

Heartbeat of Hythe

The newsletter of Hythe Pier Heritage Association



April 2025 Issue 31

Welcome

Our first publication of 2025 brings a mixture of both positive but also sad news .

Tragically, we lost a very valued member and volunteer, Allan Fairhead, who passed away in January. Allan had served as a Board member for a number of years, first through his role as Parish Councillor then later as founder of The Shed (at the Pier). His enthusiasm and dedication to all of our projects, large and small, was very much appreciated . He will be greatly missed.

The volunteers at The Shed will continue to work on the train restoration projects, thus continuing Allan's legacy.



Greg and Allan preparing to receive an award from the UK Men's Shed organisation

Jill Gower
Secretary and Editor

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Carriage 2 restoration continues ...

Progress has been hampered by absences and illness but work continues with chassis assembly, due for completion early in April. Unfortunately, the recently repaired wheel sets had to be returned to Alan Keef Limited in Ross on Wye (a miniature railway expert company) to have a missing “keyway” machined into them for the carriage braking mechanism. A trip for our railway project leader, Tina Brown, to deliver the wheel set and wait for the keyways to be engineered, was completed all in one day. Well done!



Painted chassis



Wheelsets loaded



after re-engineering

Locomotive Edward Fort

Despite being officially named back in October, Edward Fort is still not completely operational. Edward was pushed on track for a test run at the beginning of January. There was an issue with the wiring to the gear box. Luckily, original wiring diagrams have recently been discovered which will help the completion of this project.

Costs to date are almost £16K (£10k of which was donated by Beaulieu Beaufort Foundation)



Luggage Truck - Latest Railway Project is launched!

The luggage truck employed on the Hythe Pier Railway is owned (as are the rest of the locomotives and rolling stock) by the HPHA, and is leased for operation on the world's oldest continuously electric train operating on a pier, to the Hythe and Southampton Ferry Company.



It was withdrawn from service during early February for restoration as part of HPHA's continuing programme of restoration projects.

It was constructed in 1909, one of two, for the transportation of "heavy goods and passengers' luggage" along the 640 metre length of Hythe Pier. Propulsion was by manpower along tracks sunk into the decking on the north side of the structure in May 1909. The work was carried out by Marchwood builder E J Kingham, who was also a local undertaker. The "tramway" first operated in July 1909. The Hampshire Independent dated July 31, 1909 records "the new tramway on the

pier is now in use and luggage and goods are conveyed up and down on a couple of up-to-date trolleys”.

The same publication reported in its February 12, 1910 edition, “The tramway laid down on the pier for the conveyance of heavy goods and passengers’ luggage has proved of great advantage and we notice that some additional sidings are now being put down by Mr. Kingham’s workmen, which will greatly facilitate the traffic arrangements”. Although not originally intended, ferry passengers and promenaders were occasionally afforded a “lift”.

In 1920, Mr Thomas Percy, then owner of the pier and ferry boats, saw an opportunity to install an electric railway along the pier. The story of the pier railway is well documented elsewhere. So far as the luggage trucks are concerned, they were modified for the wider gauge raised track installed on the south side in 1921. The electric railway, drawing power from a third rail, commenced operating in July 1922.

The surviving truck differs very little from its original design. The other truck was unfortunately shunted from the pier into the water. In a letter to railway engineer Gerald Yorke dated August 24, 1922, Mr Percy explained how, just weeks after the railway was inaugurated, “the train pushed the luggage truck over the end of the pier”. No record can be found of any recovery.

Jeff Drodge, a new volunteer to the team, has taken the lead on this latest project. The restored luggage truck will be a different structure to the most recent incarnation, which was itself different to the original 1909 arrangement. The whole truck will be lower and more suitable for its normal use, carrying pushchairs and the occasional bicycle. We look forward to following its progress.



Changes to the HPHA Board

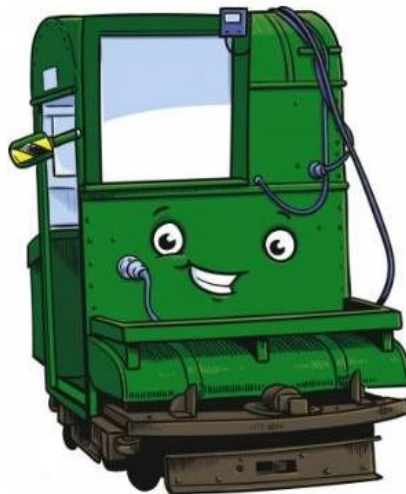
This year we have already lost two valued members of our Board. Allan Fairhead, who as mentioned earlier, died suddenly in January. Subsequently, Alan Titheridge resigned from the Board in February . He and his wife have many travel plans this year, which will take up much of his time.

We put out yet another plea for Board members. Luckily, we did have several enquires and three interested people attended our February Board meeting. As a result, we have co-opted Adrian Thatcher. Adrian has extensive financial experience and had already been working behind the scenes on business planning. Also in attendance was Jeff Drodge. Jeff has an engineering background and has subsequently taken on our latest project, restoring the luggage truck.

With any depletion of key members, comes the need for new expertise. We still need members who can join the team who manage and administer the work of the Association. Board meetings are held once a month.

We also need people who can help in a variety of roles behind the scenes, restoring the train and pier, spreading information about the history and heritage, project managing and fundraising . If you are interested in joining our friendly group, have skills that you think may be useful, along with energy and commitment, we would love to hear from you. Contact us at:

info@hythepier.org.uk



*Gerald says,
"Come and join in"*

Pier Head Roof Repairs

Unfortunately, storm damage this winter has meant yet more repair works are required to the pier head buildings. This work involves the southern end barge boards and the repair of the perspex sheet that covers the gap between the two buildings that are damaged and could possibly fall down. This is a repair on the grounds of public safety and business continuity and is the reason why the train is currently not able to stop at the seaward end station. We are hopeful that the repairs will be completed by mid-April 2025.



Forthcoming Events

Hythe Village Fete, Saturday 26th May – merchandise and information stall

Heritage Day in Hythe Village, Saturday 28th June – opening of the Engine Shed, merchandise and HPHA information.

Rock the Pier, Saturday 13th September – amazing day of music for all the family.



Community Support

We are always thrilled when local groups choose to donate to HPHA. All these efforts enable us to continue with vital restoration works such as the current luggage trolley and carriage projects, thus safeguarding the pier for future generations to enjoy.

A big **THANKYOU** goes to:



The Ladies Section of Bramshott
Golf Club for donating £1,489



Be-Be's Café for donating £620



Waterside Fire Engine for donating £600



Eyeworth Walk Christmas Lights £1,250



And last but not least, to all those who donated their foreign currency via The Herald Office, Hythe

Board Meeting dates

If you are a member of HPHA (by owning a share in the Association) then you may attend our Board meetings as an observer. Please notify us that you wish to attend 7 days in advance of the meeting by contacting any Board member. We ask for this notice to ensure we have enough room to accommodate everyone.

The provisional dates for this year are:

Monday, 28 April 2025
Monday, 9th June 2025 (AGM)
Monday, 28 July 2025
Monday, 29 September 2025

Membership Of HPHA

Membership of HPHA costs £10 per annum and includes ownership of a share in the Association. Please visit our website at hythepier.org.uk and click on the “Join” link to see more information and become a member.