

BEAMISH

THE LIVING MUSEUM OF THE NORTH



Regional Heritage Engineering Centre

News Bulletin – No.1 Summer 2013

Welcome to this new bulletin, an informal glance over the projects underway in the Regional Heritage Engineering Centre – RHEC (or ‘wreck’) and one aimed at both staff and volunteers, as well as those with a passing interest in the work we are doing. It is, however, a summary – more detailed reports with additional photographs can always be found on the Transport Blog – www.beamishtransportonline.co.uk which also features a full archive of its content and a ‘Search’ facility.

We start this report with a little background, then look at some of the current projects and outline those that are to follow through the various shops at Foulbridge, which make up the RHEC facilities.

History of the RHEC and an introduction to 'us'

The RHEC was created in 2011 when a grant was received from the Reece Foundation enabling us to make some major improvements to the workshop facilities at Beamish. The result of the dedicated efforts by the Site Support team and Regional Heritage Engineering Team, as well as volunteers from various groups, was the creation of numerous specialist 'shops' including improvements to the existing Joiner's Shop, Vehicle Workshop and Fabrication Bay. The new areas included a Timber Shop, Erecting Shop, Machine Shop and new Electricians facilities. Still to come are enhancements to the messing and sanitary facilities within the RHEC. The work was largely undertaken in house and has had to fit around numerous major projects. The Erecting Shop gives us a large space for running several projects side-by-side and enabling the smaller shops to remain (relatively!) free of clutter whilst projects are being carried out.

We do consider this to be Phase 1 – and in the future we would like to create further smaller workshops for particular specialism's (some of these may even be out on site – a period cycle shop being a long desired attraction within the Town area at Beamish and ensuring that even maintenance has some rays from the spotlight bathed upon it!) as well as a large and well equipped paint shop and new vehicle workshop, with pit, capable of overhauling vehicles as large as double deck buses.

So who are 'we'? In the context of the RHEC, I have overall responsibility and provide the curatorial support as well as project management as required. I also liaise with the wider Museum (plus our contractors) and hopefully identify the projects that will benefit our visitors across the site. Tony Vollans coordinates the workshops, as the Regional Heritage Engineer, and is experienced in a wide variety of trades, in particular carpentry. He currently has an apprentice working with him (as well as other staff members) and can call upon the support of the wider Site Support team, which is led by Shaun Kay.

Ian Bean and Colin Slater coordinate the Friends of Beamish volunteers who attend on a Saturday, whilst other volunteers can be found on site throughout the week.

New volunteers are invited to contact Sarah Jarman in the first instance, on 0191 370 4069 or sarahjarman@beamish.org.uk in order to arrange an interview, induction and meet the team on one of a number of occasions throughout the year.

Layout

This schematic plan shows the allocation of working bays in the RHEC looking from above:

Erecting Shop and Timber Shop

Bay 1	Bay 4	Bay 7	Timber Shop
Bay 2	Bay 5	Sawbench	
Bay 3	Bay 6	Porch	

Tramway Workshop –Road 1

Berth 1	Berth 2	Workshop and Store
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Current Projects

- Bay 1 Leamington & Warwick Horse Tram No.8

The horse tram arrived at Beamish last year and is stored pending the forming of a restoration team and also formal transfer of title to Beamish Museum. It will be restored incorporating parts from near-identical Newcastle & Gosforth No.49 and will bear the identity of the latter. This is considered very much a long term project.

- Bay 2 Barford & Perkins Motor Roller R025

The Saturday volunteer team have made rapid progress dismantling this mid 1920s motor roller in readiness for a ground up restoration. The main frame and other large components will be sent away for shotblasting along with Samson’s main frames this summer, leaving space to start the overhaul and rebuild of some of the modular components such as the engine, gearbox and rolls. This is a long term project.

- Bay 3 Halls Distemper Men Advertising Hoarding

The volunteers have created replicas of the original sign's components after this was damaged by high winds in 2012. Work is drawing towards its conclusion when the much-missed men will be reassembled on site at Rowley Station.

- Bay 4 Fowler Steam Roller 'Rambler'

Temporarily stored pending relocation to Vehicle Shop for re-tubing.

- Bay 5 B-Type Bus

The thorough mechanical overhaul by the staff nears its conclusion whilst the contract repaint will also be completed in late June – into the striking Saxe Blue of Newcastle Corporation Transport circa the early 1920s. Volunteer input has seen some interior painting as well as full re-upholstering undertaken and the overall result is stunning! The bus is due to re-enter service on the Museum site in July.

- Bay 6 Vacant

Used as overspill for other projects.

- Bay 7 Samson

The ambitious new-build replication of 1874-built Stephen Lewin 0-4-0WTG 'Samson' (which worked at Cornish Hush mine in south Weardale) is making rapid progress, largely with volunteer input but also skilled staff contribution. The frames are ready for riveting and will shortly be dispatched to the Severn Valley Railway's Boilershop at Bridgnorth for this work to be carried out. After this they will be shotblasted, painted and set aside. Work is now focussed on construction of the engine unit atop the boiler, making full use of the new machine shop – a major component of the RHEC development.

- Timber Shop Vacant

Vacant, but not for long! The removal of the SOS bus to the main depot has enabled final work in creating this large-jobs timber shop to be completed and it is carrying out numerous small jobs pending the rolling in of larger ones later in the year.

Future Projects

Later in 2013 the Fowler Steam roller 'Rambler' will move to the Vehicle Workshop for a re-tube and other attention requiring Chris' talents with the welder. The B-Type bus is due to vacate its slot in early July and so will leave the centre three bays of the Erecting Shop ready for the next round of projects. Thus, subject to change, the allocation of space will look something like this:

- Bay 1 Leamington & Warwick Horse Tram No.8

Pending start of this project

- Bay 2 Barford & Perkins Motor Roller R025

Ongoing work on the restoration of this motor roller.

- Bay 3

Smaller projects – including reconstruction of RAC telephone box and, later, reconstruction of 18th century 'Newsham' fire engine (hand pumped).

- Bay 4 NER Birdcage Brakevan

The long awaited overhaul of this iconic North Eastern Railway Brakevan – considered a medium term project. Whilst the chassis and running gear are in sound condition, the body and roof require extensive work, new door pillars, overhaul of the stove and re-glazing and re-canvassing.

- Bay 5 Superstructure from 4085 'Dunrobin'

As part of our contribution to the physical restoration work on the former Duke of Sutherland loco (repatriated in 2011 and currently having a comprehensive overhaul at the Severn Valley Railway) we are going to overhaul and finish to undercoat stage the two side tanks, cab and bunker (including the passenger bench that was located in the cab and made this engine so unique!).

- Bay 6 1950s Harry Vickers Caravan

A short term project due to be completed by late July, this caravan has been purchased for use by the Community Engagement Team as an outreach

vehicle to be taken around the region as well as a future component in the 1950s developments at Beamish.

- Bay 7 Samson

Ongoing.

- Timber Shop Lower Saloon from Sheffield tram No.264

This tram will be stripped in Berth 2 of the tram depot to liberate the lower saloon which requires an extensive rebuild and new bottom frame.

- Berth 1 Sunderland tram No.16

The tram is due re-tyring which entails removal of the truck. It is anticipated that the re-tyring will be carried out as a contract job with the truck being removed from site for the work to be carried out. The tram itself will be re-varnished and receive 'Binns' adverts to the end panels.

- Berth 2 Sheffield tram No.264 - dismantled

The long-awaited overhaul of this much needed tram will commence shortly with it being stripped to enable the saloon to be rebuilt. The truck will receive a standard 'mid-life' overhaul and the upper deck will be tidied up before the whole tram is reassembled and repainted.

Other projects under consideration/in planning:

Tony will be overhauling (through a comprehensive rebuild) the rounding boards for the Savage steam gallopers this winter, and longer term (next year) will more than likely tackle the massive job of rebuilding the Lighthouse Slip for erection at the fairground.

The RHEC will also support work out on site, again mixing staff and volunteer contributions as well as contractors where required. The overhaul and repaint of Duke of Sutherland saloon No.58A (repatriated from Canada in 2011) is planned, to be followed by NER luggage composite coach No.3071. Gateshead tram No.10 (currently in its British Railways guise as No.26) also requires body repairs, re-tyring and a repaint within the next 18 months.

Summary

We will shortly have a noticeboard inside the Erecting Shop which will enable each project to be tracked through the bays. The signing in point for all volunteers has also been relocated to the reception area of the RHEC, entering the Erecting and Timber Shops. This area also contains lockers for volunteers to use for their belongings.

An official opening of the RHEC is planned for the summer of 2013 and we may put off the re-shuffle until after this event. We can also look forward to the formation of a young-engineers group derived from the Beamish Youth Group, to assist with various projects and learn new skills and hopefully develop a lifelong interest in heritage, restoration and the engineering and trade skills required to sustain it.

All workshop staff and volunteers will be taking part in a number of inductions (covering such things as workshop safety) in coming months, this element being led by an outside consultant (to ensure independence). New volunteers and staff will also attend these so we will probably have a number of joining sessions throughout the year in order to deal with this.

The next bulletin will be out in the autumn – meanwhile, you can visit the workshops whenever they are open (please report to a member of staff or the coordinator on the day first) or follow us online at:

www.beamishtransportonline.co.uk

PS – any feedback on the bulletin is very welcome and can be directed to me via museum@beamish.org.uk or in person on most days (Sundays excepted) during the year.

Paul Jarman

Head of Transport & Industry

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