

The ET TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ET&WNC RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Spring Hike Coming Up Soon; Museum Receives Grant Funding; Tweetsie Plows Snow!

We've got another late winter visit to the ET&WNC right-of-way planned for March 16th. If you came along last year, come again. We'll continue our tracking the ROW with additional locations that will stand out without the summer foliage. The backup date is March 23rd. Please get in touch with Jerry Turbyfill if you plan to come with your phone/email contact, so he can plan accordingly. This high country saw some winter weather in December and Chris Robbins tells us more in his column later in this issue. We also have big news from the Avery County Museum!

2019 marks the centennial of train service to Boone. It lasted only 21 years before Mother Nature and changing economic times put an end to narrow gauge trains to the high country of Watauga County. Also in 1919, the ET took delivery of #14, the last locomotive the railroad would buy new.

Some other "9" year anniversaries: 1929 marked the final year for the Cranberry Mine and Carnegie Furnace; 1939 was the final year for service from Montezuma to Pineola; 1949 was the last year #12 ran in ET&WNC service; in 1959 Tweetsie purchased the 190 from the White Pass; in 1989 the Society gathered for the first time in Boone; and 10 years ago in 2009 we received the HOn3 ten-wheelers from *Train and Trooper*. Let's make some more memories in 2019!

Our convention will be May 31 - June 2 in Johnson City. The Carnegie Hotel has a block of rooms set aside for us and they're taking reservations now. Please make sure to tell them you're with the ET&WNCRRHS as they also have rooms set aside for The Big Train Show vendors and they fill up before our rooms do.

Curtis Brookshire, Editor 🇺🇸



December 2018. Photo courtesy of Tweetsie Railroad.

News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

Linville Depot & Caboose 505 at the Avery County Museum

Society Vice-President Jerry Turbyfill and Tense Banks send the latest from Newland, NC –

The Avery County Historical Society and Museum is pleased to announce the receipt of \$15,000 in grant money. The monies are for restoration of the ET&WNC Railroad Caboose #505. Tense Banks, Museum Chair, stated the funds resulted from two grants, one of \$5,000.00 from the Covington Foundation and another of \$10,000.00 from the Cannon Foundation. The Covington Foundation founded by Marion Stedman Covington is recognized for its contribution to the preservation of North Carolina history and historic sites. The Cannon Foundation and the Cannon name are well known to Avery County residents through the past work of Mariam Cannon Hayes in many philanthropic endeavors including Cannon Memorial Hospital.

Work on the restoration of Caboose 505 was begun after it was gifted to the Museum by Frank Winston and Ken Riddle. The historically correct renovations, both time consuming and expensive are being carried out by architect Joel Shipley and board member Jerry Turbyfill. Turbyfill stated that the \$15,000.00 will allow him to finish the restorations. The Avery County Museum Board greatly appreciates the work of grant writers and the grant foundations for helping us preserve an important piece of our mountain history. So, how is the caboose restoration progressing? Despite an autumn filled with bad weather, Jerry got the tin roof installed on the caboose. As weather permits, he'll work on trim later on. As this goes to press Jerry is starting to put the windows in the cupola and will move on to the sides and ends. There are two windows already done and Jerry says it's a lot more involved than meets the eye. Following that he'll work on the interior to include a fresh coat of gray paint.

If you visited the shop at Tweetsie last year, you may have seen a Linville River Railway depot safe there. Well through the generosity of its owner and Chris Robbins' wish to have it publicly displayed, the safe now resides in the freight room of the Linville Depot. Chris coordinated with the safe's owner to temporarily loan the safe to the Avery County Museum. We don't know how long it gets to stay in Newland so stop by and see it next time you are able. Visit the museum's new website at: www.averycountymuseum.com 🚂

George L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU

Fred J. Alsop III, Director of the museum, sends us this –

The Ken Marsh Gallery houses the 1,300 sq ft HOn3 ET&WNC RR layout that has been under development for six years now. It is, perhaps, the largest layout depicting the "Tweetsie" in this scale. The 2018 edition of the HOn3 Annual arrived in early November and featured this layout for the 5th consecutive year. There was a ten-page story by Geoff Stunkard with photographs by Geoff, Logan Heaton and Fred Alsop. The cover featured our model of the west end of tunnel #5 with a "Tweetsie" ten-wheeler pulling a consist of flats with boiler plate loads headed west. There's also an article on ET&WNC hoppers 47 and 48 by Brad Slone and a very

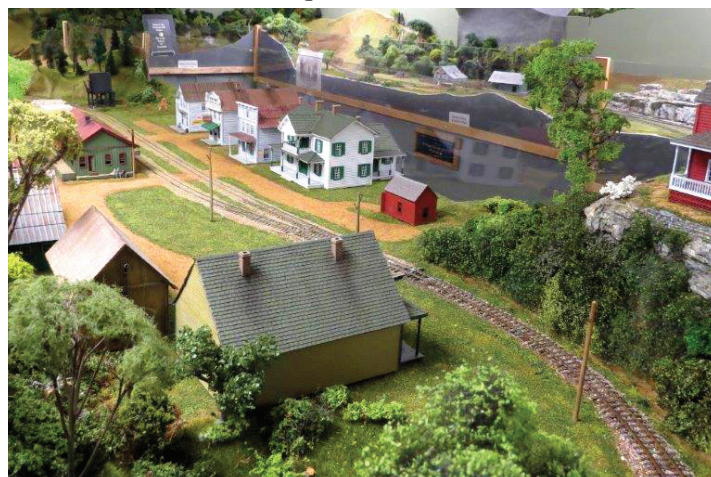
interesting article about mining and ET&WNC hopper cars by Johnny Graybeal.

Most of our work since early May has focused on the little mountain town of Roan Mountain. Retired Union General John T. Wilder built much of the commercial district of the town including the Roan Mountain Inn. Using photographs and measurements of the three original buildings that were still standing (one has since been torn down to widen the road for a new bridge), I have constructed twelve buildings, including the famous Inn, to fit into the space on the layout that we have dedicated for it. Much of the work had to be based on one photograph taken circa 1909 from a hilltop looking west over the town. The little business district now boasts two residences, eight commercial buildings, the depot and the Inn. Still to be completed will be the forestation of the backdrop mountainside, creating the Doe River and the bridge crossing it, and detailing the town with vegetation, fencing, and all the little people and their belongings that will bring it further to life.

I have made the drawings of the four buildings that made up the whistle-stop called Crabtree west of Roan Mountain over the Christmas holidays; two houses, a freight station and the Methodist Church. While John Edwards converts my scale drawings to a cad program that will operate our laser knife, and cuts out the pieces for me to use to construct the models, I will turn my attention to the landscaping of that section of the layout and complete the scenery on the Roan Mountain section.

Johnson City kicked off its celebration of its 150th anniversary on Saturday, January 5, 2019 and the Carter RR Museum was involved with a showcasing of our museum and the ET&WNC RR layout. More than 120 visitors came to tour the museum that day. We will continue to participate with special events commemorating our railroad heritage every Saturday throughout January.

We eagerly seek any ET&WNC photographs you may let us copy to help us create in miniature this little mountain railroad in the 1920's. Come visit the Carter RR Museum whenever you can. We are open on Saturdays from 10 am to 3 pm and we work on the exhibits each Thursday evening. Visit our website: www.memrr.org 🚂



In the center of this view of Roan Mountain is the house owned by Pierce Julian, who operated the clothing and shoe store to its left. The next building to the left of that is the S.B. Wood Pharmacy. Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.

Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum

Matt Bumgarner has this news from Newton, NC –

The last few months were quiet at the SE Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum. On the outside, we moved the three narrow gauge Lawndale cars to our car shop and began the work of stabilizing and cleaning the cars. Unfortunately, the car in the worst shape, a former Chester & Lenoir Narrow Gauge car dating from the mid-1870's is going to need a lot more than initially thought. Nevertheless, we have done more with worse, and we are still proud to have the car in our collection. We now have ten pieces of narrow gauge stock in the collection, as well as another eight pieces of geographically relevant standard gauge equipment. We also managed to move (original) NS Caboose 376 to a new display track next to the depot in an ongoing move to enhance and improve our 5-acre campus. Inside the shop, work is coming to a close on West VA Midland Baggage Car #1. Her roof was installed in October, and now her interior is almost finished and the exterior siding still waiting for one last coat of Pullman brown (think UPS Brown, the original Pullman color). Visit our website at: www.newtondepot.com 🚂

News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

The 2018 HON3 Annual from White River Productions has some great ET&WNC content that you should check out regardless of what scale you model (or if you model at all). Here's a chance to check out the 3d printed models available from Shapeways. Bill Miller also provides a materials list for super detailing these unique models.

Johnny Graybeal tells the story of how the ET used their hopper cars in mine, coal and stone business. And the big feature is the latest from the Carter Museum layout at ETSU focusing on tunnel 5 and Roan Mountain. Purchase your copy of this latest issue now at: <https://shop.whiteriverproductions.com> 🚂

In the last years after the mail contract was gone there still was work to do between Cranberry and the west end. The flooring plant in Roan Mountain was still shipping, and there was a little coal to move to Avery County schools and some LCL stuff like drums of motor oil, bulk items to be broken down for resale, and automobile and truck tires.

They moved trains as all extra moves after there was no mail contract, with the exception of the labor trains to Bemberg that ran on the same shift schedule as the rayon plants. Remind me to tell you about the man they ran over in Uncle Bob Hazelwood's cornfield with the labor train one day. As far as that goes I need to tell you about Uncle Bob one day too. He was an interesting old man for sure.

One thing that never did slow down as a freight commodity was "Mead Wood". Mead Wood was the local name for pulpwood that was loaded from the storage area in Cranberry below the depot and beside the creek. Local people sold it to the big paper mill in Kingsport, Tennessee that was owned by the Mead Corporation. They would cut it in the mountains then truck it to Cranberry where the wood was measured out by the cord or face cord and recorded so they could collect their money from the mill after it got to Kingsport. If you don't know a cord of wood is four feet high, four feet thick, and eight feet long. A face cord is the same except it is only two feet thick. After it was measured and the amount recorded it was loaded onto hoppers or boxcars and the train took it to the west end where it was transferred to standard gauge and sent on the Clinchfield to Kingsport. The mill then sent the payment of the consigned timber to the people that cut it.

The trains were handled in a unique way in those days, especially if they were heavy. Remember, after the war there were two yard crews through the week on the ET&WNC. One crew would take a train of stuff for the rayon plants and drop it at Bemberg where it would be worked into the plants or up the tipple by the other crew or the plant guys with the old Pot.

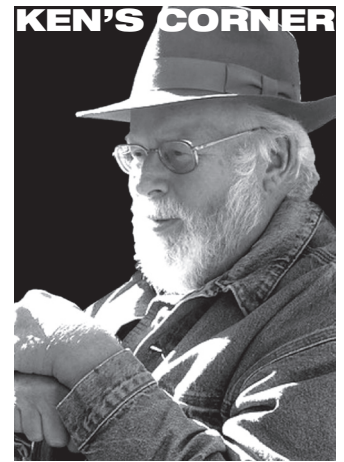
After they dropped the Bemberg work they came to O'Brien's Crossing light or with a hopper or two of company coal for the engines, as they had a conveyor there after the coal chute was abandoned. There they would turn over the 205 or 206 to the hostler, usually Donnie Palmer, who would have the 11 or 12 ready for the day's work. The 204 was the best engine so it stayed on the other yard job about all the time if it was in service. Donnie would bank off the standard gauge engine and tend to the company coal.

The crew took the narrow gauge engine and headed east with the all narrow gauge train. If the load was heavy they would cut the train in two clear of the highway between the covered bridge at Rittertown and the mouth of tunnel two at the west end of the gorge. They would drag it to Shell Creek and cut the first half in two and double the State Line Hill to Elk Park, where they would tie it down and run light back to Rittertown and grab the back half and repeat the drill. When they had everything back together at Elk Park they would pump the train off and eat lunch on the depot platform. After lunch they would go on to Cranberry and gather up what was going back to Cowtown and head west tender first. There was no wye on the west end after the labor trains were taken off. On the way home the crew would work out Roan Mountain and anything else headed west. When they returned to O'Brien, the little engine spotted the cars where it could be transferred, repaired, or scrapped, mounted to the readied standard gauge engine, and headed to Bemberg and got water.

The outbound Elizabethton and Bemberg stuff that the other job couldn't pull up Buffalo was spotted at Bemberg. The crew would tie onto it and drag it over the hill to Johnson City, often (and every Monday) having to double from Bemberg to Johnson City. Keep in mind at that time Mr. Hobbs had relaid the main line with 100 pound steel and it was fifty mile-an-hour track and coming through Watauga point and Sycamore Shoals they would push those old engines hard and fast to get a run on Buffalo. Those were the days!

If the crew wasn't about to go on the law they would work out the loads from Elizabethton, but most of the time they would law out before that got done. If they lawed out before they left Bemberg two shop men would bring the train home.

Now wouldn't you have liked to go along with them one pretty day!



Ken Riddle 🚂

Doe River Gorge

Mark Millbourne reports from Hampton, TN –

Once the fall school groups and fall color runs are done, not a lot happens on the railroad. There is regular track inspection and ongoing maintenance. Late summer into the fall I made an initial go at having handbrakes fabricated for the two new cars. We got one installed for fall colors, but found it needs some tweaking. So we have to do that and then replicate it on the other car. We may get that done soon if this mild weather continues! As you probably heard, the Fall Family Fun Festival was something of a bust this year between poor weather and very late fall color. We had less than 500 riders total over both days. The main thing after fall colors is waiting for the leaves to come down and blowing off the ROW to extend the life of the

ties. Normally we get this done by Thanksgiving, but between the leaves coming down late and then rain, cold and/or snow, the final section wasn't completed until just before Christmas. Some work has been done on the Crown. Cody reports that "the master mechanic's smoke box is just about finished and we're working on a new ash pan and grates." The electric motorcar needs new batteries and some other TLC, so that will be another spring project. Nothing has been finalized on a master plan for the new cars, but if that can be hammered out soon, the cars could be getting painted and hopefully steps and other improvements soon as spring weather allows. Last year we launched an Outdoor Education program, so we hope to attract a lot of school groups in the spring (which would include a train ride). Visit our website at: www.doerivergorge.com 🚂

Tweetsie Railroad Happenings

Chris Robbins sends us this from Blowing Rock, NC –



We are pleased to report that Tweetsie Railroad had a good 2018 season...which would probably have been much better if it had not been the wettest year ever recorded. Our second Tweetsie Christmas event was also successful. We battled rainy, icy and snowy weekends...but, fortunately, visitors came no matter what the weather. On Tweetsie Railroad's Facebook page, you can see a great video of the plow our Engineering crew rigged up on the pilot of number 12 to push 18" of snow out of the way.

Many park visitors know Matt Ernst, who has been driving Tweetsie Railroad's locomotives on weekends for several years and mentoring a new generation of steam locomotive engineers and firemen. In November, Matt became Tweetsie Railroad's full-time Engineering Director; as such, he is in charge of the trains, their operation, and all things mechanical. We are delighted to have Matt on board.

Tweetsie Railroad is looking forward to opening day on April 5th. Our full season schedule is being updated on our web site as our event dates get firmed up, but be sure to mark your calendars for Railroad Heritage Weekend on August 24-25th. Have a great 2019! Visit the website: tweetsie.com 🚂



Blevins Depot on the Carter Museum ET&WNC RR layout. Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.



LRRy safe at Tweetsie Railroad Heritage Weekend 2018. Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.

December 2018.
Photo courtesy of
Tweetsie Railroad.



Doe River
Gorge in
snow 2016.
Photo
courtesy of
Benjamin
Burton.