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February 2014

ea Bailey Light Railway Society

“to install and operate, in stages, a two foot gauge railway between the former Lea Bailey Gold Mine and Drybrook on the trackbed of the former Mitcheldean Road and Forest of Dean Junction Railway”



Major progress looks set to be made this year at the Lea Bailey Light Railway. Exciting developments will see the introduction of new locomotives, rolling stock and the completion of new points and track work.

In addition, the Society open day looks set to be the largest so far.

Five different types of manrider are joining the collection of mine wagons, albeit in various stages of completion or restoration.

A very heavy turntable is to be relocated from Clearwell Caves, where it is currently lying underground. The plan is to install it in the track outside the mine entrance where it will cross a long siding running from behind the shed and also extend to the opposite side. This is shown on an earlier site plan below.

Restoration of a battery electric loco will soon add to the motive power, alongside the Hunslet and Simplex locos.

In the longer term there are plans to restore and relocate at least one Hudswell Clarke locomotive to Lea Bailey, but at 15 tonnes this is substantially heavier than the 4.5 tonne Hunslet!

STOP PRESS

Mindless thieves have caused a serious setback by breaking in to the container and stealing vital tools. The 4kVa generator, Simplex battery and a reactive welding mask all worth £300 were removed. Any help in replacing the lost items or funding new ones would be much appreciated.

ALL ABOARD THE 20:14 GOLD MINE EXPRESS

AGM

History will be written on Saturday April 12th at the inaugural annual general meeting of the Society, to be held at 2.30pm, the Wonkey Donkey public house in Bailey Lane End.

The objective of the Society will be: *“to build, operate and maintain a narrow gauge railway based at the site of the Lea Bailey gold mine extending along the old railway trackbed, subject to permission from the relevant authorities.*

“The railway will be operated with ex-mining locos and rolling stock as far as practicable.”

Under the draft constitution, a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary will be elected alongside other committee members.

The committee will meet at least twice a year, with powers to appoint sub-committees as necessary.

Nominations for election to the committee must be made in writing at least 14 days before the AGM.

The draft constitution is available to view on the website.

A new little charger



Work is proceeding well to get the Wingrove & Rogers battery electric loco running once more in the sheds at Clearwell. New cables and connectors are required to link four truck batteries. Donations are welcome for these, which will cost around £600



Points of view

Over 40 douglas fir sleepers have been sponsored by generous donors so far. We need at least another 100 so please dig deep! These tantalized ones will replace very rotten ones being dug out by our volunteers. To contribute, please contact Rob Needham.

New to the society? Don't be shy – volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks including track and point laying, replacement of rotten sleepers, wagon and loco maintenance – and brewing tea!

Work parties take place most weekends and also during the week. If you have any useful tools, please bring them with you. "Money and bodies are the two limiting factors on how fast we can get things done," said Rob Needham

Mystery object



Spotted in the undergrowth at Clearwell – is it a loco, or what! Answers for the next newsletter please

Name that loco!

A new name will coincide with a makeover of the Simplex by Ben Elvey, thanks to paint donated by Mike Ayland. Send your ideas for names to the next newsletter!

The other LB locos will be named after Forest coal mines.

The only exception will be the W&R battery loco which will be called "Gold Miner" as it formerly worked at Clogau gold mine in west Wales and is coming to Lea Bailey.

Hunslet Update

Another loco for restoration will be the second Hunslet, currently inside Drybrook (Euroclydon) tunnel.

As the picture of the derelict loco (beyond repair) outside the portal shows, the muddy conditions will not make it easy to transfer the Hunslet from the tunnel to Lea Bailey.

Hunslet No.1 is working much better now with hydraulic fluid topped up. Its couplings will be back by the end of February, having been raised by two inches to match the height of the wagon couplings



BRINGING IN THE HEAVY GANG



Weighing in at around 15 tonnes each, the Hudswell Clarke locomotives will pose one of the biggest challenges. One of the 0-6-0s has been moved under cover at Clearwell but nothing can be done until the shed at Lea Bailey is secure and heavy lifting equipment is in place.



The wagons role

Joining the 11 wagons of all types, shapes and sizes at Lea Bailey are an assortment of ex-colliery manriders.

Pictures top left anticlockwise:

A four wheel manrider converted from a mine tub

Two Becorit bodies, which are currently being cleaned up off site

Two GMT articulated 3-car sets (cable hauled) of which it is hoped to restore one and use the other for its bogies and steelwork

A Tredomen bogie man rider (four on site at Clearwell)

Two Pikrose units, which are part of a 4-car articulated set, without bogies.





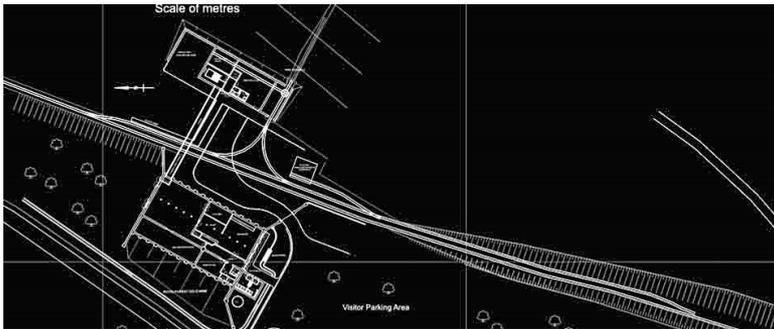
On track

Much hard work is going into the construction of points by society members. With a purpose-built set costing between £1,000 - £2,000 funds dictate that they are formed on-site from scratch.

“The points are coming on well but will need attention to fishplates,” said Rob Needham. “There are different rail sections so the fishplates will need cutting, then the rail heads aligning before the fishplates are welded together.”

Two frogs in Drybrook tunnel entrance will be moved to Lea Bailey for the next set of points.

A set of earlier plans (left) from the days when Lea Bailey was set to become a gold mining visitor attraction reveal the track layout would have been very similar to that today. A turntable is shown at the mine entrance.



Narrow gauge open day

Narrow gauge enthusiasts from across the country are expected at the second open day on June 8th, which promises to be larger than ever.

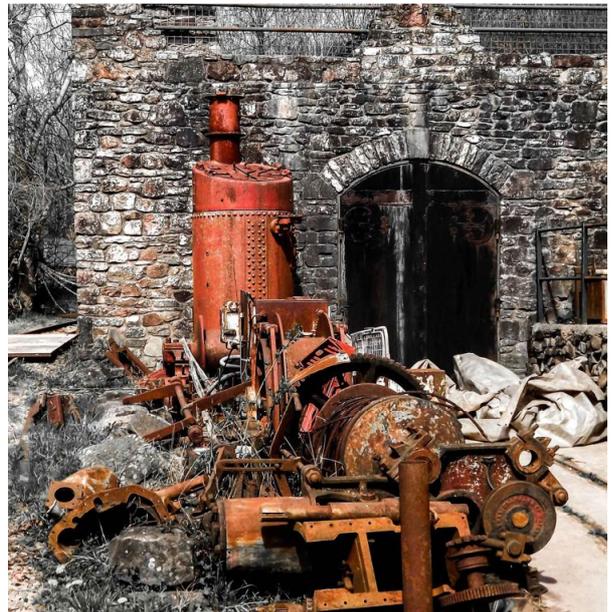
The event will be spread across at least three sites, including Lea Bailey gold mine, Clearwell Caves and Perrygrove Railway. One of the Forest free mine sites may also be open.

At Lea Bailey all operational locos and rolling stock will be giving displays, whilst Perrygrove will be offering a diesel gala weekend.

At Clearwell the underground incline will be in operation with a wagon being shunted from the top by battery loco to the outside track, where a compressed air operated Eimco rocker shovel will be in action.

Clearwell is home to a number of steam winders. One outside the mine building came from a colliery at Shortstanding run by “Slenny” Gwilliam.

More details will be in the May newsletter.



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Please submit items for the May newsletter by mid-April. particularly on Lea Bailey and Forest narrow gauge.

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