

# Lea Bailey Light Railway Society Newsletter No.4

04 Sep 2013



## Grand Narrow Gauge Day Out on September 21st 2013

You are invited to come and see the progress at Lea Bailey on Saturday 21st September at our second open day. You will be able to inspect the progress made on site, see the newly laid track and the start of the Run Around loop and see what locomotives and rolling stock are being brought into service. When you have explored our site we recommend that you pay a visit to the Alan Keef Open Day and Steam Up' at Lea Lines (2 miles) and to visit the Perrygrove Railway at Coleford (10 miles) where they are holding their Gala Weekend of Vintage Trains.

Michael Ayland

## The Lea Bailey display at Welland Steam Fair July 2013

Lea Bailey Railway provided the rail service as part of a road making demonstration. A length of track measuring around 50 yards was set up, on which the LBLR's Simplex (MR21282) ran hauling two Hudson U tipper wagons.



## LBLR progress May to August 2013

**Large 4w ex-NCB wagons:** Two wagons of 2' 2" gauge were lying in their side in the cutting outside Euroclydon tunnel. We have re-gauged the wheelsets to 2' gauge, with work done by Hodder Engineering of Whitecroft. Then each wagon was righted and loaded on to a trailer and taken to Lea Bailey for unloading and re-railing. At present these wagons are kept locked in the shed awaiting further work (they have side-opening doors and an inverted bottom, but the doors have at some point been welded shut).

**Ex-brickworks wagon:** One light wagon with racking, reportedly ex-Coleford Brick and Tile Co, Broadmoor Works, has been moved from Clearwell to Lea Bailey. The racking has been cut off and the wagon is used as a push-trolley as it is too light for use in a train. Apparently the wagon (as well as 5 more still at Clearwell) was of 1' 11" gauge, but this one had been re-gauged while at Clearwell. The history of these wagons is unknown as 1' 11" gauge was not used at Broadmoor.

**Steel tank at Lea Bailey:** A door has been cut in one end of the tank and a lock fitted. Drain slots have been cut in the floor. It is planned to use the tank as a store for PW equipment (bolts, spikes, fishplates plus hand tools) but further welding is needed on door first.

**Portable generator:** The portable 4kVa generator donated by Clearwell (provided we could find a starting handle, which we did) has proved invaluable, but it leaks oil. Despite various attempts to stop it, it still leaks - but it works.

**Hunslet couplings:** The couplings on the Hunslet loco at Lea Bailey (HE7446) for reasons unknown are approximately 2½" low and thus do not couple to the wagons with the same type of coupling. The couplings with steel mounting plates, have been removed and taken to Alan Keef for modification so that they can be re-mounted at the correct height. However, the estimated cost of the work is £600 + VAT, which is beyond our resources at present. So, in the absence of a generous donor, they will have to remain with Alan Keef for a while.

**Loco shed:** The large shed at Lea Bailey is in desperate need of attention to make it a secure weather and vandal-proof building in which to be able to work on our locomotives. Back in January a pair of doors with frame of RSJs were fitted. Now the section of the shed containing the Lister generator set has had a single door fitted each end, although work is not yet complete. In stock for further pairs of doors are several RSJs for the door frames, door hinges made by Hodder Engineering and steel tank panels (ex REME) for the doors.

**Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0DMF:** Having moved the loco into covered storage at Clearwell, some effort has been devoted to trying to find missing items in the scrap piles at Clearwell. However, in the absence of detailed drawings, we are not too sure what we are looking for. So a visit is planned to the West Lancs Light Railway (near Preston) to photograph the parts of a similar loco that they have under restoration.

Work has continued on digging out the track from the shed to the mine. Where necessary sleepers have been replaced. The points outside the mine have been reached. So the next stage is to dig out the track from the points to the container. It is probable that most sleepers along this section will need replacing as those seen so far have been found to be rotten.

Some trouble was experienced closing the left hand door of the container when the Simplex was in the container. So the back left hand corner of the container was jacked up and shimmed with steel plate. Provided that the loco is parked at the back of the container the door now shuts easily. The track into the mine dips where it goes past the doorframe. As the Hunslet front and rear buffer beams are low, this resulted in the loco catching and twisting the doorframe. The steel of the frame was so tough that it was necessary to use a Dowty prop to force the frame back into position and the insert bolts in the concrete floor to hold the frame in position when the prop was removed. The site suffered its first break-in since the group started there last year. Two locks were smashed off the right hand container door and a can of red diesel and an old arc welder were stolen. Following replacement of the locks, there have been no further such visits ..... so far.

**Bailey Lane End community fete:** Rob Dickinson manned a stall here with a pile of flyers, photos etc and the model from Clearwell. Apparently quite a bit of interest was shown and he had several interesting conversations with local residents.

**Brook in Drybrook:** Water from the brook, which flows above the tunnel, has been leaking into the tunnel. A hole in the bank of the brook was found and has been partially filled with 7 bags of concrete. Further work will be needed before winter, but the repair has reduced the amount of water getting into the tunnel. The bridge where the brook flows past the gates to the tunnel cutting had a hole where the culvert had failed. This has also been repaired with several bags of concrete so that we have been able to use the cutting to collect items from the tunnel and cutting.

**Site maintenance at Lea Bailey** continues 'weed-killing, cutting back vegetation, clearing rubbish' but there's still a lot to do.

**Various items** have been removed from Euroclydon tunnel either to use at Lea Bailey or else just to protect them from any further deterioration in the humid environment in the tunnel. These items include fishplates and spike, 3 large chain hoists, spanners for PW work, plus as et of wagon wheels with axle boxes.

**Welland Steam Show'**: this needs a separate article! Preparing for the show, borrowing and collecting track from near Gloucester, getting all ready to be moved, arranging move to Welland, setting up at Welland, operating railway at Welland for 3 days, then reversing the process to get all back to Lea Bailey (except for the track which has been sold to the Ross Steam Engine Society, so saving us the effort of undoing a lot of bolts!) was a lot of hard work and kept us occupied for quite a while, but I think we all enjoyed the show.

**Run-round loop at Lea Bailey:** It was becoming evident that we were short of track at Lea Bailey as the mine, shed and container were all full, so that any further additions would have to be stored outside. Furthermore, shunting of wagons was having to be done by hand as the track layout did not allow a loco to run round a wagon. So it was decided to use two 'Y' points that were lying unused in Euroclydon tunnel to make a loop in the track beyond the shed. As well as the points, a quantity of unused sleepers was moved from the tunnel to Lea Bailey. Eight lengths of rail were bent to shape using the Jim Crow from Clearwell. Several tipper wagon loads of muck have been dug out and moved to make the trackbed for the loop and track-laying is well advanced. It is hoped to have the loop operational for the open day (it looks likely that it will be finished a week or two before the open day).

Robert Needham

**The first 'Y' point installed at Lea Bailey as part of the Run Around loop:**





# Souvenir first anniversary issue

How it all began .....

## ***Lea Bailey Light Railway***

In October 2003 an article in the local paper, *The Forester*, reported plans by Ray and Jonathan Wright (owners of Clearwell Caves) to develop the Lea Bailey Level as a tourist attraction. However, when visited in August 2010 it appeared that work had ground to a halt some time between 2003 and 2010 as the site appeared derelict, although there were interesting remains hidden in the undergrowth. These included a corrugated iron shed with a line of (approx) 2 foot gauge track into it; the track extended towards the abandoned trackbed of the former (never opened) Mitcheldean Road and Forest of Dean Junction Railway, in the other direction the track went past the shed and turned into the old level; scattered around were various items of rolling stock including the bodies of several ex-colliery manriders plus half of a loco (subsequently identified as the exhaust conditioner and cab from a Hudswell Clarke underground flameproof diesel loco). The steel gate on the level entrance was locked but visible through a hole was a wagon on track.

When re-visited in November 2011, it appeared that some further work had taken place. Rails had been laid along the old trackbed up to the road bridge. The rails were heavy but were laid loose on the ground at roughly '2 foot gauge'. Otherwise, the site appeared as in 2010.

The Level was notorious as the Forest's 'Gold mine'. It was apparently dug in 1906-7 by a group of investors operating under the name of the Chastan Syndicate (who also briefly owned the unsuccessful Fairplay Iron Mine) but although gold was found it was in such small quantities as to be not commercially viable. So the Syndicate apparently failed. Then after WW1 the level was dug to a maximum distance of some 580 yards into the Wigpool Iron Mine gale, but was abandoned after a few years with only 3000 tons of ore removed. The 1923 1:2500 edition of the OS map shows a tramway from the mine along the old SG trackbed towards Mitcheldean Road station, but it is not known whether this tramway was ever in fact built as no photos have come to light so far. (The level did not connect with the other Wigpool Iron Mine workings which were rather more successful, with some 150,000 tons of ore being mined between c1860 and WW1.) The Wigpool Iron Mine gale is now owned by the Wrights of Clearwell and access to the old iron mine workings is possible with permission for cavers through the several gated and locked entrances on Wigpool Common, but Lea Bailey Level is apparently blocked by several rockfalls part way in and beyond the rockfalls is totally flooded.



However, back to the story .....

### **30 May 2012**

Small group of RFDCC members visit Lea Bailey mine site to see railway remains and find mine door unlocked, padlock apparently forced, door bent back at top.

Reported to Clearwell after trip.

### **27 June 2012**

Small group of RFDCC members go through Euroclydon tunnel after collecting key from Clearwell. Door shows signs of attempted forced entry with 'sleeper' wedged behind top of RH door (reported to Clearwell when key returned after trip). Intrigued by quantity of railway equipment in tunnel rotting and rusting away, apparently abandoned. Also derelict loco (HE 4wDHF?), 2 mine dump wagons, small flat wagon and remains of manrider in cutting at south end.

Afterwards the feeling was that equipment at Lea Bailey and in tunnel and cutting was too good to see rot away. So I decided to see the Wrights at Clearwell to find out what they planned to do with it all and to see whether there was any mileage in proposing a volunteer-led scheme.



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If you are not yet a Member of the Lea Bailey Light Railway Society you are invited to join. Details of the Society and application forms for joining may be found at the Lea Bailey Web site

<http://www.leabaileylightrailway.co.uk/>

## **LBLR locos**

Main sources of information are:

A Tale of Many Railways, an autobiography and history of Alan Keef Ltd, pub by Lightmoor Press 2008.

Various Industrial Railway Society handbooks

Note. This list only covers the working locos at Lea Bailey. Other locos await restoration when time, money and labour are available.

### **Hunslet 4wDHF**

Weight 4 tons, engine 28hp Perkins 3152 diesel  
HE w/no 7446, ex works 30/7/1975, gauge 2' 0"  
New to NCB, Prince of Wales Colliery, Pontefract, delivered but unused to Charlston Colliery, Yorks, 8/1975, used underground  
id No 7 ML49 ML65  
Transferred, sold or scrapped after 5/1994  
But also reported as from Charlston to Clearwell c5/1993  
To Lea Bailey after 6/12/1996, by 1/10/1997  
To Clearwell by 10/4/2000  
IRS records show now (2012) at Clearwell as '7'

### **Motorail 4wD**

MR w/no 21282/1960, date of despatch from Motor Rail works (Bedford) 4/9/1960 Class 20/28hp  
Engine Dorman 2DWD, no 68193  
Gauge 2' 0" Weight 2½ tons  
Customer Diesel Loco Hirers Ltd (Motor Rail associated company)  
No information on hire customers. Returned to Motor Rail, date n/k  
Ex hire fleet 3½ ton loco 28/4/1965 to Eastwoods (this is an earlier name for Kempston Hardwick Brickworks operator, Eastwoods Flettons Ltd became part of Rugby Portland Cement in 1962, then Redland (Flettons) Ltd until 1971, then London Brick Co Ltd)  
From London Brick Co, Kempston Hardwick, Beds, to Alan Keef (Bampton, Oxon), 2/1973. Hired to Elmet Industrial (Tractors) Ltd, South Milford, N.Yorks., 2/1974 (used on contract for Yorks Water Authority at Booth Ferry Bridge, Asselby).  
Hired to Haunchwood Lewis, Cheslyn Hay Works, c6/1974. Returned to Alan Keef (Cote, Ox) by 4/1975.  
Hired to Butlins' Ayr, c5/1975 to 31/5/1975.  
Sold to Meirion Mill Railway, Gwynedd, 6/1975.  
Railway closed, recently overhauled loco for sale £750, 7/1977  
*In 1977 the loco looks to be a standard 20/28hp model. At sometime between 1977 and sale to Lea Bailey Mine in 1993, the loco had a Deutz 3 cylinder air-cooled diesel engine fitted in place of the water-cooled Dorman 2 cylinder diesel fitted when built. A home-made wooden cab was apparently fitted after its sale to Lea Bailey Mine, removed 2012.*  
To Cumberland Moss Litter Industries Ltd, Anthorn, nr Kirkbride, Cumbria, 10/1977 Cumberland Moss Litter Industries Ltd taken over by Fisons Ltd, by 6/1980  
From Fisons, Kirkbride, to Alan Keef, 26/7/1989  
Hired to Taylor Woodrow, Woodhead Cable Tunnel, 23/7/1990  
Returned to Alan Keef, Lea, 20/8/1991  
Used on track lifting at Hewitts Farm, 9/1991  
Hired to Taylor Woodrow, Isle of Grain, by 12/1991  
On hire at Rochdale Canal, by 1/6/1992  
Returned to Alan Keef, Lea, by 28/9/1992  
Sold to Lea Bailey Mine, Newtown, Glos 9/1993  
Moved from Lea Bailey to Clearwell Caves, c1996.  
Moved from Clearwell back to Lea Bailey c1997  
Moved from Lea Bailey back to Clearwell c2003  
Moved from Clearwell to Lea Bailey 20/9/2012



## ***LBLR rolling stock***

Note. This list only covers the rolling stock at Lea Bailey. Other items will be moved to Lea Bailey when suitable storage space is available.

Two 4w Hudson mine tipper wagons (reportedly acquired from a mine in Devon) One 4w manrider wagon (ex NCB)

One bogie flat wagon (ex NCB)

One 4w flat wagon, now fitted with hoist (ex NCB)

One 4w flat wagon, apparently ex-cable drum carrier, re-gauged from 2' 2" to 2', now used to carry generator (ex NCB)

One 4w colliery large tub (ex NCB)

Two 4w large wagons with side-opening doors (welded closed) and inverted V bottom, re-gauged from 2' 2" to 2' (ex NCB)

One 4w hand-push trolley produced from ex brickworks wagon with steel racking cut off, 1' 11" re-gauged to 2'

## **A dream for the future**



At Clearwell is a Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0DMF 100hp diesel flameproof ex NCB loco, in basically sound condition (the engine has been run since it was moved to Clearwell), but it is of 2' 6" gauge and very hard to re-gauge. So not really of any interest to us at Lea Bailey. Except that at Clearwell there are also less complete HC 0-6-0DMF locos of 2' gauge plus two re-conditioned Gardner 6LW diesel engines that have been stored under cover, but have never been run since purchase. Therefore, the dream is to use the frames, wheels etc from a 2' gauge loco plus re-conditioned engine plus bodywork and other systems from the 2' 6" gauge loco to produce a working 2' gauge 0-6-0DMF in ex-colliery state.