

## **Chairman's Statement to the AGM 2020**

This year has probably been one of the most uncertain for the Society since our early days in 1967. Indeed, the way in which we are conducting our AGM this year is a first.

Following a very successful 2019 and a good start to 2020 - with Bahamas returning to the main line on 22nd February along the Settle and Carlisle Railway with a full train - record attendances during February half-term with a dinosaur themed event at Ingrow and along the KWVR - followed with Bahamas operating on all 3 days of the KWVR gala in early March; suddenly everything came to a halt just a week later, seeing our Museum Closed, and all our staff laid off as the UK entered an unprecedented period of lockdown with all tourist attractions closed. Fortunately we were able to secure a £10,000 government grant and we were able to furlough all of our Duty Officers and Matt Arnold, our Learning and Community Manager. We basically remained in hibernation for some 5 months only able to reopen the Museum and return our staff back to work on 17th August. This was achieved through our decision to bid for emergency lottery fund support, which successfully secured us at total of £61,500 meaning that we were able to operate again under what is termed as the 'new norm'.

Our reopening coincided with the first KWVR day of operation. With the support of the lottery grant we have also been able to support other local enterprises and we were delighted that we were able to support Yesteryear Travel to return the late Summer vintage bus service between Haworth village and Ingrow. We were also pleased to receive a grant of £2000 from Keighley Town Council and £1000 from Museum Development Yorkshire and, of course, over £5000 from our members and supporters which is a tremendous achievement for a small Society. Our workshop volunteers were able to return to work both at Ingrow and at Howarth at the end of July and we have also been able to support the Ingrow Bridge 11 work completion with the use of our steam crane as well as a boiler lift in Haworth yard of locomotive 957.

Obviously visitor numbers have not been as we would have hoped in a normal year, but the financial support that we have received does mean we are in a strong position and can look forward to a successful future at a time when so many other heritage attractions are really feeling the strain. We have also made good use of social media to update on progress with regard to our museum opening plans, as well as provide an online sales service, and open a new you tube channel that has proved very popular especially those reminiscences about our days at Dinting. We have also been able to provide regular updates to members who have furnished us with their email address about how we have been coping under the constant changing situation. It is very encouraging that coach trips have now returned to Ingrow and we are also hopeful of some school visits as well. We were especially pleased to see Bahamas in steam on KWVR in early September undertaking a photo charter tour.

We have also been pleased to strengthen our partnership working with Hope Cement Works and were delighted in December to be able to host 4 apprentices from the works to gain some

traditional engineering skills by working with our team on preliminary work on 1054 Coal Tank loco including involvement in the boiler lift. We hope to be able to accommodate them at Ingrow again soon. We also will be working with the works on an education project for local Derbyshire schools which will involve taking Nunlow to the works sometime next year for a while. Work on the Coal Tank has continued with £5000 being spent on new tubes for the loco and a successful out-of-frame boiler inspection being carried out. We are well on schedule for the loco to be ready for 2022 to play a major part in the celebrations to commemorate the Centenary of the merger of the L and Y and LNWR companies and of course the Big Four centenary in 2023. As the only operational LNWR loco it is expected to take centre stage in these events.

Your Committee of Directors has continued to meet regularly using Zoom technology and since our last AGM we have been joined by 2 new Directors in Helen Peach and Peter Smith who have both settled into their roles extremely well, and on your behalf I want to thank the Directors for their sterling work and the support they have given me as Chairman. I also want to thank Helen Ashby for the continuing support which she has given to us as our Museum Mentor and in particular for the work she has done in steering through our museum re-accreditation application with the support of both Pete Skellon and Frank Galvin.

In summary the year since our last AGM has been a difficult one where we have for many months been deprived of our Bahamas and Ingrow fix but we are now back undertaking the work which we love albeit in a rather different way, keeping our distance from each other, wearing face masks when appropriate, and keeping the public safe. We were particular pleased that our member Sir John Oldham was able to be with us in July to look around the museum at the measures we had put in place to ensure a safe visit, and he was able to advise that our safety measures and risk assessment had been well carried out. There is of course still uncertainty as to what the future holds but I do hope to be able to see you soon at Ingrow or on the min line again next year with Bahamas, and I do hope that you are healthy and staying safe yourselves.

Keith Whitmore

Chairman

Bahamas Locomotive Society.