

Amerton News

John Strike

Permanent Way

The turnout to Chartley Road Loop has received some attention to eliminate the knock we get when *Isabel* passes through. It was discovered that the gauge through the crossing had widened slightly and with *Isabel's* back-to-back being less than the rest of the stock, she hit the checkrail. By using the new magnetic drill we re-drilled the baseplates, tweaked the geometry, and refixed the whole lot and all should now be well. The

turnout in the yard, which collapsed, has also been repaired. In fact when we dug out the fill it wasn't the sleeper but the web of the rail, which had corroded right through!! You may recall that this is probably a 1918, WWI turnout from Leighton Buzzard via Cadeby, so it hasn't done too badly! The crossing vee has been remade in 35M, machined and welded up to the original baseplate.



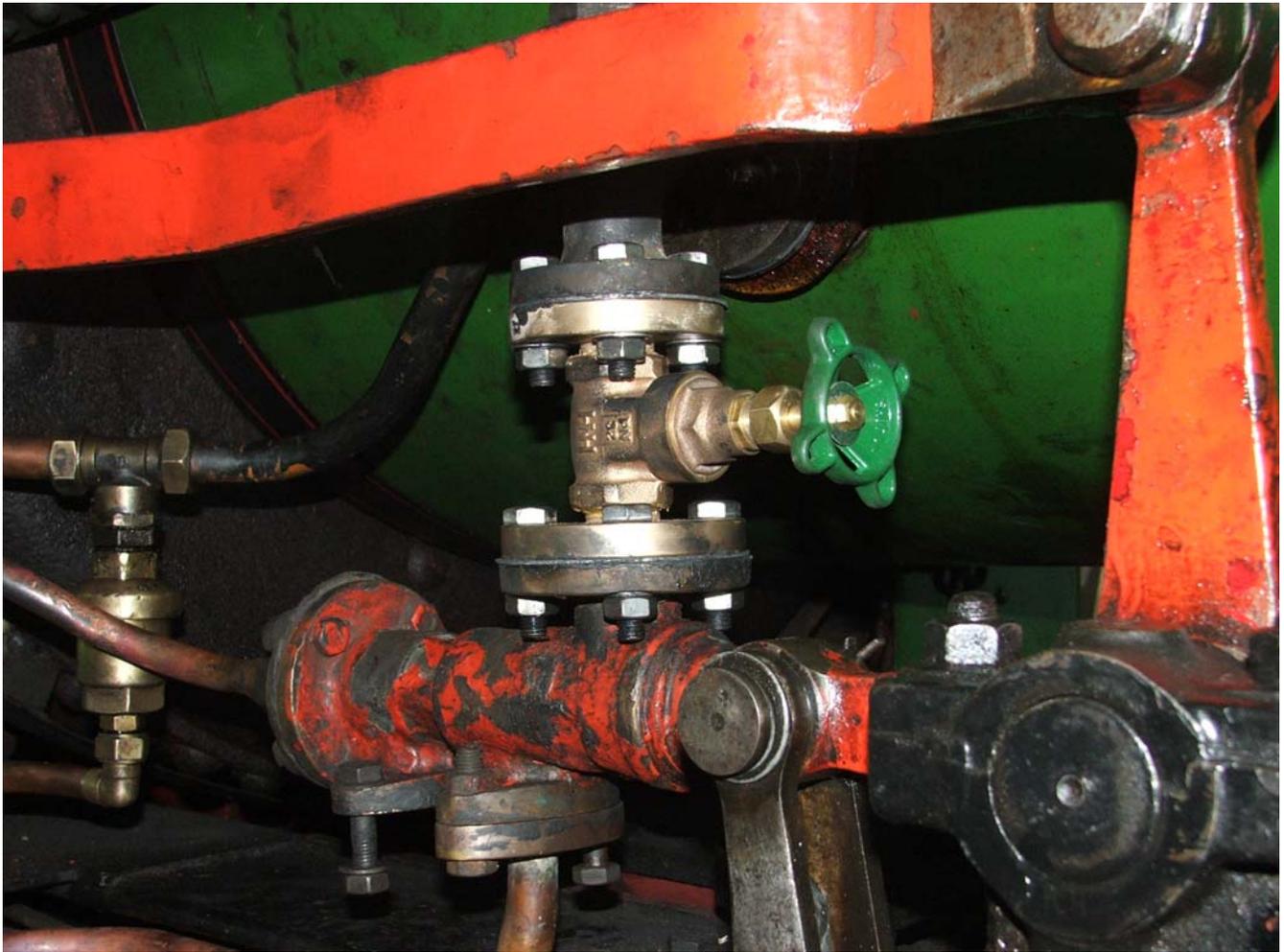
The newly fabricated crossing vee on the old Leighton point on the pit road

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Locomotives

Isabel was stripped down for the winter after the Santas and all the firebars, brick arch etc removed. She has had an initial clean and scrape and also a pressure wash prior to final preparation for the visit of the boiler inspector. She has also had a liberal coating of steam oil over much of the exposed platework and brightwork. John Glaze visited in early March and was very pleased with the overall condition and the depth of

preparation work carried out for him. Peter has done much investigation into providing an isolating valve to the clack, following the problems over the Santas. A bronze gate valve with two flanges to suit the clack on one side and the injector on the other has been squeezed in between the two and some new pipework made to suit the amended position. This should be the end of the crew's clack problems!

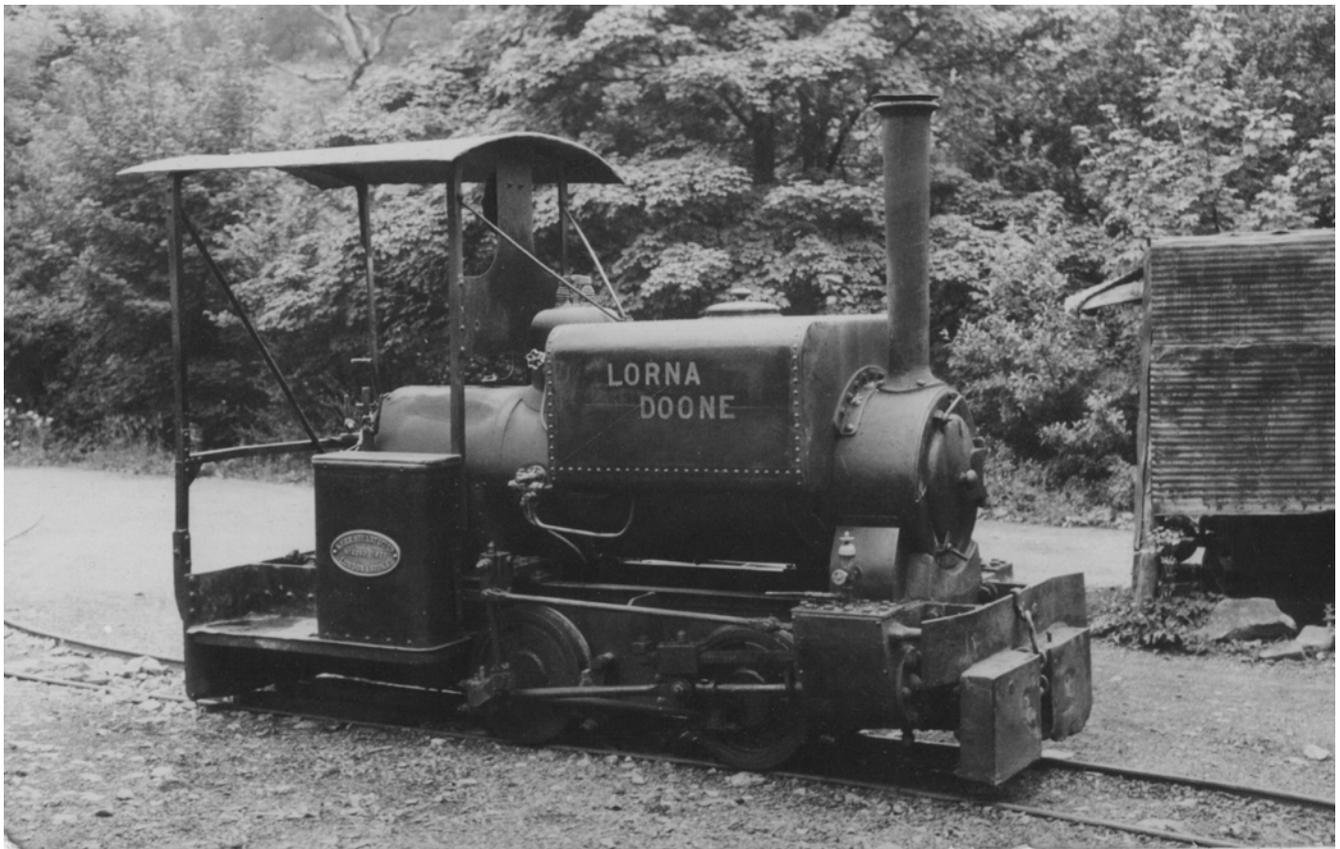


The new isolating valve between the injector and the clack on Isabel

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Lorna Doone remains on display when the railway is open. Some thought is needed for better buffing gear for when she is moved

around. She will get a good clean prior to the start of the season, and another report sent to Birmingham Museum.



Lorna Doone in Devon in the 1950's

AR Collection

The Henschel still progresses nicely, no recent news on the boiler, but work continues at Peter's on the K-L axles and the sandboxes.

746 sees use on a variety of engineering trains and still carries the generator on the front footplating, which is useful for any outside work, the battery has recently "died" and has been replaced.

7471 remains in full working order and has taken on an 'industrial' appearance.

Dreadnought remains in working order and sees occasional use.

Ruston Yd No. 70 has seen some positive progress!! Following a tip off from Peter from one of his "specialist magazines" we have acquired two complete Ruston 4VRO engines as spares for our 48DL. These were collected by my Discovery and Lawrence's excellent trailer (thank you Lol!) and both engines reside on one of the new Allens flats. The better unit is from a WWII gen set and looks in good nick, the other is a "bitsa" from a Ruston Navy. The best combination of parts will be fitted in the loco, another engine completed as a spare and the remainder perhaps offered as spares. Also in the deal came a set of 4 new Ruston injectors!! Some further dismantling of the loco is underway, mainly the radiator to assess the work in changing the blocks.



The two Ruston 4VRO's arrive behind my Discovery after a trip from Leicestershire

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The ex Second World War gen-set 4VRO with inspection cover removed

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Gordon the Hunslet will see some minor attention over the winter period.

Littleton Ruston sees much use on shunting duties and is running well.

Golspie remains in store in the carriage shed.

Baguley 774 work has stopped on the paintwork until the warmer weather arrives, but it is hoped it will be ready in time for our Gala in June.

Carriage and Wagon

Investigation has been underway on the Allens coupling springs. These couplings are designed to handle coal trains of 100 tons or more and thus with our lightweight stock, the springs do very little. The recent arrival of the ex RNAD wagons have shown their springs to be about right for our use and thus we have designed new sets of springs for all our carriage stock. After a few false starts these have now been made for us at Tested Spring in Dudley. The coupling boxes have now been removed from coaches 1, 2 and Van 4 and the new springs are being fitted prior to the season.



The new spring as fitted to the Allens coupling housing

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Four Allens of Tipton heavy duty flats have been purchased from Duncan Milner, previously we believe from the Jubilee Line extension. These are very long (14ft) vehicles with a low bed, which will be ideal for rail carrying and means we can withdraw the old Hudson coffin cars. Nick has

fabricated a set of coupling pins and the spare ex RNAD figure-of-eights work well with the wagons. Investigation is underway into a permanent emergency air horn installation for the brake van, as the aerosol can ones are not up to the job. The old Hunslet horn and valve may be re-used.



Two of the four Allens flats stored in the loop – long aren't they!

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Plant and Equipment

A new 18v cordless drill has been purchased together with a new angle grinder.

Building and CE

Roger and Ray have refitted the gable windows to the Waterhouses signal box on their new runners, work is also underway on the external boarding here, prior to starting on the 2nd new leg. The stove chimney has been cleaned out and repaired at the cap. Lol continues the new electrical installation to the shed and we now also have a new 3ph supply of our very own – no more dipping lights when we're welding!! A 110v supply has been provided in the pit and there is an external 110/240v supply for the steel erectors. Dave Garforth (a colleague of mine from Interserve) has been on site on a number of occasions to set out the bases for the new worktop building. This was all

completed ready for "Civils Week" (see separate article) on 6th February 2006 when Peter, Nick and Nigel Hart arrived with men, machines and materials to dig out the bases. 12 bases were dug concreted and holding down bolt set over the week all overseen by the SBC Bldg. Inspector, drainage re-rooted and the arisings buried up the fields and top soiled. A layer of stone over the whole site saw the end of a very successful week. Our steel fabricators have visited site to do their survey of the bases and bolts and the frame was erected in early March 2006! Nick's linear garden progresses along the line of the retaining wall to good effect.



The new frame for the workshop goes up in early March 2006, what a transformation it will make for the Railway!

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