

# NBL Preservation Group

Honorary President Professor Dugald Cameron OBE

## June 2017 Newsletter



**COMING BACK**

**(Photo Lee Gates)**

This month's cover photo shows ex SAR 6A 4-6-0 No 473 under repair at Germiston depot on 20<sup>th</sup> May. Now owned by NBLPG Member Clive Holliday, this superb little engine was one of the lucky few to escape from the scrap man during its period of storage at Randfontein. It was originally built by Dubs & Co (works number 3461) for the Cape Government Railways in 1897 and Clive now hopes to restore it to steam in due course.

Whilst on the topic of preserved steam in South Africa, I'm sorry to report that the movement of our SAR 19D No 2767 at Umkomaas has been delayed again, this time mainly due to a clash of holidays between myself and the Sappi Rail Transport Manager, Mr Henry Anderson. I was away in Portugal for couple of weeks in early June and Mr Anderson went on leave the day I returned making communication this month very difficult ! It has however given a bit more time for our contractors to prepare their risk assessment and safety case for loading the locomotive for the Sappi Health & Safety Managers.

Please be assured that we are still 100% committed to preserving this fine locomotive and will doing everything we can to complete its move to Creighton as soon as possible.

At the end of World War II the Kowloon – Canton Railway was in a seriously run-down condition and was only able to muster two working locomotives. The Crown Agents, who were then responsible for purchasing motive power, selected 12 of the stored WD Class 2-8-0's at Longmoor Downs for overhaul and shipment to Hong Kong. They were a mixed bunch coming originally from NBL and the Vulcan Foundry and all had been rejected by the LNER on the grounds that their overhaul costs would be prohibitive. However, all 12 were successfully repaired at the Government's Woolwich Factory and all were finished in grey livery with automatic couplers, headlamps and cowcatchers, still carrying their WD running numbers.



On arrival in Hong Kong they were re-numbered in a new series from 21 to 32 and were soon repainted into a dark green livery with their new numbers painted on the cabsides. Because of poor quality local coal, five of the locomotives, Nos 21 to 25 were converted to oil burning. They were used on a wide variety of duties, freight turns of course predominated but they could be found on passenger work and even shunting. Their heyday on the line came in 1951 when more than 9,000 tons of railway equipment for China was handled. The WD's could easily haul 700 ton trains up the famous 1 in 100 incline up to Beacon Hill Tunnel.



The first diesels arrived on the line in August 1955 and from then on steam working gradually diminished, the last two WD's, Nos 26 & 29 being withdrawn in September 1962. Our photos show Nos 25, 27 & 29 going about their duties towards the end of the steam era. Sadly none of the batch were preserved.



As alluded to on Page 1, our work parties have been depleted by holidays this month and our limited labour resources had to be split between work on No 61662 and our Dubs Tank. The Dubs needed to be cleaned up first as it is on display at the Main Gate at the Mizens but despite this we were able to apply a first coat of black to 'Manchester United's smokebox. It was a shame to cover up all those shiny bright steel rivets with black paint but it does make the smokebox look a little more authentic.



Excellent news this month is that our recent progress on 'Manchester United' was featured in this month's 'Steam Railway' magazine and readers will find a photograph and write up about our Appeal on Page 22 of volume No 468 – the June 16<sup>th</sup> edition. Several membership enquiries have been received since this month's edition was published and it is hoped that this will help with our fund raising or produce some additional working members.

**NZ STEAM TOUR**

(photo Jack Still)

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May, New Zealand's Mainline Steam organisation ran a tour from Palmerston North to Tangiwai and return hauled by North British Jb Class 4-8-2 No 1236. We are very grateful to Jack Still for sending us an excellent selection of pictures that he took of the tour. Our readers will be surprised to learn the Jack is in fact only 15 years old – and judging by these superb images, he would certainly appear to have a great future in steam photography ahead of him !



Built by NBL in 1939, J1236 was given works No 24559 and delivered to New Zealand in March 1940. It was initially based at Dunedin, working the hilly main line north of the city. It worked the last steam-hauled express out of Invercargill in November 1971 and was withdrawn from service in the same month.

After a long period of storage and several changes of ownership, No 1236 was purchased by Ian Welch in 1988 and eventually joined the Mainline Steam collection at Parnell Depot. It was then extensively rebuilt and converted to oil burning – hence the change in Classification from J to Jb.



Jack's photos show the tour train climbing Maewa Bank near Fielding on the outward journey (top), reaching the top of the 1 in 70 Kakariki Bank near Marton (above left) and powering through Utuki outside Taihape. (above right) - Well done Jack, keep up the good work and please keep sending us the photos !



No less than eighteen North British Loco Co related items were included in the Great Central Railwayana Auctions at Stoneleigh Park on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June. In the main, realisation prices were good with the top NBL item, a Royal Scot Class LMS 'Welsh Guardsman' nameplate, selling for £9,500. Jubilee nameplate 'Bengal' was not far behind at £9,200 but SR 'Sir Valence' failed to meet its reserve price.



A trio of NBL / SAR Cabsides were sold on the day at prices from £300 for the 4AR to £850 for a 25NC plate in ex loco condition. 19C Cabside No 2469 went under the hammer for £440.



The most numerous NBL Lots were of course the Diamond Worksplates, the top priced one from WR Diesel Hydraulic No D6308 (above right) selling for £720. At the bargain end of the scale, a Sudanese NBL diamond sold for just £80 ! A full list of all the Lots at the auction with descriptions, photos and their sale prices can be found on the GCRA website at : <http://www.gcrauctions.com/sale229/all-lots.html>

For steam enthusiasts, the South African industrial scene in the 1970's & 1980's was a working paradise with hundreds of engines being employed by a vast array of mines, power stations and factories. Many of the locomotives were of North British origin but they were bought, sold and rebuilt by numerous firms to such an extent that the original ownership and builders details were sometimes difficult to trace. Roger Griffiths was fortunate to visit many of the locations during this period and sent us these excellent photos.



1 2



1 Albion Colliery operated this fine 4-8-2T (NB 24374) which was originally built for Randfontein Estates  
2 New Largo Colliery purchased their 4-8-4T loco No 3 (NB 27469) new from Hyde Park Works in 1952.



3 4



3 Grootvlei Propriety Mines Limited purchased their A Class 4-8-2T No 3 from South African Railways. It was built by Dubs & Co (works no 3833) in 1899. 4 NBL originally built this colourful 4-8-4T (NB26246) for Anglo Alpha Cement. In October 1976, Roger found it stored out of use at Blinkpan Colliery.



5 6



5 Rustenburg Platinum Mines at one time operated a passenger service for their staff but by the time this photo was taken in May 1981 the loco RPM No 1 (NB 26242) and coaches were out of use. 6 In October the same year, RPM No 2 (NB 25902) was captured running light engine on the RPM 'main line'.



**Despite the holiday** season being on us, work has continued on our Dubs Tank at the Mizens Railway with the smokebox door and the front bufferbeam being the latest items to be refurbished. On 23rd May, the Dubs was reunited with an old friend in the form of NBLPG Member Graham McWilliams who was visiting from South Africa. Graham first photographed the loco at Springfield Colliery more than 30 years ago in May 1984 and said that he was delighted to see that the old girl was still in such fine shape !

**Recent reports** from Ireland indicate that the West Clare Railway's 3ft gauge 0-6-2 Tank No 5 'Slieve Callan' (Dubs 2890 of 1892) is currently in store at Moyasta Station. Despite being in full working order, the diminutive locomotive is nowadays only steamed by special request for large groups of visitors.

**Peter Scott** has kindly provided an update on progress with the restoration of Neilson Reid GNRI 4-4-0 No 131. (NR 5757 of 1900) The bodywork of tender No 37 has now been rebuilt for it to run with No 131 and it is almost ready for coupling. TPWS and other new electrics are being fitted to the loco and it should be ready for commissioning soon. One short test run has been made and others will follow in the near future.

**The mainline debut** of Gresley Great Northern Railway N2 Class 0-6-2 Tank No 1744 (NB 22600 of 1921) has been delayed until this Autumn after the discovery of minor cracks in the driving wheel spokes. These have now been ground out and welded but the loco will move from Tyseley to the North Norfolk Railway for the summer season before it's eagerly awaited return to the 'Main Line' later this year.

**Thank you all once again for your continued support  
More news to follow next month, Best Regards, Ken**

**Newsletter published by the NBL Preservation Group Ltd, Company Registration Number 7508287  
A Not for Profit Organisation**

**MEMBERSHIP & INFORMATION**

If you would like to comment on our preservation activities or would like further information on any of our projects, please contact our Secretary Ken Livermore by letter or by e:mail. NBL related Photos can be uploaded direct to our Facebook page at : <https://www.facebook.com/NorthBritishLocomotives>

New Members and Supporters are always welcome and funds are urgently needed for all our projects. Please join us and help to preserve North British locomotives from around the World. Our Website Address is : [www.nbloco.co.uk](http://www.nbloco.co.uk) Please send items for the website to Dave Fox at : [webmaster@nbloco.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@nbloco.co.uk)

Remember, **there is no annual Membership Fee**, just a one-off joining fee of £10 which will give you regular news updates and the option to participate in our locomotive preservation projects. All donations and membership fees will be acknowledged in writing. For further details, please email our Hon. Secretary : [ken.livermore@btinternet.com](mailto:ken.livermore@btinternet.com)

If you would like to join us or make a donation, please complete the form below and send it to : Ken Livermore, **Hon. Secretary, NBL Preservation Group, 4 Porchfield Close, Earley, Reading, Berks, RG6 5YZ.** Alternatively, you can make a direct Bank Transfer to the NBL Preservation Group, Barclays Bank, **Account Number 03113302 Sort Code 20-71-03** (please email to advise if you use this option)

**NORTH BRITISH LOCOMOTIVE PRESERVATION GROUP  
A NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATION**

**MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM**

NAME :

-----  
ADDRESS :

-----  
TELEPHONE NUMBER :

-----  
E:MAIL ADDRESS :

-----  
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP JOINING FEE (Optional) : £10

-----  
DONATION TO DUBS TANK No. 196 RESTORATION FUND : £

-----  
DONATION TO 19D 2767 TRANSPORT COSTS : £

-----  
DONATION TO HENDRIE CLASS 1 SHIPPING FUND : £

-----  
\*\*SHARES IN ENGINE 61662 (AT £25 PER SHARE)\*\* : £

-----  
TOTAL ENCLOSED : £

**All donations, loans and subscriptions will be acknowledged, thank you for your interest and support. Please make cheques or orders for Donations or Membership payable to ‘NBL Preservation Group’**

**\*\*Please make Cheques for Shares in Engine 61662 payable to ‘Engine 61662 Appeal’ thank you.**