

# Lea Bailey Light Railway Society

March 2015



## MEET THE GANG!

The working party above on Sunday January 11<sup>th</sup> was one of the largest so far in the history of the Lea Bailey Light Railway Society. Regular meets are held most weekends and some weekdays – contact Rob Needham if you would like to join in!

## AGM – WHICH WAY NEXT

*Rob Neehdam writes:*

Over the next year or so the society will face some serious challenges. We are in need of secure weather and vandal-proof accommodation at Lea Bailey for locos and tools.

To rebuild the tin shed is going to cost us, I suggest, at least a couple of thousand pounds. Track-laying in the tunnel will run out of rail at least 150 yards short of the far end, so we'll need to buy rail – not cheap, especially with delivery costs.

We have almost used all of the 150 sleepers bought through Pat. A similar quantity (and there's no point buying less) will cost over a thousand pounds. We are near to running out of rail at Lea Bailey, so will need to buy more rail (there is no point trying to use the heavy rail at Lea Bailey until we have suitable lifting gear and the resources to hire a hydraulic rail-bender).

When (soon?) we get the WR18 battery loco ready to run we will need to buy six 12v batteries, which will cost over £500.

(ctd. on page 2)

## News in brief

Attendees at NGRS AGM at Perrygrove on May 9<sup>th</sup> will be offered a trip to Clearwell 5-7pm for a guided tour underground plus operation of the incline to wind a couple of wagons out and then back down.

This will need 2-3 helpers. Any volunteers please? You'll get free entry to the caves and a cup of tea/coffee in cafe afterwards plus chat with members of NGRS!

The 2015 AGM of the Lea Bailey Light Railway Society will take place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 3pm, at The Crown pub, Lea.

Please contact [rswan@sky.com](mailto:rswan@sky.com) if you are planning to attend.

The agenda is available on the website. A motion is to be raised: "That the members authorise the committee to proceed with the process of converting the society to a (CIO) Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Volunteers are required for the committee, particularly to help the workload of the treasurer.

Then we'll need solar panels on the shed roof to charge loco batteries (4 are OK to take home, but another 6 is getting a bit too much.) And there will be more costs – when we have the shed completed we will need to equip it. So it looks likely that over the next year we will need something like five thousand pounds, and that excludes the normal day-to-day running costs such as diesel fuel, fishplates, nuts and bolts, ballast for the track, etc.

While Ray and Jonathan have been a great help, we are reaching the stage where we need to stand on our own feet.

Therefore I think we need to seriously consider becoming a charity and see what funds we can raise from grants, lottery, etc. To do that we will need to negotiate an agreement with Ray and Jonathan Wright concerning use of the mine site (which they lease from the Forestry Commission) and the railway equipment which they own. This will need the services of a solicitor – more money, unless anyone knows a friendly one who will do the work for us for free.

We also need to make friends with local councillors and MPs and anyone else who can help us. I think that we need friends who will support us when we talk to the FC about using and/or leasing the trackbed from Lea Bailey towards where? (Mitcheldean Road as a starter, or Drybrook)

To end on a cheerful note, Gareth is prepared to bring his Clayton for the NGRS AGM weekend and to do one trip to Statfold to collect or return Issing Syd.

*Rob is standing down as Chairman at the AGM. Ben Coulson has agreed to stand.*

Ten tons of ballast has been delivered to Lea Bailey for levelling and ballasting the long siding.



## MAY OPEN DAY

With visiting locos and a narrow gauge buzz about the Forest with the NGRS AGM, the LBLRS is to host an open day on Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Although details are still being finalised, it is hoped to have the Simplex, Issing Syd, the Eimco rocker shovel and possibly the new WR18 in action.

Activities at Hawthorn tunnel have still to be confirmed.

The NGRS AGM (not public) is based at Perrygrove, with visits to Clearwell, Lea Bailey and Hopewell Colliery, where their loco will be seen in public for the first time in years.



# ROOM FOR MORE!

London contractor Murphy Construction is clearing out a collection of WR BE locos. Among them are four 7 ton W218, five 2 ton WE8 and two or three 1½ ton WR5 – W218, WR8 and one WR5 are 2ft gauge. Rob Needham has purchased one WR8 for Lea Bailey as they are very rare, plus one 18" WR5.



The old Hunslet outside Hawthorn tunnel has been sold for £500 to Lancashire narrow gauge enthusiast Paul Wilson for restoration. It would have required much work to get it going again and the society already has a list of restoration projects.

## TUNNEL UPDATE

Work inside Hawthorn Tunnel is currently on hold while access and working agreements are being examined.

It is thought that access through the yellow gates is for maintenance inside the tunnel and not for general visitors.

The Society has been completely cleared of any links between activities at the tunnel and a farmer's water supply at Hope Mansell.

The problem was found to be caused by another farmer whose work on drainage had affected the watercourse.

The NGRS AGM and the LBLRS open day will not include any visits to the tunnel at this stage.

## CONTACTS

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