

Bringing Lyn back to Lynton



Andrew Charman checks up on the 762 Club and its bold project to build a new Baldwin for the Lynton & Barnstaple – a project close to fruition...

The successful launch into traffic in 2010 of the Lynton & Barnstaple 2-6-2T 'Lyd' finally set the seal on the validity of the new-build locomotive concept. Just as the A1 'Tornado' had done in the standard gauge arena, the sight of Lyd in action, looking just like the Manning Wardles of the old L&B but offering vastly improved performance, showed just what could be done by taking a lost class and effectively starting afresh.

All of which has no doubt further encouraged those behind another new-build project, that will also recreate a long-scrapped loco, and within three years could be making as many headlines as Lyd. You see while the iconic 2-6-2T has visited the Lynton & Barnstaple twice, it lives on the Ffestiniog Railway in Wales, not in Devon. The rapidly growing L&B needs its own original-style loco to go with the recently beautifully restored heritage carriage set. A

project to create its own Manning Wardle 'Yeo', actually pre-dating Lyd, has been stalled since the creation of a set of frames, though the success of Lyd is stirring ideas of resurrection. To a small group of L&B members the answer was obvious – build a new version of the Baldwin 2-4-2T 'Lyn'.

To many the resultant 762 Club, set up to fund and build the loco, appears to have been around for ages, but in fact it is less than seven years old. *NGW* felt it was high time a check was made on progress, and as a chat with Technical Director Peter Best soon revealed, the prospect of a Baldwin steaming in the Devon hills is tantalisingly close...

The original

The 2-4-2T 'Lyn', works no 15965, was assembled at the L&B's Pilton works in early 1898, having been shipped in component form from Baldwin's works in Philadelphia, USA. The order was the result of the

L&B directors deciding the three original Manning Wardle 2-6-2Ts built a year earlier were not sufficient to run the anticipated services, and neither Manning Wardle or any other UK builder being able to add another order to their then full schedules. So the Devon line found itself with a very typically American loco, complete with bar frames, a wooden cab and even cowcatchers.

Lyn was not an immediate success, the L&B's founding father Sir George Newnes quoted in 1903 as saying the loco had required more work than the other three put together. Her first boiler lasted until just 1907, and a new one was made by Avonside after which the loco became more reliable, though never as popular with crews as the Manning Wardles.

After the L&B was absorbed by the Southern Railway in 1923 all the locos saw modifications, and Lyn's turn came with a major overhaul at Eastleigh works, Hampshire in 1929, resplendent in Southern green livery, with her number E762 prominent and with various improvements including the fitting of carriage steam-heating equipment.

The improvements were to be briefly enjoyed, however. The L&B closed in 1935 and at the following auction, Lyn sold for £50 (around £3,000 today), complete with spares. Not that they were needed, as the winning bidder was a scrap merchant who within days had cut the loco up at Pilton. Only a few components survived, notably the wooden cab which was sold to a former L&B driver for use as a garden shed. And that was the end of Lyn, until now...

Above: Baldwin 'Lyn' on a typical train in Southern Railway days – the new Lyn will be expected to haul trains of twice this load.

Below: Lyn rests outside Pilton sheds at Barnstaple, showing off its classic American lines.

All uncredited photos courtesy 762 club.



The 762 Club

The Lyn new-build project was born in 2007, initially the idea of Peter Miles and Tony Nicholson, and in 2009 became a Trust led by Peter, Jeremy Martin and Jon Pain. From the start it was decided that this would be a contracted-out, professionally-built locomotive.

The basis of the 762 Club was to raise money by selling a maximum of 350 memberships, each costing £762 and payable in one lump or over 30 months at £25 a time. It was felt that with such elements as Gift Aid and VAT recovery taken into account this would provide the bulk of the funds needed to build the locomotive.

Currently there are 224 members, some of whom have bought more than one membership, and with all sources included more than £250,000 has been raised to date. Peter Best took over as Technical Director in November 2012 when Jeremy Martin's job sent him to Brazil. From long experience in standard gauge restoration projects he knows that it is difficult to put an overall cost on the project as it includes the time and skills offered by various people; 'I'll make you one of those..' – hard to assign a monetary value to.

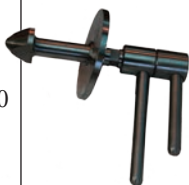
Peter admits however, that there is still quite a lot of money to find. "Broadly speaking it's likely to cost around half a million," he says during a meeting at the Ross-on-Wye works of renowned rail engineers Alan Keef & Sons. "We are more than halfway, and with some sponsorship deals we feel we've got, we've likely got the equivalent of £300,000."

It's an encouraging percentage, and as we'll see shortly roughly coincides with the amount of metal cut – because the actual build of Lyn has been underway for some time.

The new Lyn

Like Lyd, the new Lyn will be a replica in visual terms only. At an early stage the Club signed up Ian Gaylor, a professional designer heavily involved in the ZB locos of the Bure Valley Railway, and draughtsman Mike Nelson. In agreeing to provide a home for the completed loco the Lynton & Barnstaple had issued a firm required specification – looking forward to the hopefully not-too-distant future when the line will stretch rather further than its current mile, the loco needs to haul six L&B heritage carriages unaided, this being the most the stations are expected to accommodate. The original Lyn hauled only four vehicles, so a 50 per cent increase in tractive effort.

Ian and Mike have used great skills, and been given a free hand, to incorporate as much new railway



Top: Unusually the build started with the boiler – seen here under construction, it is now complete with its smokebox fitted, and ready for smaller components such as the completed dart and handles seen above.

Below: Like the driving wheels (inset) the wheels for the leading and trailing trucks have been cast and are seen here with Technical Director Peter Best after arrival at Alan Keef & Sons. Photo: Andrew Charman

technology as possible, so long as the loco looks visually identical to the original. Work done on draughting by Porta and by Wardale in South Africa, has been absorbed. The new Lyn's working pressure will be 250psi, compared to the 180psi of its predecessor. It will have a Kylchap blastpipe, piston, not slide valves, roller bearings throughout...

All of the drawings have been translated into SolidWorks CAD software enabling the whole engine to be modelled and to prove it will work. "It will make use of all the advances not available to the original builders," says Peter. "In fact we've probably had more freedom than they did with Lyd – Manning Wardle's drawings for the 2-6-2Ts survive whereas Baldwin's do not, so we were able to start from scratch."

Progress to date

The design is 80 per cent complete, but there is a lot more than fancy computer models to see, with around 60 per cent of the loco's metal already cut. An unusual early decision was not to begin, as is traditionally the case, with the frames. The cab was the first item

built, the boiler the first major component. "It may seem slightly back to front but the project initiators felt that a completed boiler would make a big statement of intent."

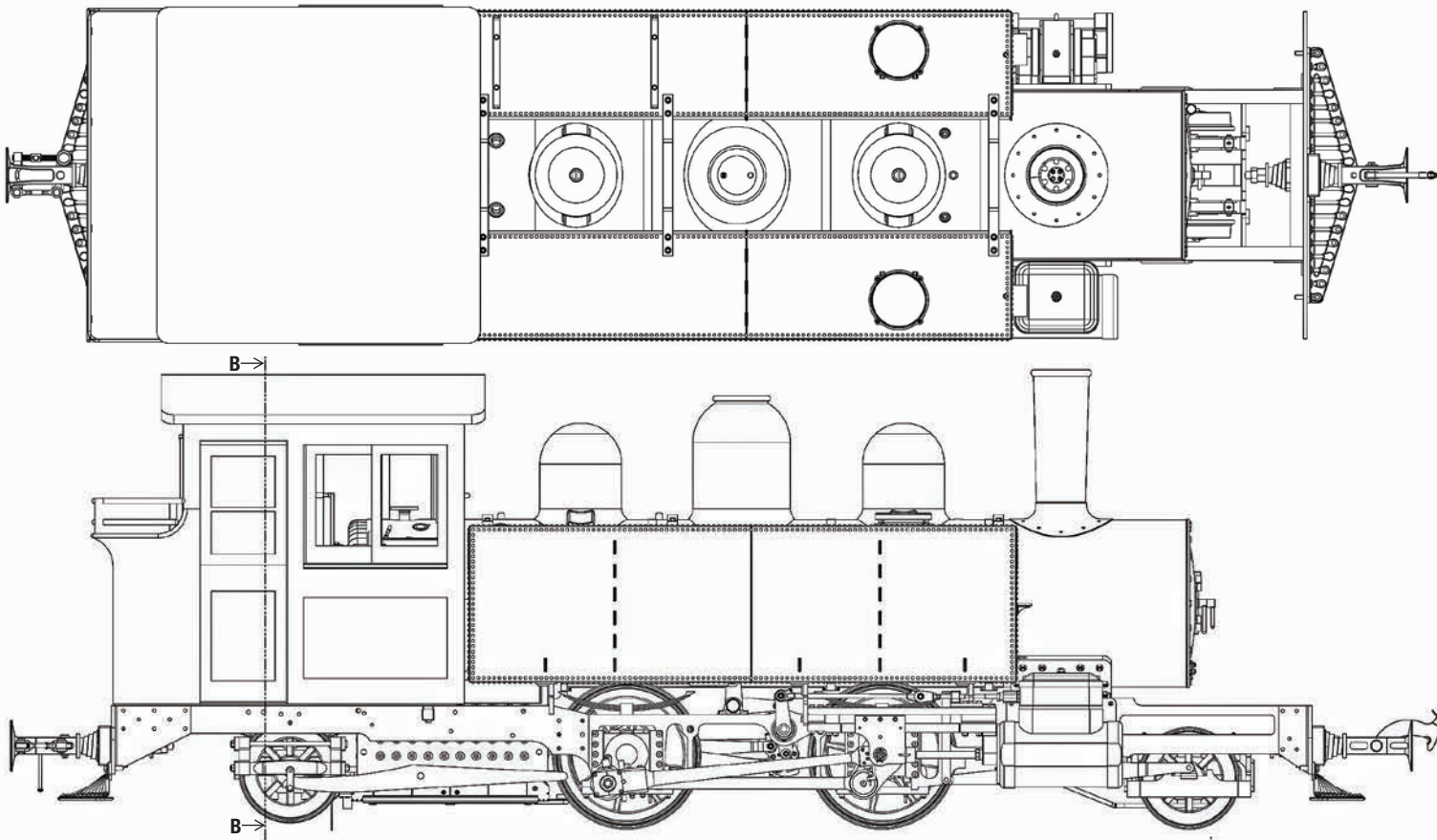
Andy Bennett of Bennett Boilers Ltd in Somerset was commissioned to build Lyn's boiler, and not only is it nearly complete, it has had the finished smokebox hung on its front.

The boiler has already been to Devon, to the L&B's Gala and the Spring event on 10th-11th May 2014 will see the wheel sets on show. The driving wheels have been machined, and at Alan Keef's we were able to view the pony truck wheels, newly arrived for machining and making up into complete sets, with axles, for display at the Gala – a major statement of intent...

Keef has a major role to play in the project, having been contracted to erect the loco and conduct its initial tests. It will then appear at the L&B's Woody Bay base before moving to the Welsh Highland

Railway for a >>



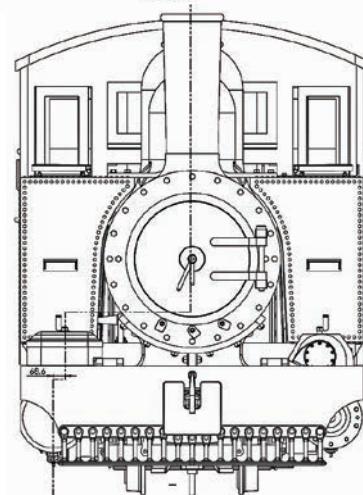


period of running in. So more components will be arriving in Ross-on-Wye in coming weeks. The distinctive wooden cab is finished, while construction of the side tanks has been sponsored, with the bunker likely to be similarly backed. The smokebox door, chimney assembly, the complex boiler saddle, pistons

and valves, cylinder and valve covers are all finished. An order is about to be placed for the cylinder assemblies, with delivery planned for May 2014.

All of which will leave as the only major components remaining the frames and the motion. Peter says that the US-style bar frames in fact represent a relatively modest cost,

“If plans go well, Peter believes the loco could be finished by the end of 2015...”



around £40,000. They will be flame cut and bolted together, and he would like to be commissioning them in around June 2014. This depends very much on available funding, for more than one reason. Patrick Keef will want to see clear evidence that the project is fully funded before he allocates space in his not exactly spacious premises for assembly of a large narrow gauge locomotive. But if plans go well, Peter believes the loco could be finished by the end of 2015 – just two years time...

Getting involved

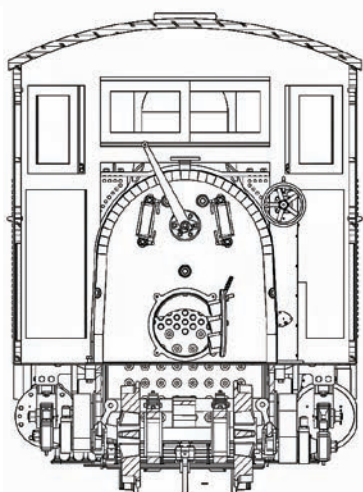
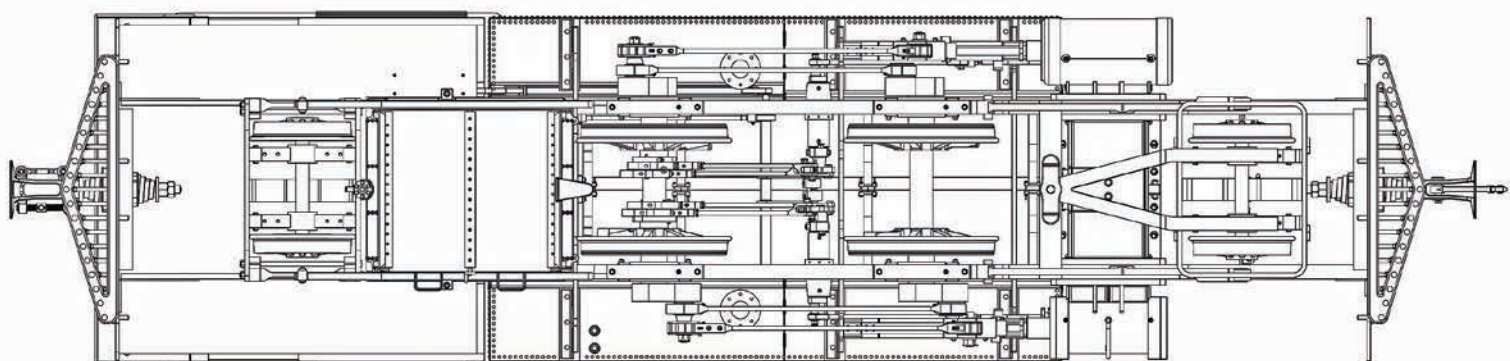
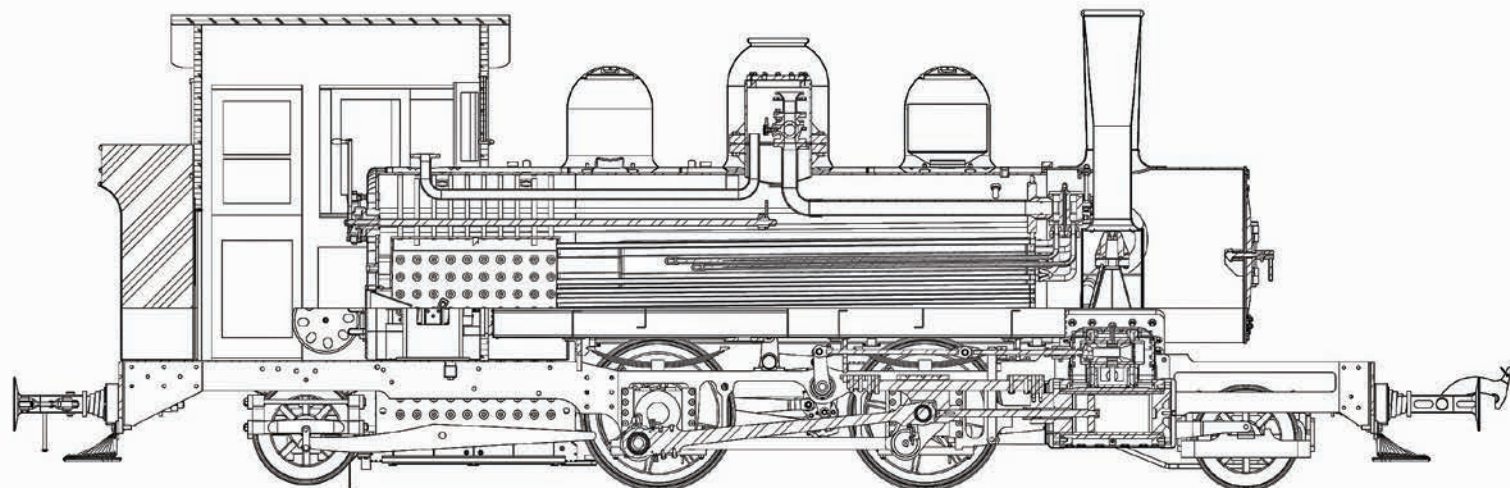
So with such a tempting timescale, if you haven't yet got involved with the Lyn project, now is definitely time to do so. The obvious way is to pay the £762 to become a full member of the club, or for £1,000 join the Lyn

The drawings above, reproduced to approx 7mm/ft scale, are courtesy the 762 Club, loco designer Ian Gaylor and draughtsman Mike Nelson.

Above left: One of the many smaller but no less distinctive components seen under construction, the cowcatchers, both front and rear versions are now complete.

Left: One of the earliest parts of the loco to be made was the US-style cab, of typical wooden construction.





Drivers Club and look forward to a full day firing and driving the loco in their first year of service.

The team realises, however, that many people simply don't have such amounts of money sitting around. A recent scheme launched on the club's website and involving the sponsoring of individual components has captured many people's imagination. While most parts on offer have been high value ticket items (the most expensive the firehole door at £3,500), a 'component of the month' promotion, a recent example being driver's vacuum brake valve at £450, has proven very successful. Currently least expensive is an Expansion Link Pivot Pin Retaining Collar, four of which are required at £20 each, and even cheaper items, such as a number of fastenings

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The picture at right is a rare early hand-coloured shot of Lyn arriving at Barnstaple in pre-Southern days, with her carriages in the same private owner livery the restored vehicles recently arrived at Woody Bay wear. Before long such a rake should be able to be recreated - for real...

required, will soon join the list.

Peter accepts that there is also a need for an inbetween stage, along the lines of a Friends organisation with an annual subscription, and he's discussing this with the team. But a major issue is the lack of time available among the small group masterminding the project, and so the 762 Club is currently looking for two, or more, essential new members.

A fundraiser could seek out sources of funding such as grants, which could greatly enhance the completion date. Similarly a couple of tame machinists could greatly aid progress by producing various components that currently have to be contracted out, saving the project both time and money. If either of these roles sound like you, Peter will be very pleased to hear from you...

Once complete the locomotive will remain in the ownership of the 762 Club but the Lynton & Barnstaple will be its custodians.

"They should be running to Blackmoor Gate by then," says Peter, "so should have a shed big enough to look after her in..."

The Lyn project is a lot further advanced than many people realise, and with a firm push it could easily surmount the hurdles that remain. In just two years' time the pages of *NGW* could feature pictures of a Baldwin in undercoat running trials on the WHR, before being painted and lined (another job already organised) and heading for the Lynton & Barnstaple... **NGW**

More Information

The website at www.762club.com contains full details of the project, including CAD drawings of various parts of the loco, as well as details of how you can get involved - by taking out membership, sponsoring one or more of the components listed, or volunteering your services in other ways. There's something for all!

