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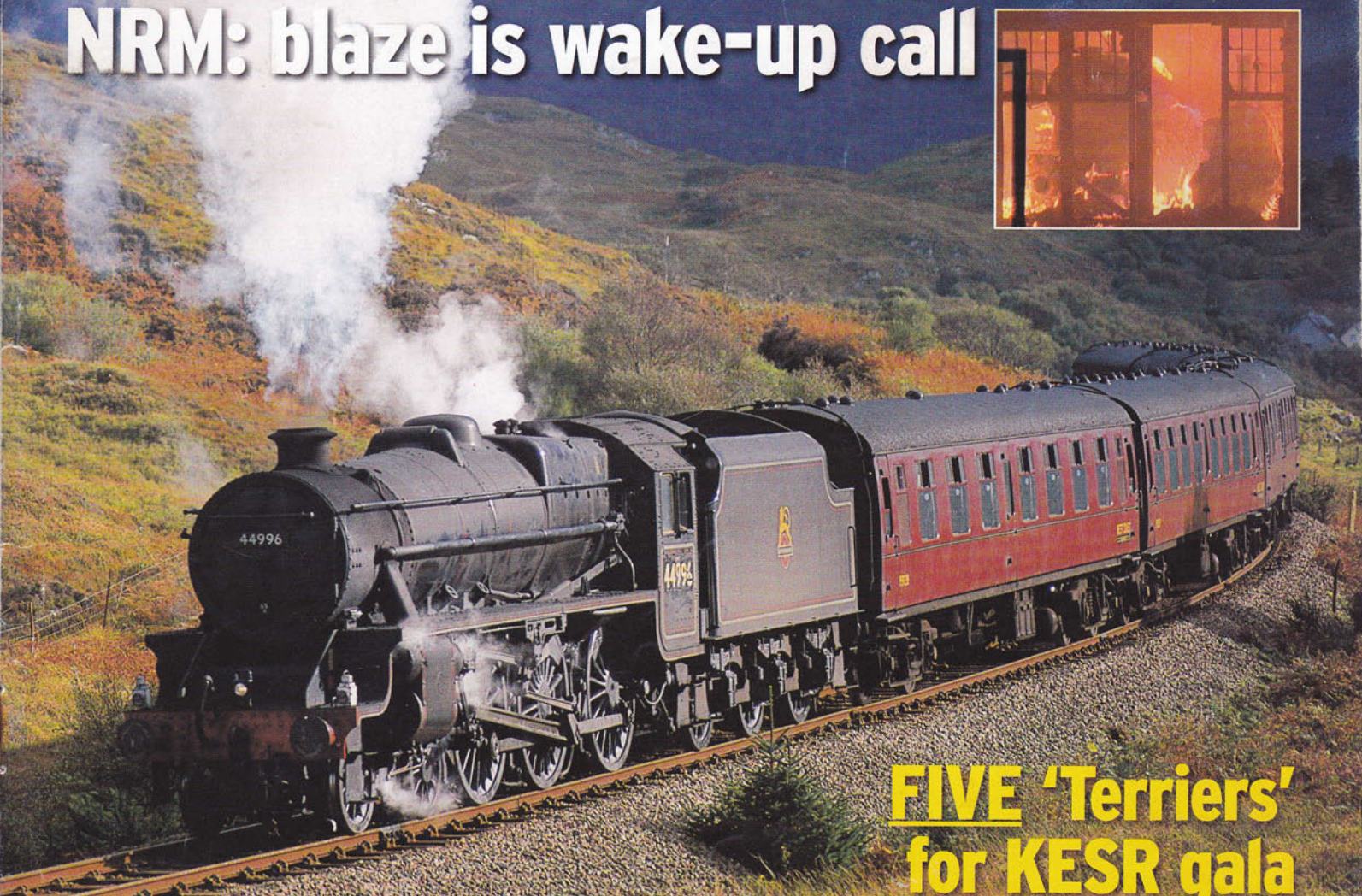
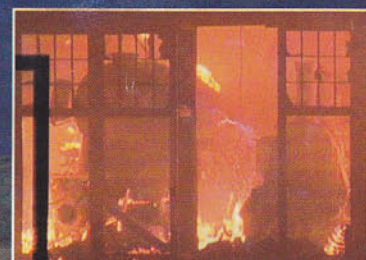
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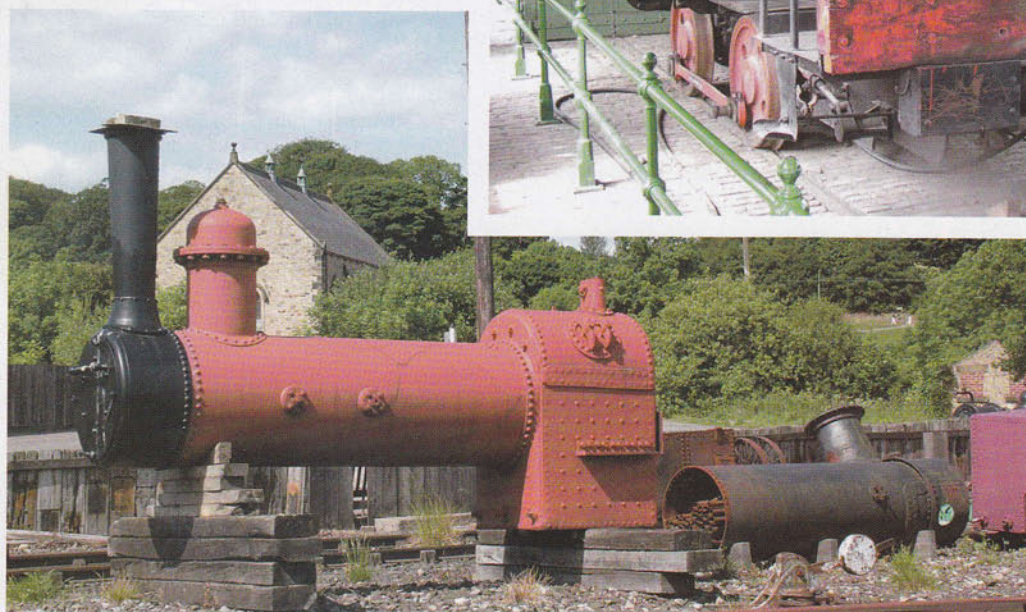


BRITAIN'S BIGGEST-SELLING RAILWAY MAGAZINE

Legendary Lewin



Above: The most unlikely celebrity steam locomotive? Seaham Harbour Dock Company No. 18 shunts a chaldron wagon under the staithes at Seaham Harbour in 1963. The locomotive's five-foot wheelbase led to its continued survival on the tight curves and lightly laid track on the quayside. TONY BOWLES/ RESTORATION & ARCHIVING TRUST.



Above and left: No. 18 today: The rolling chassis is on display in the colliery engine shed at Beamish. Some repairs have been made to the frames and the rear axle has been replaced. However, the boiler - a new item built by H.A. McEwen in 1997 - is outside. It requires a small amount of work before the engine can steam. The remains of the original boiler can be seen on the right. BEAMISH.

“One interesting aspect to ponder is how a small foundry in Dorset came to supply a steam locomotive to a large coal concern in the North East.”

Legendary Lewin

With the remarkable news that a Lewin-built locomotive could be buried at the bottom of a pit near Doncaster (SR315), Steam Railway presents the fascinating and mysterious history of the country's last operational engine built by the little-known Dorset-based company. **Report by Paul Jarman**, Assistant Keeper of Transport at the North of England Open Air Museum, Beamish.

Seaham Harbour, on County Durham's coastline, was an unlikely location to find a celebrity steam locomotive. But, during the 1950s and 1960s, enthusiasts flocked to the port, battered by the North Sea, to photograph a little Stephen Lewin-built 0-4-0ST.

The locomotive, Seaham Harbour Dock Company No. 18, was built in the 19th century and had worked among the towering coal staithes at Seaham for nearly 100 years. Despite its fame, the history of the little engine is still something of a mystery...

SHDC No. 18 was originally built for the Londonderry Railway as an 0-4-0 well tank. It was essentially a narrow-gauge design adapted to run on standard-gauge tracks. It was transferred to the Seaham Harbour Dock Company (SHDC) in 1899 when the Sixth Marquis of Londonderry re-dispersed his interests, selling the Londonderry Railway to the North Eastern Railway and taking a major stockholding in the newly formed SHDC.

But No. 18's build date is still a mystery. Photographic evidence suggests that it was Stephen Lewin's works No. 683 of 1877 but, for many years, it was suggested that it was built in 1863 - which, at the time, made it the oldest working steam locomotive in the country.

The date 1877 was ventured on a 1903 drawing of SHDC No. 18 by R J Inness (the respected local railway historian) and, with no other evidence available, this date does seem likely and fits in with the known periods of activity at Lewin's Poole foundry (see panel). One interesting aspect to ponder is how did a small foundry in Dorset come to supply a steam locomotive to a large coal concern in the North East of England?

Three types of tank...

Though built as a well tank, No. 18 was later fitted with side tanks and was ultimately rebuilt as a saddle tank, the condition with which most readers will be familiar. Like the build date, these modifications were not well documented and so, in some cases, the dates are estimates. It all adds to the mystery behind the machine!

Current research suggests that it is likely the locomotive had a major overhaul in 1936 and that this is possibly the date it became a saddle tank. Previous sources have suggested that this occurred in 1927, but there is no evidence for this (unless any readers know otherwise). It's also possible that the boiler was replaced at this point, as the positioning of the clack valves on the surviving boiler barrel does not correspond with that on the works photograph.

To add to the confusion, the clack valves on the boiler that survives at Beamish seem to have been moved. Interestingly, the crew had lost the

benefit of an enclosed cab, the new one being a peculiar arrangement with a sloping roof, possibly to stop rain running down the driver's neck. New coal bunkers and a full-length running plate also appear at this time.

Authors Russell Wear and Eric Lees speculate that No. 18 received the tank, cab and chimney from SHDC No. 19 - a Black Hawthorn 0-4-0ST (203/1871) that was scrapped at Seaham in March 1939. This now seems unlikely, however, as the tank carried by No. 18 on withdrawal appears to be the same as that carried in the 1936 photographs.

No. 18 soldiered on until the late 1960s, its paintwork by then scruffy and caked in grime. A leak around the dome led to the locomotive finally being declared a failure in 1969/70. Again, can anyone provide a precise date for No. 18's last steaming?

Preservation

Frank Atkinson, Beamish's founding father, wrote to the SHDC in 1965 expressing an interest in No. 18 although it was, at that time, still hard at work. Frank tried again in 1972 when a number of the redundant chaldron wagons were recovered to the embryonic Beamish site. He was told that the SHDC intended to restore No. 18 to working order for use at either Seaham or the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Quite how it would have fared on the climb through Beck Hole is an interesting subject for speculation!

By 1975, however, No. 18 was part of the Beamish collection. It was restored in 1977 by a group of apprentices from Laings Welding in Hartlepool to what was thought to be its 'as built' condition.

Although relaunched at a ceremony in July 1978, No. 18 only gave three years' service at Beamish before age caught up with it again and it was placed on static display.

No. 18 was loaned to a new steam centre based at Padiham Power Station in Lancashire in 1989. It was hoped at the time that the locomotive could be restored there but it returned to Beamish in 1991, still out of use.

Shortly after, Jim Rees, the museum's Keeper of Industry (now Rail Vehicle Collections Manager at the National Railway Museum) began a restoration programme which included extensive boiler work and repairs to the frames.

A search was started

Who was Stephen Lewin?

The Stephen Lewin Foundry was established in 1863. Stephen Lewin, a senior figure in the Lincolnshire town of Boston, and William Wilkinson took charge of William Pearce's foundry in Poole, Dorset. Lewin's went on to build agricultural equipment, steam launches and locomotives.

A disastrous fire in 1876 was the catalyst for a period of decline. The effects of the fire, coupled with large loans taken out to re-equip the workshop in 1875 and the general economic depression at the time, forced Lewin to declare bankruptcy in 1883. The foundry staggered on for more than a year before being sold off piecemeal at auction in September 1884.

What colour was No. 18?

We know that No. 18 was painted green in its later years, based on evidence from the 1960s. It was restored to a brick red livery in 1977 but it now seems likely that the colour match was made to a primer or undercoat found on components that were scrapped at that time.

One answer might be that photographic evidence shows that the livery carried by No. 18 (in 0-4-0ST form) and SHDC's 'Long Boiler' 0-6-0 *Clio* are apparently the same. It shows elaborately lined panels and borders on a lighter background.

● *Clio* was built in 1875 by the North Eastern Railway at Gateshead. Scrapped in 1955, the engine's cab was saved and survives at the Stephenson Railway Museum in North Tyneside.

Lewin in the lake! Rare engine is set to resurface after 120 years

Excavation discovers amazing evidence of locomotive sunk in former Doncaster marl pit.

By Mark Pearce

IT'S the stuff of legends... tales of buried locomotives abound. The now it's for real - and one of the most recent of all to be lost. Amazingly, a folding lake just outside Doncaster appears to have been home to a Stephen Lewin tank engine for around 120 years. Local folklore has it that a complete train was left stranded in a marl pit when it flooded. While locals were adamant about the story, no proof existed - until now.

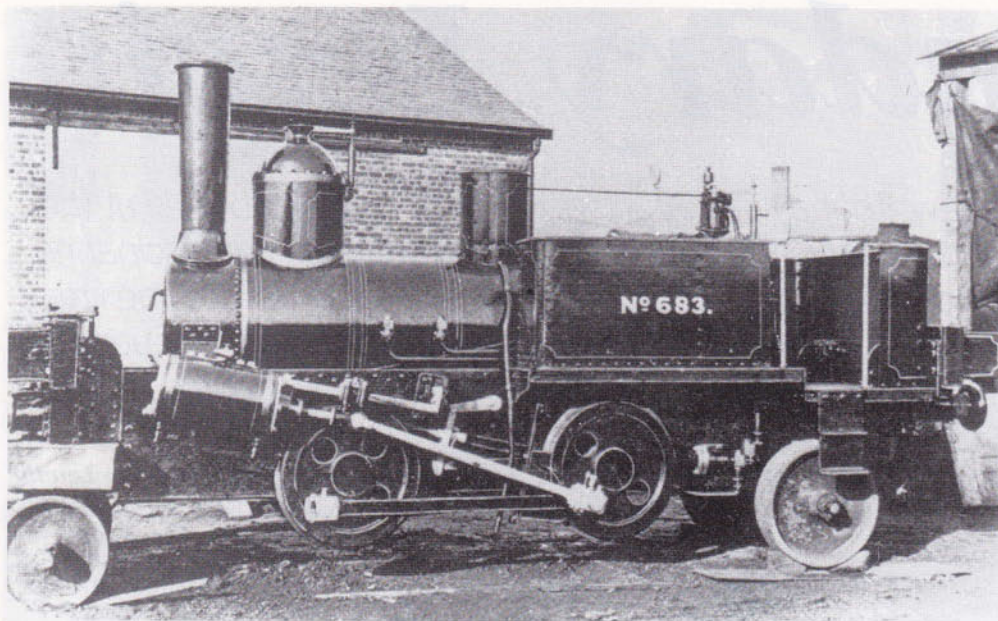
The remains of two apparently standard gauge tanks have already been brought to the surface and, as SR closed for press, the engine itself seemed to be only days away from surfacing too. Jim Rees from the National Railway Museum and Paul Jarman from Beamish Museum - the owner of the only other known Lewin - were still to be on the edge of their seats awaiting the next development.

The lake has been drained and the area surrounding it drained, to reveal the wagons and tank. However, a large mound remains with just tantalising evidence of what lies beneath starting to come out, such as coupling chains.

The identity of the machine in the lake is open to question. There are two likely possibilities: an 0-4-0ST of traction engine proportions named *Lincolnshire* or an 0-6-0 *Fidelity*. There's still the chance, too, that another ancient engine could surface. No record of any other resident locomotive exists, but both known machines were included in a sale list in October 1883. The engine is believed to have been abandoned in the 1880s. The mystery then is did one of the engines not sell or was one of them offered for sale from its watery resting place?

Mr Rees, the SRM's Rail Vehicle Collections Manager, argues that any excavated locomotive should be given a fitting resting place. 'If it comes out in one piece, then it should really be treated as an archaeological find; it needs to be carefully dried out and cleaned, then conserved - rather like a mechanical long boat,' he said. 'For updates see our website, www.steamrailway.co.uk'

Legendary Lewin



Left: Ex works! No. 18's early history is a little unclear but historians now believe that this picture shows the engine outside Stephen Lewin's Poole foundry. This shows that No. 18 was originally built as a well-tank and looks considerably different to its more familiar saddle-tank guise. The number 683 is No. 18's works number. BEAMISH.

Below: Something for the future? The last time No. 18 steamed was in 1980 but it is hoped that the diminutive tank-engine will return to action at Beamish in the near future. However, when the engine does return to steam, it is planned to be as a saddle-tank despite it being restored to well-tank form in 1977. No. 18 simmers gently at Beamish in the late 1970s - note that the chimney leans to the front! BEAMISH.

The engine today

No. 18 is currently subject to a detailed investigation by Alan Keef Ltd with regard to a return to steam. The rolling chassis is currently stored inside Beamish's Edwardian colliery engine shed and is expected to require strengthening and straightening work. Initial restoration work has focused on welding cracks in the frames and repairing the rear axle. The boiler is currently stored outside. However, it is in much better condition than the frames as it is almost 'as new'. It was built in 1997 but does need some work. It is missing cab fittings and safety valves. The locomotive also needs new plate work and tanks to return it to full 1936 saddle tank condition. The restoration is expected to take between 12 to 18 months but this depends on funding. As yet, no date has been set for work to start.

Further reading

Stephen Lewin and the Poole Foundry by Russell Wear and Eric Lees (Industrial Railway Society, 1978).

Donations

Donations towards the restoration can be made via Beamish's charitable arm, the Beamish Development Trust. Contact Anne Burton, Beamish Development Trust, Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum, near Stanley, County Durham DH9 0RG, phone 01913 704021 or e-mail anneburton@beamish.org.uk



➤ for original fittings - many had been lost over the years. Due to funding constraints, however, No. 18 has remained in this partially restored state in the Beamish Colliery engine shed ever since.

So what next?

This is not the end of No. 18's eventful life story. When I took over curatorial responsibility for the transport collections last year, saw that a restored No. 18 was a way of reviving the dormant colliery railway at Beamish. A return to the saddle tank condition is favoured, presenting No. 18's best-known appearance, something which is most requested by enthusiasts. It's also typical of a colliery shunting engine from the 1870s onwards which is well in keeping with

Beamish's curatorial date.

We intend also to produce a definitive chronology for No. 18 to be placed into the museum records. It's also planned that this information will form the basis of a book and, perhaps, a programme made up of footage of the engine in action.

Once the locomotive is running in a typical colliery setting, with the appropriate chaldron wagons, Beamish will have a very special and popular exhibit indeed. A number of requests to borrow No. 18 have already been made by preserved railways. Some thought has also been given to taking No. 18 back to its Seaham haunts - all of which serve to illustrate the interest in this little locomotive has generated. **SR**

"Once the locomotive is running in a typical colliery setting, with the appropriate chaldron wagons, Beamish will have a very special and popular exhibit indeed."