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May 2014

Lea Bailey Light Railway Society

OPEN DAY SPECIAL – SUNDAY JUNE 8th 2014

NARROW GAUGE FEAST

Narrow gauge enthusiasts from all over the country are expected in the Royal Forest of Dean on Sunday June 8th for what promises to be a great day out at three NG sites.

Lea Bailey Gold Mine, Clearwell Caves and the Perrygrove Railway will each offer unique demonstrations, covered in this newsletter. Please support all three sites (separate entrance fees at Clearwell and Perrygrove, with donations at Lea Bailey).

Join the Lea Bailey Light Railway Society and be a part of a fantastic mission to preserve and maintain mining locomotives and rolling stock in the Forest.

AT LEA BAILEY

We hope to have a visiting Clayton 13/4 ton 4wBE loco, pictured below:



This may be running alongside the Hunslet and Simplex locomotives, hauling a range of mining wagons along the line and sidings. Society members will be on hand to talk about progress since the early days, and show the latest developments.

AT CLEARWELL

A very exciting time awaits at Clearwell, where Society members working alongside Ray and Jonathan Wright, hope to haul a U tub up the mine incline, change direction on the newly restored turntable (see later news), pull it out to daylight with the Wingrove & Rogers loco, where an Eimco rocker shovel may be seen, under restoration by LBLRS..



POINTS OF VIEW

Thanks to donations and society funds, we now have 150 new Douglas fir sleepers on site, weighing more than 3 tons. The sleeper appeal is still open, and more donations are welcome.

These sleepers are replacing rotten ones being dug out from the existing track, and also enabling the laying of a new siding behind the shed, which will eventually connect with a turntable at the mine entrance.

We may be small with under 30 members, but the LBRS is growing, and the website has recorded around 28,000 page views since it was launched.

LBRS footage on Youtube has also been viewed 2,500 times.

Many thanks to the member who recently donated £330 to society funds.

Wanted: A Treasurer
To help us prepare the LBLRS for charity status and also the future possibility of lottery funding applications. It is not necessary to live close to Lea Bailey. Please contact Rob Needham.



Top left: The Hudson U tipper is test hauled up the incline, through “Manchester Gate”, the blacksmiths shop and out to daylight.

Top right: Jonathan Wright operating the Wingrove & Rogers loco on the recently cleared track.

Left: the Eimco rocker shovel, which Rob Needham has been working on.

AT PERRYGROVE

This unusual diesel loco, which formerly ran on the Blenheim Palace 15 inch narrow gauge line will be the star performer. It is currently back at Alan Keef, who are building a new loco for Blenheim.

The railway opened in 1973 as a push-pull link between the palace and the pleasure gardens.

There are several other Alan Keef locos in operation there too.



FLOODING AT DRYBROOK

Just after the last newsletter was published, heavy rain caused flooding at Drybrook, resulting in the urgent demolition of the bridge providing access to Euroclydon tunnel. We are currently unable to retrieve the remaining sleepers from the tunnel, along with the other Hunslet loco, bogie wagon and frogs.

AGM – The role of LBLRS

At the first AGM it was agreed that LBLRS will operate as a demonstration narrow gauge railway, operating ex-mining equipment in its original condition where possible, and maintaining access to the mine for these purposes. There will be one meeting a year with others as required.

BRICKWORKS WAGONS



There are a number of former Coleford Brick and Tile Works wagons at Clearwell, which are being moved to Lea Bailey for use as general purpose flat bed wagons. However they have had to be re-gauged as they were too narrow by $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. One wagon has had its frame removed and the axle boxes will be repositioned about half an inch outwards on the wagon frame.

TURNTABLE WORK



Much hard work has gone into restoring a Hudson-style turntable at the top of the Clearwell incline, ready for the open day. Years of accumulation of mud had to be cleared away before the top could be lifted to reveal a set of huge ball bearings. These have been cleaned out and now the turntable is back in working order. There is another one at the caves, which we hope to restore for use at Lea Bailey.

GETTING CLEARWELL READY

Unfortunately the battery loco derailed not long after it was restored to working order. Three faults were identified by a team of volunteers from LBLRS.

Some of the track near the car park was under gauge by up to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, point blades were not operating correctly due to a bent connecting arm, and one rail by a set of single blade points by the blacksmiths shop needed repairing. Everything is running fine now!





REINFORCING THE ROOF AT LEA BAILEY

Vital work is being planned to reinforce parts of the tunnel at Lea Bailey Gold Mine. We are hoping that caving club volunteers will help prevent further falls in an area used to store rolling stock.

“There is a fall about 80 yards from the entrance,” said Rob Needham. “There are already steel rings in place but they need better shuttering, maybe backfilled with concrete. Much has fallen through between the rings, so it is not passable for wagons, but OK to walk.

“Just inside the entrance are a few thin bands of rock where we have had a couple of falls in the last two years. This area is weak because it is vulnerable to rain and frost being so close to the surface.”



OUR LATEST ARRIVALS

New on the scene at Lea Bailey is a four wheel Tredomen Engineering man rider, made at the NCB Powell Duffryn workshops in Caerphilly. Work is underway to restore this one (although not for carrying passengers), and there are three more at Clearwell. Also new is a crane column with jib, Hudswell Clarke engine parts and a Lister 7kVA generator.



HEAVY HUNSLET WORK

The two extremely heavy (150kg) modified couplings have been refitted to the Hunslet, enabling it to properly link up with some of the other rolling stock.

The original couplings were too low, and these have now been raised on the mountings.

“With two wagons fitted with the same couplings we can go through the loop in either direction pushing or pulling with no problems,” said Rob Needham.

Coming up in the next issue: Plans for a scale model narrow gauge layout of Lea Bailey & photos and reports from the Open Day. Please send your contributions in to the Newsletter Editor. Thanks to all those who supplied photos used in this issue.

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