

Wheldale Newsletter



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Wheldale Support Group— Summer Update

We hope that you enjoy your visit to our railway and perhaps you may like to contribute to our £200 000 rebuild fund for locomotive Wheldale and perhaps one day, return to be hauled by it. At the time of writing this update, our restoration fund stands at over £48 000, almost a quarter of the way to our target.

We have a number of initiatives for the project in the pipeline and will be reporting on these in due course but we are always receptive to new ideas – so send them in!

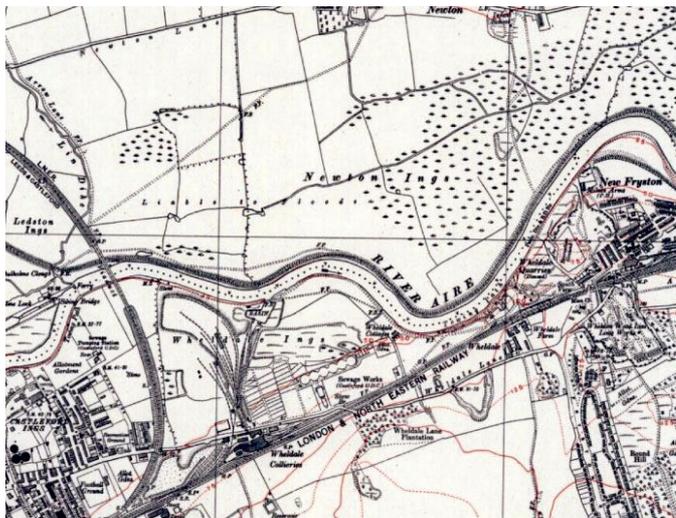
Our fund-raising team Malcolm and Mike, caught up with ex-driver Colin Davies who worked at the Wheldale Colliery, Castleford, and drove locomotive number S163 (it hadn't been given a name at that time), moving coal from the loading points to the transfer sidings.

New visitors to the railway will probably be unaware of our Yorkshire mining heritage and the fact that West and South Yorkshire was once home to hundreds of coal mines, now all completely vanished. One important group of mines lined the banks of the River Aire between Leeds and Wakefield and sent coal out by river, canal, road and rail.

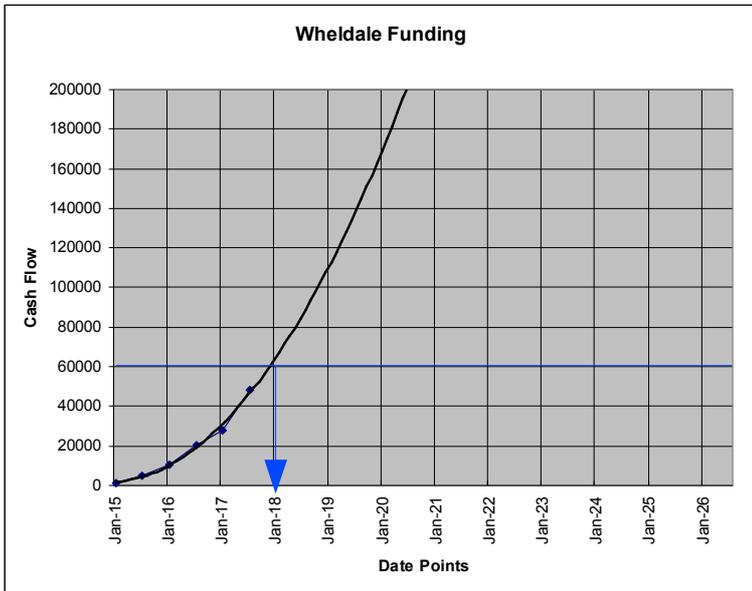


From Left to Right : Mike Walsh, Colin Davies, Malcolm Tongue

Need a reminder about where the colliery was!? Well, the town of Castleford is about a mile away to the West.



Wheldale Colliery
(Map Image National Library of Scotland)



Predicting a future trend is terribly difficult but if the current rate of progress continues, our graph predicts that we should hit the £60 000 target by the Spring. That's the point at which we plan to start the strip-down and assessment of the locomotive. Of course, we'll get there faster if we get additional fund-raising volunteers on our Summer services.



S136 with coal wagons at the colliery weighbridge. We've heard people mention the 'romance of steam' but here the surroundings look cold, wet and dismal, not romantic at all. Probably the only reasonably warm place on that day was up on the footplate of the locomotive.