



RESEARCH

Yorkshire Engine Company in Australia

In his book *Yorkshire Engine Company – Sheffield's Locomotive Manufacturer* (The History Press, 2008), the author Tony Vernon makes the tantalising statement "The Yorkshire Engine Co. also worked with a builder in Australia".

This appears to have been in the late 1950s-early 1960s. I have done what little research I can to try to find out which Australian locomotive builder this was (assuming that it was one of the established loco builders, and not another company looking to enter the market), with no success whatsoever. Does anybody have any information that might shed some light on who this unnamed builder was?

Darryl Grant, North Balwyn VIC

Australian newspapers on the National Library website (LR 204)

The National Library of Australia continues to expand the range and scope of the major newspapers that are available on line. In recent months Australian newspaper beta users can now gain access to over 650,000 pages from newspapers. Recent additions are the *Adelaide Advertiser* (1901-1919) and *the Argus* (1857-1915 and 1933-1945). These will be invaluable for light railway researchers. The National Library has been working on a prototype for a Single Business Discovery Service (SBDS) to enable searching of multiple resources, collections and format types in one interface. This prototype is now available to the public and is open for feedback. The Australian Newspapers beta has been integrated into the prototype, as well as still remaining accessible from its original address.

Phil Rickard, Ringwood VIC

Tarrawingee Tramway, NSW (LR 32, LR 80)

Chris Wurr reports on an expedition by a group of mining and light railway enthusiasts who undertook a field

assessment in April 2009 of the limestone quarries and 2ft gauge tramways of the Tarrawingee Flux & Tramway Company, which operated at the terminus of the 3ft 6in gauge Tarrawingee Tramway in western New South Wales. Limestone carbonate was quarried in the Tarrawingee area and railed the 38½ miles to Broken Hill as flux in the smelting process of silver, lead and zinc production after the opening on the tramway on 9 June 1891. It was a short-lived operation as Broken Hill's smelting was transferred to Port Pirie in 1897 and the Tarrawingee limestone quarries' reason for existence ceased overnight.

Reports by Frank Stamford and Tony Weston in *Light Railways* indicate that two Krauss 0-4-0WT locomotives were used in the 2ft gauge quarry tramway. The tramway, which ran north from Tarrawingee to a quarry, is also described in Cyril Henshaw's 1984 book *The Tarrawingee Tramway*. Chris and Trevor Penn followed the Broken Hill to Tarrawingee line in September 1999 right out to its desolate terminus. Following a good look around the sad remains of this once busy township of Tarrawingee, they followed the formation of the 2ft gauge tramway to a limestone outcrop some 3km north of the town. In 2007, Chris used Google Earth to relive the 1999 trip, which, with the aid of the new technology, showed a number of suspicious formations all over the countryside just north of Tarrawingee. On closer inspection, they appeared to be an extensive system of 2ft gauge tramways from limestone quarries dotted all around the field and feeding into the overhead loader at Tarrawingee. Chris generated a map from Google Earth showing all the quarries and tramways comprising this system, possibly 6 miles 2 chains in total. He lettered the quarries A to N (not using I) in a clockwise geographical rotation starting at the Main Quarry. Two of these quarries with skipways, C and E, are adjacent to, but not directly connected to the system. A field expedition, comprising participants from Victoria, South Australia and as far away as Kalgoorlie, met up in Broken Hill on 22 April 2009 and, armed with maps, a GPS unit and printed Google Earth images, set about investigating the entire 2ft gauge system.

Remnant pieces of track components seemed to indicate that moveable light weight rail of the Decauville type, bolted to pressed steel sleepers, was

used in the pits themselves and the main lines were of steel rail, spiked to wooden sleepers. Dog spikes of greatly varying size can be readily found over the entire system. There was not one remnant of a set of points anywhere. There was no rolling stock lying around rusting happily in the elements either. Other relics from that era found all over the field were food and tobacco tins and of course, glass from bottles of all descriptions. A couple of heavy-gauge steel, hand shovel blades were also discovered.

The quarries are scattered over a considerable area and it is assumed that the venture began with the main quarry adjacent to the north side of the Tarrawingee township. This is quite some hole in the ground and is estimated to be about 80 feet deep. The next biggest pit is Quarry D to the north. It too is about 80 feet deep. A line running due south out of this pit and carried on a descending stone embankment to the natural ground level appears to head for the Tarrawingee 3ft 6in tramway station grounds. Between the two asterisks marked on the map, the line has a rough earth farm track superimposed in parts along the way back to Tarra. Somewhere near Quarry C, the tramway formation fizzled out.

This is something of a conundrum for the team. Perhaps Quarry D was the second pit opened and this line fed straight into wagons at the 3ft 6in gauge sidings. In this case, the line from the pit to the station yard would have been 72 chains in length.

The layout of the system appears to be one of evolution and it is unlikely that all the lines were in use at the same time. The group developed a theory that Quarry D was the second pit in use and railed the limestone direct to Tarrawingee 3ft 6in station on its own isolated trackage. When the limestone in that pit was waning, more sources were discovered further north and this is where the complex tramway system began. Possibly the gently curving, west-east, cross country link line was built to connect D to the rest of the system and thus to the overhead loader on the northern leg of the 3ft 6in gauge line near the main quarry.

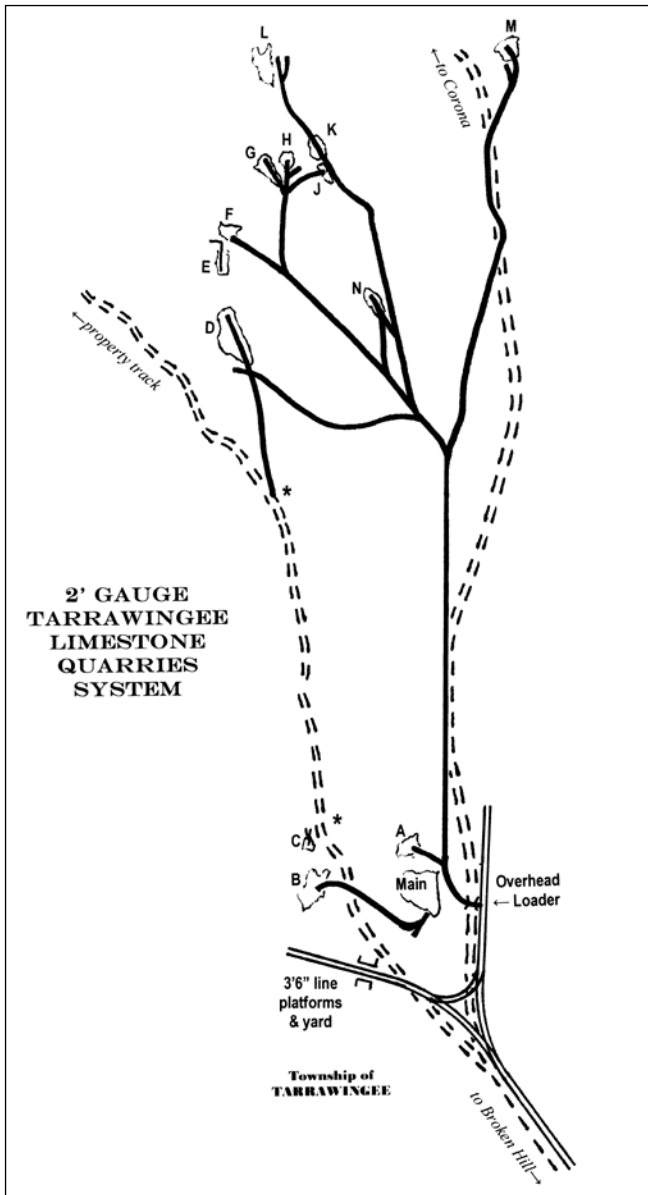
Pits C and E were not directly connected into the system, but both have their own skipways, which may have been horse-hauled. The spur to Quarry A is quite steeply graded and may have been operated by gravity, down to the overhead loader and horse or cable hauled back up with the empties. The isolated line running south-ish



2ft gauge sleepers in Quarry K with spikes still in place. Photo: Chris Wurr



Curved embankment to overhead loader at main quarry. Photo: Chris Wurr



from the main pit and curving north-west to Quarry B may have been similarly operated. With the exceptions of the line between the two asterisks from Quarry D, and the 'Up' end exit from Quarry K that has been bulldozed over, all the lines are easily detectable at ground level. One spur not seen on the Google Earth images, but spotted on the ground is the last little section from the points to pit F. No evidence was found of any location where the locos had been stabled or serviced: no ash, clinker, coal or pit. At Quarry M, there is a short spur into the side of the hill about 5 feet wide and maybe 30 feet in length and at the dead end, which would be 30 feet deep. Originally the team contemplated whether this had been the loco shed, but decided it was highly unlikely. It was too narrow and why would it have been hacked out of solid stone, when a rough old

corrugated iron and timber 'lean-to' would have sufficed? Besides, it would have been at the wrong end of the system. Just how the system operated, is cause for contemplation. The presumption is that the empty wagons were propelled (pushed) out to the various quarries from the overhead loader at the 3ft 6in gauge terminus. This would allow them to be pushed straight to the quarry face over the moveable rail sections. Fulls would be hauled in to the loader and a double shunt performed via a run-around loop, firstly to propel the trucks to the tippler and later to get onto the south end of a rake to propel back out to the quarries. *Light Railways* readers with better access to historical reference material may now like to complete the Tarrawingee story with details of the locos, rolling stock and the disposal of them and the trackwork after closure. *Chris Wurth*

Coming Events

OCTOBER 2009

1-5 Kerrisdale Mountain Railway & Museum, VIC. This scenic narrow gauge railway and steam museum is open to the public from 1000-1600 Thursday to Monday and public holidays. Steam engines run in the museum each Sunday. Information, phone (03) 5797 0227 or website: www.kerrisdalemtnrailway.com.au.

3-4 Red Cliffs Historical Steam Railway, VIC. Narrow gauge train operations using Kerr Stuart steam and EM Baldwin diesel locomotives, 1100-1600 and the first weekend of following months. Enquiries: (03) 5024 1345.

4 Big Pat's Creek, VIC. A special picnic organised by BPC residents to celebrate the arrival of the first steam tram at the timber town of Big Pat's Creek, east of Warburton, 100 years ago. Historic photo display, talks by Mike McCarthy and Professor Bill Bonwick on the Big Pat's Creek tramway and the local area, a walk along the tramway formation and demonstration for the young on how a steam engine works. At the Old Points Picnic Ground next to Big Pat's Creek bridge from 10.30am. BYO pic-nic etc. Information, Bruce Normand bnormand@hotmail.net.au

4 Cobdogla Irrigation Museum, SA. Open Day with Humphrey pump and narrow gauge steam train operations. Also twilight train for Halloween on 31 October. Phone (08) 8588 2323.

10-11 Puffing Billy Railway, Emerald, VIC. *A Day Out with Thomas:* Thomas the Tank Engine Returns to Emerald Town Station. Also on 17-18 and 24-25 October. Bookings essential on (03) 9757 0700.

17-18 Menangle Narrow Gauge Railway, NSW. Oil Steam & Kerosene Field Days with 610mm gauge railway operations, traction engines, steam rollers, stationary and portable engines of all types and operating machinery, 1000-1600 Saturday, 1000-1500 Sunday. Information: 0417 215 513; www.csmm.com.au or big-tev@bigpond.com

24-25 Alexandra Timber Tramway, VIC. Celebrations for the Centenary of the VR Railway to Alexandra with steam-hauled narrow gauge both days 1000-1545, together with stationary steam engines, vintage machinery and markets. Information: Bryan 0407 509 380 or Peter 0407 537 837.

NOVEMBER 2009

8 Alexandra Timber Tramway, VIC. Narrow gauge steam train operations 1000-1545. Also market day with trains (petrol loco) 14 November and diesel-hauled trains on 22 November. Information: Bryan 0407 509 380 or Peter 0407 537 837.

8 Puffing Billy Railway, Emerald, VIC. *A Day Out with Thomas:* Thomas the Tank Engine Returns to Emerald Town Station. Bookings essential on (03) 9757 0700.

15 Richmond Vale Railway, Kurri Kurri, NSW. Steam train operations with Santa Special train bringing Santa to hand out presents around midday with a great fun day for all the family. Phone (02) 4937 5344 or (02) 4358 0190.

DECEMBER 2009

5 Puffing Billy Railway, Emerald, VIC. Daytime Santa Special train departs Belgrave at 11.40am for Lakeside and return. Also on 12 and 19 December, with Santa's Sunset Special train on Saturday 12 December. Bookings essential on (03) 9757 0700.

6 Durundur Railway, Woodford, QLD. Centenary celebrations of the opening of the QR branch line from Caboolture to Woodford and 30 years of Durundur Railway operations with steam train rides, a book launch and other attractions. There is also a special running day on 13 December. Trains operate on the first and third Sunday of the month. For information phone (07) 5496 1976 or the website: www.angrms.org.au

12-13 Alexandra Timber Tramway, VIC. Market day with narrow gauge trains hauled by petrol loco on 12th and steam train operations on 13th from 1000-1545. No service on 27 December. Information: Bryan 0407 509 380 or Peter 0407 537 837.

Note: Please send information on coming events to Bob McKillop – rfmckillop@bigpond.com - or the Editor, *Light Railways*, PO Box 674, St Ives NSW 2075. The deadline for the December issue is 29 October.