



Wensleydale Railway

***News Release***

***October 2017***

**British Museum Marsh Award for Wensleydale Railway's Scruton Station Heritage Education Programme**

Wensleydale Railway volunteers have won the British Museum Marsh Award for Museum Learning for their outstanding contribution to the schools programme at Scruton Station, an award, which brings with it, a cash reward of £1500.

A dedicated team of 20 volunteers has brought the restored Victorian station at Scruton in North Yorkshire back to life, through an innovative programme of educational visits. Having secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2015, local volunteers worked alongside the Heritage Education Officer to research and redisplay the station as it was in 1916, creating an authentic period setting for a

programme of curriculum-linked school visits designed to engage primary-aged pupils with the story of this country station and its community during the First World War.

“This award win was against a wide range of volunteer-run projects in museums and galleries across the UK and the judges were glowing in their assessment of the programme. This is a remarkable achievement, which recognises the invaluable contributions of the volunteers and the cash prize will help us to sustain the initiative even further” comments Virginia Arrowsmith, Heritage Education Officer.

The Heritage Education Volunteers have enabled the Wensleydale Railway to create and deliver this unique and high-quality education programme, engaging 300 local primary school children with their heritage in a memorable and educationally enriching way. The award will now enable the Railway to offer their programme of school visits again next year, engaging more local children with the past through interactive curriculum-linked visits which run from May through to July.

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#### **Notes for Editors:**

##### **Some examples of positive feedback from visitors and/or museum staff**

*‘Thanks again for a fantastic morning last Thursday. The children (and the adults) loved it! It was obvious that you all have put a huge amount of research, time and dedication in to the project.’*

Mr Hollocks, Le Cateau Primary School, Catterick Garrison

*‘Arriving at Scruton Station we immediately felt as if we had stepped back in time. A Year 4 girl gasped, “It’s like being on a film set, everything looks so old and beautiful; all the people, including us, look like characters from a film.” ... and because the characters are all local people it allows children to experience their local history, giving them a real insight into how the war affected people’s lives.*

All of the activities were well-planned, exciting and engaging for the children. We

took a group of children who were on our SEND<sup>1</sup> register, who, at times lack concentration, but we were all impressed by the planned activities, which gave the children the opportunity to learn about the past and experience it through meaningful hands-on learning activities.

*A Year 5 boy said: 'All the activities were fantastic, my favourite was the one where we had to weigh parcels – I can't believe people used to send eggs on the train, in a basket; that wouldn't happen now!' A Year 5 girl said: 'The task we had to do was great and I was able to access all the activities in my wheelchair because the staff were very kind and helpful'.*

Scruton Station is a brilliant resource for schools, and one we will definitely use again. Thank you once again for a wonderful afternoon.'

Mrs Paylor, Wavell Junior School, Catterick Garrison

*'I got involved in the project through my husband who is a volunteer for the Wensleydale Railway. When I met the heritage education group, I felt their enthusiasm and commitment to making the project a success, was infectious! I got involved in the archive research initially, and have become more and more involved, getting activities and resources ready, dressing as a costumed character and running the group sessions with schools. It's been a privilege to be part of the programme and a really special experience.'*

Margaret Tong, Volunteer

*'The programme has given children the opportunity to enjoy a 'first hand experience' which draws on real enquiry-based learning, and is to be highly complimented. It has enabled schools and other groups to reflect on how things change over time and to develop empathy with a variety of situations, encouraging an understanding of the past from different perspectives. Under the guidance of the Heritage Education Officer, the project has provided the chance for children and adults alike to 'shine' in circumstances that are different to their norm, all within a supportive environment.'*

Grahame Shepherd, Volunteer and Retired Headteacher

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<sup>1</sup> Special Educational Needs and Disabilities