

Crakehall Station level crossing gates win national award for the Wensleydale Railway

December 12, 2023



Wensleydale Railway has announced that its replacement level crossing gates at Crakehall Station have won a National Railway Heritage Award. The gates, generously donated by long-term volunteer Bob Coombs, were the winner of The Hendy & Pendle Trust Volunteers Award at the National Rail Heritage Awards ceremony held in London on 6 December.

Bob generously donated the gates to the railway, and he led the project to design, build and install them. The gates are wooden and made to a design based on the North Eastern Railway Southern Division style. They were produced by William Lambert of the Woodcraft Studio at Raygill House Farm, near Hawes, North Yorkshire.

Bob has been a volunteer for 11 years and in that time, he has done various jobs, including Crossing Keeper at Crakehall Station. He is currently one of the railway's period-costumed, living history interpreters and as Leeming Bar's Station Master (which he plays in the character of Mr Newton, the original 1920s station master), he regularly provides visitors with informative tours around the 1920s restored station building.

Bob said: "Having worked the old gates at Crakehall on a windy day, I know at first hand the problems that Crossing Keepers faced. It was clear that new gates were needed. I unexpectedly came into an inheritance that not only enabled me to fund new gates but also to have ones that reflected the heritage nature of the Wensleydale Railway."

He added: "The work was mainly carried out by volunteers and is of an excellent standard. Replacing worn out metal gates with high quality wooden heritage style ones demonstrates the confidence that the Wensleydale Railway has going forward."

Nick Keegan, Fundraising and Marketing Manager at Wensleydale Railway said: "As a volunteer-led and supported organisation, this award means a great deal to us. It recognises the incredible contribution that all our volunteers make to our railway and their dedication and commitment to preserving our vital railway history for generations to enjoy. We are very proud of Bob, everyone involved in this project and to our entire team of amazing volunteers."

Crakehall railway station was opened to passengers in 1856 by the Bedale and Leyburn Railway, which later became part of the London and North Eastern Railway. The railway was closed to scheduled passenger traffic in 1954 and goods traffic in 1992. Wensleydale Railway PLC currently has a lease of the building.

The Wensleydale Railway Association (Trust) is the charitable arm of the Wensleydale Railway. The Trust recruits and trains volunteers to support the railway's operation and its charitable responsibilities also include providing education and information on the railway's history and conserving railway heritage for the public benefit. Donations to this work are welcome:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/summerappeal2023>

More information: <https://wensleydale-railway.co.uk/>