

Repair, restore, replace: behind the scenes at North Yorkshire Moors Railway

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Paul Middleton Traction and Rolling Stock Manager at North Yorkshire Moors Railway, looks at his team's busy schedule of restoration and maintenance projects over the coming months

"Even though we're not open to the public right now, the work doesn't stop for NYMR's team of 40+ fitters and engineers (including 12 in the carriage and wagon team at Pickering). As well as the major ongoing restoration work, there's the annual programme of winter maintenance, which this year is complicated by the challenges of COVID.

We're really fortunate and grateful that at least we are able to have our staff still working, thanks to the £1.9m grant from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund.

As you can imagine, carrying out engineering work while observing all the necessary social distancing guidelines is challenging to say the least; the shed is split into two smaller bubbles working in separate areas with staggered start times and split tea breaks and lunchtimes. We're not as efficient as we'd like to be and were pre-COVID, but everyone's doing the very best they can under the circumstances.

Restoration projects

LMS 'Black 5' No. 44806

Formerly known as 'Magpie' (after the 70s children's show), 44806 is undergoing a full restoration. The boiler has gone away to Riley & Sons, while the chassis is at Grosmont, where Andrew Jeffery (aka Bungle) and his team of young fitters have completed the first part of the bogey overhaul, repairing the axle boxes. The engine is anticipated to be back up and running in 18 months' time, returning to traffic in spring/summer 2023.

BR Standard 4 No. 75029 'The Green Knight'

Phil Naylor and James Newton are busy in the boiler shop with this one; fitting a new copper tube plate, new half copper door plate and half copper sides; 75029 is also undergoing a chassis high bottom end overhaul and will be back for summer/autumn 2022.

SR No.34101 'Hartland' Bulleid Pacific

The chassis work on 34101 is complete but work on the boiler continues; we've had a new firebox pressed, but there's the small matter of 2,500 holes to drill, ream and tap, ready for the stays. The work should be completed to see it back in traffic in 2022.

BR Class 24 No.5032 'Helen Turner'

This is a major, 10-year restoration, and we're still two years away from completion. Lots of new bodywork panels; bogey and engine overhaul; complete rewire; and the generator is away for overhaul. The diesel team at NYMR is relatively small, and they're carrying out this work on 5032 in between repairs and maintenance on locomotives that are in traffic.

LNER Q6 No.66395 (2238)

The owners, NELPG (North East Locomotive Preservation Group), are carrying out a major overhaul with help from the NYMR. The bulk of the work being carried out is on the chassis, while the boiler has been removed for overhaul and is ready to be steam tested.

In addition to these major projects, our essential annual winter maintenance schedule continues:

- **SR No.926 'Repton'** – work on this engine includes repairs to the super heater header and a full set of super heater elements; the cracked chimney is also being welded.
- **SR S15 class No.825** – fresh out of overhaul in 2019, 825 didn't do too much mileage last year, so it's mostly basic maintenance.
- **Lambton Colliery No.29** – Not much needed here to get it ready for 2021; it came out of being worked on not long before COVID, so it's pretty much ready to go.
- **J27 65894 (NER P3 2392)** – another one for NELPG, J27 is getting new motion bushes, cylinders bored and other mechanical repairs.
- **LNER K1 No.62005** – K1 has just arrived with us for basic winter maintenance by NELPG and will return to Scotland later in the year to pull the Jacobite, but we'll hopefully see it run at the NYMR.
- **BR 9F No.92134** – 9F only came out of overhaul in September last year, so only needs some light maintenance to get it ready.
- **BR Standard 4 Tank No. 80136** – not used last year, we've nearly finished the winter maintenance from 2019 and awaits a steam test.
- **BR Standard 4MT No. 76079** – another engine that wasn't used on the Optimist last year, we're halfway through its winter maintenance from 2019; it's had a boiler re-tube and is in the final stages, but not yet been steam tested.
- **LMS No. 5428 'Eric Treacy'** – we're just finishing off the winter maintenance from 2019; i we're just riveting a new horn guide, but it will be ready just in time for the new season opening.
- **Lucie type IV Cockerill** – we've been using Lucie to heat the diners; she's just having a boiler washout and will be ready for spring.
- **BR Class 25 No. D7628 "Sybilla"** – mostly winter maintenance here; due to have her tyres turned, just waiting on dates.
- **BR Class 37 No. 37264** – having new batteries fitted."

Paul Middleton Traction and Rolling Stock Manager at North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Photo credit: Charlotte Graham