

U3a press release



U3A CELEBRATES THE BUILDING OF A NEW STEAM ICON

Sixty years after the last engine was scrapped, the magic of the B17 steam locomotive still lives on and is being brought to life by steam train enthusiasts. A u3a talk on Thursday 6 May describes how the B17 Locomotive Trust, a charity with Rod Stewart as its patron, has set about rebuilding one of these engines from scratch. The talk is organised by the u3a Railways group for its members but is open to the general public as we know that many people share a soft spot for steam trains.

Some seventy-three B17 steam engines were built by LNER (London North Eastern Railway company) between 1928 - 1937. They mainly operated on a passenger service between London and Norwich. The first, No. 2800, was called Sandringham after the royal family's palace in East Anglia and after that the first batch of the B17s were known as 'Sandringhams'. The last 25, built in the 1930s, were named after football clubs and ran on the old GCR (Great Central Railway) route operating between London (Marylebone) and Sheffield. Those of local interest include the '2856 Leeds United' built in 1936, and '2868 Bradford City' built a year later. Both were scrapped in 1960.



Leeds United - Engine no. 2856 pictured by Ian McCabe

This fascinating talk will interest all train buffs as it is about a new class B17 4-6-0 express passenger train which is currently under construction. The train will be called 'No 61673 Spirit of Sandringham' and is being built at the Sheffield based engineering company, CTL Seal Ltd. Traditional building methods are being used where possible and the project is designed to be a teaching tool for apprentices, GCSE, A level and university students. The train is due to be completed in 2029, after which time the Locomotive Trust hopes that it will carry passengers on heritage and mainline railway lines.

The talk explains the build of the static mainframe assembly and the continuing work to produce the rolling chassis. It is open to the public on the u3a website via zoom on Thursday 6 May at 3.30 pm. To book your free place in the zoom audience email talksgroup@ilkleyu3a.org for the joining instructions. Members of the u3a can register on the Ilkley & District U3A website at ilkleyu3a.org. Further information about the B17 locomotives can be found on the B17 Locomotive Trust website on <https://www.b17steamloco.co.uk>

As a member of Ilkley & District U3A you have access to these and other talks in addition to group and social activities. There are over 140 groups to choose from, many of which are operating on zoom during the pandemic. If you would like to find out about all the U3A's activities, then go to the website and follow the links or come along to the first u3a Drop-in session due to take place since the pandemic struck. Meet members and Trustees in the Clarke Foley Centre Ilkley on Friday 21 May from 10.30 – 12.30. Find us also on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IlkleyU3A/> and Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IlkleyU3A>.



Aske Hall - Engine 61627 pictured by Brian Morrison in July 1952 as it approaches Hadley Wood North tunnel

East Anglian - Engine no. 2859. This image, courtesy of Archant Press shows the inaugural run of the new Norwich to London express service in September 1937.

