

# PGRS TRACKIN'

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**Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society – June 2016**

**Editor: Scott Williams**

**It's June my friends and the weather is so perfect. Garden railroad projects are in full swing at many of our homes. Randy shares his thoughts about the railroad he just laid out at his mountain home with a little help from his friends:**

Hosting a Gandy Dancer Event. By Randy Theis



I recently hosted a Gandy Dancer event and am extremely thankful for all that helped get the second phase completed on my railroad. The day was very successful and we were able to accomplish everything that I had hoped to get completed. Both the manpower and the experience were much appreciated. Here is an outline of things that you may consider in hosting an event. Hopefully it will make your event a success.

1. Invites
  - a. Include in the previous month's newsletter
  - b. Follow up with an announcement sent to the PGRS membership a couple of weeks before event.
  - c. Pick a rain date.
  - d. Don't make day too long. My event was from 9:30 to 2:30 and we stopped for lunch. I think this is about as long as you want to make the day.
2. Directions
  - a. In the invite, give adequate directions, your phone #, and your street address so members can use GPS.
  - b. If it is difficult to find your home, get some PGRS signs for directing members.
3. Get your neighbors involved
  - a. I had 3 neighbors "volunteer" to help.
  - b. They can clean track, do grading work, assist members, or act as gophers.
4. Provide adequate materials, and make sure they are available
  - a. This includes track, switches, track couplers, isolators, etc.
  - b. I had tools for finish grading including wheelbarrow, shovels, rakes and trowels. A member brought a transit.
  - c. Small items included Scotchbrite pads, track saws, extension cords, allen wrenches, etc. The lack of one size allen wrench slowed up the tracklayers.
  - d. Work tables. I had a couple to clean track and to preassemble sections of track, and a small one on the layout for cutting track and small work.
  - e. I was fortunate that 2 members agreed to bring their rail benders.
5. Have a track plan unless the purpose of the event is a planning event.
  - a. Make several copies so everyone knows what the end result looks like.
  - b. I laid out the switches in approximate locations to create a visual for the track plan.
  - c. I laid out key buildings so tracklayers could provide clearances.
6. Do enough prep so that members can start laying track at the beginning of the event.
  - a. Get the track bed rough graded and trim interfering shrubbery.
  - b. Have enough track prepared and available for track laying to get started.
7. Split the workers up. I was fortunate to have enough members help that they would have been on top of themselves without doing this.
  - a. Final grading crew consisted of a member with a transit and 2 neighbors who did the grunt work.
  - b. I had a track prep group consisting of a neighbor along with a member, who cleaned the used track and prepped track for bending.
  - c. The mainline was broken up between 2 groups, each with a rail bender.
  - d. Another group worked on the lumber mill switch yard.

8. DON'T OVER MANAGE. In my case, the tracklayers knew more than I did about laying track. I considered that I was there just to make sure the track was placed about where I wanted and not to judge how the track was laid.
9. Refreshments. The members have spent their own time and money to get there to help you. Reciprocate by providing them with decent refreshments.
  - a. Provide cold water and coffee for workers throughout day.
  - b. Provide a good lunch and dessert.
    - i. If you don't want to cook, order out or take them to lunch.
    - ii. Dessert. My wife commented, "Model train people sure have a sweet tooth". Enough said.
10. Test run a train while they are still there. Small corrections can then be made.
11. Follow up with a thank you email. I wanted to make sure that everyone knew how much I appreciated the help in getting my layout operational.

**Awesome report and advice Randy! Good outline to help others planning a similar event to follow to ensure their Gandy Dancer will be as well prepared and successful as yours was. I attended the event and thoroughly enjoyed it and also the hospitality you and Kathy showed all of us.**

**Your well laid out track plan, grading, and work preparation areas ensured we were all busy doing something other than standing around in each other's way and I was amazed at how quickly and efficiently the layout was completed. In just a few hours it went from non-existent, to all of us enjoying a cold beverage and watching Terry Ketcham's battery powered loco pull a log train around an interestingly designed and smoothly operating garden railroad layout. I'm sure you will have years of fun switching log cars around your sawmill operation with family and friends while enjoying that amazing view your home has of the Smoky Mountains.**

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**\*\* A reminder from Terry Ketcham that PGRS club members are invited to come by the Apple Valley Model Railroad Club in Hendersonville the last Saturday of each month to run their large scale trains on the club layout from 10 – 2 pm.**

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**\*\*\* Think you might have an idea for a topic to share at the summer Trainfest? We are looking for presenters. This should include examples you have built on a topic and/or accompanying slides to show at the Trainfest.**

**This summer we are also hoping to display Posters of projects if you think your project is something others would like to learn about but maybe not large enough for a 'Clinic' that you could display photos and documents on poster boards.**

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## **George L. Carter Railroad Museum Train Show - June 3-4, 2016**

<http://www.etsu.edu/railroad/>

10- 5 in the ETSU Mini Dome in Johnson City. 5 dollar admission

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### **Trivia Question;**

**Gear Driven Locomotives:** some of the very first 19<sup>th</sup> century steam locomotive designs were gear driven but were pretty quickly abandoned for piston rod driven locomotives. What spawned the need for, and subsequent popularity of gear driven locomotives in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century?

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### **Member Photos;**

**None this month other than Randy's photos.**

**\*\*As always, please send me photos of any model you are proud of or scenes from your layout you are proud of. We'd all love to see them in the newsletters.**

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### **Membership:**

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

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125 Mistletoe Trail  
Hendersonville, NC 28791

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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

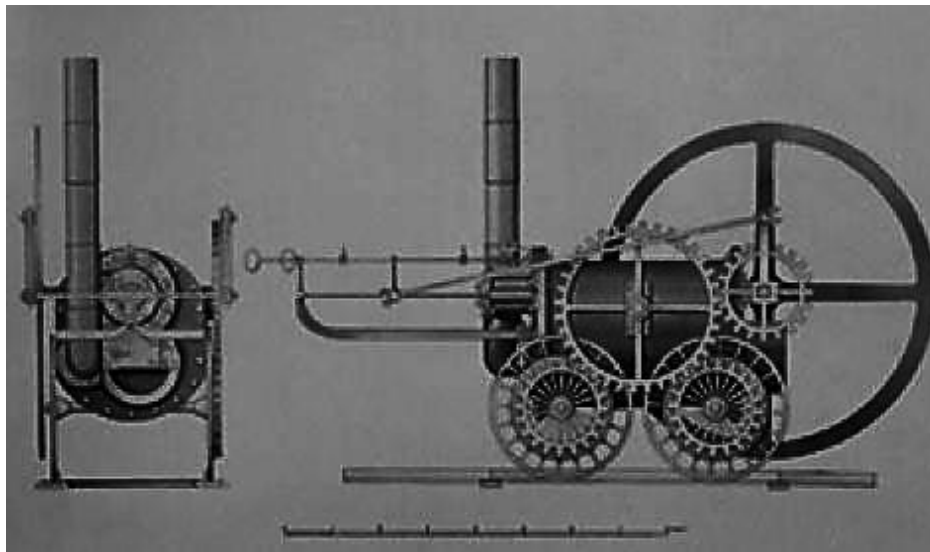
The location is on the east end near the VA hospital, so it is recommended that you access Tunnel Road from I-40, exit 55. Take a left at the first light after you exit and a left at the next light. The venue will be on the right a few hundred yards from the intersection.

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.

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Trivia Answer: Examples of early steam locomotive design employing gear driven wheels:

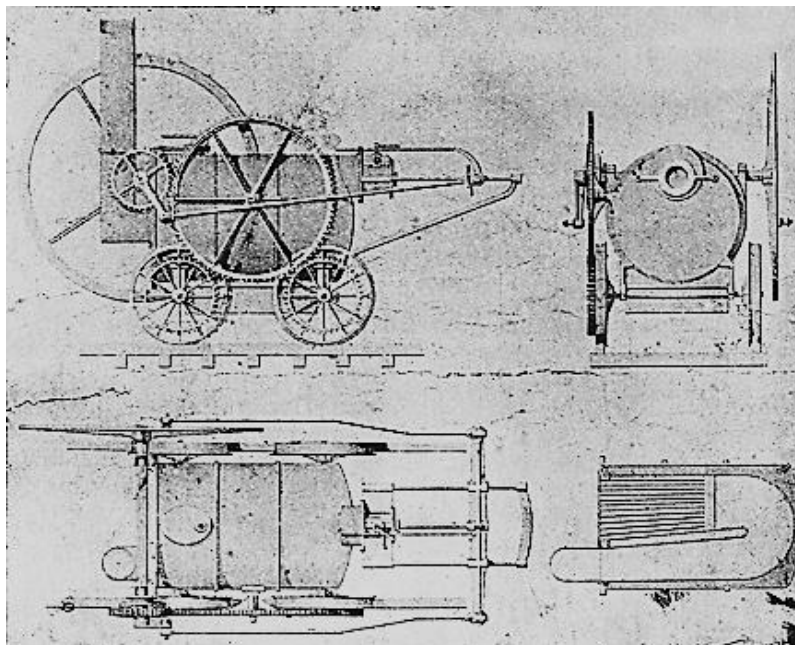


Richard Trevithick developed designs for the first locomotive in 1802, and the Coalbrookdale Company actually built the engine.



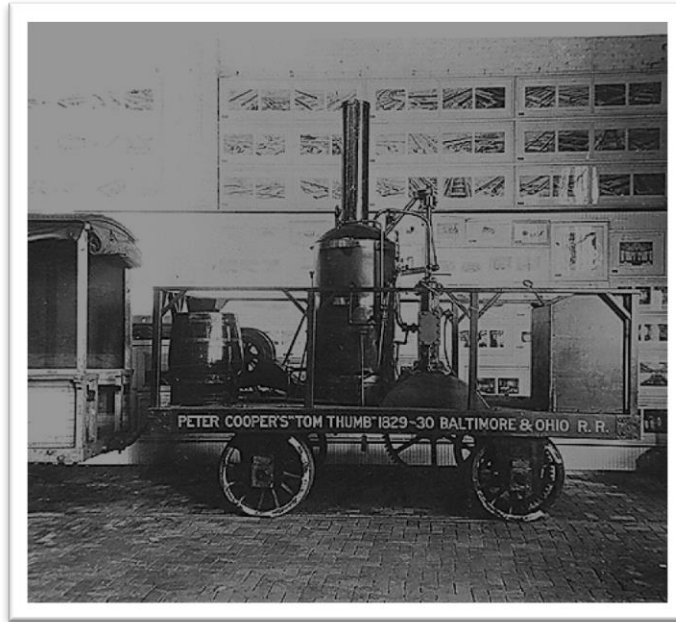
**Richard Trevithick – Pen-y-Darren Locomotive 1804**

Samuel Homfray, the owner of the Pen-y-Darren ironworks near Dowlais, South Wales, contacted Trevithick to see if a steam locomotive could be produced as a practical alternative to horses. Worked, but destroyed the rails with use.



**Richard Trevithick – Gateshead / Wylam Colliery Locomotive 1809**

Intended as a lighter variation of the Pen-y-Darren.



*Tom Thumb* was the first **American-built steam locomotive** to operate on a **common-carrier railroad**. Designed and constructed by **Peter Cooper** in 1830, it was built to convince owners of the newly formed **Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O)** to use steam engines and not intended to enter revenue service.

That's a few of the more memorable versions of early 19<sup>th</sup> century gear driven locos. There were other variations tried including rod and gear driven combinations before the more recognizable side mounted piston rod design, usually with front mounted cylinders was adopted as the steam locomotive standard.

So why did locomotive manufacturers return to gear driven locomotive designs near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century if rod driven engines had become the preferred norm for railroads? Why were they produced in the thousands in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then disappear again before mid 20<sup>th</sup> century? One of the main reasons; 'Backwoods Logging'.

Rod driven engines worked great over railroads that had subtle grade changes and sweeping curves and could achieve high speeds moving people and freight from location to location quickly and efficiently. Logging in the backwoods and some mining operations presented extreme conditions that did not favor rod driven locos and usually had to be done with expensive to maintain horse or oxen power and their unique requirements and limitations.

Rough roadbed, light gauge rail, steep grades, narrow roadbeds and tight curves. The steam loco solution for those challenges would require:

- Small diameter drivers mounted in a 'truck' to follow tight radius and uneven track.
- 2, 3, and even 4 of these driven trucks to spread the weight evenly under the locomotive.
- Rod driven drive shafts to supply the power to these gear driven trucks.
- Gear reduction, often 2:1, was similar to running a 4WD vehicle in low gear. Lots of torque, very low speed. 10-15 mph was really "hauling ass" for these locomotives.
- Light weight, these locos were initially about 10 tons, about the weight of many modern backhoe or log skidding tractors. They ranged ultimately as large as about 100 tons. Conventional rod driven locos were much heavier.

Many manufacturers of these engine types enjoyed good success until the vast tracts of American forests were tapped out and timber was to be found in smaller 'pockets' and logging Skidder Tractors and Gasoline and Diesel truck technology presented cheaper and more versatile options to using steam locomotives to bringing the timber in from the woods.

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### 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.



Garden Railroad Design  
Old Trains Wanted

#### Jim's Train Sales

O & G Gauge New & Used Trains

Jim Hendley

Etowah, North Carolina 28729

Lionel, MTH, USA Trains, PIKO, LGB  
Bridgwerks Power Supplies, Bachmann  
Split-Jaw Rail Clamps, O & G Gauge Track

Email: [jhh1218@att.net](mailto:jhh1218@att.net)  
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[www.locomotionworks.com](http://www.locomotionworks.com)



Peggy Keyes  
Owner / Chief Conductor  
[RightTrackTrainMuseum@gmail.com](mailto:RightTrackTrainMuseum@gmail.com)  
828,625-5551

#### The Right Track Toy Train Museum

A non-profit museum to benefit Pancreatic Cancer  
research  
2414 Memorial Hwy (Rte 64/74)  
Lake Lure, NC 28746  
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