




Vintage Carriages Trust

Carriage Chronicle

News for Members: May 2024

- 
- A photograph showing the interior of a vintage carriage. The seats are upholstered in a dark blue or grey fabric. The ceiling is a light brown color with decorative elements. A window is visible on the right side, showing a bright outdoor scene. The overall atmosphere is warm and historical.
- The Midland 'First Class'
 - Chairman's Day 2024
 - Museum Refurbishment Phase 2
 - Sir Berkeley at Beamish

Welcome to the May 2024 'Carriage Chronicle' Members' Update - *Bob Sprot*

Welcome to the May 2024 'Carriage Chronicle'. This issue features the further progress we have made on our major update of the Museum and we are well on the way now to completing Phase 2 of the project.

Also in this edition is an invitation to our annual Chairman's Day event which will be held at the Museum on Saturday 8 June 2024. A separate invitation to Members is also included for a ride on our Bulleid carriage at Embsay in September, subject to final agreement (please see page 15 for details).

Sadly, we have to report the death of our long serving former Chairman, Vice President, Trustee, and friend Chris Smyth, and an obituary is included in this issue.

Finally, there are the usual updates on our workshop activities including progress on both the Chatham and the Midland carriages, and a report on the recent visit of Sir Berkeley to Beamish.



Wreath for Chris Smyth on KWVR Ivatt 41241 - Photo: Trevor England

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Membership Matters - Bob Sprot

Members Update

We would like to welcome the following new Members who have joined the Vintage Carriages Trust in the last four months - Mr. S Arnold, Mr. R Bembridge, Ms. B Callaghan-Clegg, Mr. I Clegg, Mr. M Hallows, Mr. J Holroyd, Mr. C Farrar, Mr. A Laming and Mr. W Murray.

Sadly, we have been notified of the death of the following Members - Mr. I Osbourne, Mr. P Smith, and Mr. Chris Smyth. (Obituary pages 4-5) and Mr. R Winfindale. The Chairman, Trustees, Staff and Volunteers would like to send their deepest sympathies to all the families and friends.

Membership Renewals 2024/5- a reminder that membership renewal letters were sent out in early March for the new membership year 1 April 2024 through to 31 March 2025. We are grateful to most Members who have renewed their subscriptions, but we would ask if you can check to see that you have completed the renewal, and if not please send your remittance to us as soon as possible.

Legacies - The Trust continues to be very fortunate in being the beneficiary of a number of legacies. These can vary from a substantial financial bequest to the designation in wills of railway items including books, magazines and model railway lines. We have a leaflet available on request to membership@vintagecarriagestrust.org, which will give you further details if you wish to consider leaving items to the Trust.



New Museum Welcome and Thank You Sign - Photos: Bob Sprot

In Memoriam: Chris Smyth

Chris Smyth (“Smith with a ‘y’”) passed away peacefully on 15 March 2024 at the age of 79, following a long illness. Both the Worth Valley Railway and the Vintage Carriages Trust will miss Chris. For both charities he was an active volunteer for many years, and served in various capacities as a Board Member for the KWVR and for VCT as our Chairman, Trustee and Vice President. He will be remembered as well by the great number of Railway and Tramway Preservation Societies of which he was a life member (at least 41!), and by the Heritage Railway Association, where he was also a Board Member.

Chris was born and bred in Hartlepool. Here his experience of the North Eastern Region of British Railways led to a lifetime of railway enthusiasm and an especial interest in North Eastern Railway locomotives. Whilst at Newcastle University he became a founder Member of the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group (NELPG).

It was however the Worth Valley Railway which gained Chris as a long-term hard-working and effective Member. His magnificent set of Victorian whiskers and his approachability identified him as an essentially happy person with whom everyone and anyone was pleased to work. Having joined the KWVR, Chris’s initial activities were with the Railway’s Sales Department. Here Chris gained a reputation for reliability: once he started a job, he finished it. Chris’s activities on the Railway grew to include working as a Train Guard, Diesel Rail-Bus Driver, and as a Responsible Officer. For many years he was an elected Member of the KWVRPS Council and then of its successor the K&WVRPS Ltd.



Chris Smyth - Photo: Joanne Haley

In Memoriam: Chris Smyth

He was also a Director of its more recent Operating Company, the K&WV Light Railway Limited.

Chris married Susan (Sue) Garrett on 3rd December 1983. They went on to have a son, Christopher David. Tragically, Sue died in her 30's, leaving Chris as a single parent bringing up his young son. Chris joined with a few other volunteers to rent No. 3 Mill Hey, a property very close to Haworth Station. This provided rather 'spartan' overnight accommodation and from this base Chris frequently engaged in the fine art of beer tasting, late evening fish and chips and endless discussion on railway matters. Chris then bought the property, which included a shop at ground level. For many years this shop was rented to the Vintage Carriages Trust, and then to the KWVR, and it is now a micro pub.

Chris had joined the Vintage Carriages Trust in its very early days. He was a Trustee (Committee Member) for many years. His election as VCT Chairman was at the time when the Trust was attending to the financing and erection of the long-planned Storage Shed at Ingrow, together with the first stages of its transition (eventually) to an Accredited Museum. This was perhaps the most important stage in the development of the present VCT Museum.

Chris was also a long time Director of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies, now the Heritage Railway Association (HRA). He ran the HRA Carriage Competition for many years and was involved with the Carriage Database.

His passing was a sad day for the Vintage Carriages Trust, the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway - and for the Railway and Tramway Preservation Movement as a whole.

Michael Cope and Others.

Chairman's Day - Saturday 8 June 2024 - *Trevor England*

Our annual event will take place this year on Saturday 8 June to inform members and guests of the progress made by the Vintage Carriages Trust during the last twelve months. Those attending will be able to meet the Trustees at this event and to enjoy a visit to the Museum and Workshop. The programme for the day is as follows:-

10.30 am until 11.00 am - Tea/Coffee and biscuits will be served. This will allow you the opportunity to view the present restoration projects and the refurbishment work in the Museum. The subsequent talks will be held at either the front of the workshop or the front of the Museum. The programme for the day is as follows:-

11.15 am Welcome - Trevor England

To be followed by:

Museum Development & Interpretation - Trevor England

Museum Development North Guidance - Jonathan Yewdall

Retail Report and Reception - Bob Sprot

Chatham & Midland Carriage restorations - Trevor England

Vintage Trains - Trevor England

Locomotive progress - Ian Smith

Bulleid Carriage at Embsay - Trevor England

Re-Accreditation update - Dave Carr

AGM arrangements - Dave Carr

Conclusion - Trevor England

Chairman's Day - Saturday 8 June 2024 - *Trevor England*

- 12.15 pm - A Buffet lunch will be set out either at the front of the workshop or the front of the Museum.
- 1.45 pm - Meet on Ingrow station platform for a train ride.
- The usual offer of a train ride after lunch on the KWVR will depart Ingrow at 1.51 pm towards Keighley.

Those members wishing to attend will need to inform us by **31st May**, at the latest, so that we can plan for the numbers attending. This can be by **email** to membership@vintagecarriagetrust.org or by **telephone** to the Museum between **11.00 am and 4.00 pm** on **01535 680425**. Please state your name and email address or telephone number, as these will be required. This will allow us to send out final details and arrange the buffet.



VCT Museum and Flower Boxes March 2024 - Photo: Richard Jones

Museum Refurbishment - Finishing Phase 2

- Bob Sprot and Paul Holroyd

The Four Wall Bays - Shop Side

From the end of January and throughout February our builders were at work putting new cladding on the remaining four wall bays on the shop side of the Museum. This was a continuation of the successful style adopted last year on the three wall bays in front of the newly installed toilet facilities, and when completed means one entire side of the Museum will be refurbished.

New Doors

As well as re-cladding the walls, the builders created a wider exit doorway from the Museum back into the shop to make it easier for visitors with wheelchairs and pushchairs. The remaining doors on the shop side of the building were replaced with up to date fire doors. Finally, a new Workshop door was put in place, complete with a see-through window.

New Displays

The Collections Team recommended to the VCT Trustees who in turn accepted the proposals that these four wall bays should feature the following themes:

Bay 1 (nearest the shop door) - The history of VCT to date including reference to some of the people who built up the Trust.

Bays 2 and 3 - the history of carriage design, construction and types.
(from the stagecoach design through to modern high-speed trains)

Bay 4 - Stations including signage, artefacts, and details of a typical historical station staff.



Completed Cladding Phase 2 Wall Bays
- Photo: Bob Sprot



Stations Bay under construction
- Photo: Bob Sprot

Museum Refurbishment - Finishing Phase 2

- Bob Sprot and Paul Holroyd

Implementation

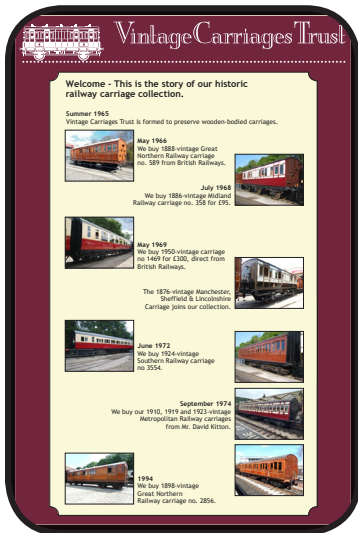
A small team under the guidance of Chairman Trevor England and comprising Chris Smith, Paul Holroyd and Norman Overend have started to install signage and other artefacts on these bays.

Paul Holroyd, using the same successful style that he created for the three wall bays last year, is continuing to produce interesting and eye catching interpretation boards to explain the themes, signage and artefacts on these displays. The photographs in this issue give an indication of the results that have been achieved to date, and it is hoped that all four of the wall displays will be completed this summer.



Station bay under construction - Photo: Bob Sprot

Museum Refurbishment - Finishing Phase 2 - Bob Sprot and Paul Holroyd



VCT Bay Planned Interpretation Boards - Photo: John Brailsford



New Wider Exit Door to Shop - Photo: Bob Sprot

Workshop Update - Trevor England

Workshop Report

As reported in the last issue the main priority is to complete the work on the Chatham carriage. Then a concentrated effort to progress the Midland carriage can begin again.

Chatham 3554

The doors of the guard's compartment have been rebuilt by Chris Smith and then reinstated. He is now carrying out some considerable work that was found to be needed on the opening window frames. The interior of the compartments are also having more done to them by Chris and Norman Overend to complement the exterior finish. Both sides of the carriage have now received nine coats of paint. John Heaton and Chris have also cleaned the underframe and Chris is now painting this as well.

We have been given some samples of the sizes of the numbers and letters to finish off the exterior bodywork. These were supplied by Peter Jardine of the Isle of Wight Railway together with some sizing carried out by Ian Purkis of the KWVR Carriage and Wagon Department while on a visit there. In the brake area, the bulkhead behind the hand brake wheel has been addressed to rectify the issue of the clearance, and the mechanism checked ready for future use. The steam heat radiator which is life expired is still to be replaced by the new one purchased that looks of the correct period.

The plan is to have this carriage looking well, and even better than previously planned, in time for the Chairman's Day in June. We are hopeful as well that we will have the carriage out on the KWVR to celebrate its centenary at some point later this year.



Chatham in final green livery Photo: Bob Sprot



Rebuilding the Chatham brake Photo: Paul Holroyd

Workshop and Carriage Update - Trevor England

Midland 358

Since the last report little has changed on the exterior of the vehicle, but we expect that the team can move on to this carriage in the summer.

However, Lowbridge Upholstery on the interiors of the two 1st Class compartments have carried out considerable work. This has been organised by Ian Wild and the impact and finish of the work to date is very pleasing. The interiors of the 3rd Class compartments have been completed already.



Midland 1st Class Interiors - Photo: Bob Sprot

Metropolitan 465

We are pleased to report that this carriage is expected to be used on the KWVR Vintage Trains again this year. These will be on both Saturdays and Sundays for the five weekends from Saturday 20th July until Sunday 18th August.

DRB E79962

The work on this vehicle is still on hold.

Locomotive Report - Ian Smith and Bob Sprot

Sir Berkeley at Beamish

Sir Berkeley has been away from its base at Middleton visiting the Beamish Museum in County Durham throughout April. Scheduled to steam on ten separate occasions our engine has been in use on the recreated colliery line at the attraction. However, a failure due to leaking steam has restricted its use.

It is hoped that further steamings at Middleton will take place later this year once the cause of the failure has been identified and repaired.



Sir Berkeley at Beamish April 2024
Photo: John Astley



Sir Berkeley with Chaldron Wagons at Beamish April 2024
Photo: Michael Denholm

Bellerophon

The overhaul at Foxfield is progressing with most of the work needed being on the boiler.

Bellerophon OO Gauge Model

As reported in previous issues there have been delays in the production process of the model. However further revised samples are due with KR Models in the next few weeks, which may mean that the finished model will be on sale later in 2024.

Front of House Update - *Bob Sprot*

2023-4 Strong Retail Sales

The VCT Shop produced one of its best annual sales results in the financial year April 2023 - March 2024. This was due partly to the quality of donations received, especially on books, magazines and dvd's, and partly to the efforts of Richard Jones and our team of front of house volunteers. Our traditional areas all saw major increases on sales in the previous year with books being up 12%, magazines up 15% and our revamped gift area up 44%. Richard helped grow our book sales by putting together and displaying interesting sets of donated titles, and Paul Holroyd and Keith Taylorson remodelled the displays in the magazine room with equally pleasing results. Finally, after 25 years with the previous model we have obtained a new soft drinks cooler courtesy of Coca Cola!

2023-4 Excellent Visitor Numbers

Our visitor numbers to the Shop and Museum for the year also showed a significant increase of 19% from 14,496 to 17,237. The major factor in this increase was the visit of Flying Scotsman in May 2023 with the week of cab access for the paying public outside our Museum.

Welcome John Astley

We would like to welcome John Astley to our staff as Front of House Assistant covering Sundays and Mondays. John comes from a family background steeped in railways and he is also a trainee fireman at the Emsay and Bolton Abbey Railway.



John Astley
- Photo: Bob Sprot



New Coca Cola Cooler
- Photo: Bob Sprot

Events - Bob Sprot / Trevor England

KWVR Steam Gala March 2024

The annual KWVR Steam Gala took place from 21 - 24 March. Although this did not feature any of our VCT carriages, the impact was tremendous on both increased visitor numbers and more importantly our sales!

The photograph below shows the two locomotives from our friends at BLS in front of our Museum during the Gala.



BLS Engines 45596 Bahamas and 1054 Coal Tank at the KWVR Steam Gala March 2024 Photo: John Astley

Bulleid S1469 at Emsbay

Our Bulleid carriage has continued to be in use on the Emsbay and Bolton Abbey Steam Railway over the Easter period.

We have been offered the opportunity later this year for a VCT members ride in the carriage on the Emsbay and Bolton Abbey Railway. The provisional arrangements are set for Friday 6th September with services starting from Emsbay at 3.00 pm, 4.30 pm and 6.00 pm. The first two timings are likely to be free and the 6.00 pm one is a Fish and Chip Special at £10.00 for the food. It is also hoped that there will be the opportunity to have a guided tour of the workshops.

If you wish to be on the trips on the Bulleid and/or the Chatham please contact Trevor England by email on

trevorengland@vintagecarriagetrust.org

so that we can know the numbers.

We will allocate the limited number of seats on a first come first served basis.



VCT S1469 Bulleid Carriage still in use at Emsay - Photo: EMBR Archive

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