

working on the lower "FLAT" section of the Hartley Vale Tramway. It could prove to be a Mort built engine, and this is feasible as there is a record of this firm constructing a small locomotive for a coal mining concern in 1879. This particular engine has, so far, eluded identification and was obviously built to narrow gauge requirements as it had 7 inch diameter cylinders, weighed 9 tons, and cost 1,000. As to the suggested locomotive built by Messrs Armstrong, I have been informed that a Scottish firm of this name constructed industrial locomotives about the period under review. It is a pity that evidence of this mysterious third engine is so fragmentary, in spite of intensive research among surviving books and papers.

Further conflicting evidence is that on a visit paid to Hartley Vale by the author, together with Eric Stephens and the late Bart Wiles about 1950, we descended with much difficulty the then long abandoned main haulage way to the valley flats and came across the remains of the supposed Fowler built locomotive. Nearby were a pair of locomotive side-tanks which showed signs of once having possessed the distinctive name-plates of Messrs Dubs and Company of Glasgow. This find raised the question:— Did the oil company have two Dubs built locomotives in their employ? This we know not.

For the record we decided to photograph one of the side-tanks, which was lying flat on the long grass, so we proceeded to raise it to a vertical position. Bart Wiles grasped the top edge about midway in its length, Eric Stephens the far end, and myself the nearer end. With a mighty heave the heavy tank was raised, much to the annoyance of two black snakes who had made a comfortable home beneath the tank as it lay on the grass. Mr. Wiles leapt some four feet into the air and wanted to stay aloft at that elevation, for the time being at least, but the forces of gravity proved too great. One snake was killed in the general excitement, the other left at speed and was seen no more. We draped the battered corpse over the side-tank for photographic purposes. It may be stated that at the time of our visit, the "HILL-TOP" Dubs locomotive was intact, apart from its name-plates; standing in splendid isolation on a pair of rails in the vicinity of the Hartley Vale Railway Station.

THE METRE GAUGE ROLLING STOCK AT HARTLEY VALE

Although no official details are to hand regarding either the number or description of the metre gauge rolling stock at Hartley Vale it is thought that these vehicles were perhaps, restricted to two types, a four-wheeled high-sided box wagon for shale conveyance and cased kerosene, and four-wheeled tank wagons for the bulk transference of liquids.

The four-wheeled open-topped box wagons had their sawn timber bodies fixed to external wooden framing and were rigidly rectangular in appearance. Two stout baulks of squared timber formed the main frames which were set above the axles and placed against the inside boss of the cast-iron spoken wheels, the axles revolving in large cast-iron plumber-blocks bolted at the lower sides of the frame timber. Both frames projected beyond the body-work and were adapted for use as "dumb" buffers, the four sides of which were clamped between iron straps to prevent disintegration of the wood. Bearing and coupling springs were a missing refinement and, most, if not all of the wagons had a lever hand-brake fitted at one side operating against one wheel. A centrally placed dead-eye was bolted to each head-stock and held a bolted shackle from which a three-link coupling chain was suspended. This chain was joined to the shackle of the adjoining vehicle, making it virtually impossible for the rake of wagons to become unattached irrespective of the severe grades of the haulage way, the whipping of the haulage cable, or the inequalities of the railed track.

The four-wheeled oil-tank wagons also had outside wheels, their under-frames, buffer arrangements, and method of coupling, being constructed in a similar manner to those supplied with the open-topped shale-wagons. The rivetted circular shaped tank had flat end-plates and was fixed in place on the vehicle by being metal strapped into wooden cradles supported across the longitudinal sole-bars, these cradles had their upper surface shaped to fit the diameter of the 350 gallon capacity tank.

End thrusts of the tank, developed in transit, were absorbed by stayed metal uprights bolted securely to the headstocks at each end of the vehicle. Bolted to the upper ends of these uprights, giving them a "buffer-stop" appearance, was a strong wooden beam, horizontally mounted at a position a little below midway across the tank end-plates. These beams, with the tank sandwiched between, were held fast by a pair of screwed