certainly there was a build-up of some material on the floor but perhaps it would have been unwise to investigate that too closely! In the end we decided to paint the floorboarding a battleship grey, matched to some boarding we found in the adjacent compartment, and which by coincidence almost exactly matched some paint we already had in stock. The slats may or may not have been painted. If they were, wear on the upper surface would soon have removed any paint in that area. We will refit the slats and decide then what to do.

Stuart Mellin has drawings showing how the partition between the brake van and the third class compartment was probably constructed and he will be commencing work soon in that area. This will be followed by remaking the brake column timber casing, renewal of gutter timbers and making step boards for both the bogie and solebar.

At present not much work has been done on the carriage body but when the bogie is refitted that will form the focus of our attention. If you have any woodworking skills which

Locomotive News

Sir Berkeley

Due to its size this locomotive has seen little use on the Worth Valley over the years since it was sold to the Trust by Roger Crombleholme. It was therefore extremely pleasing to not only see it in action in Ingrow Yard during *Bellerophon's* birthday celebrations, but also to see it having a fairly high profile during the Worth Valley Railway's Autumn Enthusiasts' Weekend. Some of the latter may have been due to the fact that our Chairman Trevor England is also Chairman of the Worth Valley's Heritage Events Committee!

may be of assistance, or if you have none at all but are just willing to get involved, your presence will be most welcome.

Coach Caretaker Philip Walton reports that work on the Bulleid Coach is still very much alive. Evidence of this is provided by the scratching sounds and tuneless singing that you hear from the coach on Wednesday working evenings.

The current main task is stripping paint from the ceiling of the saloon at the Keighley end, with a heat gun and scraper. This job is probably the worst available as it results in severe neck-ache and an attack of "Bulleid Dandruff". Our secondary task is the fitting of window and sliding window units. Both of these jobs, and the painting of the ceiling, will have to be completed before we can start fitting out the interior. Jobs available for unwary volunteers include paint scraping, de-rusting, painting and stripping paint from the window frames. No skills are necessary, but a working knowledge of the words and music to "Right Said Fred", by Bernard Cribbins, would be an advantage.

In the workshop is a priority list of current work items, also detailed task sheets explaining what skills are required (if any), how to go about the task and how to do it safely. At weekends there is usually somebody working on 2856 or on other projects. Please don't hesitate to come and join them – or to join one of the "Working Weekends" (dates are at the end of this *Newsletter*), or the "Wednesday Working Evenings" – which take place each *first* and *third* Wednesday of the month.

Metropolitan Coaches. As mentioned above by John Heaton, the Metropolitan coaches are undergoing some maintenance attention. The problem is with wear on the steel slots on the plates into which the drawhooks fit. Some eighteen months or so ago it was found that as a result of this wear one drawhook was able to rotate within this housing plate much more than was appropriate. Correcting this was put on to VCT's and the Railway's joint "things to do" list. However at the last Enthusiasts' Weekend it was noted that one other drawhook was similarly afflicted. This was particularly disappointing because at the time of finding the earlier problem all the other five drawhooks had been inspected and no further problems had then been found. Now finding this further problem prompted VCT to put rectification in hand immediately. At the time of writing one drawhook plate has been welded up, machined back to size, and put back in position whilst a second is with a second welder who is carrying out similar work. We will then check the remaining four drawhook plates and rectify them as necessary. Whilst this is a job we could have done without, it certainly needed doing. We could also have done without the quite hefty resultant expense – but that's another story!

Whatever the reason, it is a good job that the locomotive was around to haul the twilight special heritage train. Due to staffing difficulties the "Pug" which was due to double-head with *Sir Berkeley* could not run and our little loco had to do the job alone!! A very fine job it made out of it too. All including the driver and fireman had a most interesting and enjoyable trip in the evening light. (See the VCT page in the latest issue of the Railway's magazine *Push & Pull* for a full account).

Bellerophon

As you will be aware from the last Newsletter, *Bellerophon* is now 125 years old. Here, Jackie Cope reflects on the events of the day selected to mark this important Birthday:

"It was 9 am on Saturday September 25th, the day of "*Bellerophon's* Special Birthday". VCT was about to open the box and take out all the Collection gathered together at Ingrow to honour our aged locomotive.

As we raised the lid (or more accurately drove down Ingrow Yard) there was a general air of action which was comforting to see. Our Chairman Trevor England was walking around in a long blue overall waving his arms and looking as if he was fully confident that what was happening was what was supposed to be happening. Inside the Museum, down in the Mess Room things were looking very well ordered with our President's wife Marjorie

Higgins and Lesley Garthwaite surrounded by a sea of packs of biscuits, crisps and loaves of bread – they were embarking on the "buffet, sandwiches and nibbles" activity. The beautiful birthday cake which Lesley had made and iced had to be brought downstairs from the Committee Room and placed on the table at the buffet. I can't remember at this stage which brave soul did this, but no doubt if anything had gone wrong we would now remember who it was! As things were all went smoothly and the cake rested resplendent in the middle of the buffet table.

Things started to move out of the museum. This was one of those very rare occasions when all the VCT Collection was gathered at Ingrow. Usually lack of space and secure covered accommodation means that it is scattered at various locations. *Bellerophon*, back from his/her visit to Foxfield Railway, was being prepared at Haworth. *Sir Berkeley*, the Trust's other working locomotive, had returned to the Worth Valley for the occasion from its base at the Middleton



125th Birthday Event Managers at work: Trevor England gives advice to diesel driver Dave Ashworth under the watchful eye of Hon Curator Jackie Cope. Photo: David Mark

Railway. *Bellerophon* arrived hissing and puffing but sounding quite good. After all we will all wheeze a little when we are 125 years old! Our President Robin Higgins was nurturing the locomotive into action. John Adams of the Worth Valley Locomotive Department brought *Sir Berkeley* into the yard. The tests required before use on the Worth Valley had been carried through by John to a successful conclusion only that very morning. Our thanks to John for doing the tests and then offering to look after the loco during the day. Our thanks also to Mark Astley for ensuring that all was ready for John to carry out the tests.

All had to be sorted and in place by 12 noon when *Bellerophon* plus the "Chatham" coach and one of the Metropolitan coaches would make up the Birthday train, and the Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford would arrive at Ingrow to make a journey down to Keighley and return, on the first of the four shuttles of the day.

What else was there to be set out to make the display complete. The oldest former Leeds Corporation bus of the Keighley Bus Museum collection – an AEC Regent, built in 1934 – arrived and settled into place in the yard, soon to be joined by the locally-based 1912-built Fowler Steam Road Locomotive *Western Prince*, the Keighley Rotary Club's "Little Red Bus", and John Downs' Scarab tractor unit (to keep our Scammell Mechanical Horse company!).

Guy and Aileen Hindley set up their music group in the corner of the Museum and as the space allowed Denis was helped to arrange his model trains near by. Things were beginning to come together. We managed to placate the elderly couple who seemed to have gleaned from Radio Leeds that a bus was going from Ingrow to Saltaire. Someone said what a good job Jackie had made



Left to right: VCT Chairman Robin Higgins, the Deputy Lord of Bradford Cllr Peter Lancaster and Mrs Lancaster, *Bellerophon*, Jackie Cope, Trevor England, Michael Cope, the 'Chatham' coach and the nine-compartment Met: all celebrating *Bellerophon's* 125th Birthday. Photo: David Mark

of her interview on Radio Leeds. As she had **not** been interviewed for Radio Leeds this was pleasing but rather puzzling. David Andrews, the Chief Executive of the Yorkshire Tourist Board, arrived with his wife and his two small boys. The elder of the two obviously had decided that this was a more interesting part of Daddy's job. He could not wait to travel on the train and flatly refused to have anything to do with the little red bus.

It was essential that the Birthday train shuttle kept to time or it would disrupt the Saturday service train. *Bellerophon* took his coaches into the Ingrow Station platform, and prompt at 12 noon the Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford Cllr Peter Lancaster and his wife drove to the front of the station – things were going according to plan. The party of official guest grew. Cllr Michael Pye Chairman of the Yorkshire & Humberside Museums Council, Ann Cryer MP, Ralph and Marion Povey President of the Worth Valley Railway (and VCT Member) and Graham Mitchell Chairman of the Worth Valley Railway accompanied by his mother. All boarded the shuttle accompanied by a number of VCT members, friends and general public who happened to have arrived on a particularly interesting day!

The rest of the day is a haze of activity, cake cutting ceremonies (no VCT event would be the same without a cake) and lots and lots of people. The band played, the little ones watched Denis' train go round and round, the people travelled on or watched *Bellerophon* shuttle to Keighley and back. Mark Astley helped John Adams to shuttle *Sir Berkeley* around the yard. A buffet was laid on and disappeared and the resultant washing and clearing up was carried out. The distinguished guests left and the Trust members and visitors played with their train, listen to the music and enjoyed the rest of the afternoon.

Just as it started the day ended. The music stopped and went home, the little red bus and the big grey bus departed. The working members of the VCT put part of the Collection back into the museum. The locomotives steamed away. The Museum doors were secured the roller shutters came down. The lid was back on the box.

Thanks to David Mark and others for the donation of some excellent photos of the event. Two of David's shots are seen here and another appears in the latest Yorkshire Tourist Board Member Newsletter "White Rose".

***Bellerophon* in the year 2000**

After all that excitement Bellerophon is once more setting off on his/her travels. 2000 should be an exciting year for the locomotive and for the Trust. Here, Paul Holroyd outlines the plans which will hopefully come to fruition...

One would think that with all this activity the working members of the Trust would not have time for anything else. No such thing: at least four have ventured into uncharted waters. Jim Pickles describes the first of these three:

"In the late summer a letter was received from the Yorkshire & Humberside Museums Council, inviting members to attend educational courses on various aspects of running museums. I opted for three courses, fire training, health and safety and emergency first aid. The courses were quite demanding, and frighteningly educational, particularly with regard to human nature, and as a result the VCT emergency procedures are being given that bit of extra attention. Whilst the courses demanded hard work, there was a lighter side – if you ever suffer a chip pan fire, don't ask me to put it out!

"At the time of writing we are in negotiations for *Bellerophon* to visit **Stoomcentrum Maldegem, Belgium**. They propose using *Bellerophon* for their special festival weekend, from **29th April to 1st May**, inclusive.

Stoomcentrum Maldegem operates a 10 km standard gauge line between Maldegem and Eeklo. They also operate 2 km of 600 mm narrow gauge.

If all goes according to plan, they will be operating a main line excursion on Sunday 30th April using a type 1 Pacific (a photo of which appears in the March 1999 edition of *Railway World*). Details of the main line excursion are available from: Alan Hoggett, 38 Chiltern Road, Lincoln LN5 8SE; Tel 01522 527050."

VCT Volunteer and Middleton Railway committee member, Ian Smith, has first hand knowledge of Stoomcentrum Maldegem, and hopes to be able to represent the Trust during the locomotive's visit.

Hopefully, *Bellerophon* will also visit the Netherlands this coming year.

VCT Members will remember that in 1996 *Sir Berkeley* visited **Stichting Museum Buurt Spoorweg, Haaksbergen, the Netherlands**. Following this very successful visit, this time it's *Bellerophon* which has been invited to Haaksbergen, to steam on this picturesque little railway. The exact dates of operation are not yet finalised, but are likely to include June 1st, 2nd, 11th and 12th and possibly certain Wednesdays and Sundays in June. *Bellerophon*'s last day in the Netherlands would be 14th July at the very latest.

We stress that at the moment none of the above is finalised. However, we hope that this advance information may be helpful to Members who would like to visit Belgium or the Netherlands this coming year. More information will be available soon, when we would hope to have greater detail: so please contact the Trust early next year if you are interested in paying a visit.

***Bellerophon* and the Millennium Cavalcade**

Bellerophon has been invited to take part in the Millennium Cavalcade of Steam, which will take place on **August 26th to 28th inclusive** along the five miles of track between Shildon and Darlington. This event has received a great deal of advance publicity in the monthly railway press. The event is strictly for ticket holders only, with viewing field places costing £13.50 per day for adults and £8.50 for concessions. Grandstands and Terraces cost between £18 and £45 with concessions from £14. If you would like further information please telephone Rail 2000 on 0870 012 2000 or visit their website at www.rail2000.com

I was the only person on the course to fail this exercise – if you never get things wrong, how do you learn to do things right?

On the Health and Safety course, a fellow participant asked, how do the rules affect volunteers that are over the age of 90 (yes – ninety!), and on the Emergency First Aid course, my lasting impression is, during the afternoon tea-break and general chit-chat, glancing around the room and noting that it was strewn with limbless corpses! (Those practice dummies can seem awfully lifelike!)"

Meanwhile **Mark Astley** in his capacity of *Locomotive Caretaker* attended a *Heritage Railway Association Seminar on locomotive Boiler Maintenance*. **Nick Garthwaite** accompanied Mark and will we hope be able to help him in the on-going maintenance of *Bellerophon* ready for its travels next year.

Every so often we mention in these Newsletters **Michael Walton**, son of our Trustee Philip Walton who now lives Stateside: here, Michael writes of his life the other side of the Atlantic – a living example of how you can be an active working member of VCT, no matter where you live:

“At the end of February 1998 I moved out to South East Wisconsin to start work on a three year contract for a consulting firm, leaving behind me all sorts of essential things such as black pudding, Heinz Salad Cream, the hills of Yorkshire, and the VCT.

America has treated me relatively well. There was definitely a culture shock involved (although for which party is still being debated). Life here is certainly a lot different to England, but once I had learnt the language I was off and running – America and England – two countries divided by a common language! 20 months working in America, and I have suffered summer temperatures of 110° Fahrenheit and 90% humidity and winter temperatures of -35° Fahrenheit and several feet of snow. I’m still a big railway preservation fan and whilst I can’t admit to success in locating preserved railways even close to comparing to those in England, I can report seeing some pretty long goods trains on the way home from work some nights.

Upon leaving England I happened to wonder how I could remain an active VCT despite the distance involved. Evidently, my involvement in the first and third Wednesdays of the month working evenings was destined to go on hold. The answer came in the form of the VCT web site which was put together with the help of Paul Kirkup who provided the material to publish – the address of our site is:

<http://www.neotek.demon.co.uk/vct/>. This continues to grow and contains brief information about the Trust along with news and photos of restoration projects and special events. The distance has enabled me to see a much broader image of the Trust and the continued development it undergoes.

I’ve been in various aspects of railway preservation for 20 years now, and certainly never would have imagined my interest in a Carriage Restoration group like the VCT being so deep, but when you look at the VCT – Carriage Restoration is just one piece of an organisation catering for a huge and diverse audience, along the way having something to interest almost everyone.

Another side venture in which VCT plays a central role is the Railway Heritage Register Carriage Survey which is certainly making huge strides in cataloguing the 3,000+ preserved carriages scattered throughout Great Britain in their differing states of restoration. The project is very important in forming a communication hub for several types of people. Those restoring carriages look for examples of similar work or groups where interfaced is possible in perhaps share costs when having parts made. Film companies looking for rolling stock to use in productions; history students and curious railway enthusiasts form other groups of potential users.

The Railway Heritage Register Carriage Survey was added to the VCT web site in 1998 and it can be accessed from the site. Unfortunately, for the next few months the project was plagued with server issues which caused problems until April this year when XOOM.com offered to host the site at no charge without imposing a storage limitation. Since then it’s

been plain sailing for the project which now has more than 3,000 entries and almost 2,000 photographs available on line. Curious computer literate individuals may be interested to know that the database occupies nearly 120 megabytes of web space at the time of writing and during a database update this temporarily peaks at more than 200 megabytes. Until the database went live on the web, public knowledge and accessibility of the work was limited. In order to get the database on line huge efforts have been made by Michael Cope back in England to scan images in order to include them.

1999 has not been a huge year of web development for the project. Also my job has taken much of my spare time preparing for the Millennium, but there are several new developments which should be coming to fruition early on next year. One is the possibility being worked on at the moment to distribute the Survey database on multimedia CD-ROM which has led to the development of a new and much more powerful search engine to be used on such a product. So that’s an insight to the life of an international VCT member. I might be a long way away from Ingrow and Wednesday evening working evenings, but I’m still just as keen to see the Trust grow and thrive. There are even some benefits, my work on VCT matters which in the past invariably left me covered in dust/paint/oil etc is now such that I don’t need to take a shower when finished.

I’ll be in trouble if the internet fails at the end of the year due to the Y2K bug, but that’s a risk I’m going to take. Personally, I’m more worried about driving to work on the wrong side of the road – or is that the right side of the road? After 20 months of pondering the same question every morning I’m sure I should know better!”

Fame, at last!

We were delighted to see:

- that the December 1999 issue of *Railway World* has a two-page colour feature on the VCT Museum:
- that the Worth Valley Railway’s Timetable leaflet for 2000 features *Bellerophon* on the cover: and
- that the Middleton Railway’s Timetable Leaflet for 2000 features *Sir Berkeley* on the cover.

Working Weekends in early 2000: 29th/30th January and 19th/20th February

Please note the dates – and if you can come along, please do so, even for an hour or so! Jobs available for Everyone!

Working evenings: the first and third Wednesday of each month

At Ingrow any time from 6.30 pm onwards: again, jobs for everyone – see you there?

HMRS

Tony Straw, Hon Membership Secretary of the Historical Model Railway Society, has sent news of that group's activities at various centres nation-wide. Any VCT member interested please contact David at 11 Gorse Avenue, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 3NS for further details.

AJECTA

We have not as yet received the 2000 excursion programme of our twinned body AJECTA (Association de Jeunes pour l'Entretien et la Conservation des Trains d'Autrefois). Details should be available shortly, and will then be available from the VCT Secretary, or from the telephone, fax and internet locations shown below.

AJECTA is based at Longueville, to the East of Paris, almost at the end of the suburban service from the Gare de l'Est. if you are able to visit, we are sure you will be made very welcome, but please check that there will be someone at Longueville before travelling a distance.

AJECTA's address is: PO Box No. 1, F-77650 Longueville, France. Alternatively for railtour and other information contact the Provins Tourist Office on 00 33 1 64 60 26 26 (telephone) or 00 33 1 42 72 68 51 (fax). Alternatively look at their Heritage Railway Association's internet page, which is <http://ukhrrail.uel.ac.uk/ajecta/ajecta.html>
Remember that, as formal 'twins', VCT Members qualify for AJECTA Members' prices for the railtours.

The 'Usual Notices'

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)

'Give as You Earn' Scheme:

Those who take part in this scheme can make one-off or regular gifts to the Trust by quoting 'Vintage Carriages Trust' and our registration Number 00230500 on your Choice Form or Coupon.

Multiple copies of this *Newsletter*:

Normally just one copy is sent to two or more Members residing at the same address. If however you would like further copies, please let the Secretary know.

Subscription Rates:

These are still held at the intentionally low figure of £4, or £2.50 for Members' spouses and for Seniors, or £120 for Life Membership. Those who are in full-time employment or who otherwise can afford a donation above these annual figures are invited so to do! Those wishing to join the Trust as Members should contact VCT at the usual correspondence address (see below).

Data Protection Act:

VCT Membership records are kept on a computer. These are *not* made available to any outside bodies. If nevertheless any member does not wish their records to be kept in this way, please contact the Secretary.

VCT Website and email address:

Our Website is at: <http://www.neotek.demon.co.uk/vct/>
...and the email address is: trust@mwdjcope.demon.co.uk



All three in steam, Ingrow, 25th September 1999: guest road locomotive *Western Prince* with the Trust's locomotives *Sir Berkeley* and *Bellerophon*.
Photo: Melvyn Marchant