

# NBL Preservation Group

Honorary President Professor Dugald Cameron OBE

## April 2020 Newsletter



### DIFFICULT TIMES

(photo courtesy Steamnet2000)

I'm afraid that the worldwide situation with Coronavirus means that our Newsletter will temporarily contain more historical information rather than current news. We are still very keen to receive your photographs, details of NB locomotives around the world and new project information but our short term focus will be on what has already happened rather than what is about to take place ! Having said that, there will still be plenty to read and our own locomotive preservation projects will resume as soon as the lock down is lifted.

One of the last photos we received showing a North British locomotive in steam this year was from the SA based preservation group Steamnet2000. It was taken at Beaconsfield depot in the Northern Cape section on 13<sup>th</sup> March and shows two of their 25NC Class 4-8-4's Nos 3437 and 3482 cooling down after steam tests. No 3482 (NB 27342) has just dropped her fire, an event that was immediately followed by a cloudburst and a thunderstorm ! No 3437 (Henschel) had her fire dropped 24 hours earlier. No movements were made, just tests of the boilers and auxiliaries.

Like virtually everywhere else in the world, all work on the site is now at a standstill until further notice. Full details of Steamnet2000's activities can be found on their Facebook page :

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthernCapeSteamPreservation/>

**THE NAMED B1's**(photo [www.colourrail.com](http://www.colourrail.com))

Between 1945 and 1948 North British constructed 290 B1 Class 4-6-0's for the LNER and it's successor, British Railways Eastern Region. Although primarily intended as mixed traffic engines, nineteen of the NB locos carried names along with 40 of the class that had come from other manufacturers.



Writing in 'Britain's Railways Remembered' Paul Jones records the late Derek Cross' thoughts on the LNER naming policy as follows : *"Although the LNER was generous in naming locomotives this did not extend to essentially freight classes and even the 'V2s', with mercifully few exceptions, were un-named. Anyhow, the first 41 'B1s' were named after various antelopes, deer and other cloven-hoofed fauna of the veld, though in some cases I suspect the services of a very experienced big-game hunter were called on to conjure up some obscure Wilde, or other form of, beeste. From No 1041 onwards deer, antelope, and other species of game appeared to have run out and the next hundred or so were un-named, then came No 1189 Sir William Gray, followed intermittently by another sixteen named after various dignitaries, of whom nobody had ever heard. Indeed, they will be remembered by posterity as the men who were named after locomotives rather than the other way about."*



Despite Mr Cross' rather amusing thoughts on the subject, seventeen of the North British B1's received the names of LNER directors – resulting in my humble opinion in some of the most evocative names ever carried on the LNER ! As a young London spotter in the 1950's the names carried by 61244 'Strang Steel' and 61242 'Alexander Reith Gray' conjured up visions of Scottish Steam at it's best !

No 61242 is seen in our top photo, pausing at Hawick along with 61290 (another North British product) on railtour duty in July 1961. Sheffield Darnall's No 61189 'Sir William Gray' races past Wortley Junction with a train for Skegness in 1966 and finally one of Haymarket shed's favourites No 61244 'Strang Steel' leaves Edinburgh Waverley in July 1959. Fortunately we still have two NBL B1's with us today !



## 61662 UPDATE

(photo Rail Archive Stephenson)

Regrettably the coronavirus health issue continues and our work party members are no longer able to travel to the Mizens Railway to work on the locomotive. The Mizens site has now been closed completely and securely locked up for the foreseeable future. Please bear with us during these difficult times and hopefully we will be able to resume operations during the summer. We are delighted to report that Steve Donaghue, one of our keen supporters in Manchester who has been suffering with Coronavirus, is now out of Intensive Care and is well on the way to recovery. Well done Steve, our thoughts are with you.



In the meantime, this month's photo shows the original No 61662 'Manchester United' approaching Thorpe le Soken, near Colchester with a Clacton-on-Sea to Liverpool Street express on 3rd July 1957. Our research into drawings and patterns for No 61662 continues on line and £25 Shares are still available for anyone who may have the good fortune to be able to spare a few pounds to help us.



**BULAWAYO VARIETY****(main photo William Ford)**

Situated around 270 miles south west of the capital Harare and 200 miles south of the Matabeleland coalfields, Bulawayo shed in Zimbabwe was until quite recently a last bastion of steam. Although normally associated with Garratts, Bulawayo once saw a huge variety of conventional North British types - some ex Rhodesian Railways classes and some locomotives on hire from neighbouring South Africa.

In William's superb view of the yard area, taken from the station in June 1981, we see an NRZ Garratt and a SAR 14R Class 4-8-2 on shunting duties. Around 20 SAR 14R's, including several North British locomotives, were hired by NRZ during 1981 and 1982 for use on the Bulawayo shunts, releasing the larger Garratts for main line duties.



The NRZ hired engines included six 15E's, six 15F's and twenty-two GMAM Garratts and No. 4099 of this class (NB 27691) is seen at Bulawayo Station in August 1980. Unfortunately, the GMAM's were considered too heavy on coal and were returned to SAR by September 1981. At one point NRZ were considering the purchase of thirty SAR 25NC Class 4-8-4's but the deal sadly fell through ! **(John Batwell Collection)**



The former Rhodesia was a good customer for NBL and some 18 orders comprising 137 steam locomotives and 1 diesel were delivered between 1903 and 1955. The very last order for Rhodesia was L63 taken in 1955 for 4 off SAR 19D type 4-8-2 locomotives for Wankie Colliery. The NB works numbers were 27557 – 60.

The first of the batch, WCC No 1 (NB 27557) adds a splash of colour to Bulawayo shed during a visit in 1981. Two of these fine locomotives were still active at the colliery until 2018 and it is believed that at least one of them remains stored for possible further use.

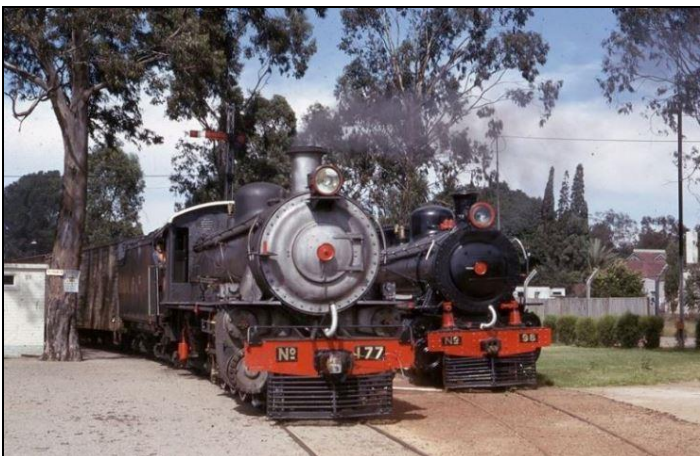
**PRESERVATION DAYS**

(main photo John Batwell)

In November 1997, three steam locomotives were released from Bulawayo Museum to run a special train to celebrate Bulawayo Station's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and these comprised NRZ 7<sup>th</sup> Class No 43 (NB 16173) 9B No 115 (NB 21478) and 12<sup>th</sup> Class 4-8-2 No 190 (NB 23385). The NBL trio are seen, complete with additional water tankers approaching the station.



The NRZ Museum collection comprised several operational engines that could be used on specials plus certain Garratts which could still be found in normal service. Museum locomotives could sometimes be found at Bulawayo shed and vice versa.



The Bulawayo Railway Museum is mainly an open-air affair with locomotives sympathetically displayed around the yard for photography. In May 1988 visitors were able to see 12<sup>th</sup> Class 4-8-2 No 177 (NB 23378) in steam with 10<sup>th</sup> No 98 (NB 19996). ex RR 7<sup>th</sup> Class 4-8-0 No 43 (NB 16173) was beautifully restored in blue livery (**Richard Manton**) Several other locomotives of Springburn origin were also present including the last surviving Neilson Reid 4-8-2T No 19 (NR 5799). The Museum is east of the steam depot and a list of exhibits can be found at : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulawayo\\_Railway\\_Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulawayo_Railway_Museum)

**MODERN TRACTION**

(photos Nick Newport &amp; Huw Williams)

In February 2020, NBLPG Chairman Nick Newport found SAR 4E electric locomotive E258 (NB 26898) stored at Bloemfontein depot pending possible restoration. No E258 was the last of 40 1Co-Co1 electrics completed at Hyde Park Works in 1953, they soon became known as the 'Green Mambas' because of their length and livery. The 4E's were amongst the most powerful electric locomotives in the world at that time.



Huw Williams very kindly sent us the interesting photo below showing NBL diesel shunters Nos 28056 & 28057 stored at the former Spillers flour mill yard at Trafford Park. By that time purchased for scrap by Northern Metals, these two locos, along with NB 28055 represented NBL's very last order No L113 and were in fact completed by Andrew Barclay of Kilmarnock after the firm went into liquidation in 1962.





As mentioned previously, we don't have a great deal of 'news' to report but NBLPG Member Rodney Towers managed to capture this stunning image of 45596 'Bahamas' (NB 24154) heading up the hill towards Oxenhope on the Keighley & Worth Valley on 6th March 2020, shortly before the lockdown came into force. Hopefully we will see much more of this fine engine on the Main Line later in the year.



**And finally :** Barrie Lamb sent us this evocative image of Dubs NER 0-6-0 No 1275 whilst at Darlington North Road Museum. As mentioned last month No 1275 has been earmarked for a move to Shildon.

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

**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)

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

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**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.**