

PGRS TRACKIN'



Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society – July 2015

Editor: Scott Williams

Ahoy PGRS crewmembers! July Greetings to you all.

I hope you are all enjoying the hot summer weather so far and enjoying your garden trains and looking forward to our July 25th Train meet in Greer, SC as much as I am. This spring was robust with a record crop of pollen which made being outdoors nasty for those allergy sufferers amongst us and coated cars, homes, and everything left outside with a thick, fuzzy, yellow-green coating. Up here in the mountains we've had lots of rain showers and even a few big gully washers that have made track maintenance a little challenging and Mother Nature hit us with August-like heat in early June but maybe she'll cool things down again before the dog days finally arrive.

This month, in addition to the newsletter I will also send a PDF file supplement from Don Watson with detailed instructions and photos on how to build a Locomotive Engine Carrier like the ones he uses. The unique feature of Doc's loco carriers is that they are designed in such a fashion as to allow the locomotive to draw power from the track and run in and out of the carrier directly on to the rails negating the tedious step of inserting the wires that connect the loco to the tender and positioning all the wheels on the rails. The engine conveniently runs from the carrier on to the rails, ready to go.

**** Here's an outline of the seminars scheduled for our July 25th Train Fest meeting:**

Battery and Sound Conversion for Your Locomotives: (Presented by Gary Poague)

Gary will show how you can convert your locomotives to battery operations and add sound. He will have some of the locomotives there that he has converted for your viewing. The various sources for R/C equipment, sound cards, and batteries will be given and compared. You should be able to go away from this presentation with enough knowledge to tackle your own conversions.

Building Outdoor Structures for Your Railroad: (Presented by Don Watson)

A description of materials, glues and construction techniques used in building durable outdoor structures will be presented. Included in the presentation will be sources for recommended

waterproof materials and glues. Photos of existing outdoor structures on garden railroads will be shown. Also some examples of items built by Don will be there for viewing.

Techniques, Tips and Options for Track Laying: (Presented by Jon Bole)

Jon will present some of the ways you can lay track that will help minimize maintenance and provide for trouble-free operations. He will discuss the importance of a sound foundation including ground preparation, if your RR is at ground level. He, along with the help of Fran Monahan, will also provide some ideas on building an elevated RR. The pros and cons of free-floating your track versus some form of anchoring or locking it down will be presented. Issues including expansion and contraction, cleaning, and ballasting will also be discussed.

*** To refresh everyone's memory on this event... the PGRS Board of Directors chose **Saturday, July 25th**, from 10-4 pm, as the date to host the **First PGRS Large Scale Train Fest**, or the **FPGRSLSTF**...for short...{jus' kidding}.

The event will be held at the same location as our January meeting; The Cottages at Brushy Creek. **The address is: 101 Cottage Creek Circle in Greer, SC.**

The **Train Fest**; *will be a day where members can get together and exchange ideas and learn new things about garden railroading. It will be a non-“club-business” meet. Members are encouraged to bring train items for show-and-tell, for sale, and for swap. Ample tables will be provided. It's a good time to bring those unused items collecting dust out to find new homes.*

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Trivia Question: Charles Babbage, a 19th century English mathematician, philosopher, inventor, and mechanical engineer, who is best remembered for originating the concept of a programmable computer with his mechanical Difference Engine thought up what device most of our model locomotives still display? [answer at end of newsletter]

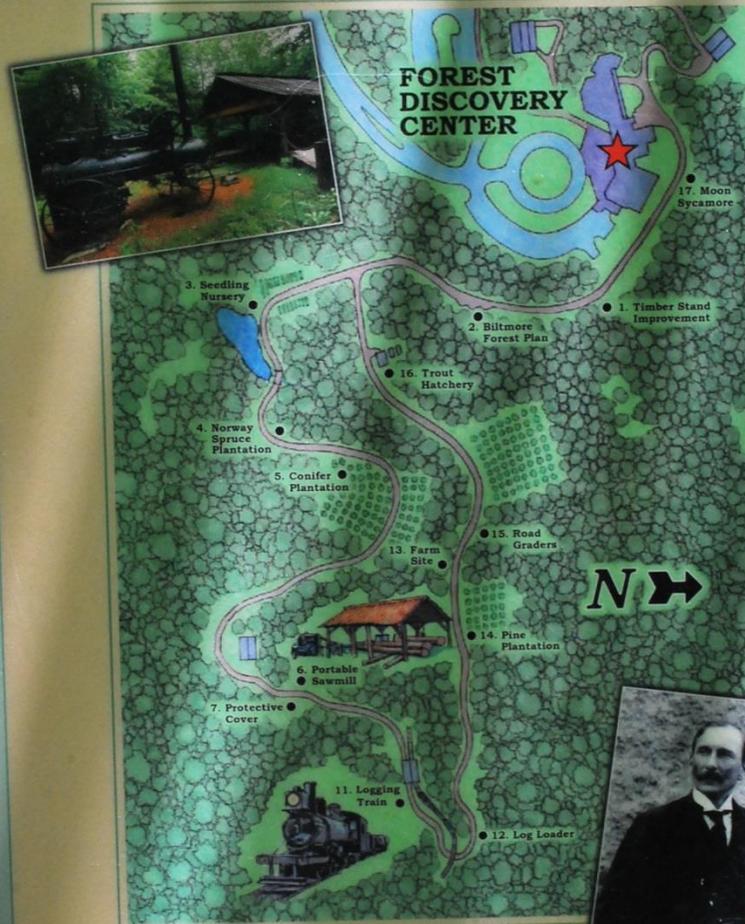
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I drove to the Cradle of Forestry in America museum on June 4th with the express interest to photo the Climax loco, log cars, and log loader and had perfect weather for it.



Forest Festival Trail



"Statesman! Lumberman! Engineer! Forester! Come! And be welcome!" So read Dr. Carl Alwin Schenck's invitation to the first ever Biltmore Forest Festival in 1908. In 1895, George Vanderbilt hired Dr. Schenck, a German forester, to manage more than 80,000 acres. The land became a living laboratory where he and his students learned all they could about managing a forest. At the Forest Festival he shared that information with leaders in the lumber industry. Join us now as we revisit Dr. Schenck's laboratory. It will take about 60 minutes to complete this easy 1.3 mile trail. You will see Carl Schenck's legacy and discover how his work continues into the present.



Zoom in for some brief information on the land, Dr. Schenck, and George Vanderbilt.

Mr. Vanderbilt later sold the timber rights for **70,000** of those acres after taking some heavy personal investment losses in 1902 to Louis Carr Lumber in 1912 for 12 dollars an acre for all timber standing or down on the land and gave Carr 40 years to remove all the wood products which gave Vanderbilt a much needed steady infusion of cash. Mr. Carr set up shop near Brevard and gave the area the name of Pisgah Forest.

Mr. Vanderbilt cancelled his plans at the last minute to travel on the Titanic but his luck ran out 2 years later in March 1914 when he died unexpectedly, of sepsis complications from an appendectomy and later the flood of 1916 washed away Vanderbilt's very profitable nursery business which was located on land at the confluence of the French Broad and Swannanoa rivers. Prior to the flood however, Edith Vanderbilt had visited Louis Carr in 1914 to offer him the land for sale outright for 5 dollars an acre. He thought it over and thanked her for her offer but stated that "We are in the lumber business, not real estate." Edith then offered 86,700 acres for sale to the Federal Government for 5 dollars an acre and it formed the bulk of Pisgah National Forest.

For more details see sources like Thomas Fettes book; "[Logging Railroads of the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains.](#)" and other sites about Pisgah National Forest.





It was a bit of an eye-opener of a visit. I met a gentleman there named Mr. Gibbs. He is a volunteer and was repairing a rotted window sill on the Climax loco and he shared with me some history of the owners of the Climax but what surprised me is that the entire place operates on volunteers. The whole complex has a paid director and a part time handyman who split their time between other facilities and are only there maybe one day each week. All the other people you may encounter in their Forest Service uniforms are transient volunteers who live in their large trailer RVs and are provided electricity and hook-ups on the property and they find these park volunteer opportunities on Volunteer.gov. A friendly docent verified that was in fact what they all do. The US forest service and other government entities like BLM, etc. simply have little money to allot for park/museum employees and for that matter, very much upkeep either.



Mr. Gibbs is a retired hospital employee of 35 years from Syracuse and has for many years driven from his home near Hendersonville [I believe that's where he said], to work on building maintenance, maintenance of the displays and often even uses his own money. He also works for Habitat for Humanity. He said he recently repaired the blacksmith forge on site and ponied up 150 bucks of his own money and the Forest Service finally gave him an additional 500 bucks to buy the material he needed for the forge. He also paid for a truck load of railroad ties he told me to 'coax' the forest service in to paying for having more ties delivered so he could install them by himself. He stated that he replaced a 900 lb iron block on the rear of the Climax entirely by himself. He is in his 70's. They seem to let him work on whatever project he wishes to and we are all fortunate to have someone like him and the other volunteers or, as he said, the facility would quite simply not be open to the public.

Anyway, take a ride up 276 from Brevard when you get a chance, stop along the way to view Looking Glass falls and Sliding Rock right alongside the roadway and stop by the Cradle of Forestry. There are numerous buildings and a sawmill along the paved woods path as well as the Climax loco and log loader. The main building has very nice, informative exhibits which appeal to all ages and the Forest Trail has lots of wildflowers and trees well marked with signage and overall an informative and pleasant spot to spend a sunny afternoon in the mountain forest. There are plenty of nice places to eat and the Oskar Blues Brewery is also located in nearby Brevard and it makes a good road trip.

June 18th Rocky Cove Railroad track day at the NC Arboretum, Asheville, NC.



The track gang installing much needed expansion joints to the straight sections and re-ballasting the tracks at the NC Arboretum.

[The Arboretum has added Sunday operations 12-4 pm for July and August](#) which increases the chance to come run trains. Contact Bill Huntman about signing up to volunteer to run trains on the Rocky Cove RR. whunteman@gmail.com or 828-400-9982 (cell).

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Cheap Loco weights:

I needed to add some weight to a small locomotive but wondered where to find cheap lead weights for the job? Answer: NAPA [or other auto part stores] had tire balancing wheel weights with attached double side tape and they worked great. One strip of half ounce weights come 24 to a strip and cost me 2.95 for the strip. Ask around, not everyone may be willing to sell just one strip. I stuck 12 oz. of weights in the side tanks of the engine adding $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound to the loco.

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Mars Hill University exhibition on trains in WNC.

“The [Rural Heritage Museum](#) at Mars Hill University opens a new exhibition beginning June 27, 2015: "How The West Was Won: Trains and the Transformation of Western North Carolina." The exhibition will run through January 31, 2016.”

<http://www.mhu.edu/news-events/news-articles/rural-heritage-museum-opens-new-exhibition-exploring-trains-in-wnc>

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611 photos contributed by J.R.Snider:





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Pete Gendron sent in this photo of some serious large scale locomotive power. 7 1/4 gauge. This one is in Leatherhead, Surrey England. It is a K36 and runs 60 people per trip.

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Gandy Dancer day at Tim Wagner's new backyard garden railroad.



I'm Doc. This is my track bender. I'm here to help Tim build his railroad.

I'm Gary. This is my level. I'm here to help Tim build his railroad.

I'm Pete. I'm holding the track steady for Doc and Gary. I'm here to help Tim build his railroad.



I'm Fran. This is my Transom. I'm here to help Tim build his railroad.

I'm Tim. This is my home and railroad. I asked for help building my railroad. They say sometimes "be careful what you wish for."

It must be noted that Jon Bole and Bill Huntman were also present...to help Tim build his railroad.

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Apple Valley Model Railroad cement embankment solution.

Terry Ketcham says;

"I'm using hydraulic cement, water and blown in insulation to form a goop that is spread on wire mesh. It seems to be working fine, and playing around with spray paints for color."





Editor's note; I saw the results of this work a few weeks back at AVRR and it looks really awesome, even unpainted and I can see lots and lots of uses for this technique on club member's garden layouts. Thanks for sharing Terry!!

Upcoming Events:

[In case you missed it earlier in the newsletter]

JULY 25th

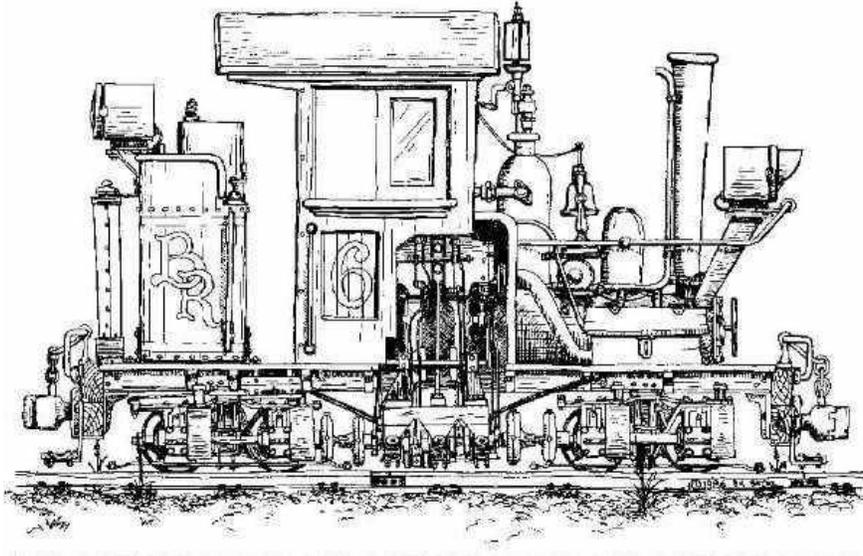
First PGRS Large Scale Train Fest.

10-4 pm @ 101 Cottage Creek Circle in Greer, SC.

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Member photos:

Bruce Bates' whimsical Shay loco cartoon quite likely lead to the creation of this live steamer below the drawing:



Hi Scott,

Here are images of the BW&R Shay in cartoon and real life. The model was made by Jim Hadden. I suspect that it's live steam.

*Best Regards,
Bruce K. Bates*

I think I may have found someone to design our PGRS webpage. Now's the time to get your camera out and take some photos of your trains and garden layouts for use in the club web page.

Please send your photos so I can post them in future newsletters or on the upcoming website to: flatrat@charter.net

Thanks!!

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Membership:

Please feel free to share this newsletter with friends who might be interested and if they wish to become members ask them to contact the PGRS Secretary/Treasurer for a membership form.

Don Watson
125 Mistletoe Trail
Hendersonville, NC 28791

docwatson@morrisbb.net

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Train Lover Luncheons:

The current luncheons are:

Columbus Area: Meets every Third Thursday of every month at Larkins Carolina Grill, 155 West Mills Street in Columbus, NC 28722. @ 1:00 PM. Contact Gary Poague 828-712-3429
gpoague@windstream.net

Greater Greenville Area: Meeting the first Tuesday of every month - at 12 noon. It has been moved to Mutts in Greer as it is more centrally located for the greater Greenville area. Contact Ken Majchrzak at: kemajchrzak@gmail.com or call Ken at: 864-385-4951

Asheville Area: Meets the 4th Thursday each month. We meet at 11:30 AM at Gondolier Italian Restaurant and Pizza located at 1360 Tunnel Road, Asheville 28805. Contact Tim Wagner timwagner2012@gmail.com

The location is on the east end near the VA hospital, so it is recommended that you access Tunnel Road from I-40, exit 55. Take a left at the first light after you exit and a left at the next light. The venue will be on the right a few hundred yards from the intersection.

Winston Salem luncheons are currently being planned by Tony Potter and J.R. Snider.

Charlotte luncheons are currently being planned by Hank Paulson and Dave Smith.

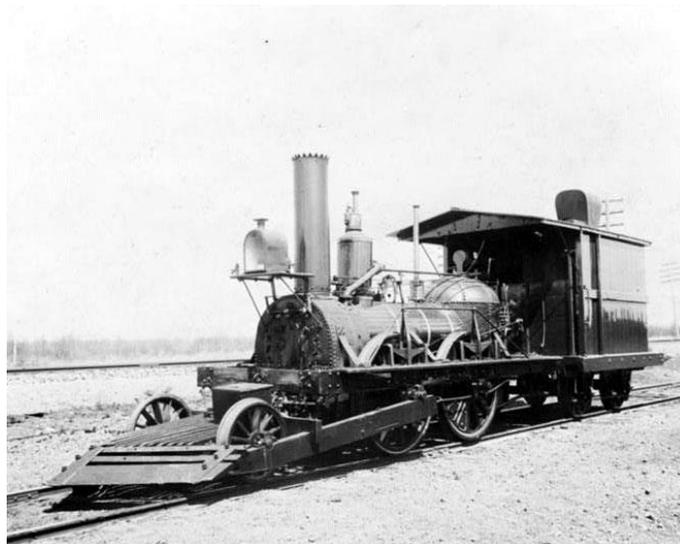
We encourage members to use the local network created by the TLL coordinators to casually invite folks by to share your layout and train projects, what we call a "Mini Open House", either on the day of a TLL or just any day in the month that you would like to have some company to talk or run trains

If you are interested in starting a "Train Lover's Luncheon" in your area, call a couple of friends and agree to meet. The next month everybody invites another friend, etc.

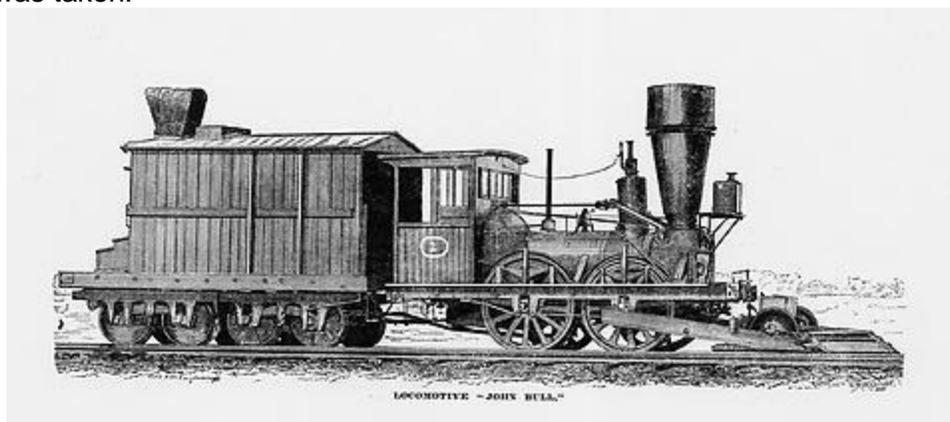
Trivia Answer: According to a Wikipedia entry on locomotive pilots Charles Babbage is indeed credited with first suggesting a device attached to the front of locomotives to clear obstacles.

“The pilot was invented by [Charles Babbage](#) in the 19th century, during his period of working for the [Liverpool and Manchester Railway](#).^[1] However, Babbage's invention was not built, and it is uncertain whether later users were aware of Babbage's idea.”

A posting on “WiseGEEK” states: “A cow catcher is a device attached to the front of a train in order to clear obstacles off the track. Invented in 1838 by British engineer Charles Babbage...”



John Bull is a British-built locomotive that operated in the US. It was operated for the first time on September 15, 1831, and it became the oldest operable steam locomotive in the world when the Smithsonian Institute operated it in 1981. It has a pilot in the photo but it is unknown when the photo was taken.



Business Related to Our Hobby

Any Member who has a business related to our hobby is welcome to submit an entry for inclusion in PGRS Trackin' each month.



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