



Vintage Carriages Trust

Members' Newsletter: April 1998

Dear VCT Member,

This brief *Newsletter* accompanies your invitation to the formal opening of the latest extension to our Museum building at Ingrow – to take place on **Saturday 9th May, at 12 noon**. If you are able to join us for this occasion, please do so: this promises to be a pleasant, informal celebratory occasion!

As a Member, you will be only too well aware of all the building work that has taken place at the bottom end of Ingrow yard since 1989. In three stages, the result has been firstly the main body of our fine Museum building; then an excellent Shop, storerooms, Messroom and toilet facilities; and now the fine and well-equipped Workshop which, together with greatly improved access walkway and disabled access facilities which will be Opened on 9th May.

Andrew Scott, Head of the National Railway Museum, has kindly agreed to officially open this third stage. For this he will be joined by **Councillor Andrew Mudd**, who is the Chairman of the Keighley Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund. We were extremely grateful to the SRB Challenge Fund for their £33,000 grant, which acted as part of our 'Partnership Funding' to the £222,800 Heritage Lottery Fund money we were delighted to receive.

Vintage Carriages Trust as a body seems to specialise in Openings! If you attended either of our previous two Museum Openings, you will know that these are very informal affairs with light refreshments and what has now become the tradition of a CAKE. We are grateful to Howard Clough, Chairman of the Railway's Catering Committee, for again organising this latter via a friend of his.

We should also have a Band in attendance this time, so we might even have a selection of Fanfares. Your Officers and Committee and all those who work as volunteers in the Museum certainly would welcome a Fanfare to celebrate the end of a very worthwhile project.

So: see you on 9th May?

If you can 'RSVP', please do so, as this will help give an indication as to how many people are going to turn up. However, this isn't obligatory; so if at the last moment you find you can after all be present, please come!

..... "the end of a very worthwhile project"??

Well, actually, completing the Workshop and the access improvements isn't the end. What will happen in the future is yet to be seen – but in very recent weeks the Keighley SRB Challenge Fund has very kindly allowed us a total of £6,000 towards installing **gas central heating** in the Shop, magazine room, Messroom and the upstairs room and Library. Also included is provision of energy-efficient heat-recovery fans to provide much-needed ventilation in the upstairs room. In very quick time, this installation is now complete and is fully operational. The successful Contractors for this work were Messrs SIAS, whose premises are in Ingrow, off South Street and within a couple of hundred yards or so of our Museum – confirming that we really do prefer to place work locally if at all possible! As it was not practicable to bring a gas supply the full length of Ingrow Yard from the main road to our Museum, Peter Young, a Director of SIAS, suggested an approach to Worsted Spinners Messrs John Haggas – our immediate neighbour. We were delighted that Messrs Haggas were pleased to allow us not only a branch off their own supply, but also to agree to charge us for the gas at a very reasonable rate. Over the nine years or so we have been at Ingrow we have built up a very good working relationship with Messrs John Haggas, and we look forward to many future years of this happy relationship. Certainly, moving to gas heating rather than the previous full-rate electric heating will cut our energy bills very considerably, and we take the opportunity to again thank the Keighley SRB Challenge Fund, Messrs John Haggas plc and our Contractors Messrs SIAS for helping so very usefully towards this.

Our new Workshop has seen quite a lot of work since its completion. Carriages currently resident in here are our **Bulleid** coach, the **Midland** coach, and **Great Northern** No. 2856. Work continues steadily on the **Bulleid**, with attention currently being paid to improving the finish on the ceiling at the 'Keighley' end. The **Midland** coach, having been recovered from the Ingrow 'Shoddy Manure' Dock Road, has been emptied and cleaned and has had the roof covering removed. The roof boards (and the rest of the coach) is now steadily drying out.

With this carriage now safeguarded, it will receive a full restoration in due course: however, it will need to take its place in the fairly lengthy list of work to be done!

It's the **Great Northern** that has seen the greatest activity, by a long way. Stuart Mellin has now completed almost all of the fire-damage rebuild work, except for replacing the ceilings and the bulkhead between the Guard's compartment and the adjacent First Class compartment. The Loss Adjuster has visited: he approved the work done, offered an interim payment (which we accepted!) and agreed that the work on the ceilings and the bulkhead could be done after we have finished work on the roof timbers and on the framing above the bogie pivot. Work on the roof timbers is fairly obvious and is fairly straightforward – basically, replacing three or possibly four of the roofing planks, also a few of the curved supporting ribs and quite a number of the 'noggins' which ensure correct spacing between the outer roof and the inner ceiling. Work on the framing above the bogie pivot presents more of a challenge. The problem is that there is quite a significant bulge in the Guard's floor above the bogie pivot. The favoured theory is that the Guard's brake was heavily overloaded over a period of time in the pre-1950s past, causing the wood framing to distort and push the floor upwards. We have now run out the bogie and lifted the floorboards above the bogie pivot, to allow better inspection of the framing. We haven't found anything dramatically astray here: indeed, whilst there's quite a bit of investigation yet to do, there is a possibility that all that is needed is to reseal the floorboards; there's a possibility that the framing has settled back to (more or less) its correct position, leaving just the floorboards in a bulged state! Possibly more serious is that we can now see the framing behind the dropped buffer rather more clearly. Damage *is* evident here, which will need rectification. Access is not good; so a preliminary may well need to be to drop out the buffer spring – a significant job in itself!

All this is preliminary to knowing what we need to do for this carriage's full restoration. We will be making application for a Museums & Galleries Commission/Science Museum PRISM Grant as soon as its clear what we need to do. This is likely to be the first of two such Applications, as we will be asking for support towards restoring the structure and exterior finish of this coach as a first stage, with the interior to follow as a second stage in due course.

The phrase "We have run out the bogie....." deserves expansion. This is the first time VCT has done this, and it's pleasing to report that it went quite smoothly, involving as it did primarily our Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and one other Member, Mark Astley. Thanks are due to the Railway's Carriage & Wagon Department for the short-term loan of two hydraulic jacks and for advice given. Moving the bogie from under the coach to its present location just a few feet to one side, just in front of the Bulleid coach, was however quite a performance! This involved moving every vehicle in the Museum itself – our thanks go to Members of the Bahamas Locomotive Society who used locomotive *James* to help us with this job. Our apologies for this "just one hour" job taking quite a lot longer than just one hour!

Work on *Bellerophon* continues to make steady progress, with most of the work on one side of the motion now completed. An unexpected challenge was to find that the left hand piston rod had at some time in the past acquired a rather nasty bend and needed replacing. The necessary replacement was made by our friends Messrs Sealand of Keighley – again showing that we prefer to use local firms where possible – in quick time and at a reasonable price. Hopefully *Bellerophon* will be operational again in time to be available as standby locomotive to Bahamas Locomotive Society's 'Coal Tank' for the Railway's Vintage Trains, and for the Railway's Enthusiast Weekend – possibly even in steam in Ingrow Yard for our Museum Opening on 9th May! The time Terry Sykes is able to spend with *Bellerophon* continues to be very much at a premium. He is (and we are) very much aware of the need to find someone who has a degree of relevant skill and expertise to at least assist him in looking after this locomotive. If giving a hand here is something which attracts you (*Bellerophon* is after all a very interesting and historic locomotive), please do not hesitate to contact either Terry or the Trust's Secretary.

And finally.... If you are one of the selected few to find a Membership Renewal notice enclosed with this *Newsletter*, would you please attend to it *as soon as is possible*? As ever, if you are able to add a donation to your Membership fee, would you please do so: and if you pay UK Income Tax, could you please consider Covenanted your payment? Annual Membership remains a bargain at £4; £2.50 for Juniors, Seniors and Members' Spouses; and Life Membership is £120.