



# Driver Training

Report of initial training session at Puffing Park

24th June 2019

Monday 24th June saw the initial Puffing Park training session in the club's programme to train up new drivers. The guinea pigs were Peter Wood, Matthew Cadbury and Alan Day and the session was hosted by Roger Stephen and Mike Collins. We were also joined by Clive Reynolds. Peter has a 3 1/5" gauge Rob Roy he is keen to get working on the track, Matthew has a 5" gauge loco based on a Cadbury shunter that is virtually ready to go and Alan has recently acquired a 5" gauge Hymek loco which will require some tinkering and fettling to be ready to go.

The club's driver training programme has four strands:

1. A **Locomotive Operations Guide** (which you can find [HERE](#)) providing basic Puffing Park safety information and information about loco preparation, raising steam, driving, shutting down and troubleshooting.

2. **Support** to the new drivers in getting their locomotives ready for the track, for example, implementing the correct type of couplings and gauging information for driving trucks.
3. **Practical sessions** at Puffing Park beginning with a group session and followed by individual sessions as necessary.
4. An **Assessment** process aimed at supporting the drivers avoiding bad habits and generally improving their competence.

It was a fine day and we began at 10:00 by moving the club loco Polly onto the steaming bay. After running through the various controls of the loco, Roger took everyone through the process of raising steam and then Polly was moved to the track using the loco lift.

At that point there was a problem as the water level in the boiler had dropped from half way up the water gauge to near the bottom of the water gauge. It turned out a clack valve fed by the axle pump was not sealing properly and the boiler water was being forced back through the bypass valve into the tender. A skilful tap of the valve from Roger using the shovel seemed to fix the problem! This incident did have the benefit of illustrating how important it is to never lose focus on the boiler water level.



After a lap to check everything was now working OK, the new drivers took turns in taking the loco round the track with Roger literally looking over their shoulder. As might be expected in the learning process there were one or two incidents of losing steam pressure down the back straight and of over-filling the boiler! Overall the session fulfilled its purpose of familiarising the new drivers with managing a loco at Puffing Park. The picture left shows Peter Wood heading off with Roger riding shotgun.

*Do you want to drive a loco at puffing park?*

*If you are interested in driving a loco at Puffing Park then please get in touch with Roger Stephen or Mike Collins. Remember you don't need your own loco as the club has one that can be used. Coal and water is provided on site.*

A couple more pictures from the session....



Matthew demonstrating a spirited departure with safety valve blowing and a hint of wheel spin!



Where has the water gone?