

Saturday 18 March

RAILWAY 60

Statfold Barn Railway is over near Tamworth. I have been once in the past, but I can't remember "when" or "who with". Today I drove down and timed my arrival to within one minute of the arrival of brother David and nephew Michael. The original Garden Railway (which was not open today) dates back to the late 80's. Since then a long line (well over a mile at a guess) has been laid from Statfold Junction to Cogan Halt, then round the New Road balloon loop, and back. Station half way along at Oak Tree Halt for the engine shed and museum. The Junction station is on two levels, so there are all sorts of interesting routes. There are also different gauges, so some fascinating pointwork. I think I heard someone saying they had 16 engines in steam today, and there were well over a thousand people there. The weather was variable, with some sudden rain showers (including one just as we had taken up residence on the viewing platform). The trains were full, but we always managed to get a seat. We had a couple of complete trips round the layout and a ride on the separate line of the tram. I managed about three hours before I had to admit defeat, but I was really glad I had gone. Apparently they will also be open on a more regular basis through the summer, not just on big enthusiast days, so I must come back when it is less busy.



A passing train on the other line, and the loco on the front of ours' - K1 0-4-0T 5292, built by Beyer Peacock in 1909 for Tasmania.

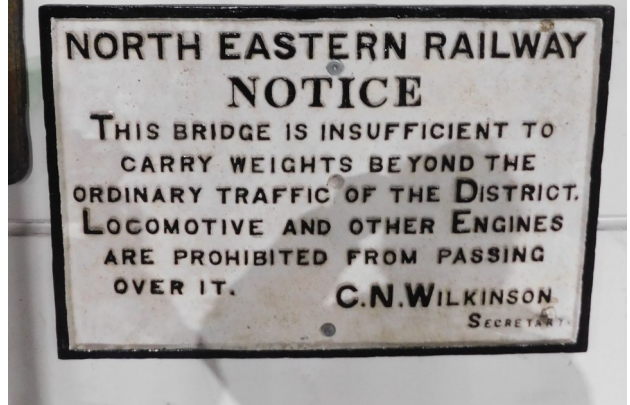


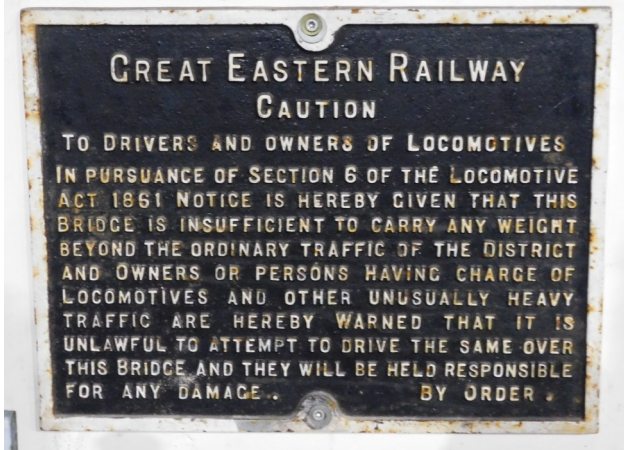
*Isibutu* 2820, built by Bagnall of Stafford in 1945 for a sugar railway in South Africa, comes off the turntable at Statfold Junction.

*Statfold* 3903 is a Hunslet of Leeds design. Originally built for the quarry lines of North Wales, this was built in 2005 at Statfold.



In the shed/museum there was plenty of interest. Surrey County Council GP39 was built by Hudswell Clarke of Leeds in 1930 and used in the building of the Guildford bypass. It then went to the Penrhyn Quarries and into preservation at Bressingham in 1969. There is a good chance that David and I rode behind her in our youth.





Their collection of signs is quite wonderful - this is only a small part of it - and I would love to find out more about the searchlight. Sybil Mary is another Penrhyn Quarry loco, built in 1906 by Hunslet of Leeds.



*Cloister*, 542 of 1891, Hunslet of Leeds for the Dinorwic Quarries. *Cloister* the horse won the 1893 Grand National - I wonder if the naming is because the Quarry Manager won a few quid?

You can hire the rather splendid carriage, not that a wheelchair can get in, and we have a Post Office Railway unit.

*Jatibarang* No 9 spent its working life at an Indonesian sugar mill. Built by Arnold Jung in Germany in 1930.

Upstairs there is a wonderful view of the locos, and there are a lot of them out and running today, plus some other exhibits. *Michael*, the last Quarry loco built for Dinorwic in 1932.



Not sure about the top loco. The second is *Roger*, 0-4-0ST, built in 1918 by Kerr Stuart in Stoke-on-Trent for the National Smelting Company's zinc refinery at Avonmouth. It then spent fifty years in Canada, coming back to Statfold in 1913. The plan was it would have a major overhaul and then go back to Canada. However different insurance regimes made them decide it could stay here.

*Harrogate*, 0-6-0ST, built by Peckett of Bristol in 1944 for the Harrogate Gas Works Railway. More recently it has been on the South Tynedale.

*Jack*, 0-4-0WT, is an 18" gauge loco built in 1898 by Hunslet and used at John Knowles (Wooden Box) Ltd of Swadlincote - and K1 again.



The Goose was built eight years ago at Statfold Barn, on a Morris lorry chassis. I want a ride, no, change that, I want one! We did manage a ride on the Burton and Ashby tram. The line only worked between 1906 and 1927, tramcar 14 having been built for the Midland Railway by Brush of Loughborough. On withdrawal it was used as a shed, then taken to Detroit in the 1970s to run on a tourist-orientated tramway there. That closed in 2003 and the car spent 11 years in store. In 2011 it was purchased by Graham Lee, the man who founded this railway, and refurbished. It was given a new battery system by Clayton Equipment of Burton, so overhead wires are no longer needed. We had a ride on this one.



The crew of Tramcar No 14 captured near Gresley Common - photo undated, but given the pristine condition of the tram, probably Edwardian. The conductor, Leonard James, is actually at the controls, whilst the driver, Charles Wells, stands in front. Photo courtesy of the Tramways and Light Railway Society, with thanks to David Voice. <http://www.tramwaybadgesandbuttons.com/page148/page4/page381/page381.html>



I can't find this top loco in the guide. The signal box is a new build to the standard Midland design, and I got a final picture from the footbridge as the heavens opened.