


OPEN DAY & AGM

The spring open day will take place over the weekend of May 14th and 15th from 11am-4pm. At Lea Bailey, the Simplex and WR8 locos will be working alongside the Eimco rockershovel. We also hope to have a visiting Lister loco. The WR5 (which currently has transmission problems), WR18, WR5L (18" gauge) and the Eimco loco will be on static display.

At Clearwell, visitors will be able to see the Hunslet loco in action, and the haulage incline.

14th & 15th May Open Days at the Lea Bailey gold mine
come & see how we're doing in our 4th year




Site open from 11am to 4pm with two of our locos operating plus our rockershovel and two visiting locos

Society members will be present to explain what we have achieved so far and what our aims are for the future


Car parking and tea/coffee available on site

On the same day visit Clearwell Caves to see underground incline plus Hunslet loco working outside

We're hoping to have a visiting Lister loco



and to have a unique loco on a 2 year loan



A barbeque will be held at Lea Bailey starting at 5pm on Saturday 14th May, after the open day, followed by the society AGM at 7pm in the Brewery Tap, Mitcheldean.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mindless thieves broke into the container and took a socket set, large wrench, large thick pry bar, orange gas bottle and sledge hammer. The locos and batteries, and mine were all unaffected.

Issing Sid at Lea Bailey has now had nearly 24,000 views on Youtube. Facebook now has 813 "likes" and 329 people have so far viewed the first movement of the WR8 under its own power.

Rob has discovered that the Hudswell Clarke diesel locos now at Clearwell, were recovered from a Yorkshire colliery (20-25 years ago) by Ray Wright and Dave Harvey as they were both qualified pit deputies. He hopes to talk to Dave to unearth the full story of underground dismantling of locos, then raising from 3000ft deep pit bottom and reassembly on surface.

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- * The early days of Lea Bailey

AFTER THE FLOOD

Following the flood of 10/11 January, Jonathan Wright (Mine Manager) arranged for Grail Engineering of Cinderford to take away and repair the mine door that had been damaged by the force of the water.

In addition, they inserted a grill, laser-cut from steel plate, in the lower section of the door. This would prevent a build-up of water behind the door in future. Then Jonathan ordered six 6m double-wall 2ft diameter pipes to be delivered to Lea Bailey.



They were delivered on 18 March and on the 20th a group of volunteers from the railway, who each had underground insurance and appropriate equipment assisted Jonathan to take the pipes into the mine and install one at each point where the level went through a band of weak rock.



These bands were where roof falls had occurred. With the pipes in place, they provide an escape route for water in the event of further roof falls.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

A diesel leak on the Simplex has now been fixed.

Nick Kelly is proposing a 2 year loan of his Eimco 401 loco to Lea Bailey to restore to working order and then to use while we make our own compressed air loco (from a rockershovel or Clayton with Eimco air motor fitted). "If we can get an air motor, I'll see about fitting it in the motor-less Clayton that I've got," said Rob. "Then replacing the empty battery box with an air reservoir would give us a compressed air loco. The Eimco 12B has a Type 200 air motor, which is the same as that in the Eimco 401 loco, and is really the size I would like."

Rob appeals: please will everyone take home their rubbish from Lea Bailey. Not throw it on the ground, or drop it in the container, or try to hide it in stack of blocks, or use the Hudswell Clarke loco front end as waste bin, or hide it in the manrider bodies. We cannot complain about half-term vandals smashing bottles on site if we leave empty bottles lying around. If you take a bottle of beer to Lea Bailey, take the empty bottle and cap home afterwards.

Newsletter editor Phil is slowly adding his photo collection of Forest freemines to his website: www.oldindustrial.wordpress.com

AFTER THE FLOOD *(continued)*

Although the pipes are of adequate diameter for a person to crawl through, they do not result in any changes on the rules governing access to the mine. As the mine is still classed as an Active Mine, it comes under the Mines Inspectorate and access beyond the wagon storage area can only be authorised by the Mine Manager in person.



The photos show the method adopted to take each pipe into the mine, after it had been found that a pipe on a tipper wagon frame would not fit under the steel arches at the first band of weak rock. Also two photos show the pipe installed at the furthest band of weak rock (note how the fallen rock has raised the floor to within three feet of the roof).

Eimco 12B rockershoovel w/no B815

Rob Needham writes:

Having restored our rockershoovel to full working order in December 2014 and operated it with a towed compressor for the NGRS visit in May 2015, I felt that the finishing touch to the restoration would be to get a guardrail and an operators platform fabricated to the original design.

Of the various Eimco 12Bs surviving in the UK, the only one still with original guardrail and platform was the example at Dolaucothi in West Wales. So in July 2015 Nick and I visited the National Trust site suitably equipped to record measurements to enable accurate reproductions to be made.

Back in the Forest, first attempts to make a guardrail from thin-walled tube failed. After discussions with Bryan Lawson, Alan Keef produced one from thick-walled tube. One detail not obvious on the Eimco at Dolaucothi was the method of securing the guardrail. We decided that the least obtrusive method was to weld a length of circular steel bar inside each end of the rail, then shape the bar to fit in the sockets on the Eimco, and finally to drill a hole through each steel bar to take a split pin to lock the rail in place.

Fabrication of a new platform was rather more complex as the original had comprised two castings supported a checkerplate platform. Tim Hodder (of Hodder Engineering in Whitecroft) took on the challenge.

All was going well, until Tim died in March, 2016 (he was 77 years old and in the process of retiring and selling his business). Fortunately Paul Callard, who was buying Hodder Engineering, was happy to continue fabrication of the platform, which was completed in April. The two photographs show the Dolaucothi and Lea Bailey Eimcos for comparison. Ours will be operating at the open weekend of 14/15 May.

All that remains now is to keep it clean and oiled and greased – and to check wheel back-to-back measurement to try and solve its tendency to derail when going through the points at Lea Bailey.



WR8 ON THE MOVE

After much hard work by Nick, the WR8 is now working. A short clip can be viewed on Facebook: www.facebook.com/leabaileyhighrailway

The timeline below from Rob's Logbook charts the progress over the last twelve months:

- Received notification of sale of battery locos by Murphy's at their London depot
- 18/2/2015, J.Murphy, London contractor is having clear-out of old WR BE locos. Available are four 7 ton W218, five 2 ton WE8 and two or three 1½ ton WR5 – W218, WR8 and one wR5 are 2ft gauge. I have expressed an interest in one WR8 for Lea Bailey.
- Unsold locos at Murphy's depot inspected by Nick 17 February 2015 with advice from Bryan Lawson
- WR8 loco LM4 w/no N7605 (with also an 18" gauge WR5L) bought and delivered to Lea Bailey 20 March 2015
- Unloaded onto bogie wagon with WR5L on 21 March
- Unloaded from bogie wagon 5 July 2015 and stored on rails in steel tank
- New brake parts and battery box clips from Hodder Engineering 24 July 2015 (including some parts for WR5)
- Nick has been sorting out the wiring with assistance from Bryan Lawson, who supplied a copy of WR5 wiring diagram.
- Started fitting parts to WR8
- Received new set of contacts from Bryan Lawson via Alan Keef
- More brake parts received from Hodder Engineering
- 4 October broken rear headlight removed from WR8
- 10/11 January 2016 WR8 in steel tank not affected by mine flood
- 24 January Nick resumes work on WR8 electrics after winter break
- 28 February WR5 put on flat wagon and stored in steel tank with WR8 moved into container
- 10 April First attempt to move WR8 under power of two 12v (ex WR5) batteries, not high enough voltage, so add 12v battery from Simplex. Loco moves under its own power for first time since 2001 (or maybe earlier). Batteries only temporarily wired in sitting on battery box
- 17 April Four new 12v batteries plus one ex WR5 connected up in battery box. Loco runs for first time at Lea Bailey with full 60v. Brakes not yet working as need some bolts and two pieces need fitting.



WHAT COLOUR SHALL WE PAINT IT? - asks Rob

Now the WR8 is working, the question of what colour to paint it has been raised.

My personal opinion is that we should aim at Lea Bailey to have the locos finished in realistic colour schemes representative of what they would have had when in industrial service.

As the WR8 was built as and was used as an underground loco by a tunneling contractor, it should be painted white. This is the colour used for underground locos for many years, regardless of owning company, on safety grounds.

So for locos of that era any other colour would be completely unrealistic. Hence my choice would be a white loco and battery box with the name 'Murphy' on each side of the battery box.

As we only have one 2 ft gauge ex-Murphy loco, it seems an appropriate name.



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WHAT COLOUR SHOULD WE PAINT IT (*continued*)

However, the obvious loco for a colourful finish is the Simplex as this is representative of locos that were used in many different industries sporting varied colour schemes. Almost any colour could be considered realistic.

One further thought – if we repaint the WR8 should we also attempt to straighten out all bends and dents in the metalwork? Or leave it somewhat battered in appearance?

Finally, what about the headlamps (one each end)? As they are, if left on they will drain too much power from the batteries, shortening running time between charges. Possibilities are (1) use a 6th battery (there is room in the battery box) just to power the lights, (2) have the lights switchable, so that they are only on when needed, and (3) replace the bulbs with LEDs, thus dramatically reducing power consumption.

What do readers think about these various options?

Suggestions and newsletter items to the newsletter editor: philipedwardcj@hotmail.com

Eimco 401 compressed air loco

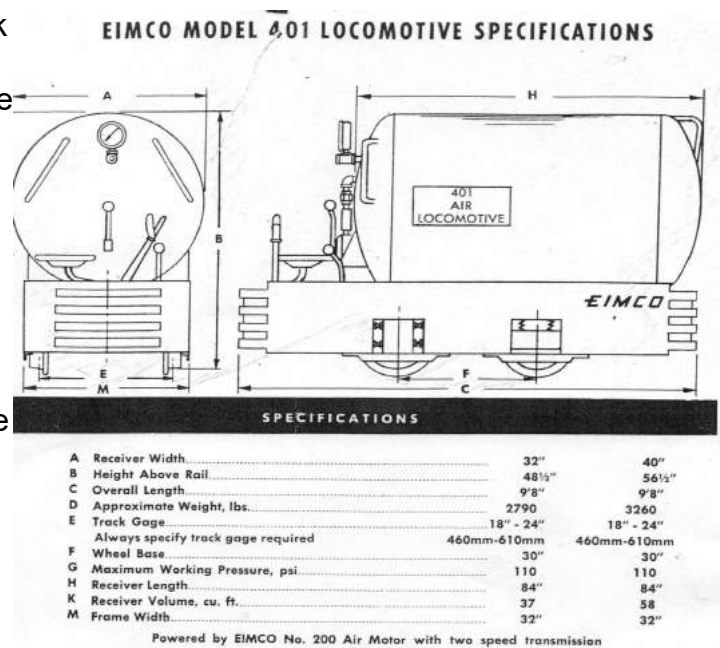
In January, I contacted Nick Kelly to ask if it was possible to view two 2ft gauge compressed air locos that he owned. He replied that one of the locos, a Universal Tramaire Special, had been sold to a group in Austria but that I was welcome to visit to see both locos if I was quick before the loco left for Austria.

In the end, it left before I could visit Isfield to see it. Then Nick contacted me again in March to say that he was thinking of offering the other loco, an Eimco 401, to us at Lea Bailey on a 2 year loan if we could restore it to working order. The loco has a Type 200 five cylinder rotary air motor, the same as is fitted to our Eimco 12B rockershovel.

With our experience of the 12B, the idea of having the 401 on loan is very attractive. Furthermore, Nick is happy for us to visit to see the loco and to bring it back to Lea Bailey. The lifting and transport logistics remain to be sorted, but it is hoped the loco may be on static display at the open weekend.

The loco is Eimco w/no 401-216 of 1968, which Nick Kelly purchased from a mine in British Columbia. So far as he is aware, this is the first loco of this type in Europe.

I have managed to find a copy of the Eimco 401 locomotive Parts List and Instruction Book (26 very useful pages), which will be a great help with restoration. Particularly as the first task on arriving at Lea Bailey will be to re-gauge the loco from 18" to 24", which is described in the Instruction Book. *Rob.*



photos over...

EIMCO 401 COMPRESSED AIR LOCO (ctd)



2016 Appeal

This year we aim to lay track from the points at the Drybrook end down parallel to the runaround loop and into a second container on the mine waste tip some 8ft left of the existing container, and then lower the existing container and lay track to connect it to new line, removing old track to container.

We have 100 new sleepers on order and are investigating a possible container. But we will need at least one set of points, preferably two (both left hand turnouts, in 30lb rail). Therefore for this to be successfully completed we will need finance and helpers.

So to any readers who are not members, please join our society - membership subs are our one dependable income; if a lapsed member please renew your membership; if already a member, please keep it up, and all additional contributions will be very welcome. And there is (and will continue to be for a long time) much physical work to be done at Lea Bailey. It's not all hard physical labour (although there is plenty of that). The Simplex loco needs repainting. Old rail spikes need straightening. Cleaning up the site, clearing vegetation. Making cups of tea. Talking to visitors (and recruiting them if possible). It doesn't matter how often you come or for how long, every bit helps.

Extract from Narrow Gauge News - Issue 203 July 1994



Lea Bailey Mine 2' 6" Gauge

This site is operated by the owners of Clearwell Caves and is due to become a 'tourist attraction'. The site is an old gold mine which was closed at the turn of the century, there are a number of rock falls in the mine which have to be cleared away, once this is done it will be opened up to the public. People will be taken into the mine by rail and will then travel up an old track bed to an old railway tunnel; track will also be laid through this tunnel. At the moment work is concentrated on track laying and ballasting, and MR21282 was in use on this work.

Inside the workshops a 28hp HE was being overhauled, the gearbox has been refitted and other work is progressing. The frame of a second HE is out in the yard. These two are HE's 8985 and 8986, but it is not known which is which. A third 28hp HE locomotive has now been acquired, they just wanted the engine, gearbox and parts, and the frame from this loco is now dumped alongside the road at the entrance, loco identified as HE9053/1981. Two HC 68hp locos are dumped out in the open, these are two of HC DM 739, HC DM 924 and HC DM 925. It is not thought anything is to be done with them in the short term.

R.D. Darvill