



THE NORTH STAR CHRONICLES – a newsletter primarily for the model railway fraternity

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Editorial

Correction:

With respect to the May NSC, a friend from the UK informed me that he had ridden behind the two 19D locos 3321 and 3322 from De Aar to Walvis Bay on a trip from Cape Town to Namibia on the Union Limited in 2004. Both locos were oil fired then. Upon checking it would appear 3322 was converted from coal in 1998 and 3321 in 1999. The last line of my friend's message was particularly interesting:

“The last time I saw both 19D's was at Voorbai, dumped and stripped of all their pipework and fittings and I certainly wouldn't have put money on either of them ever steaming again. So great to see.”

Indeed. Thank goodness for Ceres Rail who commissioned the rebuilding of the two locos.

This month will feature one of the garden layouts viewed in the UK in April. This is Nigel Town's SM32 layout in Derby. Nigel is one of a relatively small band in the UK who model South African narrow gauge. A feature is that several of his locos are coal fired.

It has to be borne in mind that my visit was in early April and although the weather was already becoming milder it was still a bit chilly and the layout had still to receive its post winter spring cleaning. The main job still to be done was to clear leaves off the track. It has also to be borne in mind that Nigel still had a considerable amount of preparatory work to do (mainly ensuring the locos ran properly!) ahead of the 16mm Narrow Gauge Exhibition at Peterborough the following week.

Track configuration

Nigel's track plan comprises a folded dog-bone from which a terminus station (Mid Illovo) diverges.



Right dog-bone loop viewed from the front with Mid Illovo at rear.



***The terminus/right hand dog-bone junction middle of photograph.
Left hand dog-bone loop junction top right.***



Setting the loco scene: A Lawley outside Mid Illovo station.

I was doubtful if this class of loco (NG6) ever ran on the twenty six and a half mile long Umlaas Road Mid Illovo line but according to the 'Soul of the Railway' (<https://sites.google.com/view/system-6-part-22-umlaas-road-m/home>) no 106 operated there between 1916 and 1924.

The main power on the line was provided by NG3/4s in the early days subsequently replaced by NGG13s and finally a NGG16 no 115.

The above loco was built by Nigel and won the MOTY (Model Of The Year) award at the Peterborough Narrow Gauge Exhibition in 2019.



Coal fired John Brittain built NG15 no 144 – one of my favourite locos/ models - this one with the instep tender.



View of the Mid Illovo terminal station with a John Brittain built coal fired NGG16 no 151 awaiting its turn for an outing.



Another view of the beautifully detailed NGG16 no 151



Coal fired, John Brittain built, NGG16A no 3900 (formerly NGG16 no 155)

34 NGG 16s were built for the SAR between 1937 and 1968, the last being produced at the Hunslet -Taylor works in Germiston. When the Alfred Count Railway was privatised in 1988, two of the class, nos 141 and 155 were rebuilt using technology similar to that employed by David Wardale in the rebuilding of the 'Red Devil' based on developments by the Argentinian engineer L D Porta.

"The Class NG G16 rebuilding incorporated a gas producing combustion system (GPCS), [Lempor](#) exhausts, an improved spark arrester, lightweight multi-ring articulated piston valves, improved valve events and improved mechanical lubrication.

The rebuilding was done by mechanical engineer (the late) Phil Girdlestone, who was employed as Chief Mechanical Engineer of the ACR primarily for this purpose. The work was carried out at Port Shepstone. The first locomotive to undergo the treatment was the Beyer, Peacock-built no. 141 in 1989.

The modifications were similar in scope to that of the Red Devil, although not as extensive. Like the Class 26, no. 141 was also painted red and nicknamed the Red Dragon. Dragon emblems were later mounted on the cab sides and bunker ends.



The second locomotive, the Hunslet-Taylor-built no. 155, was rebuilt in 1990, but it retained its traditional ex-SAR black livery. Both modified locomotives were reclassified to Class NG G16A. Source Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Class_NG_G16A_2-6-2%2B2-6-2



NGG16A in the steaming bay. Note lever for hand water pump in front tank and battery powered blower in chimney.



And the Real McCoy: NGG16A 'Red Dragon' formerly no 141 at Port Shepstone in 1990 on the late lamented Alfred County Railway. Source Wikipedia



The two NGG16A locos climbing the hill to Nquabeni c1992. Both locos now reside in operational condition at Sandstone Estates. Photo Wikipedia.



And now for something completely different.....a Funkey diesel as operated by the Eastern Province PP Cement factory in P. E. Model scratch built by Nigel. Photographed in front of model of Bratton Fleming station on the Lynton and Barnstaple (L&B) in North Devon, the L&B being Nigel's other modelling interest.

The model runs on Slater's motor/gearbox combination with all wheels being driven. Everything, including the cab, is illuminated on this model, not just directional lights. The digital "speed" readout on the dashboard is actually a voltage indicator showing the state of the battery.

The driver called Luke sits on the driver's seat fastened to a 180degree servo so Luke rotates and is always looking in the right direction.

The prototype of this loco has an interesting history. Built in 1967 by C H Funkey & Co as one of two for Consolidated Diamond Mines of Namibia, this diesel hydraulic loco was originally equipped with Caterpillar engines subsequently refitted with Cummins engines rated at 335 hp. The pair were sold to Eastern Province Cement (date unknown but they were there in 1975) where they operated on the Chelsea to New Brighton branch line transporting limestone from the quarry at Patensie to the cement works. In the early nineties after the line had closed and limestone supplies were trucked in by road the two locos were acquired by the Ffestiniog where one was used on the Welsh Highland section (unaltered) while a new body had to be built for the other because of the Ffestiniog loading gauge. The new body incorporated cabs at each end. 'Castell Caernarfon' is the original loco while 'Vale of Ffestiniog' is the rebuilt one. Nigel's loco is thus a depiction of the WHR loco.

An article by Dave Mees (whose line will feature next month!) of another model of 'Castell Caernarfon' can be viewed at

<https://www.16mm.org.uk/2013/06/01/mom2013-06/>



Funkey 'Castell Caernarfon' on the Welsh Highland

The consist in the train below will be of interest to other South African Narrow Gauge Modellers; the timber trucks were designed and built by Nigel, this is an unusual kit as Nigel designed it for strength and it is built entirely in 0.9mm steel. They are available as kits from Model Engineers Laser.

<https://www.modelengineerslaser.co.uk/Catalogue/ByScale/16mm> from the website of which the following is drawn.

“Designed by Nigel Town this is a 16mm scale model of the two foot gauge modified Type ST timber wagons used on the Alfred County Railway in South Africa. Perfect accompaniment for an NGG16 Garratt locomotive they will work equally well in any type of train carrying loads of timber logs or even just empty. All steel construction which requires soldering or gluing and a 22mm copper stop end to represent the brake cylinder. The bogie is supplied as a fret in 3mm steel to be built up and then miniature ball bearings are used for the axle ends. Accucraft Z3 wheels are required to complete which are available from various suppliers. Couplings can either be Accucraft choppers or more scale appearance cast brass choppers.”



The timber trucks are followed by a pair of B wagons. These again are entirely in 0.9mm steel. Finally bringing up the rear, the passengers are accommodated in a pair of coaches built from Triassic Models kits. Sadly, Triassic Models ceased trading, some years ago, but the good news is Resurgam Models offer kits of the same prototypes.



To complete the story, rebuilt Funkey “Vale of Ffestiniog” at Boston Lodge.



The Funkey on the 16mm Modular Layout at the Peterborough Exhibition

Clearly this is a bit of poetic licence but why not? Diesels could have run on the Port Shepstone to Harding line, certainly in Alfred County Railway days.

In conclusion, Nigel who I wish to thank for inviting me to visit the layout and assisting me with the copy of this article, reminded me I had played a tiny part in the proceedings of the loco's build. I helped Nigel figure out the colour scheme that the loco wore when it was still in South Africa by locating some photos thereof.

The End