

# NBL Preservation Group

Honorary President Professor Dugald Cameron OBE

## June 2020 Newsletter



### SIGNS OF RECOVERY

(photo : Wonder Steam Trains)

The trails of black smoke rising from their chimneys say it all - Wonder Steam Trains who are based at Hermanstad depot near Pretoria, achieved an amazing treble on 7<sup>th</sup> June this year when three of their North British steam locomotives were lit up simultaneously ! 15F 3117, 15CA 2850, and 19D 3366 were undergoing their boiler exams and all three were successful. This would be quite an achievement in normal times but during the middle of a lockdown it was little short of incredible. The North British works numbers of the three lucky locos are 26001, 24018 & 26086 respectively.

Wonder Steam Trains Ltd. began life over thirty years ago as Friends of the Rail when a group of local enthusiasts came together to preserve, restore and operate the remaining fleet of steam locomotives based at the Capital Park depot. The change of name and management came in July 2019 and since then the new organisation has worked tirelessly to negotiate a safety permit and a line access agreement with Transnet. Full details can be found at : <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Wonder-Steam-Trains>

As the lockdown starts to ease in the UK, test steamings have recently taken place on the North Yorkshire Moors and Great Central Railways with hopefully others to follow soon. We are all looking forward to the day when our own restoration efforts can be re-started.

**THE OLD ORDER**(photos : [www.colourrail.com](http://www.colourrail.com))

Last month's feature of LMR pre grouping locomotives was well received so this time we are looking at a few older NBL types on the Eastern & North Eastern Regions. In 1948, the Eastern & North Eastern sections of BR inherited 25 different classes of North British locomotives from the LNER – 19 of them having been built prior to 1923.



The Great Central O4 freight 2-8-0's were introduced in 1911 and North British eventually constructed no less than 190 of them – many for overseas use in World War One. No 63597 is seen above at Mexborough shed in July 1959, it was built in 1912 and lasted until 1961. Another GCR design was the J11 Class 0-6-0, many of which came from the Neilson Reid stable in 1902. No 64311 is seen coming under the footbridge on the single-track branch at Gamesley. It was also withdrawn in 1961, after 59 years in service.



The Manchester, Sheffield & Lincoln Railway was a forerunner of the Great Central and some of their locos remained active into BR days. N4 0-6-2 Tank No 69234 which came from Neilson & Co in 1891, hauls a long freight into Sheffield Victoria in 1952. It was withdrawn the following year. The NBL North Eastern J27 0-6-0's were built in 1908 and lasted almost until the end of BR steam. No 65823 is seen inside the smoky caverns of York shed in 1967. This location now serves as the UK National Railway Museum.



Turning to the Great Northern Railway now and several of their designs survived until BR days. North British built twenty K2 Class 2-6-0's for them in 1918 and No 61766 of this batch is seen near New Batsford in July 1960. Another successful NBL / GNR type was the N2 Class 0-6-2 suburban tank of 1921. No 69513 shunts vans at Peterborough North station in September 1960. No 69523 of this class (NB 22600) is preserved in working order at Loughborough on the Great Central Railway.

The Great Eastern section of the LNER tended to rely on their own Stratford built locos until after the 1923 'Grouping' and will be covered separately.

## VISIT TO PAKISTAN

(photos : John Barrowdale)

Regular contributor John Barrowdale recalls a visit to Pakistan in 1990 and kindly sent some photographs of Pakistan Railways Class GS No 64 on a rail tour he was on with the Railway Travel & Photography group. This particular loco is NB Works No 22768 of 1921 and is now preserved at Rawalpindi. All the photos were taken on the 2ft 6inch gauge line between Mari Indus and Pezu on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1990. This beautiful little engine was specially turned on a triangle to go tender first to Pezu so that it would run smokebox first through some dramatic scenery returning to base in second picture. The 3rd photo was taken on the way back to Mari Indus just before sunset.



North British did not actually receive any orders from Pakistan after the country was formed in 1947 but a number of India North Western locomotives, many having been built by NBL, were transferred to their fleet.

Most of the North Western State Railway infrastructure was in Pakistani territory and was renamed the Pakistan Western Railway. In East Bengal, the portion of the Assam Bengal Railway in Pakistani territory was renamed the Pakistan Eastern Railway. The new country adopted 8,122 km (5,047 mi) of the North Western State Railway; 6,880 km (4,280 mi) was 1,676mm (5 ft 6 in), 506 kilometres (314 mi) was 1,000 mm (3 ft 3 3/8 in) metre gauge and 736 kilometres (457 mi) was 762mm (2 ft 6 in) narrow gauge.

All narrow-gauge lines in the country were converted to 1,676 mm gauge (5 ft 6 in) or closed in the 2000s.



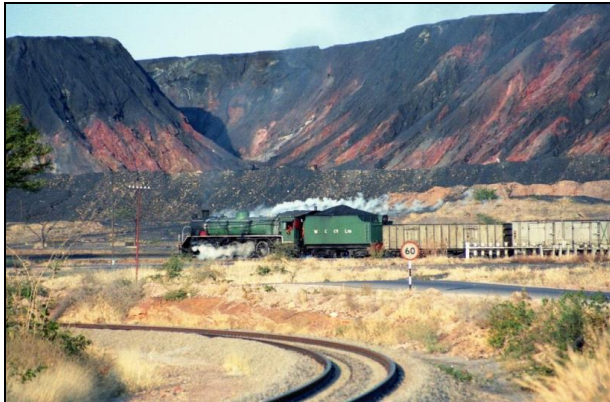
Up to date information has been difficult to come by recently but it is believed that several of the North British narrow gauge 2-8-2's have survived in Pakistan, either plinthed or in museums including No 64 as stated above. Further information on this interesting topic would be very welcome. Many thanks go to John for these historic photos.

After the photo of WCC No 1 (NB 27557) appeared in our April Newsletter. Long term member Neil Berry kindly sent in some photos of a trip he made to Zimbabwe and Zambia in 1990. High on his priorities was a visit to Wankie Colliery where some of their North British 4-8-2's were still active.

Sometimes referred to as 'Barnsley in the Bush' the WCC operation at Hwange in Zimbabwe is a large colliery with underground and open cast sections. A number of steam locomotives including garratts and rigid frame types were used over the years but we are principally looking at the batch of four 19D industrial 4-8-2's that were obtained from North British in 1955. First up is a view of WCC Nos. 4 and 2, (NB 27560 & NB 27558) outside the loco shed. No 2 is then seen shunting wagons at the colliery.



The third photo shows No 2 departing Thomson Junction with empties for the colliery with Neil's wife Wendy and his friend Les on the footplate. We then see WCC No 4 returning from the exchange sidings.



Having recovered from nearly rolling the car into a ditch (!) Neil drove back to Wankie Colliery where they saw No 2, NBL 4-8-2 heading for the colliery. Finally, No 2 is seen passing 15th Class 410 Inkolomi, as it departs Thomson Junction with empties for the colliery with Wendy and Les still on the footplate.



What a brilliant day at the colliery, we are very grateful to Neil, for this superb selection of photos.

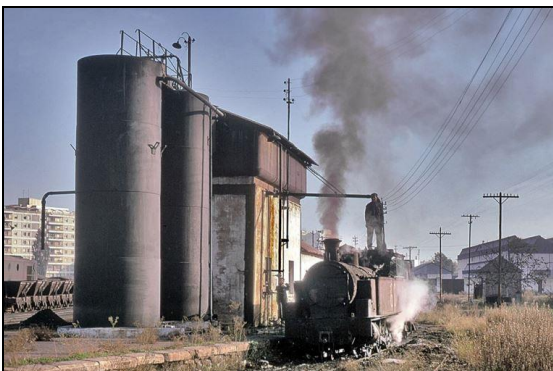
Much has changed since Derek Phillips visited Spain's Rio Tinto Railway in the 1970's but a portion of the line and a fair number of the engines survive. The railway was built by British Interests in 1875 to serve the copper mines and consisted of almost 100 miles of 3ft 6ins gauge track to various points in the mining complex. The 'main line' line from Rio Tinto down to the loading dock in Huelva was around 50 miles long with numerous loops, sidings and branches. It had eight bridges, five tunnels and 12 stations, providing transport to miners and the public, as well as an efficient method of exporting the minerals. The majority of their engines were 0-6-0 Tanks built by Dubs and North British. Over 140 locomotives, 3,000 trucks and 40 passenger coaches saw service on the line, which gave good service to the mines until it closed in 1984.



0-6-0T No 60 (Dubs 2172) shunting at Rio Tinto and today's heritage train in the red river valley.



No 49 (Dubs 1514) passing 2-6-0 No 204 near Naya – the yard is still full of abandoned equipment.



No 66 (Dubs 2478) fills up with water at Huelva - the present end of the line is at Los Frailes station.

The present-day operation consists of a 12km heritage line winding through the red river valley, following the old mine workings from just outside Rio Tinto to the rebuilt station at Los Frailes. Highlight of the journey for many enthusiasts is passing the time warp at Naya yard where several old steam locos and wagons remain just where they were left in the 1970's. Three or four steam locos are kept inside the shed and one is used on Sundays between November and April when the fire risk is lower. Quite surprisingly, 23 Rio Tinto steam locos still exist including No 49 (middle picture). Ten are preserved, four remain dumped where they last worked and nine are in the Lopez Soriano scrapyard at Zaragoza.



**Paul Whittle**, Vice Chairman of the DHRS, advises that all services have been suspended on India's Darjeeling Himalayan Railway due to the Covid 19 pandemic since 22 March, just two days before the unprecedented cancellation of all passenger trains across a network that normally carries 23 million passengers daily. By early June, and with strict social distancing, one third of DHR staff were back at work carrying out essential maintenance. The last charter trains before India's national lockdown were run along the full length of the 55 mile World Heritage line on 15-17 March for the DHRS's associated travel company Darjeeling Tours Ltd ([www.darjeelingtours.co.uk](http://www.darjeelingtours.co.uk)) using DHR 0-4-0ST No 804 (NB 23302) seen above. A further visit to the DHR is scheduled for January 2021 and limited places are still available. The DHRS web site is at [www.dhrs.org](http://www.dhrs.org)

**The Furness Railway Trust** report continued progress on the overhaul of FR 0-4-0 No 20 (Sharp Stewart 1448 of 1863) at the Ribble Valley Railway. Constructed by Sharp Stewart & Co to order 440, this 0-4-0 tender locomotive was one of a batch of eight locomotives constructed for the Furness Railway. It was completed in 1863 and when the overhaul is complete it will be the UK's oldest working steam locomotive. Sister engine No 25 (SS 1585 of 1865) survives in store at Carnforth.

**And finally** : our webmaster Dave Fox has very kindly completed the task of putting our back number Newsletters onto the NBL website [www.nbloco.co.uk](http://www.nbloco.co.uk) If any of our Members or Friends would prefer to receive email copies of the Newsletter, rather than receive post at this time, please send your email address to me at : [ken.livermore@btinternet.com](mailto:ken.livermore@btinternet.com)

**Thank you all once again for your continued support, stay safe out there !  
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 :

-----  
JOINING FEE OR DONATION TO NEWSLETTER COSTS : £

-----  
DONATION TO HENDRIE 1301 TRANSPORT FUND : £

-----  
DONATION TO DUBS TANK RESTORATION FUND : £

-----  
OWNERSHIP SHARES / DONATION TO 19D 2767 : £

-----  
OWNERSHIP SHARES / DONATION TO NBL TANK 25916 : £

---

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’**