

# IRONSTONE

Issue 1

“The Home of East Midlands Ironstone Quarry Heritage”



The Magazine of Rocks by Rail  
The Living Ironstone Museum

## Editorial

Welcome to Ironstone, the first issue of the news letter for the revitalised Rutland Railway Museum, now renamed Rocks by Rail. It's been so long since the last news letter came out we thought we'd start a fresh with a new one, bringing the news of the railway to you, our members. Detailing what's happening, what has been done, what we plan to do and what you can do to help.

There is currently no particular plan to how often this will come out, and no fixed size to the news letter. Until things settle down they will be a bit adhoc, but we hope you will appreciate the newsletter all the same.

Regards

Alistair Grieve

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### Opening Times

General opening hours:

Tue/Thur: 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm)

Sun: 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm)

Operating Days: Third Sunday in every month

Train driving sessions: Monthly, Year round - by tick-  
eted pre-arrangement

Workshop tours: Everyday

Café: From 11am when Museum open

Admission Charges:

Operating Days:

Adults £5, Children £2.50, Under 5's Free

Group Visits - by arrangement

Dogs welcome if responsibly managed

Rocks by Rail (Rutland railway Museum)

Cottesmore

Rutland

LE15 7BX

### Contact Details

General queries - [secretary@rocksbyrail.org](mailto:secretary@rocksbyrail.org)

For membership—[membership@rocksbyrail.org](mailto:membership@rocksbyrail.org)

Questions or information relating to the ironstone quarry heritage, the exhibits or local quarrying history, please contact [curator@rocksbyrail.org](mailto:curator@rocksbyrail.org)

[www.rocks-by-rail.org](http://www.rocks-by-rail.org) 07873 721941

Front Cover—Sir Thomas Royden shuffles through the yard at Cottesmore in 2012

Rear Cover— Sir Thomas Royden, 1931, Fulstow and Singapore pose for the cameras at the end of the November photo charter.

Ironstone— The magazine of Rocks by Rail

### Events For 2014

- Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2014
- Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2014
- Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2014 – The Great Walk Commemoration
- Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2014
- Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2014
- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2014 – Diggers & Dumpers Event
- Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2014
- Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014 – Autumn Steam Gala

*Note: Operations on Bank holidays is subject to review and will be confirmed in due course – check website for details.*

<http://www.rocks-by-rail.org/>

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## Simon Layfield



Whilst this magazine is all about good news, we do have to start off with some bad news. Simon Layfield, the railways general manager and a driving force behind the reinvention and re-launch of the railway sadly passed away at the start of February. He suffered a major heart attack whilst out cycling in January and entered a coma from which he never came out of, despite the best efforts of the hospital staff.

Simon was a very popular and well liked member of the RBR crew, he had a boundless enthusiasm and could turn his hand to almost anything. Tributes have been received from across the railway preservation movement.

RBR will continue and progress but it will be with a Simon sized hole.

## Features Request

**The Great Walk—** On Sunday June 15 we will be commemorating the Great Walk when the massive dragline excavator SUNDEW slowly inched its way from Exton Park to Corby in 1974. If you have any old photographs, clippings, even maybe a movie of the event please get in touch as we'd like to create a Timeline in our SUNDEW café. If you were involved, or know someone who was, why not come along on the day and joining the barbecue by one of SUNDEWS cabs.

## Development News

A good start for the news letter would be to bring everyone up to date on where we are with the development plan, what we have achieved so far and we are planning to do.

### The Plan

Over the years as more and more equipment arrived the railway had begun to resemble a scrap yard with items dumped all over the place, many with little or no relevance to the ironstone industry, and the railway had no real goal. So a plan was devised to put this right, the aim—to recreate an East Midlands Ironstone Branch from exchange sidings to quarry with all intermediate points of interest. To provide a facility that would not only entertain, but educate, the public about this now forgotten part of the East Midlands industrial legacy.

Within the site several areas have been identified and allocated roles as follows:

North End—exchange sidings and passenger platform

Main yard—weighbridge, locomotive & wagon facilities, passenger platform, tea room and exhibition facilities

South End—rail served demonstration quarry showing first cut ironstone.

Alongside the main running line would be a nature trail and foot path so visitors could walk along and experience the trains in passing whilst by the quarry would be an area set aside to demonstrate the dragline in operation. The car park would also be relocated enabling development of the quarry.

The idea is that trains would leave the exchange sidings with rakes of 10 wagons, run up the branch to the main yard where they would be split into rakes of 5 and run over the weigh bridge for weighing before being propelled into the quarry. There they would be “loaded”, then returned to the main yard, weighed, reassembled into a 10 wagon rake and then run back down to the exchange sidings. In between these trains the passenger service would shuttle back and forth between the two platforms.

### Work to Date

Work to date has seen the majority of the redundant items removed from site, the running line has been cleared and opened up and the nature trail set up alongside. In the main yard the passenger platform has been built and the “Sundew café” and exhibition area opened. The former car park has been converted into the Cottessmore West Quarry and linked by rail to the running line.

The car park has been relocated to the site of the former Burley system exchange sidings, and in between here and the quarry is the “digger playpen” for the dragline. A footpath links the quarry and playpen with the main yard. A cab from the Sundew drag line was rescued and now sits by the viewing area that overlooks the quarry.



*1931 stands in the new platform. On the right is the loco yard with stored locomotives, whilst on the left is the Sundew café with outside seating area. Running between the loco and café is the track leading to the quarry area.*



*Above—general view of the quarry area looking north from the entrance to the site. The Ruston-Bucyrus 22 sits by the ironstone, the tipplers sit on the main siding and in the far distance can be see the diesel Mr D on the exit from the quarry area.*



A new and much needed locomotive inspection pit has been built in the main yard and this has made day to day operation much easier, as has the construction of a coaling stage further down the yard. The above picture shows the inspection pit under construction during August 2913. All the tracks were relaid and connected ready for the November gala.



A key part of the ironstone operations was the plant machinery, used to quarry the rock, load the wagons, move the overburden etc and these are not forgotten at Rocks by Rail. We have built a “Digger Play Pen” by the quarry where visitors can watch the dragline in operation as it scoops up the earth and moves it around.

## Next Steps

The next steps will see a much needed water tower built alongside the coaling stage and the loco yard tidied and relaid with a hard standing to enable better access to the locomotives stored there. Longer term it is hoped to cover over some of this area to protect

the locomotives from the environment and provide an environment suitable for working in., relieving some of the pressure on the workshop.

Planning is currently going on convert the long siding on the east side of the running line into a loop to accommodate the weigh bridge, the building itself to be built using an original Stewart & Lloyds plan.

At the north end there is a lot of stored stock present so this will all have to be moved before the track can be taken up and relaid and the platform built. Our plan is some way off from completion but we are getting there. If you fancy being part of this, please come along and lend a hand, the more the merrier.

Just before the exchange sidings the line crosses the route of the Oakham Canal, this is disused and quite overgrown, but there are some canal enthusiasts who are slowly tidying this section up. When finished it will be an attraction in its own right.



Left Upper—This is the north end of the running line which currently holds a lot of stored rolling stock, but as you can see the ground is being cleared out prior to the start of being relaid as exchange sidings and a platform built for the passenger service.



Left Lower- Looking from the railway north over the remains of the Oakham Canal, you can see just how overgrown this is, but it does contain water, albeit not that deep. This will be an attractive spot when the work on the canal has been completed.

## The Operational Fleet



We currently have two steam locomotives available for traffic, both built by Andrew Barclay. Sir Thomas Royden (above) works number 2088 was built in 1040 and spent all its life at Stourport Power Station before Withdrawal in 1977, arriving at Cottesmore in 1980.. 1931 (below) was built in 1927 and spent its working life in the sugar beet industry at Kidderminster, Wissington and Spalding, before entering preservation in 1972, arriving at Rutland in 1975.







Of our two working diesels Jean (above) is a thoroughbred ironstone engine having been built by Sentinel in 1965 for the Oxfordshire Ironstone Company in 1965 it worked at Glendon, Storefield and Corby quarries before ending up at the Yorkshire Tar Distillers at Kilhurst, South Yorkshire in 1975. Jean returned home to Cottesmore in 2011. Mr D (below) was built by Thomas Hill in 1967 and worked in the cement industry at Barrington works, where it hauled the last train from the quarry, the last working quarry railway in the country. The locomotive was donated to the railway by RMC to commemorate this historic event.



## In The Workshop



As well as the operable locomotives we have quite a few currently under going restoration , some will be ready somewhat sooner than others. Hopefully it won't be too long before Jean will be joined by two more ex OIC Sentinels, Betty and Graham. Graham is equipped with a vacuum brake system and so will be able to work the passenger trains.

In the workshop there are two steam locomotives, Rhos and Vigilant , both former Corby engines. As you can see from the pictures they have a long way to go but they will both steam again.

Finally we have the Ruston and Hornsby diesel shunter "Eric Tonks", named after the man who did so much to record and document the East Midlands Ironstone quarries and railways, and to whom we owe a great debt. His books on eth subject are essential reading.

This locomotive, the penultimate one built by RH in 1969, worked for Hays chemicals at Sandbach for all its life. It arrived in a very worn out condition in 1996 and is now waiting fitting of a new engine.

*If you fancy helping out on the restoration of the locomotives, or any other projects please come along, you'll be made very welcome, no special skills are needed, just a sense of adventure.*

## Rolling Stock



For the passenger service we currently have two brake vans in use, both featured here. The one nearest the camera was built at Ashford works, to a Southern Railway design, for the Army. The grey one behind is a Br built Shark Brake Van (originally designed for spreading ballast during track relaying) and entered passenger service at Christmas 2013.



However the brake vans can only suffice so far, and as we want to grow our passenger numbers we need something more suitable. Luckily we have been fortunate enough to acquire the body of an 1869 Great Eastern 4 wheel coach, number 514. The coach is in good condition despite being used as a garden retreat for many years and then volunteer accommodation at the South Cambridgeshire Rural Railway Museum. Currently on an accommodation wagon it will eventually be fully restored to service.



As well as passenger stock the railway has a wide variety of wagons, the majority associated with the ironstone and quarrying industries. Whilst some are stored awaiting restoration, others like the tipplers here see regular use on running days and also photo charters.

## Plant



The museum is not just about the railways of the ironstone industry, but the industry itself. The railways are only part of the story, plant machinery also played a key part in the operations and we have 3 working examples on site.



In the digger area we have a Ruston Bucyrus 22RB Drag Line, here you can watch as it scoops up bucket full's of earth and shifts them around. Whilst looking quite impressive, this a tiddler compared to many of the draglines that worked the ironstone quarries.



In the quarry area itself we have the face shovel version of the 22RB, which is used to “load” the wagons. Although we don't actually load them as we can't unload them after!

Also onsite is a Euclid dump truck, typical of many that worked in the quarries, and if the industry had survived, many quarry railways would have been replaced with these. At Cottesmore the narrow gauge line from the Cottesmore quarries suffered such a fate.

The sheds built to house the dump trucks can be seen at the back of the site, now used by a farmer. The large concrete structure by the platform was the tipping dock where the dump trucks emptied their loads into waiting railway wagons below.

## On Display



Behind the platform is the loco yard which currently holds a wide variety of locomotives both steam and diesel. The problem is that keeping these out in the open air does not do them any good and they slowly deteriorate over time.

Thus the plan is for this area to be covered over, to provide sheltered accommodation, and allow them to be viewed by our visitors in a much better and managed environment. At the back of the shed a workshop area will be also provided. With the leading edge of the shed butting up to the platform it will enable us to provide some form of passenger cover as well, after all the sun doesn't always shine at Cottesmore.

The pictures here show just a few of the locomotives that currently reside in this area. At the top is the Yorkshire Engine Co 0-6-0 DE, DE5 which worked at Cottesmore on the Exton Park system until closure in 1973. It was repainted in 2013 as part of the 40th anniversary of the closure.

In the middle is Cranford No2 which was built by WG Bagnall in 1942 and worked at the Cranford Quarries until closure in 1969.

At the bottom is another Yorkshire Engine product YEC 2521 which worked at the United Steels site at Appleby Frodingham, but is identical to those that worked on the USC Exton Park system until superseded by the diesels like DE5. Painted in the Exton Park livery it is on loan from the National Coal Mining Museum.

## A Normal Running Day



A normal running day has the system split in two halves with a passenger service running up and down the mainline whilst a separate train works the quarry area. Currently the passenger service is the preserve of the steam locomotives as we have no operable passenger fitted diesels, at present.



The trains are propelled down the line to what will be the site of the exchange sidings and where another platform will be built, allowing passengers to walk down the lineside nature trail one way and travel the other by rail.

Passenger accommodation is currently provided by the brake vans, but in due course it will be the 4 wheel coach.





The diesels are normally found working the quarry line, and here they simulate the operations as would be found in most ironstone quarries. The train is propelled into the quarry area and the locomotive detached to allow the first wagon to be “loaded” (this minimises accidental damage to the loco. It is then coupled back and the train slowly drawn forward as the rest of the wagons are “loaded”. When complete the train runs down to stable near the platform before repeating the process.



The wagons are not actually loaded as we have no easy way of unloading them.



## Scenes from the Railway



Some scenes taken during the past year or so, showing the diesels Jean and Mr. D. in action. As you can see we do let the diesels down the main line once in a while, after all the steam locomotives can't have all the fun.





And some scenes from the same period showing Sir Thomas Royden and 1931 in action. We don't just keep them on the passenger turns but do let them have a pay with the wagons as well, it's always nice to mix things up and keep the crews practiced on both types of train.

# Fulstow



For our November 2013 steam gala we played host to the lovely saddle tank Fulstow from the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway. She looked quite at home on our trains and also took part in a photo charter on the Monday, which like all our other charters failed to find any sun!

## A Visit to NIRT



Our locomotives have been on their travels with both STR and 1931 having seasons at the Deeside Railway in Scotland, but before that we took STR to the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust , near Northampton. It looked right at home at this former ironstone quarry and we had a great time.

