

IRONSTONE

Issue 3

“The Home of East Midlands Ironstone Quarry Heritage”



The Magazine of Rocks by Rail £2
The Living Ironstone Museum

Editorial

Well it's the 3rd issue on Ironstone and a lot has happened in the past year. Whilst we started off with some very sad news things have definitely ended on a high note. This issue has been expanded to 28 pages to cover all the news and events that have happened in the last few months. It's been a busy time at Rocks by Rail.

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:

First and third Sunday in every month
Train driving sessions: Monthly, Year round - by ticketed pre-arrangement

Workshop tours: Everyday

Café: From 11am when Museum open

Admission Charges:

Operating Days:

Adults £6, Children 3, 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

For membership—membership@rocksbyrail.org

Questions or information relating to the ironstone quarry heritage, the exhibits or local quarrying history, please contact curator@rocksbyrail.org

www.rocks-by-rail.org 07873 721941

Front Cover—Familiar Locomotives, unfamiliar location. Sir Thomas Royden and 1931 stand at Blaenavon High Level station on the Pontypool and Blaenavon railway.

Rear Cover— STR stands on the rail over rail bridge at the PBR as Edmudsons passes below.

Ironstone— The magazine of Rocks by Rail

Events For Early 2015

First Sunday of Each Month is Driver for a Fiver.

- Thursday 1st Jan Mince Pie trains
- Sunday 11 Jan Volunteering day
- Sunday 15 Running Day
- Sunday 15 Stanton and Staveley Day
- Sunday/Monday 5/6 April Easter egg hunt and quarry
- Sunday 19 April running day
- Sunday 17 May running day
- Monday 25 May running day
- Sunday 21 June running day

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

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

Table of Contents

Page 3— Christmas running and beyond

Page 4— Development News

Page 8— Around the Workshop

Page 9— The 1308 Trust

Page 10—Train Tickets/That sinking feeling

Page 11 —August Running Day

Page 12 - Rocks in Wales

Page 20 - Diggers and Dumpers

Page 12— November Gala and Photo Charter

Christmas Running and beyond

With 2014 almost over and the basic operation of the railway bedded in we've been looking to expand on the running days, to encourage more visitors to attend and increase our attractiveness to families. Of course we have to balance out the increase in running days with the availability of volunteers and how much extra work will be needed to operate them.

First off in addition to the main operating day, every 3rd Sunday of the month which sees both passenger and quarry operating we will now be running every first Sunday of the month. However this will be Driver for a Fiver with one of the diesel fleet. We're also looking to do more running at Bank Holidays, and these should be a full operation , quarry and passenger trains.

The first of these expanded operations is over the Christmas period when we'll be running on the 14th and 21st December. These will be our Santa at the North Pole trains. All will be passenger only with no quarry operation. Booking will be essential. We'll then follow this up with mince pie trains on Jan the 1st, again steam passenger trains with no quarry operation.

After the New Years Day there are no further trains in January, as we take time for some much needed maintenance on the railway. From February onwards the operating pattern will then settle down to a 1st Sunday driver for a Fiver, 3rd Sunday full operating day pattern, with bank holiday running as required. We're still finalising events but we do plan to commemorate



the 10th anniversary of the closure of the Barrington Cement Works Quarry Railway on July 19 Also Easter Running will be expanded to 2 days.

If you think you can help in anyway with the operations, or any of the ongoing projects you will be more than welcome. Just pop in any weekend and make yourself known.

Development News

Without doubt the big news has been the official announcement of the awarding of a grant from the Mick George Community Fund, administered by Grantscape, for the building of an insulated three road exhibition and conservation building, which will sit behind the passenger platform (the Ironstone railway Exhibition Centre (IREC)). This has long been our dream and as simply put by Robin Bickers (volunteer and museum trustee) “a major goal in our development plan whereby the heritage of quarry railways can be more fully interpreted for the benefit of museum visitors. The new building will provide secure accommodation for the exhibits, encourage more conservation work and training in old skills thus enhancing opportunities for volunteering at the museum as well as providing a focus for future educational visits where a younger generation can learn about their industrial past. “

Mick George Ltd operates extensively in the East Midlands and across East Anglia as an aggregates, contracting and waste management services supply company. Three of the Company’s existing minerals and waste management sites near South Witham, Rushton and Thornhaugh share direct historical links to the past opencast mining of limestone and iron ore where industrial railways played a key role as part of the transport system to the distant steelworks.



A last look at the engine sidings during the September running day. before the work began .

With planning permission granted no time was wasted in getting started on the work, although first things first and a massive shunt had to be undertaken to remove all the rolling stock from the sidings. The next time they go back it will be under cover. The commencement of work did mean that the October running day had to be cancelled, the main access point for the plant machinery crossed the track and a ballast road had been laid over the line for this purpose. With work being undertaken by our contractors ACME we hope the shed will be up and in use by spring 2015.



Following the big shunt to clear the yard of all stock the work began to prepare the base for the main structure. One of the key things is to ensure that it is level and as the picture by Steve Hanglands (left) shows this did involve some considerable digging as the site is on a slope.

The picture was taken on October 16, less than a month after the above picture and shows excellent progress already.



Only the day after the previous picture the sub base was laid down. This will provide the main foundations for the whole structure so has to be solid. Steve Hanglands was back on site to capture this shot of the team from Mick George posing with their handiwork, whilst the below picture shows the view looking north, giving a good idea of the size of the site. The fence along one side is the back of the passenger platform.



As mentioned in the introduction we had to cancel our October running day due to the line being blocked by a temporary ballast access road to the shed IREC site. Whilst unfortunate we had already anticipated this and it is a necessary part of the work as it allows access to the site for the plant machinery.

The picture by Steve Hanglands above shows the road in place, squeezed between the Woolsthorpe Engine Shed and the loco line up. It was always in the project plan for this to occur so the loss of the October running day was unavoidable but not unexpected.



Once the base was graded and levelled the next step was to prepare the foundations for the super-structure. Steve Hanglands' picture (left) shows the holes being dug for the superstructure bases.

Once they had been dug (and drained of rainwater) it was the turn of the concrete to be poured and the anchor bolts concreted in.



The ice cream cones are to allow for the bolts to move if necessary when fitting the vertical members. Both pictures again by Steve Hanglands.

With no definite edge it's been difficult to visualise the actual



extent of the building as it almost merges into the surrounding earthworks. However by mid November the concrete sections that will form the bases for the side walls had been poured and it's now possible to see the full size of the building and how it will look. By the next issue of Ironstone this should look very different.



Away from the IREC shed there has been plenty of other work going on, with the second siding in the quarry now beginning to take shape. A visit by the pupils from Oakham school for an afternoon's volunteering on September 28 enabled the track to be put in place and by the end of the day the first panel was fixed in place. Completion of this work will allow a much greater flexibility of operations in the quarry area with extra rakes of wagons operating in and out and extra locos at Gala days, Outside of operating days it will also provide much needed siding space.

Steve Hanglands picture (left) shows the second siding with just the final work needed to secure it in place and make it operational.

A big thank you to the pupils of Oakham School for their help with this.



Hot on the heels of the announcement of the grant for the IREC came the news that we had been successful in our application for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of the Sundew Cab.

As our Great Walk Commemoration event in July showed there is still a lot of affection in Rutland for Sundew and it still evokes many memories and stories, (See Ironstone 2 for a report of the event).

The HLF have given us an £8,100 "sharing heritage" grant, which will pay for a significant amount of

the work to restore the cab. We had already started on the project but this is a huge boost and will enable it to be achieved so much quicker. When complete it will become a self contained museum, with audio visual equipment installed to help tell the story of this great machine.

If you have any memories of Sundew or the Great Walk we'd love to hear from you.

Around the Workshop



A lot of work has been undertaken on two of the diesels, the Ruston Hornsby Eroc tonks, and the big GEC Ludwig Mond (left). Eric is now ready for operational service having gone several successful test runs, and should make its debut in 2015. Ludwig is not far behind and should hopefully also be back in 2015.

Following its return from Blaenavon 1931 had to have several tubes replaced and, after the November gala, was taken out of traffic for a planned overhaul. It's mid way through its 10 year ticket and this has been planned for sometime.

The ex Corby dumper trucks have also seen some attention. They have been resident in the north end for quite some time. Whilst not really up to regular work they were made fit for the November photo charter and gala. The first time in 20 or so years that these have seen any use.



The next plan on the list is the building of a "Super Industrial" using the boiler of ex-Southern railway S15 30825, seen here in the car park. Okay it's actually being stored on the behalf of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway who currently have no space for it, but it's a nice idea and we're sure someone somewhere will believe us.





Above—Graham stands in the shed, approaching the end of its overhaul

1308 Trust Gary Brown

The 1308 team have been busy since the last Ironstone magazine with the most notable progress being the removal of her wheel sets, in order to have the axle boxes overhauled and the tyre profiles corrected. So far no major issues have been uncovered but a full appraisal will be carried out in due time. The team's next moves include the continuation of cleaning and painting the frames ready to receive the next layers of paint, also the decision has been taken to remove part of the central casting forming the base of the smoke box area, it is very heavily corroded and to ensure the locomotive's reliability in service it was felt a replacement would be the only option.

Work behind the scenes continues to uncover her history at Corby and the work she carried out there, according to accounts from former employees RHOS spent most of her time working weekend permanent way trains all over the Corby Quarries system. As part of our research we have also uncovered the location of the original works drawings and copies are being acquired to aid the restoration work.



Train Tickets—Rocks Style

BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION		USE BLOCK LETTERS		
BRITISH RAILWAYS				
From				
COTTESMORE WEST PIT				
To				
Letter Wagon	Number	2	PAID	
A			GIFT AID	
Container			DONATION	
C				
Contents IRON ORE				
Consignee ROCKS BY RAIL				

Our Museum is run wholly by volunteers and much of our income is derived from donations.
If you are a UK tax payer, the government will refund the tax paid on your donation to our Charity.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION. *The Trustees*

I confirm I have paid/will pay an amount of Income Tax &/or Capital Gains Tax for this tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

We hope you enjoyed your visit. If you did, please tell others!

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact us ;

Rocks by Rail - The Living Ironstone Museum
Cottesmore Iron Ore Mines Siding,
Ashwell Road, Cottesmore,
Oakham, Rutland, LE15 7BX

Or call 07873 721941
www.rocks-by-rail.org

Until now we've not had proper tickets for our visitors, and one of the attractions of heritage train rides is having a proper train ticket. Of course as we're a museum dedicated to industry a normal passenger ticket just wouldn't do, so what could be more appropriate than one based on a wagon label. These travelled with each wagon and indicated where it was travelling from and to and what the contents were. As the images above show, there are obvious changes and the To box will be filled in for each visitor, a unique memento of their visit



That Sinking Feeling

The new exhibition shed replaces the 3 open air sidings that have been a part of the railway set up on site for almost as long as it has existed here.

One thing that has not changed is the repeated need to lift and pack the trackwork as it slowly sank into the ground under the

weight of the locomotives. The excavation work for the IEC shows the reason why, with a large amount of clay present just below the surface. Hopefully this will now be a thing of the past.

August Running Day

With events in July and September and the visit to Blaenavon also in September the August running day was a nice change of pace. Just a normal running day with diesel operation in the quarry and steam on the mainline.

Mr D worked the quarry whilst Sir Thomas Royden did the honours with the brake vans.



Rocks in Wales



Unfamiliar territory for Sir Thomas Royden and 1931 as they stand at Blaenavon High Level on Friday 12th September, the first day of the PBR gala, with an afternoon train for Furnace Sidings.

In September the Pontypool and Blaenavon railway celebrated the 100th birthday of the steam locomotive Rosyth No1, an Andrew Barclay 0-4-0St like our two steam locomotives, with a steam gala featuring several Andrew Barclay locomotives. Both Sir Thomas Royden and 1931 were invited along, along with another Andrew Barclay, Edmundsons, from the Rushden Transport Museum near Wellingbrough. The gala ran over 3 days 12-14 September, with a photo charter on the 16th.

The Friday (12th) featured just the Andrew Barclay locomotives, whilst on the Saturday and Sunday they were joined by the PBR's resident Austerity 71515 Mech Navvie's Ltd. Trains were a mixture of single and double heading with a freight train thrown in for good measure. The PBR has fearsome gradients including a stretch of 1 in 24 and is a stern test for any locomotive. Sadly 1931 found it all

a bit too much and had to be taken out of traffic on the Sunday afternoon after several of its tubes failed. Luckily most of the trains had run by then and the unavailability of 1931 did not pose too much of a problem for the remainder of the day.



Left—most of the Rocks team who travelled with the locomotives pose alongside 1931, at Furnace Sidings on the Friday Morning, in typical misty Welsh Valleys weather.



Top left—Friday Morning and Sir Thomas Royden climbs up the 1 in 24 from Blaenavon to Furnace Sidings with a train for the Whistle Inn. This is one of the steepest adhesion worked climbs on a standard gauge railway and really makes the loco's work. The building in the back ground is the Rhymney Brewery, which produces a nice range of ales.



Middle Left—As well as the mainline the PBR also has a short branch to Big Pit, The National Museum of Coal. Here STR has arrived with a service from Furnace Sidings comprised of two vintage coaches, a Manchester & Milford/ GWR hybrid of 1895/1911 heritage and a Great Easter Inspection saloon from 1914. This never used to be a passenger line, but the rail access to Big Pit itself.



Bottom Left—1931 stands at the current northern terminus of the line Whistle Inn, 1307 feet above sea level and one of the highest stations in preservation. The picture is taken from the beer garden of the Whistle Inn pub — how convenient.



Above—In glorious afternoon light STR and 1931 sweep round the curve from Big Pit with a train for Whistle Inn via Furnace Sidings.

Below—STR stands at Big Pit with the museum behind. On the left on display is another Andrew Barclay, Forester, whilst not quite visible is a further one, Nora, on display outside Big Pit.





Above—who could not resist setting up a picture like this? At the end of Friday and lit by the setting sun Edmundsons, Rosyth No1, Sir Thomas Royden and 1931 line up in the yard at Furnace Sidings.



Left—1931 and STR charge the hill with a Saturday afternoon train from Blaenavon High Level to Whistle Inn. The track in the foreground is a headshunt that the train will



shortly pass under. The branch to Big Pit is between the headshunt and the photographer. The train is on former London North Western rails, the headshunt and branch were Blaenavon Co Ltd.

Left—STR and 1931 give a helping hand to a Whistle Inn bound service as they bank it up the hill out of Furnace Sidings.



Above—the last train of the day from Blaenavon High Level on Saturday saw all 4 Barclays booked to work the train to Furnace Sidings and here they are raising the roof as they storm the hill with STR and 1931 leading the charge.



Left—Sunday started very dull and misty but it did begin to lift as the day went on. Seen here Rosyth No1 and 1931 are flat out as they bring a dinner time train up the hill and past Big Pit, visible above the trees.



Left Bottom—There was a freight train booked to run on both the Saturday and Sunday, but due to various issues only one run was made on the Sunday, and that had STR in charge. In a brief moment of sun it's seen here in the loop at Blaenavon High level awaiting the arrival of a passenger train from Furnace Sidings. Under the weeds are the remains of the original platform 2 whilst to the right of the fence runs a cycle track that cuts through the old goods yard and along the trackbed of the old up line.



Left—A bevy of Barclays at Furnace Sidings, seen from the footbridge. On the left at STR (taking water) and Rosyth No.1 with a train for Blaenavon High Level, whilst on the right is 1931 with a service for Big Pit. In the background are the spoil heaps from the Coity Pit, and now a nature reserve, whilst behind it all is the massive bulk of the Coity Mountain which provides a the back drop to the railway. Not long after this was taken 1931 was declared a failure and took no further part in the weekend.

Below—The last train of the gala storms up from Blaenavon High Level under a dark and brooding sky. Sir Thomas Royden sits in the middle, sandwiched between Edmundsons and Rosyth No1.

Despite the failure of 1931 it was still a great weekend and certainly put the locomotives through their paces. Of course it did leave us with some work to do when the locomotives got back to Cottesmore, but it was an enjoyable and worthwhile weekend.





Above—during the photo charter STR swings round the curve from Big Pit whilst Edmundsons stands on the rail over rail bridge.

Below—STR shunts the vans over the bridge as Rosyth steams past with saloon recreating a miners' works train, which often used old vintage coaches to ferry miners around.





Above—What a view. STR shunts the vans over the unique rail over rail bridge, Edmundsons brings a freight up the valley and Rosyth works the miners train on the branch.

Below—STR shunts the vans as Edmundsons blasts past at a lower level on the mainline.



Diesels Diggers and Dumpers



Our September running day was the week after the visit to Blaenavon and luckily was the annual Diesels Diggers and Dumpers day, giving locos and steam crews a chance for a rest.

This is one of the events to emphasise the other side of the quarry operations, i.e. the plant machinery. We had the face shovel in operation in the quarry whilst the drag line was working in the “digger playpen”. For this event the Euclid dump truck was also in use and operations featured it being loaded with earth by the drag line before it would move off and dump the earth ready for reloading.



This year we also had a special guest in the very strange shape of the Smalley excavator (left). These little machines were built by Richard Smalley (Engineering) Ltd. of Osbournby near Sleaford, Lincolnshire, and only have one axle with two wheels. They move by using the backhoe to drag them along the ground in a very strange, almost crab like way.



These machines can be still be found in use today and this one was last used to clean out various drains in the fens.

A fascinating little thing and certainly one of the weirdest pieces of plant we've seen in a long time.



In the Sundew café we had an O Gauge model Iron ore system with working draglines and tippler made from Meccano! The wagons were loaded by hand, but shunted over the tippler by locomotive where they were rotated and the contents tipped into a waiting tub below for reuse. The only problem was trying to get the table level so the wagons didn't run away of their own volition.



Rail operations were carried out by Mr D and Jean, with one working the quarry and the other carrying out the popular Driver for a Fiver trains from the platform. At lunch they swapped roles to ensure crews and locomotives got to carry out both duties.



There were also several mainline runs with the hoppers giving the visitors a reminder of the once common sight (and sound) of wagons being tripped along an industrial railway. Now a very rare sight.

With warm and sunny weather this proved to be a very popular event, with the cafe and trains busy all day long. Hopefully we'll have some more plant for next year.

November Gala and Photo Charter



Our November gala was due to have the little 0-4-0ST Vulcan as guest engine (see Ironstone 2) but a problem during the loading meant it was not possible for it to take part. A rail used to create the ramp onto the trailer buckled under the locomotive, causing it to drop sharply and the buffer beam strike the trailer. Whilst the damage looked superficial the decision was taken not to risk the locomotive and source another guest if possible.

We were lucky enough to get Beyer Peacock no 1827, a little 0-4-0ST built in 1879, courtesy of the Foxfield Railway. It was originally built with a crane but had been rebuilt as a plain saddle tank many years ago. Ironically, like Vulcan, 1827 was the works shunter, albeit for Beyer Peacock rather than Vulcan Foundry.



With the gala on the Sunday the annual Russ Hillier photo charter was on the Saturday, featuring all three locomotives. As seems the case the weather was yet again murky and dull. Poor Russ, yet to have sun at any photo charter.

Above—1827 heads across the canal. A view that has been opened up by vegetation clearance.

Left—1827 and STR climb into the yard at Cottesmore.



Above—a busy time at Cottesmore as STR and 1931 blast up the mainline whilst 1827 shunts in the siding. On the left are the YEC and Belvoir, displaced from their normal place in the engine yard by the ongoing work for the IEC.



Left—1931 gets to grips with the dumper trucks as it shunts the quarry.

During the day various combinations of locomotives and stock were used up and down the railway. Whilst the lack of sun was depressing it did allow for some moody and atmospheric pictures.

The day rounded off with a short night shoot which had two scenes set up: 1931 in the quarry and STR and 1827 in the main yard (see overleaf).

Despite the lack of sun everybody had a good time and went home happy.

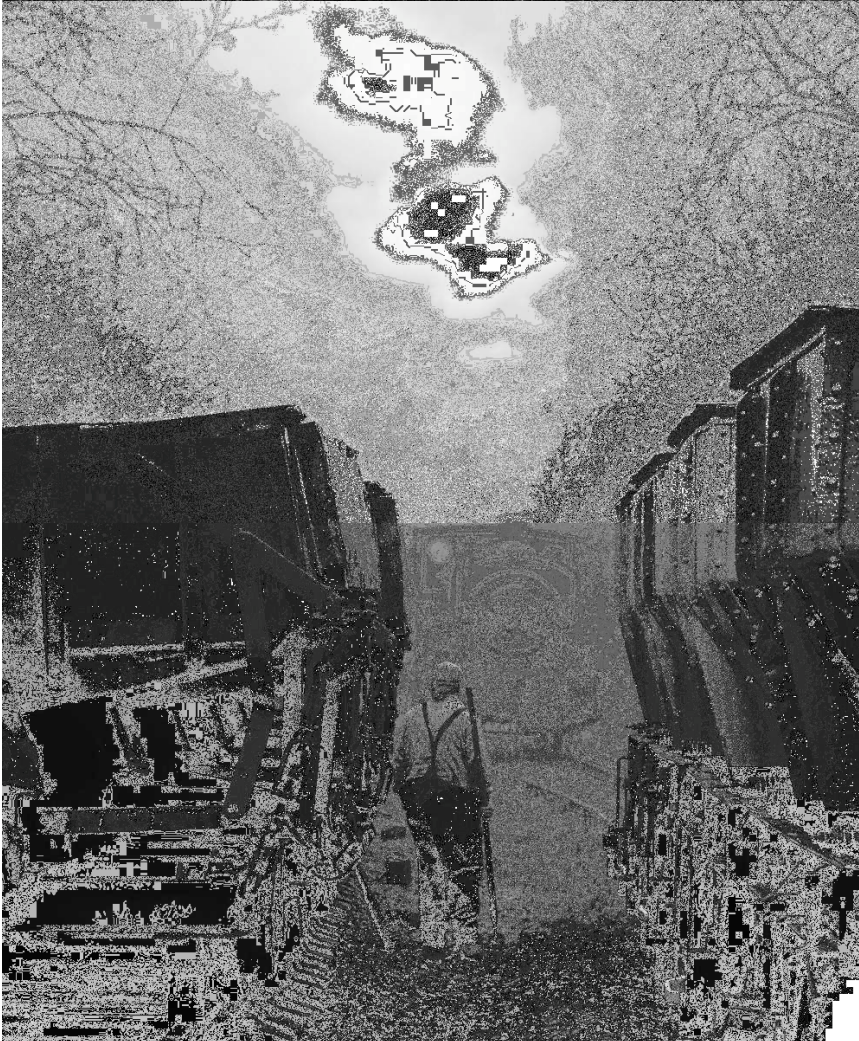


Above—Night time in the quarry with 1931

Below—STR and 1827 stand in the yard as the crews discuss the day's events



Ironstone— The magazine of Rocks by Rail



Sadly the day of the gala didn't fare any better weather wise and just like the Saturday it began very misty and murky. It did however enable some very moody photographs in the quarry. The two shots here show 1931 at work. The dump trucks were stored here due to the lack of siding space caused by the IEC work.

During the day the locomotives took turns in working the quarry, mainline freight runs and the passenger turns. The passenger trains had to run short of their normal destination beyond the canal due to the presence of wagons stored on the mainline, again due to the ongoing IEC work. Hopefully by this time next year the IEC will be complete and we'll have plenty of siding space again.



Above—1827 approaches the yard at Cottesmore with a short rake of hoppers on Sunday afternoon.

Below—it began to rain on Sunday afternoon, but it didn't stop our visitors braving the conditions to capture shots of 1827 on the brake vans. I took this from the dry of the loco shed.





The dragline was also in operation and this time there was plenty of earth to play with, the spoil from the excavations for the IEC having been dumped here. The only problem is that it contains a large amount of clay and every so often the driver had to clean the bucket out as the earth just stuck inside and would not drop out!



As well as 1827 both STR and 1931 were in operation over the weekend. This was 1931's last weekend in operation before it was taken out of traffic for a mid-term overhaul. It's now 6 years into its 10 year ticket and already a year overdue. Both are seen here in the wet of Sunday afternoon.



Luckily the rain (which wasn't forecast) didn't arrive until late on the Sunday afternoon so it didn't spoil the day. In the end we had over 200 passengers which makes it our biggest grossing event to date.

The gala is now becoming a regular on the Industrial railway scene, and again showcased just what we can do. We're already looking forward to next years event.

