

## September open days at Lea Bailey

16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> September, open days at the Lea Bailey Light Railway, almost hidden in the Forest of Dean. Unfortunately the planned visiting loco had to pull out at short notice due to Gareth's unexpected work commitments. Apologies to all attendees on the Saturday morning for the delayed start, which was due to problems starting the (recently-acquired) compressor in the wagon. A new fuel filter had been fitted to overcome the problem, but it took longer than expected to bleed air out of the fuel system and get it running normally. A selection of stills taken from my video of the two days are on page 3. But here are a couple of photos of the latest acquisition for the railway. It's an Eimco 24 rockershovel, which is two sizes up from our 12B. The photo below shows the 24 for sale in Alan Keef's yard in 1995.



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Would you please note that the deadline for inclusion with the February 2018 Newsletter is the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. Submissions are welcome that would be of interest to members of the LBLRS. These can be forwarded to me as text/disc by post or you can email or telephone. If you require anything returning please ask. Photographs, plans and drawings are acceptable as long as permission has been given by the copyright owner.



The photo above shows the 24 at Ashbrittle (where it has been for the last 22 years) awaiting collection for the move to Lea Bailey.

It weighs approximately 4 tons, which is twice the weight of our 12B. And it is going to take quite a lot of hard work to get it working again, although fortunately it does look to be basically complete.

### News from YouTube

The September open days videos are on YouTube at  
<https://youtu.be/9layDh0c6HU>  
<https://youtu.be/1Qj4LDVdcnU>

For earlier videos, pure LBLR clips at Lea Bailey and Clearwell total just over 240,000 views.



The main players continue as before, the figures in brackets are for the last month:

Original Sid 134,000 (5500)

Loco Exchange 42,000 (1000)

Clearwell wagon recovery 34,000 (1000)

Sid and the Pig 18,000 (3000)

The last is running very nicely, it's been right up with the original Sid clip on a day by day basis in the last week. I wouldn't like to make too much of a long term prediction but I would expect all the above to get to 50,000 and it will most likely take at least a couple of years. However YouTube viewers are fickle, the figures could equally likely all die off or suddenly accelerate, but most likely they will potter along.

I continue to consider these are very good for a niche operator.

**Rob Dickinson**

### Progress at Lea Bailey

James has cleaned out the small man-rider (ex mine tub) ready for a coat of paint.



We now have two V-tipper wagons, having built up the second frame and fitted the spare skip. And both now look smarter with a coat of paint.



The interior of the tin shed is being tidied up. The stack of new sleepers has been moved off the bogie flat wagon and now sits in the corner of the shed, with the new compressor wagon on the adjacent track.



And the WR18 battery loco (still awaiting restoration - any volunteers to take it on?) has been moved from the steel tank into the shed by the sleeper stack.



Nick has started working on the WR5, trying to find what the problem is in the transmission before giving it a full strip-down and overhaul





Getting the 12B in position ready for working



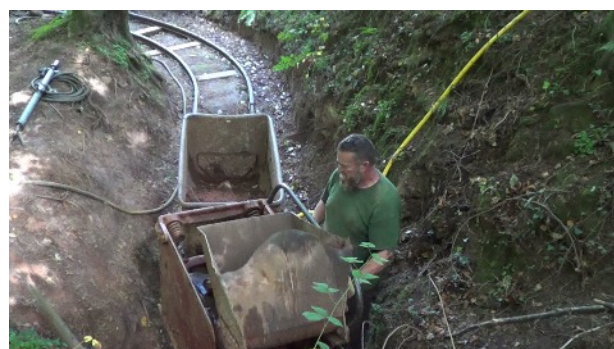
Drilling rock to bring it down for 12B



Compressor charging up the air receiver



Above and below: 12B in action



Driver for a fiver on the 401 passing gold panners



Bringing down more rock for the 12B



Full load in the shovel



Slewing left for next load

## Open days photos

Photos in left hand column are from 16<sup>th</sup> September and those in this column are from 17<sup>th</sup>.



## A bit of history

The known history of our Simplex, 21282, includes the following:-

On hire at Rochdale Canal, by 1/6/1992

Returned to Alan Keef, Lea, by 28/9/1992

Our chairman recently came across the following photos on Flickr which show the loco at work.



"Alan Keef Ltd contract hire 2'0" (60cm) gauge 4-wheel diesel mechanical locomotive built by Motor Rail (works No.21282 of 1957) at the head of a works train whilst on hire to Dew Construction Ltd for the restoration of the Rochdale Canal. At the Summit Level temporary railhead near Littleborough on 24th June 1992."



Photos by Gordon Elgar, link to his Flickr profile page where many other photos can be found is [https://www.flickr.com/photos/12a\\_kingmoor\\_klickr/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/12a_kingmoor_klickr/)

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There is also a photo of 21282 in the recently-published 'Industrial Railways and Locomotives of Cumberland' by Peter Holmes, published by the IRS. It shows the loco at work at Fisons peat works at Kirkbride on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1980.

## Eimco news

A month or so ago Richard visited Cornwall and came back with news that the Eimco 824 that used to be in the Holman Test Mine is now plinthed outside at the King Edward Mine Museum. Sad to see it static out-

doors, but at least it is safe from scrapping as it is the last 824 in the UK, no 824-052 (photo below).



Richard also reported that Colin Saxton at the Moseley Industrial Museum at Tumbly Down has acquired two 12Bs and an Atlas Diesel LM36 ( I think that these must have come from South Western Mining & Tunnelling on Bodmin Moor). The photo below is of one of the 12Bs which still has a legible identity, B636.

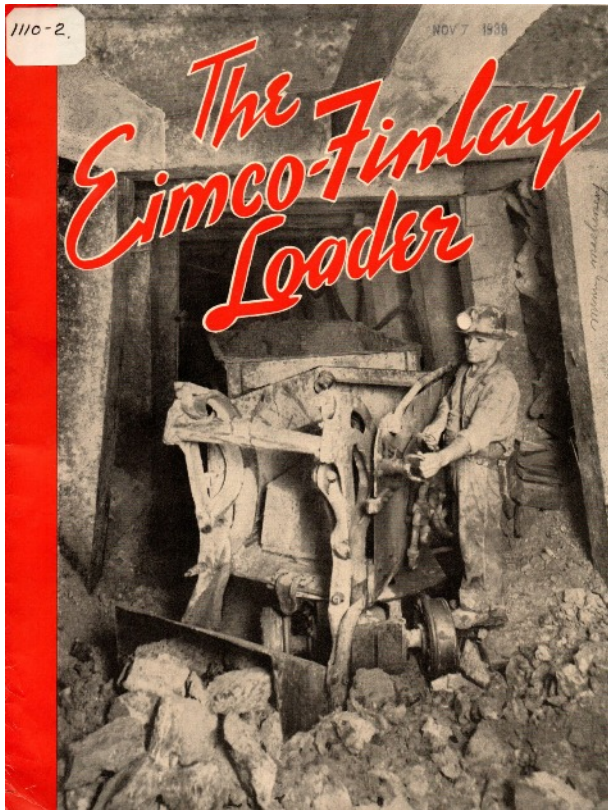


Our recent acquisition for Lea Bailey is the last surviving Eimco 24 in the UK and is unique for the UK in being right-hand drive, i.e. the controls are on the right-hand side. All surviving 12B and 21 rockershovels in the UK are left-hand drive. RH drive models were only produced where two rockershovels were working side-by-side on parallel tracks in a heading. 24s were relatively rare in the UK and were never manufactured here, all being imported from the US. The only identified 24 user in the UK was Wheal Jane tin mine in Cornwall. One was photographed outside an exploratory adit at Tyndrum in the Scottish West Highlands in the 1990s - the most likely user in that area would have been the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board on a scheme such as that at Cruachan. Ours still has its US Eimco plate and is no 10125 (date unknown, but probably c1950). Pre 1995 history is not known, but it has the number 45299 in weld on one side and was apparently acquired by Alan Keef from a contractor (name not known) in Nottinghamshire, which suggests a possible NCB origin. Weight of the 24 is thought to be approx 4 tons. (21 = 3.3 tons, Model



26 = 4.8 tons, the 24 being larger than the 21 but smaller than the 26)

A bit more Eimco news. I've just acquired a copy of an Eimco Bulletin of 32 pages from 1938 (cover below). I've copied it and can supply it as a pdf to anyone interested. At 17MB it's a bit large for email, but I'll send it on a CD to anyone who sends me £1



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## More news from Lea Bailey

### Purchase of compressor wagon



Roy Etherington offered us the chance to buy his compressor wagon, which would no longer be needed at Statfold after he had transferred ownership of Issing Sid to the Statfold Trust. We agreed a price and Richard collected the wagon from Statfold, tested it, and delivered it to Lea Bailey in time for the September open days.

### Track to container



Building of a retaining wall for the track to the container has been completed. A winter task is to relay track with ballast instead of clay and new sleepers.



Another recent purchase is a (second-hand) chemical toilet. So another winter task is to install it in a corrugated iron enclosure in a corner in the tin shed (which will save having to sit out in the open air!)

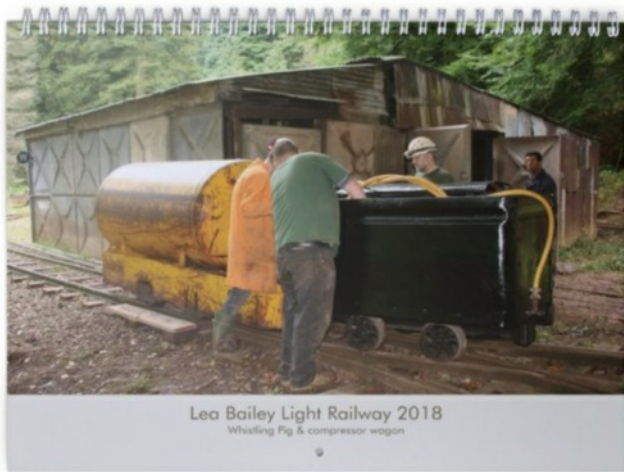


Getting ready for the arrival of the Eimco 24, a short length of track has been laid at the end of the ramps (photo below).

### 2018 Calendar

Having said that I wouldn't produce a calendar for 2018 without orders, as I've received two orders





I've decided to produce one after all. It's available from me for £8 if collected or £9.50 by post. Orders please to me by post, phone or email, contact details at the foot of page 1 (cheques payable to me please, not to the railway - for each calendar sold I will donate £2 to the railway)


**Clearance sale** - clearing out my car recently I found 5 copies of the 2017 Lea Bailey calendar. If anyone wants one send me £1.50 to cover postage and I'll send one by return post

A special thanks to Howard for his donation to cover the cost of renewing the public liability insurance for the railway for another year.

Finally a warm welcome to new members, including our first overseas members - Marcus and Ute from Germany and Richard (and family?) from the US (and one in France, as my brother, John, has moved to his station high in the Pyrenees).

## Thought for the future?

Having acquired the Eimco 24, what we will need to complete the set is an Eimco 21. Anyone got one spare? There is an interesting one in Ontario - LD2400 identifies it as made by Logan Engineering in Dundee, probably around 1970, for use at the Glebe Mine in Derbyshire and then moved to Canada by La Porte when Glebe was closed.



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### Eimco Underground Rocker Shovel <sup>21</sup>

Manufacturer: Eimco Jarvis Clark  
Asset Number: B15-526  
Telephone: +1-705-566-8190  
Fax: +1-705-566-6680

[Ask about this product](#) [Print](#)

Description

Serial Number: LD2400

24" Gauge

Large Air/Drive Motor missing

Unfortunately it doesn't quote a price, just says 'Ask about this product' in the advert and I haven't dared contact McDowell to ask how much! (Plus cost of transport from Canada to UK!)

## Merry Xmas & Happy New Year to all - see you at Lea Bailey in 2018

### Stop Press - Eimco 24 arrives at Lea Bailey

Finally, after several changes of plan and a trip to collect it that didn't quite get to plan here it is!

The Eimco 24 from Ashbittle is now safely stored on the track at Lea Bailey.

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November I went as a passenger in the lorry, which was loaded with forklift so that the Eimco could be collected without the 40ft long 4 axle lorry having to go down the narrow lane to the railway. After a brief stop at the Taunton Deane services, we arrived at the unloading point about 11am. After unloading the forklift, we drove down the road to the Hole Farm access lane, which was not only narrow but also steep in places and damp and muddy with no space to turn lorry round at the farm. As the lane steepened and we neared the railway crossing where the Eimco had been placed ready for collection, the forklift skidded, brakes applied, wheels locked, and it slid down the hill until it came to rest with the forks in the bank on the left and one rear wheel hanging over the drop on the right. After a local farmer had tried to pull it free with his tractor and failed, the only option was to call for another driver with his 10 wheel tractor unit, fitted with Hiab behind the cab, to come and rescue us by lifting the forklift back on the lane. He arrived about 3pm, reversed down the lane to where we were stuck, lifted the forklift, then slowly followed it down to the crossing. There the Hiab was used to load the Eimco onto baulks laid above the 5<sup>th</sup> wheel. After it was securely strapped down, the next stage was for the farmer and his tractor to help the tractor unit with Eimco back up to the road, then the tractor went back to help a Transit van (which had been trapped down at the farm by the forklift misshap) up to the road, then repeating the exercise to get the forklift up to the road.

And then the forklift slid off the road into a ditch before there had been time to load it back onto the lorry. Finally at about 7pm we were ready to head home, after a brief stop for a break at the services. Arrival back in the Forest was at about 10pm. So the unit with Eimco were parked in the yard in Cinderford and the Eimco finally reached Lea Bailey on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>.



A bit rustier than it was when it left the Forest 22 years ago, but intact



Left hand side, showing Eimco US plate and number 45299 in weld.



Right hand side , showing controls with special linkage to control lever on right. Also visible are the extra supports for operators platform welded on when converted to right hand drive. From a distance it looks not unlike the 12B, but close-up the increased size is obvious. To operate this rockershovel will definitely require a platform to be fabricated for the operator. And a guardrail.

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## A last-minute extra page

Some thoughts on the first user of our Eimco 24. On the side it has the number 45299 in weld and is painted white. This is consistent with use by the NCB. In the IRS Nottinghamshire Handbook, among the colliery loco lists the only one which has locos with similar numbers is Ollerton Colliery where four Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0DMF locos were supplied new in 1950 for underground use. These locos apparently had numbers 820/45103 to 820/45106 (presumably 820 identified the colliery). Production at Ollerton Colliery is reported to have ceased in 1994. Underground track gauge was 2ft 3in. So everything about the Eimco 24 is consistent with first use on import from the USA being at Ollerton, soon after 1950 and set to a gauge of 2ft 3in. Then, not later than 1994, it was in the hands of a contractor with the gauge set to 2ft (easily achieved by the removal of a couple of spacers, if gauge setting was similar to that on our Eimco 401). The intriguing question then is 'was there a double-tracked section underground at Ollerton requiring left and right handed machines working together? Out of interest, at Drillserve in Cornwall there's a crawler-tracked Eimco 622 for sale which is painted white and has the number 45323 in weld on the side (622s were frequently used underground by the NCB on development work). Possibly also from Ollerton?

One question is who did the conversion of the 24 to right hand drive? The machine looks to be a standard LH drive machine that has, after manufacture, been converted to RH drive (and could easily be converted back to LH).



Photo of white Eimco 622 at Drillserve in 2015 (for sale - only £8000!). Note 45323 in weld on side.

**Rob Needham**

After the Eimco 24 was delivered yesterday, Ben, Jack and James continued working at Lea Bailey and laid a short track in the tin shed. Then they moved the WR5 on flat wagon from the steel tank on to the track in the tin shed.



So now there is plenty of space to work on the loco under cover. All it needs now is power and light in the shed.

And this really is the last item in this newsletter - the latest latest news from Lea Bailey!