

# The Gelert Trust – Annual Report 2023

Registered Charity 1171674

38 Woodbourne Road,  
Smethwick B67 5LZ



## **Trustees:**

David Allan, Lewis Dittrich, Neil Evans, Graham Farr, Andrew Goodwin, John Kerr, David Lampert, Bob Menzies, Martyn Owen, Nigel Watkinson, Mark Seale, Myles Jones, Beth Gloster



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## Introduction

2023 was another satisfactory year for The Gelert Trust. Gelert's operation at the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway (WHR) has continued, providing opportunities for both training and education, as well as operational experience. 2023 was an important year for the trust as this marks Gelert turning 70 years old.

The Trust continues to explore ways of securing Gelert's future, how best to celebrate the locomotive's rich heritage and educate a wider audience about the story of this popular locomotive. The Trust has worked closely with the WHHR to establish a clear partnership in maintaining and celebrating Gelert which has become popular both with volunteers and with visitors to the railway. When not operating or under maintenance Gelert is stored under cover in the Museum of the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway.



Photo – Gelert with volunteers on an evening social



## Education and Involvement

A volunteer has offered support in updating the current website. Commitment from trustees and the volunteers have opened discussions about how best to use this, both for attracting involvement and for education. It is also hoped to develop donation facilities, creating an online shop and other key elements to improve the site. Traffic will be exchanged with the Facebook page when amendments have been made.

Whilst coming to the end of the pandemic it was a challenge to engage and encourage new volunteers to work with the trust in the maintenance and development work on Gelert. However, the Trust's work schedule for 2023, and work utilizing both modern CAD and traditional engineering to replace the smoke box floor, were initiatives which have helped to encourage and engage new volunteers to be part of the maintenance and upkeep of this locomotive. The use of social media to share work schedules has been a feature of the trusts work in 2023.

Work schedules always need to be well communicated to ensure that all Trustees are given the opportunity to offer their support or guidance. Continuing to improve this will be worked on during the 2024 operating season so that new volunteers can be well supported by more experienced Trustees.

The practical use of the engine for operations is always defined by the structure of the WHHR timetable. However, the WHHR has increasingly depended on the use of Gelert due to the non-availability of other motive power, thereby increasing opportunities for training and increasing experience. As a result, Gelert was steamed on 51 occasions and provided the service on 40 occasions, crewed by a mix of trustees and other volunteers. Of these, 21 were also training days. In addition, 11 footplate experiences were provided.

Working parties have also continued, to deal both with ongoing routine maintenance, and with continuing engineering improvements.

## Engineering and Maintenance

During the 2022 operating season a 'clicking' noise from the right-hand engine/steam chest area had been reported several times. Investigation of this was scheduled to be carried out during the winter by the WHHR locomotive team and Trust volunteers working together. Following Gelert being taken out of service in November 2022, the boiler was washed out and the tanks drained for the winter as usual. A Trust volunteer, assisted by a member of the WHHR locomotive team, removed the steam chest covers for inspection, but after investigation it was concluded that the noise is unlikely to be coming from that area. However, it was also noted that adjustments to valve settings were needed. They were carried out, and all reassembled, including minor repairs to the cover.

The rest of the winter maintenance continued as normal with the boiler being washed out, firebox and smokebox cleaned, gauge glass and other boiler fittings being stripped and dismantled. Much of the winter work involved two young volunteers, who helped with many of the tasks, so it formed a very useful introduction for them to the routine maintenance jobs and work in general on the locomotive.

Following the successful cold boiler examination and steam tests, the work done on the steam chest was assessed, it was confirmed that the clicking noise was not coming from there, but the work on adjusting the valve had been successful as the loco had very clear and clean beats when working. So that work had formed a very interesting and productive learning experience.

However, in addition to that, through a process of elimination and working back from the steam chest the noise reported in the previous operating season was identified to be a very tiny amount of slack in a bearing. This is only a small issue, but will involve a large amount of work to rectify, so it is possible that this work will need to wait until the 10 year overhaul. Again, a very useful and interesting piece of investigative work for the volunteers involved



Photo – Gelert's left hand cylinder cover being removed for inspection

An item previously identified and scheduled for 2023 was the fitting of breathers for the engine's water tanks, these were made by a WHHR volunteer during the pandemic, and these have now been fitted

## Funding and Finance

The financial viability of the operation of Gelert remains a key priority for the trust. In 2023 the trust continued its work with the WHHR to investigate the WHHRs contribution to the locomotive ten-year overhaul, which is now only three years away. The trust believes that the best way to celebrate and educate others about Gelert is through its continued operation in a public environment where adults and children can see, hear, and smell the locomotive, interacting with it and being inspired by an industry of yesteryear, inspiring the community of today. Our work with the WHHR and ensuring there is a financial commitment for Gelert remained a key priority for 2023, alongside seeking to develop a raft of other funding initiatives

## Social Media

The trust's main social media outlet is currently its Facebook page, used not only to promote Gelert but also to detail the volunteer work which goes into maintaining and running it. Regular updates have been posted of the winter work, and also advertising when Gelert has been running in service on the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway. Included in these updates are means of inquiring about volunteering on any aspects of Gelert.

It attracts a significant and growing audience and engagement, of which the main age groups are 25-34 and 65+. The posts are regularly shared into groups dedicated to Railways such as ours giving us a bigger reach into showing Gelert and its history. The Facebook page now has 1,087 likes with 68.1% of them in the UK followed by 11.1% in the USA.

Facebook is regularly used for organizing volunteer work parties particularly in the wintertime when the major maintenance is undertaken. An email group overlaps with that of the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway and is also used for internal organization of work parties so Gelert can be maintained using available volunteer labour most effectively. Discussions continue how to improve promotion of Gelert and The Trust, using both this and the development of the website.

It is intended to that developments of the Trust's website will include links with the Facebook page so that they can interact with one another. An online shop for memorabilia remains an aspiration to be developed at some point in the future.



## **Preserving Gelert's History**

The trust is committed to developing methods of safely storing key documents to the continuing story of Gelert. An online 'cloud' system is being used to manage historical archive documents, such as drawing, previous orders, key letters and correspondence and keep current trust documents such as meeting record, financial records, and any current records of the trusts activities, which will then form an historical record in the future.

This will also be used for collecting and preserving information on the history and continuing story of Gelert. It is planned for the website to display much of this information so that it can be available to as wide an audience as possible.

The information boards provided in 2021 to give passengers details of the historical significance of Gelert when not in use and on display continue to be updated with information on Gelert's history.



## The Future

Discussions continue on how to promote Gelert and the Trust, the use of the Facebook page has been a continued success with engagement expanding.

Growing involvement in the work of the Trust is also an ongoing priority. The Trustees will continue to seek to appoint further Trustees in the coming year, both to increase numbers, and particularly to increase participation by younger members.

The trust believes that the best way to celebrate and educate others about Gelert's history, and the traditional skills involved in operating and maintaining it, is through its continued operation in a public environment where adults and children can see, hear, and smell the locomotive, interacting with it and learning about an industry of yesterday, inspiring the community of today, aided by modern tools where appropriate.

Whilst coming to the end of the pandemic, it was a challenge to engage and encourage new volunteers to work with the trust in the maintenance and development work on Gelert. However, it is pleasing that progress has continued to be steady during 2023



Photo – Gelert at Pen-Y-Mount



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name  
The GELERT Trust

No (if any)  
1171674

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01/01/2023	To	Period end date 31/12/2023
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### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Dontions	-	-	-	950	910
Gift Aid received	-	-	-	630	-
Gift aid interest	-	-	-	17	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	-	-	-	1,597	910
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	-	-	-	1,597	910
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Bank charges (Robbery)	60	-	-	60	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	60	-	-	60	-
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	60	-	-	60	-
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	- 60	-	-	1,537	910
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	3,914
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	- 60	-	-	5,451	3,914



## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	5,451	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			


	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	L C DITTRICH	1/8/24