

Clifton Rocks Railway Restoration Annual Report 2007

Visitors have increased in numbers from 2006, and would have been more had we not had to cancel trips after the Hotel changed hands and discovered their insurance did not cover us. Between 24 Sept and 28 Nov 16 trips cancelled for prospective 468 visitors due to insurance problems. We hope to open again by beginning of December.

Less work hours have been spent, but more time has been taken in doing trips Many thanks to the volunteers helping Peter and I with the group trips (especially Mike Taylor), and to the volunteers helping with the work so diligently.

	2005	2006	2007 (to mid Sept)	total
Open day visitors	6500 (3500 est, 3000)	2797 (1132, 1665)	3212 (1088, 2124)	12509
Group trip visitors	117	843	935 (would have been 1400+)	1895
Number of trips	9	41	48 (would have been 64+)	98
Hours spent on trips	30	225	229 (would have been about 315)	484
Work hours	1199	697	377 (would have been about 480)	2273
Number of volunteers	62	45	43	107

Significant Events since last AGM

- November: dug out trenches at bottom station looking for the buffers. Instead we found 3 water chutes and suspect the buffers are under a 20" thick blast wall. We also found a "Shelter 3" sign under the ledges in the bottom refuge area
- December: I started making a sectional model, Dave Hewgill a working cable car model, and John Perkins a car
- January: cleared wet wood debris from upstairs cafeteria room of the BBC area. Looked for artefacts under the ledges. We hosted a very enjoyable party for friends and volunteers. It was well attended with lots of varied food and mulled wine.
- February: taking stock of finds. It looks like lemonade (especially by Brooke and Prudencio) was the most popular drink, followed by milk and beer (especially Bristol United). Many bottles would have had deposits on them so would have been taken back to the supplier. Lots of broken cups were found, and a couple of sugar bowls. Had to support the window pillars on bottom station
- March 2007: article in Pints West (CAMRA Real Ale journal) published about bottles found in refuge areas. We put some more shelving up and went looking for more artefacts.
- April 2007: we rearranged the displays to show all the new artefacts, started to reassemble some of the signs- which are a big jigsaw puzzle of delaminated ply, glued some of the broken china, did some weeding, repainted the cable wheels, brought up another railing from the turnstile area, and weeded the top water tank walls
- May 2007: models completed and booklet about barrage balloons in Clifton printed. Fifth open day in conjunction with Museums and Galleries Month, and harbourside bus rally. Blitz night as part of Museums and Galleries at night event. Articles in Somerset Life, Evening Post. Radio interview for Original Bristol on their launch day. More wartime signs assembled, painted back stairs. Reminiscences of people displayed. New surrounds on the turnstile to make it safer to go through.
- June and July: we did 17 group trips but no work to get a break

- July 2007: rescued a clack valve complete with thimble filter from the bottom water tank. This had been cut during wartime. It needed three to move it in the tank and three to lift it out. We had some new helpers so it was a rewarding experience for them. The other valve is still in situ. We put acro props in the top and bottom station water tanks.
- August 2007: many more finds in refuge shelter (a little doll, toy aeroplane, a domino, ladies face powder top, small bottle of cologne, part of a cut glass bowl, a whole Brooke and Prudencio ginger beer bottle and many more bottles) and put on display. Pantomime group donated us £250 to tidy up bottom station. We were given permission to paint the bottom gate by Bristol City Council. Extreme weeding of inaccessible places on top and bottom façade by Guy who was a joy to watch. Put more acros in bottom water tank. We also put some new wartime signs up we had found and reassembled. Made a new piece of handrail for curved part of the handrail of top station.
- September 2007: Sixth open day in conjunction with Doors Open Day. Still a top attraction. Article in the Evening Post about new finds in the tunnel
- Featured in a video "Cliff Lifts of Great Britain" by Onlinevideo
- September 2007: the new Hotel owners New Light Hotels (the Hotel owners have always covered our insurance and provided our electricity), realised that their insurance did not cover railway tunnels. Since then we are not allowed to go in the tunnel. An exception was made for the centenary celebration of the Institute of Structural Engineers who were also dining at the Hotel. New Light Hotels asked for the risk assessments for our tasks and for group visits, and had asked the fire officer to inspect because they want to make sure we are properly insured. We hope to be up and running again soon since there is a lot more research and recording to do- it is like an archaeological site at the moment. There are also many people patiently waiting for their trip down the tunnel. We also want to do some essential maintenance in the top and bottom water tanks.

Open days

- 19 May: open 10-4 and had 280 visitors, opened again 6-8 to participate Museums and Galleries at night event (135 visitors). New models on display. We decided to do something new by having a blitz evening in view of the fact we had so many war-time finds on display. Most of us had tin helmets and overalls with ARP badges, but we were surpassed by members of the Military Vehicle Trust who came resplendent in ATS and military uniforms. They also brought a searchlight, siren and green goddess which were placed on the lookout point. An amazing sight which must have brought back memories to some of the residents who have lived in Clifton all their lives. After closing shop, most went on a trip down the tunnel and we then had fun with the search light and siren since it was dark. The Evening Post took more photos, including a superb picture of the search light against a backdrop of the suspension bridge.
- 20 May: The harbourside bus rally meant that numerous vintage buses disgorged passengers every half an hour (673 visitors- shows the contribution made by bus rally). The rearrangement of the boards seemed to work so we avoided the huge queues we had before. The weather was fantastic, and everyone was very complementary about all the hard work we had put into the project, many had come back to see progress.
- 8/9 September: Another very successful sunny Doors Open Day with over 2100 visitors (1242 Saturday, 882 Sunday). Rupert Eveleigh from HTV came to interview us, as did Supreme FM radio. Even the Lord Mayor came to visit us! CHIS had a stall outside. Everybody was so full of praise- it was very gratifying. I received a lot more completed surveys and did an analysis of them, which was very interesting.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make the Railway such a success this year.