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The Changing Face of Vasto Place

Arguably the biggest upgrade to NDMES facilities since its formation in 1985 is changing the face of our Vasto Place facility.

With the raised track storage shed and "bendy track" approach now completed, attention has turned to the new workshop and ground level track storage shed and the steam-up bays.

The shed was erected in mid-April and interior earthworks completed in early May.

Work is now progressing apace on clearing up the surrounding area, track making and track laying, the concreting of the shed floor and inlaying the 7¼" track, the supply of electricity to the shed and repairs to the rotunda.

The current "mainline" will be realigned with the present turn-out to the tunnel overbridge removed and the back straight alongside the Men's Shed used as the approach track to the new shed and its head-shunt.

The track fabrication team is now using the repositioned jig to make track to the required lengths and radii. While this work is continuing, the steaming-up bay is being upgraded to provide two new bays and access from these to the turntable. Project manager Andrew Manning gives us an overview of the work involved and the timeframe.

"To ensure a practical electrical supply to the new shed/workshop, some changes have been made to the existing installation," he said.



Much of the work going on at the club is being achieved by the Tuesday work crew. Pictured here on May 6 are: Standing from left, John Martin, Andrew Manning, Ian Huxtable, Colin Osborne, Tom Winterbourn, Mike Bowen (Andy's brother-in-law visiting from the UK), Paul James, Andy Davies and Ken Cooper; seated from left, Les Harris, Richard Turner, Barry Webb (shortly to return to the UK), Dennis Lord, Stan Armstrong (regular provider of morning tea) and John Shugg. Apologies to those who regularly turn up and were not present when the pic was taken.

Photo: Tom Winterbourn

"The 3-phase welding outlet at the container will go and has been replaced with a 15A GPO plus two 10A GPOs.

"The container, which recently had its roof re-sealed, has been fitted with lights and a GPO, connected externally by a flex lead, allowing us to move the container."

Andrew said the new 12m x 7m x 2.7m shed now had installed workshop lighting on the western side and just two double fluorescents over the storage area.

There are two 15A and three double 10A GPOs on the workshop side and one on the carriage side. All of the electrics were installed by the end of May.

Provision has also been made on the distribution board for

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The Changing Face of Vasto Place (cont...)

two 3-phase 10A isolators, so the power hacksaw and drill press up can be connected to power if it is decided to relocate them.

“There has been an upgrade of circuit breakers on the main boards in the workshop and the board near the container,” he said.

“At this stage it is planned that all of the concreting (in the new shed) will occur around the middle of June, allowing time to get the rotunda repaired and the three lengths of track for the shed.

“Once the shed work is completed, the track jig can be set up in the workshop area and the curved track fabricated.

While this work is continuing, the station area alongside the raised track is being cleaned up with a concrete surface, making it easier to keep clean.

Running conjointly with the main shed work has been the upgrade of the steaming-up shed, with two additional bays. One will be purely 7¼” (to allow ash pans to drop through) and the other dual 7¼” and 5”.

This work, which requires dedicated radius track from the bays to the turntable, has to be completed by the end

of August in readiness for the invitation run planned for September 13.

Work to the rotunda was made necessary because fasteners and brackets supporting the floor were rusting out. Andrew said the rotunda was constructed around 1995, when he first became involved with the society.

“The rotunda was built for club use only at a time when we did not run for the public,” he said.

“The construction was light and time has caught up with it. It has been on our watch list for a couple of years to do something.”

Andrew said the floor and support beams and brackets have been removed in readiness for a 100 mm concrete floor. The balustrading would then be relocated to a lower level.

“We could perhaps go all the way and give the structure a coat of paint!” he said.

Andrew said the rotunda would be stripped as soon as possible after AMRA with the target of the floor being poured mid-June – at the same time as the floor is laid in the carriage shed and workshop and the concrete strip on the picnic side of the station was poured.

Tom Winterbourn

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It's Been a Busy and Fruitful Month

The past few weeks have again seen much activity at Northern Districts.

Our May club run day was well attended with several locos in steam and some valuable driver training taking place. It was also pleasing to see our newest member, Bill Wall, steaming his new loco.

The next weekend saw the monthly public run in all its glory and although we had a couple of showers, the attendance was at a near-record level. The four locos (two 7¼s and two 5s) managed to keep up with demand for rides, even though those waiting were queued down the far ramp of the bridge at one stage.

I guess one could gauge a day's success by the positive comments from patrons in general and the smiles on faces.

This year's AMRA was also well attended by members, with around two-thirds of the membership helping out with preparation, running the show and packing up at various stages. This is a great participation rate and a thank-you goes to all concerned.

Down at Vasto Place, the track team has made, prepared and set in place the three lengths of 12m track in preparation for the concrete pouring of the shed floor. At the time of writing this message, it was anticipated this would occur within the next week (early June).

Extensive electrical work was completed in late May, with power points and lighting fitted to the shed and our sea container. This involved some serious trenching and cable-laying to the new facility. Other electrical work undertaken included power points to the meeting area and the picnic area, as well as an upgrade to the switchboard.

With the on-going saga of the deteriorating gazebo wooden flooring, we decided to fit a maintenance free concrete floor while the new shed floor was being poured. With that in mind, the gazebo floor has been stripped out – but this revealed a huge tree stump which the floor had covered. As with many jobs, this created extra work, so stump grinding was necessary (scheduled for June 5).

On completion, the raised formwork will be placed and the floor hopefully completed by the June run. The boundary seating will require lowering to complete this project.

Finally, work on the steaming bay track and signalling system is progressing well in preparation for the proposed September invitation run.

As previously mentioned, it is member participation that progresses this society and I would commend those who are able to help achieve our goals.

Paul James, President

Invitation Run Day Set

The first invitation run to be held at Vasto Place for many years is being planned for mid-September. AALS-affiliated clubs from throughout WA are being invited.

Organiser Damien Outram said if the event was a success, thought would be given to expanding the event Australia-wide next year. The inter-club run will be held on Saturday, September 13, catering for all gauges available at the club – 7¼" and 5" ground level and 5", 3½" and 2½" raised level, plus traction engines.

Because of our tight curves and narrow clearances, would-be visitors are requested not to bring ride-in

locos. They are also being asked not to bring more than one or two riding cars.

NDMES will supply all coal, char, oil and fuel requirements and also provide free lunch and a BBQ dinner plus free tea and coffee throughout.

Damien said the event will run from 10am till "late", which will allow members and visitors a rare opportunity for night running. A red light at the rear of all trains will be necessary for running after dark.

The provision of two extra bays in the steaming-up shed will help accommodate visitors.

Calendar of Forthcoming Events (July-August)

General Meeting	Friday	11 July	8:00 pm
Club Fun Run Day	Sunday	13 July	9:00 am — 2:00 pm
Public Run Day	Sunday	27 July	10:00 am — 2:00 pm
General Meeting	Friday	8 August	8:00 pm
Public Run Day	Sunday	31 August	10:00 am — 2:00 pm

Garden Railway

A garden railway, which has long been on the club's wish list, has taken a step to becoming a reality.

At the May committee meeting, Tom Winterbourn was authorised to look at the feasibility of the project, with Steve Reeves.

Both attended this year's AALS convention in Melbourne and inspected a garden railway layout featuring both 0 and 1 gauges after discussing ways for "regeneration" of miniature/model railway societies with AALS president David Proctor.

This is a problem faced by most if not all clubs such as ours.

The NDMES committee favoured 1 gauge.

A suitable site will now be identified for the "railway", how best to establish it (ground level or elevated), what components can be stored under cover, security and possible funding sources, such as LotteryWest and the City of Stirling. A recommendation will then be made to the committee and the proposal put to a general meeting.



This garden railway display at the AALS convention in Melbourne in April attracted considerable interest, with private and promotional trains being operated, mostly by remote control. Photo: Tom Winterbourn

Such a railway layout could be the catalyst for attracting new younger members to the society.

Anyone interested in helping further the project should get in touch with either Steve or Tom.

The Ultimate Garden Railway Loco?

With the possibility of a garden railway back on the agenda at NDMES, the ultimate live steam locomotive for such an operation has just been announced in the UK. Not that any suggestion is being made here that this is the way for us to go!

The streamlined Stanier Duchess Pacific express loco personified the "golden age of steam", and now one of these majestic streamliners is being offered by Kingscale in Gauge 3.

The Duchess, or Princess Coronation class, commemorated the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937 and were among the most powerful locomotives to run on British railways, with a tractive effort of 40,000 lb.

The hand-built model being offered is 1020mm long, 180mm high and 130mm wide. It has four cylinders and comes in classic red and gold livery. It has a silver-soldered multi-flue copper boiler with semi-wet firebox and is fired by a near-silent ceramic gas burner.

The four cylinders are configured prototypically with the inside cylinders controlled by rocking levers.

Gauge 3 was one of the five original gauges recommended by the Society of Model Engineers in 1899 – a gauge now finding wide popularity among garden railway enthusiasts and collectors. It is today Britain's largest scenic modelling gauge.

Only 10 "Duchess of Hamilton" models are being offered world-wide. And the cost? A cool 5,495 pounds sterling (about \$9,868 at today's rate of exchange), plus shipping costs.

A 7¼" live steam model of a Duchess, made famous by Hornby-Dublo in the '60s, sold at auction in the UK last year for a record 140,000 pounds sterling (just over \$250,000).



For more details, photos and videos, see:
www.kingscalelivesteam.co.uk

Committee Decisions

Some of the items discussed at the May Committee meeting were:

Loco and riding car register: Ongoing with David Naeser. The President has contacted David to organise and tag riding cars ASAP.

Signage for clubhouse: The President displayed some designs and one was chosen. Les Harris has offered to have this made.

Steaming bay tidy up and track layout: Tom Winterbourn is fitting dual-gauge track on the road side of the steaming-up bay to the turntable. Once completed, 7¼" track for a fourth bay will be constructed.

AMRA Display, track layout and driver roster: Damien Outram and Steve Reeves co-ordinated this event. On Damien's suggestion, new signs for wall mounting will be bought. Les Harris will arrange for his son, Richard, to produce these. Price per ride is to stay at \$2. AMRA file with all details will be made available at the showgrounds. Steve contacted all members and completed the roster.

NDMES September invitation run: Date has been set for Saturday, September 13, and WA clubs have been notified.

Track modifications and layout to new shed: Stage 1, realign mainline; Stage 2, tracks to be laid into the new 7¼" shed; Stage 3, passing loop.

Loco speedos: The Committee decided this would be a voluntary fitment by the owners of 7¼" locos.

Speed sign: The President is to arrange for speed signs to be posted on the station departure lines.

Electrical work to new shed: Andrew Manning reported that power points have been provided to the container, new 7¼" shed and on a post near the container.

New equipment: It was decided to buy a new rotary mower and hedge trimmer at a combined cost of \$748.

Concrete work: The concrete pour for the floor of the new 7¼" shed and the gazebo was scheduled for June 7.

Driver's licence blanks: Jim Crawford has only a couple left and asked that the layout be reviewed and, if ok, more to be provided.

Project schedule: This will be updated now that many projects from 2012 have been completed.

Club social: It was decided that funds raised at AMRA this year should go towards a club social of some description. Type of function and venue yet to be decided.

Garden railway: Tom Winterbourn proposed the club seriously consider a garden railway as a way of introducing younger members to model engineering. Tom and Steve Reeves to canvas support from members and look into possible funding sources.

Oils ain't Oils!

The following interesting test results on penetrating oils came our way via Richard Turner, who received the info from his local Men's Shed.

Machinist's Workshop Mag recently published some information on various penetrating oils that were found very interesting. Penetrates were tested for break-out torque on rusted nuts. They are listed below, as forwarded by an ex-student and professional machinist.

<u>Penetrating oils</u>	<u>Average torque load to loosen</u>
No Oil used	516 pound
WD-40	238 pounds
PB Blaster	214 pounds
Liquid Wrench	127 pounds
ATF-Acetone mix	53 pounds

A subjective test was arranged of all the popular

penetrates with the control being the torque required to remove the nut from a "scientifically rusted" environment.

The ATF (automatic transmission fluid) Acetone mix is a "home brew" of 50 - 50 automatic transmission fluid and acetone and it re-eased bolts better than any commercial product in this one particular test.

The Men's Shed machinist group mixed up a batch and all members now use it with equally good results.

Note also that "Liquid Wrench" is almost as good as "Kroil" for about 20 per cent of the price.

A Godwin-Singer rep says that ATF-Acetone mix is best, but you can also use ATF and lacquer thinner in a 50-50 mix. Power-steering fluid also works as well as transmission fluid!

Amphibious Attack Sinks Dennis' Battleship

Model engineering certainly has its ups and downs, sometimes associated with that sinking feeling, just ask Dennis Lord.

After a number of steam locos, Dennis turned to his maritime past and built a model of the Leuwin sailing vessel, followed by a battleship.

The water-borne models took to the water like, well, ducks to water, but the battleship met its Waterloo, thanks to the ducks' bigger cousin, the swan.

The launch on a local lake went well, until the swans spotted the intruder and attacked, sinking it as clinically as the Bismarck* was attacked and sunk by British torpedo bombers on May 27, 1941.

Dennis enlisted the scuba-diving skills of fellow NDMES member John Martin, but it appears the battleship was lost without trace.

Oh how history repeats itself! Dennis joined the British Navy one day after his 15th birthday – and that was almost 78 years ago, for he will be celebrating his 93rd birthday on August 9.

Dennis hastens to point out that not all his models have failed in such spectacular style as his battleship – and he has been quite a prolific builder. He has completed a Gauge 1 Evening Star 2-10-0 after buying the castings; he has a 3½" Evening Star 85% complete with a rolling chassis and a boiler under construction; he has completed a 5" 4-4-0 made from castings but it has yet to be steamed (he is trying to retrofit an axle pump); and has completed a 2½" WA Class N loco built from scratch.

During his 17 years in the Navy, Dennis trained as a chief electrician and on returning to civilian life he took himself off to night school in Oxford, UK, and graduated



Dennis works to provide 12 volt power to the new bays in the steaming-up shed. Photo: Tom Winterbourn

as an electrical engineer and instrumentation and control engineer. These are some of the skills he has put to good use at NDMES since becoming a member in 1997. He has been, and still is, an active member, particularly with electrical work and signals.

On entering retirement in 1986, Dennis had to hand in his electrical engineer's licence, although he has continued to do this work at NDMES, mostly with 12/24 volts.

In 2009, Dennis had to surrender his driving licence and he has since been a familiar sight travelling to and from the club on running days and working bees on his "goffa". His latest model, a Taiwanese-built "Cutie", has a range of 35 km and a flat speed of 16 kph. In the four months since acquiring his little Cutie, he has chalked up over 1000 km, mostly between home and club!

Dennis, whose picture as a young RN sailor appeared in the last newsletter, is by far our oldest active member and still looks forward to joining the Tuesday work crew and also attending our running days.

**The pursuit and sinking of the Bismarck is one of the great maritime stories of all time. The Bismarck and her sister ship Tirpitz were the largest battleships ever built by Germany. At the Battle of the Denmark Strait, Bismarck engaged and destroyed the battle cruiser HMS Hood, the pride of the Royal Navy. Two days later, while heading for the relative safety of occupied France, Bismarck was attacked by Fairey Swordfish biplane torpedo bombers from the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal; one scoring a hit that rendered her steering gear inoperable. In her final battle the following morning (May 27), Bismarck was neutralised by a sustained British bombardment, was scuttled and sank with heavy loss of life.*



Dennis heads off home after a Tuesday working bee on his Cutie "goffa". Photo: Tom Winterbourn

May Public Run Day

Rain, hail or shine, there's no keeping NDMES patrons from our monthly runs. On Sunday, May 25, the weather forecast didn't bode well with showers predicted throughout the day – and seven booked parties. And rain it did, but there was plenty of sunshine in between and the day turned out very enjoyable, with long queues waiting for rides.

Unfortunately, we only had two 7¼" locos and two 5" in steam, but nobody complained about having to wait for their second, third or fourth ride. Here is a pictorial round-up of the day.



Stephen Briggs driving Firefly and Paul James on the club loco No 1 round the curve as they approach the station.

All photos: Tom Winterbourn



Above: Stephen gets away from the station as Andrew Manning waits to load up.



Below: In his customary relaxed style, Damien Outram climbs out of the station with Ron Collins' 0-4-0 hauling 11 passengers.



Happiness is ... Andrew Manning wears that ear-to-ear smile as he leaves the station driving Bushfly.



Into the black hole....Andrew Manning about to disappear into the tunnel with Bushfly.

A Time for Reflection

by Nick Pusenjak



W942 shunts in the yard at Pinjarra.

Photo: Nick Pusenjak

quite important. Narrogin was possibly the busiest during the heyday of the WAGR. It was on the busy Great Southern main line to Albany. Lines on the inner and outer loops to Merredin branched out to the east.

Another line ran through Williams, Darkan and

WA's railway network once included many cross country routes and branch lines.

It was a more relaxed era as trains traversed the countryside stopping here and there and providing a valuable service to small communities along the line.

A large tranche of these lines closed in 1958, when the WA Government Railways (WAGR) network was pruned. So I never got to see them in action.

Passengers were carried on most lines, usually in the form of a steam-hauled goods train with a passenger carriage or a brake van that had compartments attached.

Travel times could be incredibly slow by today's standards. Take, for example, the line that connected Brookton with Corrigin. The "mixed" goods train left Brookton at 1:30 in the afternoon, having connected with the "Wildflower" class diesel electric train from Perth. Corrigin, some 90 kilometres away, was reached at 7 pm.

There were nine sidings along the line and the train would have stopped to load and unload wayside goods, maybe shunt some wagons off, or collect others.

We have fast cars now. I drove that road recently at a leisurely pace with the cruise control set well below the speed limit in well under an hour and the wheat belt roads that were once a series of sharp right and left hand turns are now gentle curves.

The Brookton to Corrigin railway closed in 1958, along with Busselton to Flinders Bay, the Denmark branch and branches north of Geraldton that went out to Ajana and Yuna. Many other little-used and definitely unprofitable lines went at the same time.

Stations from where these lines radiated out became

Collie to join the South West Main at Brunswick Junction. Finally, another line also went west to Pinjarra. Trains were always coming or going from Narrogin and the shunting of wagons was a 24-hour-a-day task.

Some branch and cross country lines survived to the end of steam and into the diesel era.

An interesting line was the Hotham Valley branch that ran from Pinjarra to Narrogin via Dwellingup and Boddington. The Narrogin to Boddington section succumbed first, followed by Dwellingup to Boddington.

Due to the timber mill at Dwellingup, the truncated line survived until the preservation era and the section between Isandra and Dwellingup is now operated as a tourist railway.

For many years this line was the preserve of the MSA Class 2-6-0 + 0-6-2 Garratt locomotives, which thrived on the sharp curves and steep grades. The Boddington Branch (as the line was known after cessation of services to Narrogin) and Boyup Brook line were the last used by the MSA Class, which were all out of service by the early 1960s — and before I was out and about with a camera.

After the MSA Class, the line was dieselised and the motive power was usually a Y Class Bo-Bo diesel-electric stabled at Pinjarra.

Following the takeover of the Midland Railway Company of WA by the WAGR in 1964, Midland Railway English-Electric F Class locomotives were regulars on the line and then towards the end of the

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A Time for Reflection (cont...)

by Nick Pusenjak

(Continued from page 8)

steam era, W Class 4-8-2s were drafted into service.

The pictures published here were taken on the Royal Show public holiday, which afforded an opportunity to get out and photograph trains that didn't run on weekends.

I seem to recall trains ran Monday, Wednesday and Friday, days on which I was tied to a desk job in Perth.

The method used was a Perth to Bunbury goods train would stable its load at Pinjarra, then take empty wagons up the hill to Dwellingup and return with the loaded ones, then continue on to Bunbury.

No. 942 was one of 60 W Class 4-8-2s built by Beyer Peacock (UK) for WAGR's post-war rejuvenation. She entered service on December 18, 1951, and lasted almost to the end of steam, being withdrawn on June 17, 1971.



After the sunshine had receded, W942 returns to Pinjarra on the Dwellingup branch. Photo: Nick Pusenjak

The Ws were dependable “go anywhere” engines, suited to hauling the “Australind” express passenger train or pottering about on the now lost branch lines. Fortunately, a good percentage of the class survived into preservation, some operational.

Nick Pusenjak

Pedestrian Trains

Every now and again, some information comes to hand which throws a whole new light on our operations. Such an occasion followed the April run day, when our train services were scrutinised using sat-nav data.

It was the speed of our trains – or lack of it – which was surprising. In fact, you could say the locos were not “pulling their weight”, travelling at a very pedestrian rate. Dennis Lord and his “goffa” would have been embarrassed by this rate of progress!

The sat-nav pinpointed that the three ground level locos on the day were pulling passengers for only a third of the time they were on the track AND their overall average speed was no more than about 3 kph.

Well, that's what Harry Roser reckons. Harry had attached the satellite navigation device to his Westrail diesel outline No 4, which was one of three 7¼” locos operating on the day, the others being Ron Collins'

gleaming 0-4-0 driven by Mr Ed Brown and Tom Winterbourn's Black 5.

Harry's loco spent a total of 4 hr 20 mins on track but only hauled passengers for 1 hr 15 mins.

While there were no major hold-ups during the day, station dwell time (loading and unloading) and maybe the occasional delay waiting for the train ahead to clear the station brought the total average speed down to 3 kph. However, while the loco was in motion, the average speed was an exhilarating 8 kph. The loco did miss out on a higher overall average speed due to a blocked air filter towards the end of the run.

During the run the “diesel” travelled a total of 13 km.

Maybe next time we'll get a fix on the 5” raised track brigade with perhaps a time and motion study on station staff! Watch this space.

Don't Forget Friday's Meeting

Just a late reminder that the next NDMES club meeting will be held on Friday, June 13 at 8pm. All members are urged to attend. If you have any issues you want to raise, this is the correct forum in which to do so. Also, if you want to “show and tell” about your particular model engineering project, please let Andrew Manning know.

Most Members Involved in AMRA

AMRA 2014 has come and gone and all involved can breathe a sigh of relief after a job well done.

Without final revenue figures being available by “print deadline”, it was anticipated we provided about 2000 rides over the three days.

There was a small but quality bench-top display of locos in various stages of completion, ranging from Gauge 0 and 1 through 2½” and 3½” to 5”. There were also some working “donkey-engine” type models and other steam-powered items which proved popular with visitors.

And there, somewhat standing aloof, were the near-completed Fowler traction engines of Ron Collins and Paul Costall alongside the running track. They, too, attracted much attention, particularly Paul’s “showman’s engine”, with all its necessary paraphernalia.

The motive power for the weekend was Bushfly with Firefly standing in reserve. Although there were some injector problems with Bushfly, Firefly was not needed. Many members took turns at driving Bushfly over the three days.

As the president has stated elsewhere in this edition, there was a good roll-up of members, with about two-thirds of the club membership dropping in to help out at various times over the three days. However, for some it stretched over five days, with loading up at the club on the Friday afternoon and unloading on the following Tuesday.

Finally, thanks to Steve Reeves and Damien Outram for organising the event, with Steve already putting his hand up for next year!



Steve Briggs and Bushfly haul passengers past Paul Costall's near-completed Fowler showman's engine.

All Photos: Tom Winterbourn



Pete Harding extols the virtues of NDMES to a visitor.

Overall, this year’s AMRA display seemed smaller than last year, although the quality was still there. A selection of photographs taken on the Monday morning are reproduced on this and the following page.

Tom Winterbourn



Left: Quiet contemplation... Ed Brown reflects as he waits to refill Bushfly's tanks.



Right: Steve Reeves holds court as he demonstrates one of the exhibits to half-a-dozen interested visitors.

AMRA Report (cont...)

by Tom Winterbourn



Steve Reeves points out the finer points of Walschaerts valve gear to Robert Otway.



Who's a pretty polly then... well maybe when I've got all my plumage!
Richard Turner's Polly kit loco on display.



The NDMES display, with locos from O Gauge to 5" gauge.



Not cooking with gas! Bushfly's injector played up early on Sunday, so Ed Brown, Steve Briggs and John Shugg got their fingers dirty sorting out the problem.



A close-up of gauge 0 and 1, and 2½ and 3½ inch locos.



Future members? This father and two sons show more than a passing interest as Pete Harding explains the workings of a steam-powered pulley.

'Phoenix' Projects in the UK

The Brits have no equal when it comes to their total devotion to anything relating to steam power – and steam locomotives in particular. In the halcyon days of steam both before and after WW2, the devotees of steam would easily have surpassed support for any other pastime, save possibly some sporting codes.

But alas, steam was not to survive and by the end of 1968, all had gone. Many were hauled to scrapyards, in particular Woodham's at Barry in South Wales, to await the cutters' torch. But how do you dispose of thousands of locos overnight? This provided the breathing space for enthusiast groups to raise the cash needed to purchase locos at little more than scrap value.

Today, hundreds of locos have been preserved and/or rebuilt and are now to be seen back on the British main

lines and on heritage railways. But this is not enough for the Brits. They want to resurrect, phoenix-style, representatives of classes which did not survive the cutter's torch and are now filling in the gaps.

Following the "mission impossible" restoration of the sole 8P standard Pacific "Duke of Gloucester" and the new build Peppercorn A1 Pacific "Tornado", a plethora of other projects — 18 at least — are now being built using mostly original plans.

The latest milestone was last month (May), when the frames for a long-gone P2 2-8-2 ("Prince of Wales") were cut. In the next edition of Steam Lines, we aim to bring you up-to-date on what locos are being built from the ground up and a précis on some of the more notable projects.

Sleek, Fast – But Just Too Wide!

Imagine the repercussions at NDMES if we entrusted the purchase of new expensive carriages to our most knowledgeable members — and they stuffed up.

A considerable amount of money would be lost, accompanied by red faces and total embarrassment, because they ordered carriages which were just too big to go through the tunnel or clear bridge pylons, station stanchions etc.

Quick forward to the other side of the world, to one of the world's leading and most innovative railways, and there's outrage and world-wide ridicule over the multi-million Euro blunder made by French railway chiefs, who ordered new trains too wide for its system. And remember, this is the country which led the world with its efficient and powerful steam locomotives, super-fast electrics and GTVs and which has held world speed records.

Now, about 1300 platforms will have to be trimmed back at a cost of about \$A70 million.

French Secretary of State for Transport, Frederic Cuvillier, described the blunder as "tragically comical" and "mind-boggling", blaming a lack of coordination between France's two state rail bodies, the SNCF and RFF. In a statement, the rail companies stated the introduction of the new trains "requires us to modernise 1300 of the 8700 platforms."

According to the satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné*, SNCF drew up the specifications for the new-generation trains, but "its clever engineers forgot to check on the reality on the ground," where the space between platforms varies between stations.

The problem affects 182 regional trains supplied by French manufacturer Alstom and 159 from Canada's Bombardier, due to come into service by 2016.

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