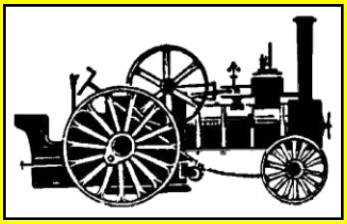
Issue 668 Sept 2026

A Wisp of STEAM SUPREME



Extracts from The Melbourne Steam Traction Engine Club's Newsletter

Wolseley WD 2 Engines

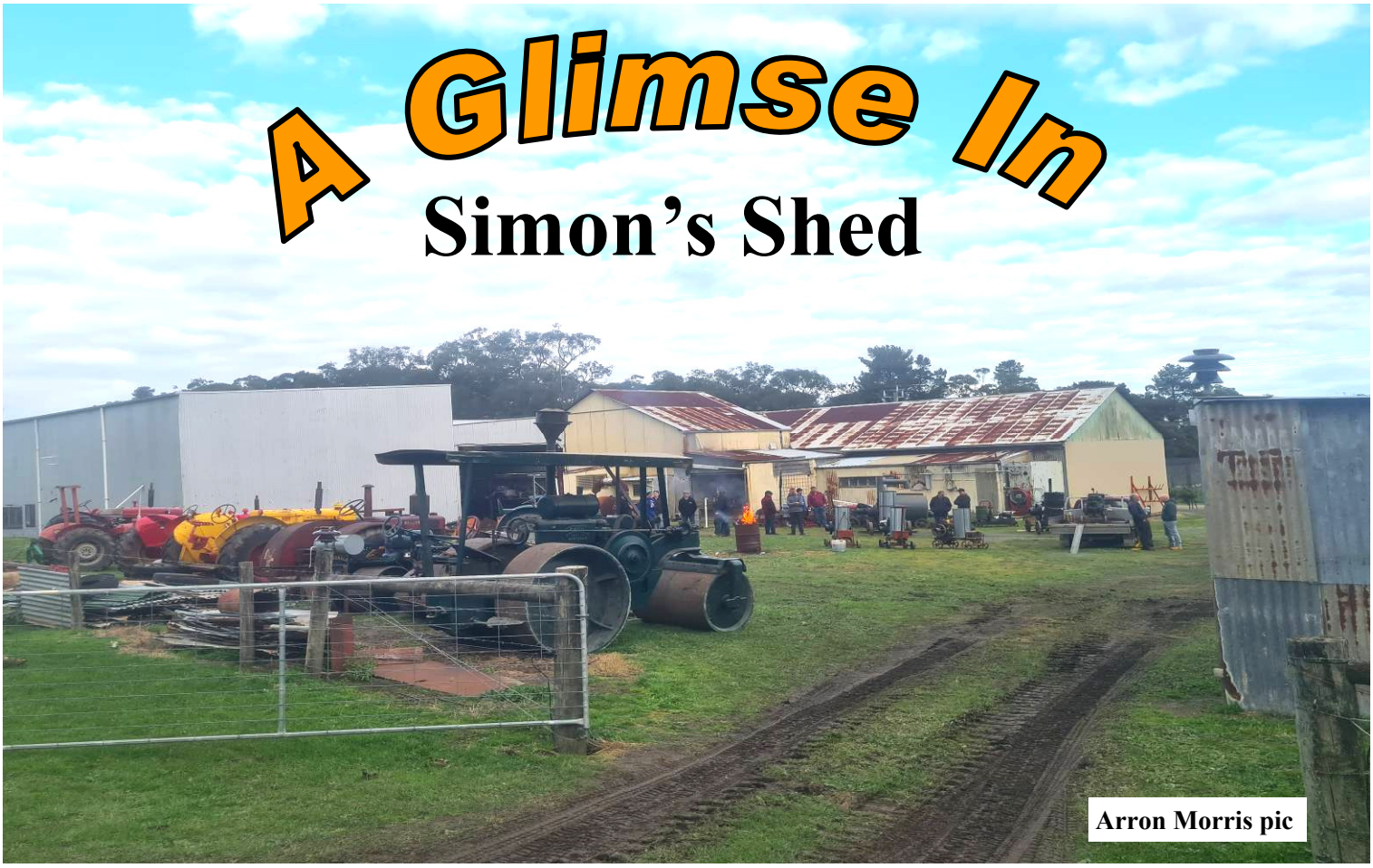
Warwick's Finned Hopper Wolseley on display at Simon's shed

Dave Wallace cranking up his Ransomes crawler on arrival at Scorseby .

Spiros Expanding Tubes to Finish off our Pacific loco boiler

Stationary engine gathering outside Simon's shed

A Glimse In Simon's Shed



Arron Morris pic

The Gate was open and the BBQ was hot for members from Kindred Engine Cubs from the surrounding district .

There was some apprehension about the weather being the middle of winter but with patches of blue sky and a bit of sunshine there was nothing to worry about apart from it being a bit greasy at the gate way .

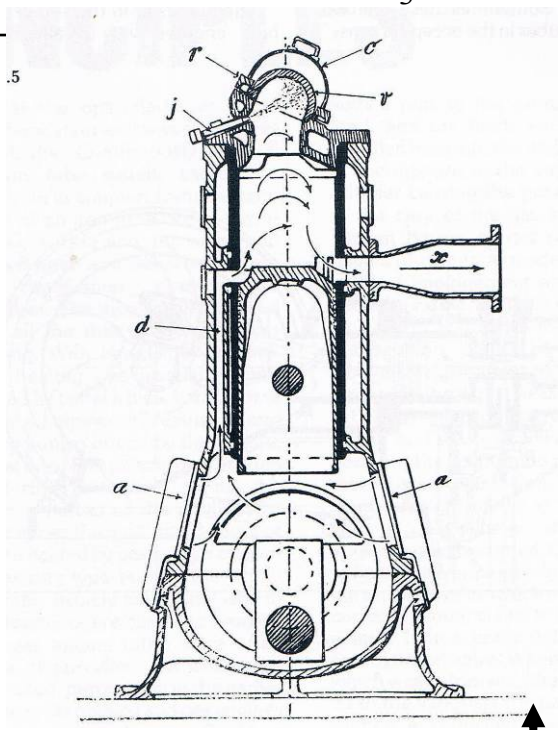
Encouraged by the weather quite a few members from visiting clubs took the opportunity to bring along an engine or 2 and set them up in the shed's yard supplementing Simon's fantastic indoor display.

Here is a few snapped by visiting MSTEC members.

Aaron Morris was particularly interested in the large transport mounted vertical single cylinder 2 stroke engines on display outside the shed →

Sunshine 10 BHP magneto ignition 2 stroke made by H V McKay in Sunshine Melbourne

Amongst the visiting engines lined up outside was this Petter S Crude Oil 2 stroke Engine . Note various others in the background being admired.



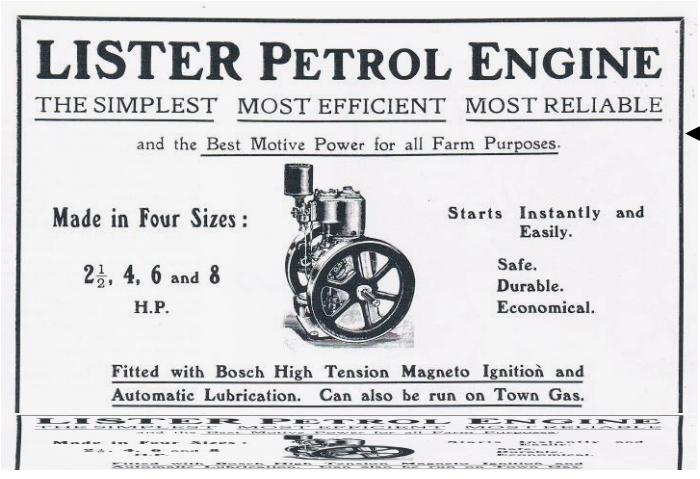
Petter Style hot bulb 2 stroke crankcase scavenged engine Engine key v - hot surface , j - injection nozzle , a—air intakes to the crankcase , d—transfere port x– exhaust r—hot bulb retaining ring Ackn Stationary Engines for Enthusiast Edgington & Hudson

Fuel is injected into the cylinder at the end of the compression stroke by a variable displacement plunger pump some what along the lines of later Diesels but in those early days engine mechanicals and injection pumps could not handle high enough compression ratios to achieve ignition by the heat of compression alone *(the key feature of Diesels patent)* As a fall back a section of the combustion chamber surface was left uncooled to further supplement the heat of compression sufficiently to ensure combustion . (Ackroyd Stewart's patent talks about the use of supplementary heat (enough said } These engines where typically single cylinder crankcase scavenged 2 stroke engines with arrangements for supplying the supplementary heat for starting by blow lamp , starting cartridge or other incendiary device . Once running the surface remained hot enough from the preceding firing to not need this assistance .

This Petter is interesting because it represents an early example of this type of engine known variously as Hot bulb , Surface ignition and Semi Diesel . Widely made by a number of manufactures around the world and very popular for pumping duties , Field Marshall and Bulldog tractors and Scandinavian fishing boats due to their simplicity , reliability and economical running .

About this time when fiddling around starting my Wolseley pumping set a lady came up to me and said " Is there a **Lister Junior** engine here ? I remember one on the farm driving a pump when I was a Little girl "

Now I had noticed a couple of Listers behind me driving pumps so turned round and took a closer look . ***The first one was a large single cylinder 4 stroke magneto ignition on a transporter probably an R so definitely not like the one she remembered.*** →



LISTER PETROL ENGINE

THE SIMPLEST MOST EFFICIENT MOST RELIABLE

and the Best Motive Power for all Farm Purposes.

Made in Four Sizes:

2½, 4, 6 and 8 H.P.

Starts Instantly and Easily.

Safe.
Durable.
Economical.

Fitted with Bosch High Tension Magneto Ignition and Automatic Lubrication. Can also be run on Town Gas.

LISTER PETROL ENGINE

Actually these engines came in a range of sizes with the largest an R and the smallest an A which at 2 1/2 HP was also called the Junior .

Now as luck would have it behind it was a Junior . At first she was not convinced but the more she looked at it the more the memories came flooding back . I noticed she came back a couple more times to reinforce those memories.

Thanks to Simon It certainly made her day .
and Chris Glassock and Aaron for the pics

Now I like to bring along something different to Simon's " do's " each time so thought my Wolseley WD2 pumping set would be something a bit unusual .

Although I have had it for quite a long time, it has never been out before. While the finned hopper variety of these engines are quite common in the UK they are seldom seen out here. I guess it has to do with the our hotter climate and its limited cooling as mine was just starting to simmer by the end of the day despite only having a very light load.

Talking of boiling here was another exhibit here that relies on boiling

Something completely different but still getting a lot of attention was this miniature steam display that young Spiros, along with help from his father Greg brought along and set up on a table .

It is a fully working miniature beam engine supplied by a spirit fired Stuart Turner horizontal boiler. The brass tank on the pedestal is the feed water supply for extended running .

Something of interest for engine enthusiasts of all ages which is what Simons shed is all about ! Warwick

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WOLSELEY FINNED HOPPER ENGINES

Warwick takes a look at these stylish engines but discovers just how rare they are in this country and wonders why .

The story starts in the 1880's when Fred Wolseley came up with the worlds first successful mechanical sheep shearing handpiece when working on a farm in the Riverina. The idea was to alleviate the back breaking task of cutting the wool off sheep with hand held blade shears as by this time , according to google AI , there was approximately

100 million sheep in the country. Development was a long drawn out process with initial machines made in Sydney but they took a long time to get accepted . Once got right Wolseley returned to England and set up a factory to produce them in quantity along with various other farm machinery .

Mechanically operated sheep shearing hand piece from Warwick's collection. Although a Cooper not a Wolseley it is very similar .

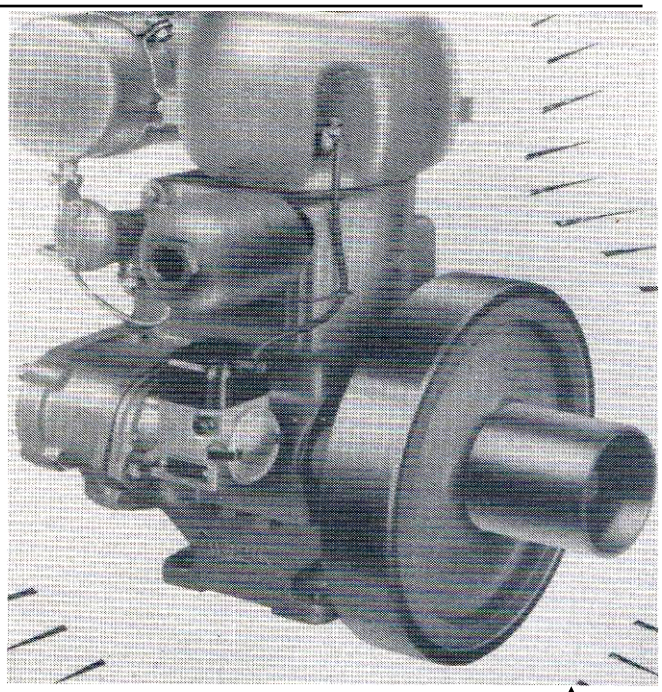
Below it is a hand held blade shears , the previous method for cutting the wool from sheep by hand which meant bending over all day a back breaking job but never the less a good shearer able to do 150 per day

The Factory was in Birmingham England and became closely associated with Austin , Fowler, Ruston and Hornsby being a supplier assisting them to meet their orders for small engine.

Fast forward to 1939 and WW 2 and not much changed until they were commanded by the War Department of the Ministry of Supply to make a batch of small engines to ship to the Western Desert hence the WD designation .

By this time Wolseley had stopped making small engines themselves and were rebadging Ruston & Hornsby class PT as their own . It appears the basic design for the Wolseley WD 1 was taken from this but with extra attention being paid to timing gears, lubrication and crankshaft material to ensure durability and quieter running to meet the military specifications. Another requirement was ease of starting by employing an impulse magneto and a carby with a fixed jet so nothing to get out of kilter . Choke was via a lever operated butterfly .

This all made for a very nice easy to operate engine but surprisingly had no air filter and a rather small unfinned water hopper while lacking the usual built in crank handle . This makes me wonder just what they were used for in the Wester Desert ! Production ceased in Feb 1945 when it was obvious who would win . By this time 3, 548 engines had been made Ackn .David Edgington book Wolseley Stationary Engine.



The WD 1 Wolseley.

Wolseley War Department Engine . Note the smooth water hopper

A civilian version was introduced soon after the war ended and designated WD 2 with little changes except the addition of the distinctive fins on the water hopper I had seen pictures of them in Stationary Engine Magazine . This is what attracted me to the engine as it gave a certain" cool look " and I just had to have one but alas none was forth coming !

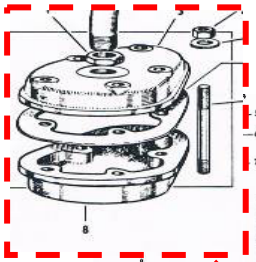
I did find a plain hopper one on the bank of the Murrumbidgee river upstream from the property Uardry (get it) in the Riverina . An area known for its flatness and dryness even to the extent that you can see the curvature of the earth !

The hot straight level road across the Hay plains is a favourite place for car testing

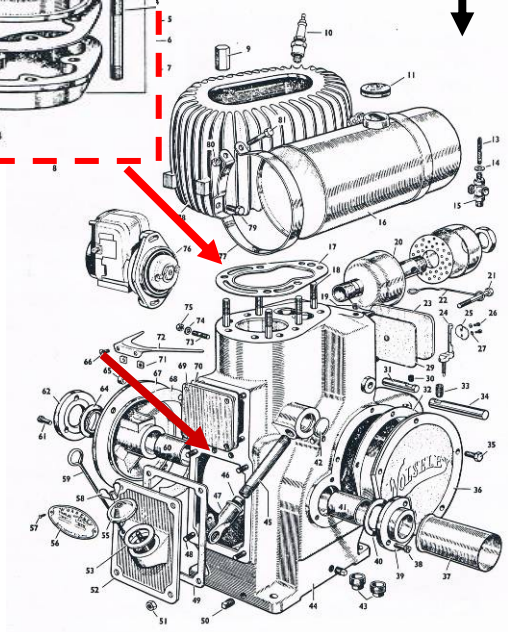
In it's day the engine powered the air compressor for starting a large horizontal twin cylinder diesel engine , Although I do not remember seeing the make it all fits in with being a Ruston not a Wolseley .

Anyway not sporting the finned hopper it had no appeal to me.

Still on the lookout I found a couple more Wolseley's but these were tank cooled and , instead of a finned hopper , had a flat cylinder head closed by a plate with a water outlet to allow tank cooling to cater for our hotter climate.



Hopper and tank cooling heads were interchangeable



I thought I was in luck when I found a finned hopper in a scrap yard at Forbes so bought it at an exorbitant price while keeping my eye out for a hopper cooled engine to convert .

I eventually spotted one at a MSTEC bring and buy in the Wantirna days and bought it for a keen price in great anticipation only to be devastated when I found it had 6 head bolts instead of 5 so my finned hopper would not fit but I still went on to restore it anyway.

My hopper cooled engine showing the flat head and closing plate for cooling in lieu of a finned hopper .

Sorry if the cooling tank looks a bit shit house ! It is

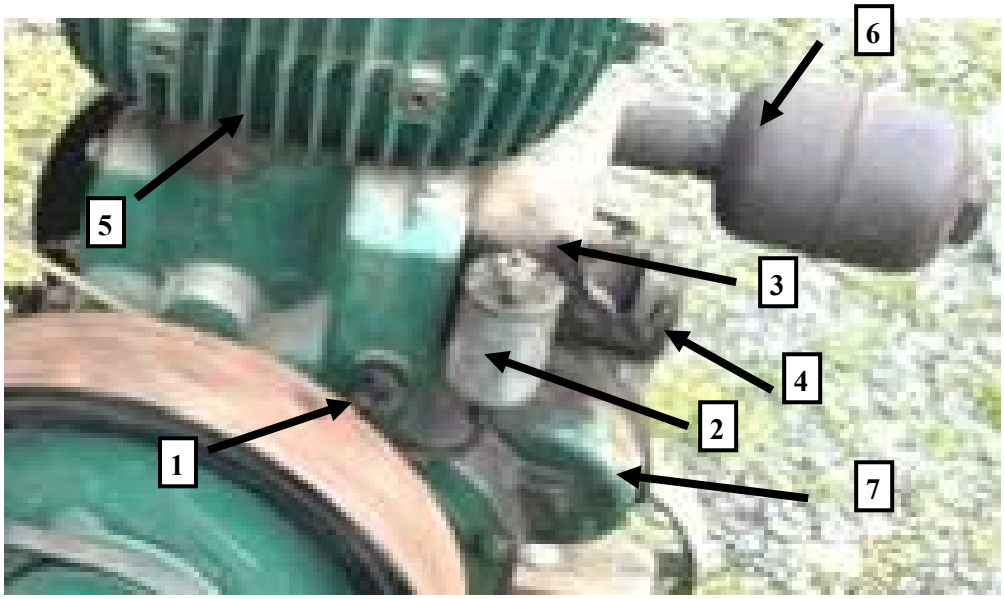
ENG No	HP	RPM
3158	5	1350

THE WOLSELEY SHEEP SHEARING MACHINE Co Ltd
BIRMINGHAM ENGLAND

The plate on my engine does not give too much information

Later I found out from David Edgington's book that it is a WLB 8 / 9 which has the bore enlarged from 3 " to 3 5/8 " requiring the extra head bolt and 2 flywheels to handle the extra power. Anyway I eventually restored it but have never displayed or rallied as not having a finned hopper it does not have much appeal for me plus it has piston ring issues .

Just when I thought I had got over these engines here one was ! A completely restored finned hopper WLB set up on a 4 wheeled trolley driving a centrifugal pump to circulate coloured water for sale at the Korumburra Swap meet . The price was probably right given the set up and restoration but more than I like to pay as half the fun is the restoration . But what the heck ? I am very pleased with it and have rallied it a couple of times the most recent being last week at Simons Shed .



A closer look at the engine shows
1/ the knob for adjusting the engine speed over a wide range to vary the horsepower . It looks a bit dangerous by to days standards being half buried behind the flywheel .
2/ The separate carburettor float chamber with fixed main jet so no danger of loosing that setting
3/ Adjustable choke lever but no indication of which is on and off so could cause confusion when needing to start it in a hurry
4/ No air filter at all just a dish over the inlet to keep out rocks . Typical English but not what you want in the desert. As they found out
5/ The finned water hopper , good for short runs but you would want to specify the tank cooled option for continuous running out here .
6/ A good muffler for Quiet running
7/ Impulse coupling to drive the magneto giving a Full Spark no matter how slowly cranked .

Summing Up Overall I am very pleased with it being smart looking , a very good quiet runner and easy to start with a well developed carburettor and impulse magneto .

This was evidenced at Simon's shed when I found I had brought the wrong crankhandle that would only engage turning backwards . By this time I had an audience then remembered reading about the old factory party trick of pulling the flywheels slowly over by hand to trip the magneto impulse so I tried this . First turn it fired and built up speed gracefully I do not know who was more surprised them or me .

A grand total of 143,144 engines were made when production ceased in 1975

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(Acting) Mc Duck Sez

Members of a certain age will remember the comic character Scrooge McDuck who was always counting his money . Well our Acting Treasurer Andrew McCoy has this to say

Thanks to the 90 members who have already renewed their membership for FY 2026/7. Invoices have recently been sent out for those who have not already renewed. If we have your email on file, it's been sent by email. Otherwise watch out for a letter from the Postie. Don't panic if you haven't got it yet. Wait until ***Monday 7th September***, and then contact either the secretary or the treasurer and we'll work out how to get one out to you.

There are several ways to pay your membership

1. EFT from your bank to ours. Bank: Bendigo Bank, BSB: 633-000 Account Number: 210485694 ***Please make sure you include your surname and invoice number as a reference so we know who it is who is paying***
2. Cash into our money bin Walk or ride your horseless carriage to any Bendigo Bank and make a deposit to our account giving them the same details. Please make sure the teller includes a reference with your surname + invoice number on the deposit.
Account Number: 210485694 ***Send us a notification that you have paid***, either by email to treasurer@melbournesteam.com.au or send us a letter with the date you paid to 1200 Ferntree Gully Rd, Scoresby, 3176
3. Credit Card Follow the link on your invoice to pay by credit card. Send us a Telegram or Telex if you want to pay by credit card but have received your invoice by post.
4. Cheque to 1200 Ferntree Gully Rd, Scoresby, 3176. Please write your name and our invoice number on the back of the cheque.

5. In person. Catch me at Scoresby with the rail team most Thursdays and in the afternoon of most run days.
Don't forget to send your completed membership renewal form to the secretary or include it with your in-person or postal payment.

After your payment is processed (that will take a couple of weeks if you send a cheque in the mail) your membership card will be left on the desk near the sign-in book.

Shed Levees ,invoices have been sent out. If you think you should have one, and haven't got it, please let me know. Let us know if you need an extension beyond September to pay, or if you wish to pay in instalments.
Thanks, **Andrew McCoy** Treasurer Melbourne Steam Traction Engine Club Inc

Around the Club

Ramsomes Crawler

The latest arrival at the club is Dave's little **Ransome's** MG TRACTOR ,Mark 40 Made in England by Ransome's , Simms and Jefferies Ltd Ipswich .

An internet search suggests the company was founded in 1789 by Ransomes who had an iron works that quickly went on to focus on agricultural products . Merged with Simms and Jefferies in 1869 their combined innovation and production skills led to a highly successive company which dominated global markets for steam engines and agricultural machinery .

Details of the implement linkage and track joints

View of the bonnet open .

After WW 1 they easily switched over to internal combustion for powering their products. This lead to the introduction of their first small crawler in 1936. A forerunner of the Mark 40 that Dave has just put on display down at our Museum . Judging from its stylized fibreglass bonnet and innovative drive train with 2 gearboxes , one 3 speed and another giving either forward or backward , rubber hinged tracks and 3 point linkage it is quite an advanced machine . Hopefully Dave can fill us in on it's history and details

Steam Shovel

Work has been proceeding steadily on the boiler . When removing the steam fittings from the boiler for inspection a curiously shape device resembling a china man's hat was found inside.

A view of the boiler lying on it's back showing the mysterious tap on the outside of the boiler positioned half way between the upper and lower gauge glass mountings suggesting something to do with water level .

Unbolting the flange from the boiler barrel revealed a pipe going inside the boiler attached to something that was too big to come out through the hole., thus preventing its removal

Peering in through the man (boy) hole revealed a shallow funnel shaped dish on an S shaped pipe about 1/2 between the high and low water level take offs.

As for what it is the general opinion , of our steam experts , is that it is a skimming dish for removing floating debris and oil scum from the surface of the water in the boiler. ackn Rohan Lamb .

After sifting through a lot of nonsense on the internet Tomlinson's gave a good explanation about how dissolved solids and oil scum floating on the water increase surface tension leading to foaming and erratic boiling at the surface of resulting in water being carried over with the steam into the machinery . A sure sign is gurgling noises and the water level bouncing around in the gauge glass. To avoid this skimming should be set to continuously draw off a small amount of water . This is made easier by having a valve with fine graduations to help with the getting the setting right.

This is in contrast to blow down which involves occasionally opening a large valve at the bottom of the boiler for a short time to expelled solids and scale that has accumulated around the foundation ring .

Skimming on our steam shovel is likely to be important because the oil laden exhaust steam is condensed via the feed water heater before being returned to the water tank to be used in the boiler again .

It would be a great help if someone can take on making a replacement skimmer as a fill in project The old one is available as a pattern . Warwick

TrackMobile First Drive in 35 Years

Last Sunday must have been the day for Crawlers as Warwick's TrackMobile drove around under it's own power for the first time in many years. The weekend before it moved back and forth in a straight line several times . Encouraged by this a special effort was put in to get some steering for the August Run day . This turned out to be only to the left but it still allowed a number of anticlockwise laps around the arena

Turning is achieved by slowing down the appropriate track by applying the brakes to the corresponding track drive sprocket . This is done by having separately hand operated brake master cylinders for the left and right axles of the Ford truck differential it uses.

This problem was not unexpected as the machine had been outside for 35 years. In anticipation new brake pipes and reconditioned master cylinders have been fitted but there is still a problem with the right brake calliper .

During the day it was displayed on the arena but not everyone knew what they were looking at as one told me I had made a bad mistake and put the seat on backwards . Actually I originally had it this way round but found the engine in the back and drive at the front gave better steering , ride and less likely to throw a track at anything above walking speed.

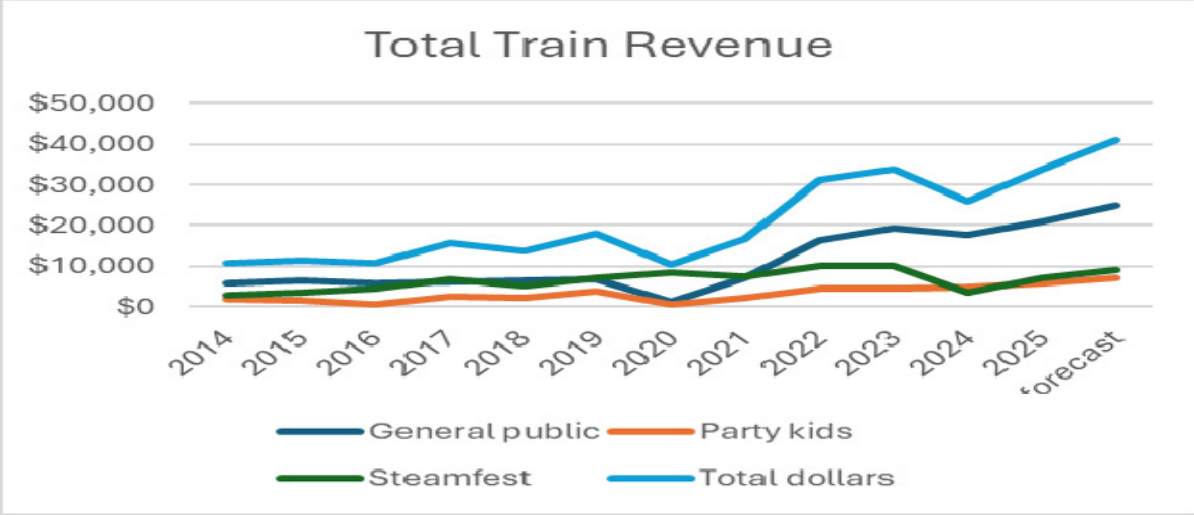
By the way the engine is a Holden Grey motor and gearbox driving into a Chev 4 speed truck Box . Diff is Ford light truck and only had to be turned upside down to drive in the other direction . Chris Glassock Pics

12" Gauge Railway Report

— **August 2026 Rob Worland Advises.**

Train Revenue Trends Apart from one cold damp day four of a recent group of five Sundays averaged $1,500. We have never seen a group of days over $1,000.

From the week we came out of social isolation (Covid), four years now, general ticket sales and bookings have been steady. Recent ticket sales suggest a new trend of increased numbers. The significant dip was the 2024 Steamfest.as shown on the attached graph



Steam Loco No.43 Clive Hamish promptly made a bronze pressure plate to replace one that was found missing from the front bogey. Being spring loaded it had a cupped upper face to receive a plunger. This was a challenge to machine but he soon whipped up the special tooling required.

Loco Joy was Hard to start. George, assisted by Andrew, has patiently worked through the whole range of possible causes and got it running. Generally, George reported the various aspects of the Ford engine as being in good condition. However I hear things where not helped by a battery that had given incredibly long service.

Track ballasting is proceeding, with attention being given to the south end of the railway yard.

Plastic Sleepers have been fitted to three track panels in the yard. These were panels in public view and looking a bit shabby. The replaced redgum sleepers would be from when these panels were originally in the main line up to 34 years ago.

Rob Worland, Railway Manager

Pacific Loco Boiler

(Once referred to as the Bottomless Boiler) After a long drawn out saga Rodney Martin reports that all that now needs to be done to finish it is fitting the rest of the tubes having already successfully developed the technique and tooling on the first group. For anyone interested in the process or in lending a hand contact Rodney 041 2881867 at his works just on the outskirts of Emerald .

Rodney keeps a watchful eye while young Spiros gets the feel of rolling in the new tubes . Greg V photo

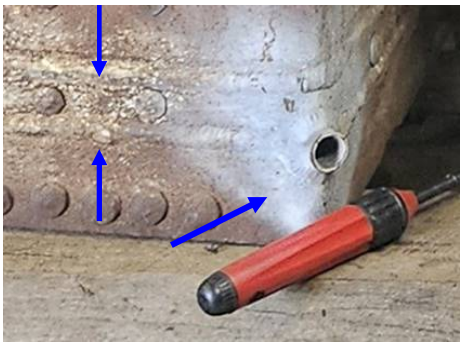
Since Phil's passing all the work of inspecting , crack testing , stay replacement and fitting washout plugs has been going on in Rodney's workshop in conjunction with Roy Odgers and the Boiler Inspector in preparation for it's ticket.

Background the saga started when the boiler on our loco Franklyn flyer was removed for inspection in June 2016 after discovering holes in the firebox crown which left the only sensible option to have a completely new boiler made. Fast forward 2022 and despite exploring all options no suitable local builder of small boilers could be found..

This concerned member Phil Randal immensely as our petrol electric loco Joy was all we had and if this failed we would have to close the railway again which had already taken a COVID battering. He set about exploring alternatives and turned his attention to the 3 dismantled locomotives we had inherited from John Davies In his mind the best option was the Pacific (4-6-2 wheel arrangement) Amusement Park loco from the 1950's . This had already had it's running gear professionally refurbished by Damon Gundry who built the bogies for P11, REG. The boiler appeared to be in good condition except it was bottomless having had the foundation ring removed and about 50 mm cut off the bottom of the firebox to raise the grate to give better ashpan access. Being a man of action Phil took it on himself and commissioned a local welder to refit the foundation ring .

By the end of the year the repair was done , with Phil footing the bill himself and everything was ready for the hydraulic test . During this disaster struck when several of the brass tubes where found to leak internally despite looking perfect . Intergranular corrosion had set in . Phil then set about procuring a new set of steel tubes which took ages to arrive . By then Phil was a spent force and on his passing Rodney Martin and Roy Odgers took over the boiler job.

At this stage the opportunity was taken to have the boiler thoroughly inspected and upgraded with a couple of new longitudinal stays and 4 washout plugs recommended



Close up showing the new washout plug and bottom welded back on .

The last act is rolling in the new tubes Spiros quickly got the feel . Greg photo

With the boiler nearing completion that then raises the issue of a name for the loco ? Rob Worland Proposes PHIL in memory of Phil Randall given he started it all by taking the wretched boiler to the boiler maker near Ballarat to get it restored in the first place . In addition he was the President for some time and on a number of occasions financially extremely generous to our club . Also Rodney at one time worked for Phil and speaks of him with great respect. What do you think ?

Franklyn Flyers Boiler

In the intervening period a new boiler was commissioned from the UK arriving in Sept 2024 .

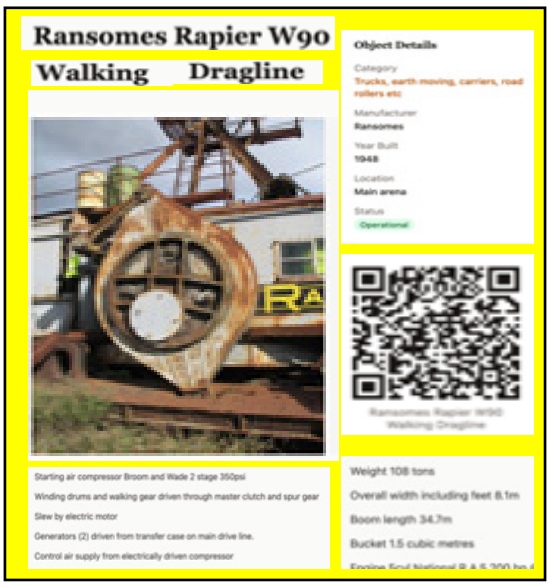
While waiting for this the locomotives running gear has been completely overhauled at home thanks to Ray Bedford , John Meade and the late Frank Hedges. This means we now have the makings of 2 completely reconditioned steams locos for our little railway . Once commissioned there is no doubt our railway will be the place to come to when it involves large scale live steam .

DIGITAL CATALOGUE PART 2

Last month we introduced the clubs new online catalogue . This month we take a closer look at what one machine's page actually looks like and what better example to show it off than BigFoot our walking dragline.

Bigfoot's page gathers it all in one screen containing a photograph , the vital statistics , where to find it on site , wether it is operational and the full story .

Bigfoot's page — photos, key details, the scannable code, and her specifications, all in one place, and translated into multiple languages.



FOR EXAMPLE At a glance you can also see its history and the challenges associated with getting it and transporting it to our site then restoring it to operational condition.

This is where you come in , every machine in the collection can have a page this rich — and the richness comes from you. The specifications, the dates, the anecdotes: that knowledge lives in the members who found, moved, restored and run these machines. It isn't written down anywhere else. The Collection app is also a safe and reliable central library for all the documentation we hold about our exhibits, and all accessible for members.

We're building the catalogue up ahead of the launch later this year, and we'd love your help. If you have photographs, history, stories or corrections for any machine — especially ones you've had a hand in — please add them to the Collection app. Every member will be able to log into the system and add details.

And next time you're at Scoresby, keep an eye out for the QR codes starting to appear beside the exhibits. Point your phone at Bigfoot's, and its whole story — from 1948 to her first steps in 2011 — is right there in your hand. Duncan Meyers

COMING EVENTS

With the warmest winter ever coming to an end our type of vintage machinery events are kicking off again . Here are a few good ones to help you threw off" cabin Fever " Check web sites for full details before heading off .

Social Meeting First Wednesday each month

Regular Events : -

MSTEC Social meetings, 8 pm Scoresby. First Wednesday of each month .
Museum open every **Thursday, Saturday** and **Sunday** . Miniature Train running every Sunday 11 am to 4 pm
Museum Machinery in action. Last Sunday of each month **Except end of year December.**

2026 COMING EVENTS .

September
13 Ashburton steam train rides
30 **RunDay**
October
3 & 4 Model Engineering Exhibition
3&4 Alexandra heritage Rally
17 Saturday **MSTEC AGM Scorseby**
18 FlatHead Ford Festival at MSTEC
24 & 25 Hamilton Pastoral Museum Rally
31 Oct & 1 Nov Goldsmith Rally
November
1 Goldsmith Rally
7 & 8 Mt Alexander Rally and Tractor pull.
14 & 15 Bendigo Swap Meet.