

Press Release dated 4th February 2023

Railway enthusiasts learn about “fly on the wall” documentary

Over 70 members and friends of the u3a railway group attended a fascinating presentation by Paul Middleton, Director of Mechanical Engineering at North Yorkshire Moors Railway.



Paul joined the NYMR as an apprentice and is known to most as “Piglet” from the Channel Five “fly on the wall” TV series *The Yorkshire Steam Railway*.

The invitation to visit Ilkley came during a visit to the locomotive sheds by the railway group during the summer.

Suspensions that these “fly on the wall” documentaries make the most from everyday incidents were confirmed but it does make for good TV. The public clearly approve because three seasons have been completed and the benefits of major TV coverage for the heritage railway is immense.

Everyday challenges of running an 18 mile railway that also uses BR tracks to reach Whitby were of particular interest to the group.

Members all remembered the instruction not to use the toilet while the train is standing in the station. Without going into detail, that is how train carriage toilets of the 1950’s operated. So a recent project was to retrofit waste tanks to all 45 carriages that run on the railway. And, of course, installing a method of emptying them hygienically.



Paul also explained that the railway uses 2.5 tonnes of coal per year and that the Motive Power Depot based in Grosmont maintains 10 operational steam locomotives, 4 steam locomotives under restoration and has 30 full time staff with a further 100 volunteers.

The u3a Railway Group meets fortnightly in the Clarke Foley centre near the main Ilkley car park and is one of over 100 groups meeting regularly across the district. If you are at or nearing retirement age u3a gives the opportunity for lifelong learning and joining up with others who share your particular interest or hobby.

Find out more by visiting the u3a website (search Ilkley & District u3a) or scan this QR code on smart phones or tablets. Join u3a before end of April for just £7:50.

