

Strathspey Railway Association AGM November 2018

Report on Caley 828 by Doug Scott

From time to time the Strathspey Railway has found itself dependent on one steam locomotive to operate its services. This is far from ideal - we really should always have three steam locos capable of working our services. In the period between the end of October 2017 until July 22nd 2018 CR 828 was the sole source of steam traction on the Strathspey Railway. She operated the 2017 Santa and Mince Pie Specials flawlessly until the very last day on January 3rd when an Injector problem resulted in her failing her daily fitness-to-run exam and the service had to be cancelled. Following some routine winter maintenance that included fitting new slide valves she re-entered traffic at the start of the 2018 season. Delays in completing some major work on 46512 resulted in 828 working the majority of the services until the weekend of our 40th Anniversary celebrations on July 22nd. Since then she and 46512 have shared the workload.

When we brought 828 back into operation last year the intention was that she would run on approximately 35 - 40 days. In 2017 she accumulated over 90 operating days. In 2018 the total is again in the 90s. This means she has run around 11,000 miles in the past two seasons - not a bad achievement for an elderly lady. This amount of running does rack up a fair amount of wear and tear and although she has generally been very reliable we did have to take her out of traffic in September for a couple of weeks as a result of some unusual mechanical symptoms. At first we feared that she had suffered a very serious failure but fortunately it turned out that the symptoms were the result of progressive loosening of rivets that hold the running plates to the loco main frames. The cure was relatively straightforward - remove the slack rivets and replace with closely fitting bolts. It sounds easy but it took several uncomfortable days to complete the job. It was a great relief to take her out on a test run and find that she was back to good health and able to resume normal operations.

By the time you read this at the SRA AGM she should have been down to the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway to play a starring role in the SRPS's Caledonian Reunion Gala. This should bring together the world's last two operational Caledonian Railway locomotives together with the SRPS's Caledonian Railway carriages in a Gala and Photocharter event. The money earned by hiring 828 for the event will go to the CR828 Trust to be used for 828's next heavy overhaul. (Thus adding to the funds provided very generously in 2017 by the SRA members via the Annual Raffle).

Looking to the future we are in discussion with the SRC Boiler Insurance Company with a view to extending the boiler certificate into late 2020. As things presently stand the 10th Anniversary of the boiler ticket is 30.09.19. Ordinarily this would mean that the loco would come out of traffic on October 1st 2019 but because the boiler lay out of use for a 2 - 3 year period between 2014 - 2016 there is a possibility that an extension will be granted.

At the next heavy overhaul there is a lot of heavy work required. This may include renewing the cylinder block, loco dragbox, main frames and stretchers. The tender will also need a lot of heavy work. The CR 828 Trust, the legal owner of the loco, is gearing up to mount a major fundraising campaign to raise around £250,000 to secure the operational future of the loco well into the second half of the 21st Century. I'm sure we will hear more from the Trust shortly on this subject. The SRC also has a responsibility towards the overhaul of the loco and will be providing direct financial input plus the engineering facilities and manpower resources to carry out the overhaul. A new operating agreement for the loco is being developed between the Trust and the SRC. Hopefully there will be a successful outcome in the near future thus securing Aviemore and the Strathspey Railway as the operational base for Scotland's most iconic steam locomotive.