



FOUNDED IN 1989

The ET TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ET&WNC RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July 2021
Volume 23
Number 1

Board of Directors

Officers

Chris Ford, *President*
901-497-0809
chris@cfordart.com

Curtis Brookshire, *Vice President*
703-772-7002
curtis.brookshire@verizon.net

Sharon Stewart, *Secretary*
tuttyjane42@gmail.com

Patricia Jennings, *Treasurer*
pjdrg2006@yahoo.com

Board Members

Johnny Graybeal, *Past President*
Joel Shipley
Dr. Fred Alsop III
Jerry Turbyfill

Newsletter Editor & Society Historian

Curtis Brookshire
curtis.brookshire@verizon.net

Society Website

www.etwncrrhs.org

Address any inquiries to -

The ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society

PO Box 70697
ETSU
Johnson City, TN 37614

National Narrow Gauge Convention Right Around the Bend – Tweetsie Heritage Days and Steam in the Gorge Coming Up!

The 41st National Narrow Gauge Convention in Hickory is just weeks away and I hope as many of you as can will attend. You'll be able to experience most of what we would have done at our annual ET&WNC RR Historical Society meeting plus a whole lot more. The Carter Museum and Doe River Gorge will welcome convention guests and there's a special trip to "Tweetsie Country" including right-of-way highlights and exclusive events at Tweetsie Railroad. The Southeast Narrow Gauge and Short Line Museum is only 14 minutes from the convention center and they're making special preparations to welcome guests from across the country. The Hickory Convention Center will host dozens of clinics with at least four of them by ET Society members. Clinics will cover a wide variety of subjects, many dealing with modeling, others with prototype operations or historical preservation. There will be layouts to see, both at the convention center and home layouts spread throughout the local region. And then there's the vendor's hall. There you'll feel like a kid in a candy shop. Convention chairs Johnny Graybeal and Matt Bumgarner, who also hosted the 31st NNGC in 2011 have assembled a great team to bring this event to life. Many of us (me included) are reprising our roles from ten years ago. So come on over to Hickory and meet fellow narrow gaugers from near and far.

Now, closer to home, let's see what's happening around the ET&WNC neighborhood...Tweetsie Railroad plans to host its Annual Heritage Weekend at the end of August...the crew over at the ETSU Carter Museum continues their work on the HOn3 ET layout, plus something special...and speaking of special, look at what's happening at the Doe River Gorge – Good Lord willing and the creeks don't rise – we'll get to ride behind **STEAM** again in the Gorge...and there's also a never-before-offered model available of a rare piece of ET&WNC rolling stock.

When all the excitement calms down and it starts getting colder again, we'll roll out our plans for the 2022 ET&WNC Historical Society Convention. So, fellow members, read on.

Curtis Brookshire, Editor

From the workbench of your Society President –

Hey y'all! On behalf of the Historical Society, I'd like to congratulate Johnny and Matt and their entire team for taking on the monumental task of organizing and putting on a National Convention. The magnitude of something of this scale is not to be taken lightly, even by seasoned folks. My hope is that this venue will fill some of the void left by the cancellation of our own Society Convention and give those of us hankering for some "ET time" something to remember for this 2021 summer. Thanks from all of us!

CFORD

News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

George L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU with focus on the ET&WNC RR HOn3 layout

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

The Carter Railroad Museum continues to be open to the public every Saturday from 10-3, but it is a little more difficult to reach us these days. An adjacent university building is now undergoing major renovation and the parking lot we jointly use is now a contractor's staging area for the next 2 years. You will have to park a little further away to visit us, but we are always making changes to the layouts in the museum, and it will be worth the walk and the minimum exercise you will derive from it.

The Mountain Empire Model Railroaders layout is undergoing major changes on several of the modules nearest the gallery entrance with depot work being done on one side and a mountain scene, complete with a logging enterprise, being constructed on the other side. The N-scale "Knoxville" layout is getting fresh scenery to replace the faded lichens the original builder used for much of the "vegetation", and it is looking much brighter.

Two major structure projects have been completed on the ET&WNC RR HOn3 layout, and a third one has just begun. The five major structures that constitute the Johnson City yard; the 3-stall car shop, the carpenter shop, the oil and sand house, the "mystery" single stall house, and the 3-stall engine house, along with a small coal bunker and a water standpipe have been completed. Landscaping of the yard is to follow. The "mystery" building mentioned above only appears in one distant aerial photo that we have of the yard buildings, but we know it was there connected to the left-hand stall of the engine house. Additionally, the coal chute that stood at the east end of Elizabethton has also been completed, installed, and the scenery surrounding it, including a couple of cornfields, are now in place. Member Michael Sager hand-laid a dual-gauge turnout to complete the connection of the ramp from the coal chute to the mainline as not a single right-hand turnout with

the narrow-gauge track on the right-hand side could be found anywhere, including from the manufacturer.

The newest project involving structures is the little railroad town of Elk Park, NC. The only structure we will not have to create from historic photos and build is the depot, as the second depot (the first one burned down) was available as a commercial kit. So far, I have drawn approximately a dozen buildings that graced the center of the community around the train station to scale. Ben Merritt is using our laser knife to cut out the pieces from CAD drawings that Bill Smith has transferred to this software from my drawings. In a few months we should have most of the buildings from that community in place around our mainline, along with the hillside landscaping that it nestled in. To date, A.P. Brinkley's 1910 store and the bank buildings are the only main street buildings that have been completed.

We have also received a couple of prototype ET&WNC pieces on loan from Michael Allison that are now on display. We have the original number plate from Linville River RR locomotive #9 and the shift lever from engine #6. The museum will co-host a rail excursion in Knoxville on the Three Rivers Rambler RR followed by a luncheon cruise on the paddle-wheeler, The Star of Knoxville. Check the memrr.org website for details of this October 30th day-trip from ETSU. We are planning our Annual Big Train Show for early June of 2022 after two years absence in the 64,000 sq. ft. ETSU Mini-Dome. Details will follow and we hope to see you for both of these events. Come visit us whenever you can and see all these changes for yourself. Information about events and layouts can be found on our website at www.memrr.org ■

News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

From Facebook (which your editor is not a member), we have an announcement of a model never before offered. Benjamin Merritt, a student at ETSU, has a 3D printed kit in HOn3 for the ET&WNC caboose #503. That's the small caboose with no cupola, which served as a crew dorm in Boone in later years. If you do have Facebook, check out **Merritt 3D Designs & Printing**.

From Benjamin's Facebook page: We are excited to officially announce our debut of the ET&WNC caboose 503 (cupola-less caboose) model in HOn3 scale! We hope this brings excitement to your July 4 holiday, send us a message or email us at merrittb@etsu.edu to place an order. Caboose Kit: \$55.00 (excludes trucks and couplers) Shipping (US only): \$5.00

Modelers attending the 41st NNGC will have admission to the vendor's hall featuring dozens of dealers offering just about everything one could need for modeling. Most vendors will have special offers and sale prices on many of their items exclusively for the convention. Look to see 3D printed ET&WNC models from Western Rail as well as track, scenery materials, command control systems, tools, books and more. Many convention-goers find that the Vendor Room is their favorite place. For more information, visit www.41nngc.com ■



The 3-stall engine house and the carpenter shop are ready for scenery at the Johnson City yard facilities, with other structures to follow. *Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.*

Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum

Matt Bumgarner has this news from Newton, NC –

Work over the last few months at the SE Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum has focused on infrastructure and property improvements in anticipation of the upcoming Narrow Gauge Convention. Repairs to our depot museum roof and touch-up painting, as well as painting our warehouse adjoining our growing rail yard has all taken place. We have also:

- Moved a 40-ft Southern Railway boxcar into the yard to act as a temporary shop
- Fabricated and mounted end railings on our narrow gauge West Virginia Midland #1 baggage car
- In conjunction with an Eagle Scout project, nearly finished painting the 1890 Harrisburg Tank Car into her original colors.
- In our Model Railroad Center, a complete loop can now be made on the new HO/HOn3 layout
- A local landmark HO layout- “Wade’s Train Town” was moved into the MRC. The creator of the layout, Wade Warren, was a paraplegic who built the 22 x 28 ft layout in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. While not a showcase for “modeling” per se, the sheer size and density of what is packed into the layout is amazing given the physical limits of its creator, and additionally, any model railroader over the age of 40 will appreciate the nostalgia of seeing close to every structure ever offered in the era from Tyco, AHM, Model Power, Lifelike, Pola, and Atlas.

We hope to see everyone at the Convention (and the week before at Heritage Weekend at Tweetsie). Visit our website at www.newtondepot.com 🚂

Linville Depot & Caboose 505 at the Avery County Historical Museum

Aneda Johnson and Jerry Turbyfill send us this from Newland, NC –

The Avery County Museum and historic Linville Depot are looking forward to visitors on the National Narrow Gauge Convention bus tour. The depot houses artifacts from the railroad and has been restored to its mid-1920s appearance. ET&WNC Railroad caboose 505 has now been professionally lettered and numbered.

The main museum is looking forward to updating its music room with an interactive exhibit featuring local bluegrass musicians Brooke and Darin Aldridge. Brooke won Female Vocalist of the Year from the International Bluegrass Music Assoc.

Later this year the museum will be part of the Newland Christmas Variety Show along with the local parade. The museum is on the Avery County Chamber of Commerce’s (<https://averycounty.com>) list of things to do, which can help you keep current with what’s coming up. More info is available on our website at www.averymuseum.com 🚂

Doe River Gorge

Mark Milbourne reports from Hampton, TN –

Doe River Gorge is very grateful, after a year of COVID, to not just have summer camps going again, but to also have an

enrollment about the same as 2019! So this is our busy season, and the railroad is likewise busy. For parents dropping their kids off for camp, we offer the scenic ride into the gorge. And during the week, motorcars are kept busy shuttling campers to three different activities located in the gorge. Our Saturday Day Quest events were one thing that was able to continue last year with masks on the train ride, and of course have resumed this year, thankfully without masks.

DQ attendance this year started out on the light side in June, but July and August are nearly fully booked, already surpassing 2019. For a given DQ date, we start with a schedule of four trains and then add up to three more depending on reservations, so the rest of the season will be seeing six and seven trains per Saturday! The narration on these rides always includes some ET&WNC history and stories, to the obvious enjoyment of many.

We have recently heard that the National Narrow Gauge Convention is expecting to bring at least one busload on August 31, and of course both they and we are hoping that their trip to Pardee Point can be steam hauled.

In the last newsletter we mentioned the ambitious project to upgrade the track with additional crossties to make it able to safely handle the Crown locomotive. We also mentioned the challenges of getting these into the ground, since much manual labor was still required, in spite of having loan of a tie inserter machine. Several volunteers rose to join the task, with one recruiting three fit young men, siblings, from his church, who had the energy to do much of the trenching that would have killed the rest of us, uh, more senior guys. And thankfully, the actual number of ties needed turned out to be less than estimated, about 220, which we were able to get inserted by the end of May, just in time before camp season hit. It remains for them to be tamped and spiked, which is difficult to spend time on during camp season, but plans are being made to tackle this in early August, as soon as camp is over. To expedite this task, a 35# electric demolition hammer, with both tamping spade and spike driving cup, has been acquired, thanks to the generosity of a recent visitor who saw firsthand the hard work involved in doing this by hand! So we are optimistic about having the track ready for the Crown.

Work on the Crown itself has been able to continue somewhat over the summer and likewise there seems to be a good chance of it being ready for NNGC, as long as the state boiler man can make it by then. We’ve been given permission to do a few test firings, but he will need to come and sign it off before it can operate for the public. So keep your fingers crossed and plan to come with the NNGC!

Doe River Gorge will again be offering its “Maze of Life” corn maze/fall festival event which debuted last fall and was very successful in spite of COVID. The corn was just planted and is already starting to sprout. October this year gives us five full weekends and it will be offered every Saturday and Sunday. In addition to the regular scenic train ride, a night time ride is also an option, which is a very different and unique experience. Basic details were just posted on the website and while pre-registration is not required, it is recommended and will be available soon. And given the imminent availability of the Crown, it is certainly possible that some train rides for this event will be steam hauled!

Visit our website for more info at www.doerivergorge.com 🚂

Tweetsie Railroad Happenings

Chris Robbins sends this from Blowing Rock, NC –



Two big events of interest to ET&WNC fans are coming up soon. Tweetsie's Railroad Heritage Weekend takes place Saturday and Sunday, August 28th and 29th. Plus National Narrow Gauge Convention attendees can attend an exclusive special event on Thursday, September 2nd.

Tweetsie's Railroad Heritage Weekend Schedule as of July 24, 2021. Schedule subject to change.

All Railroad Heritage Weekend activities are included in Tweetsie Railroad's regular daily admission price with one exception: A \$5 per passenger donation is required to ride the special 1870s vintage No. 5 Coach Car, pulled by one of our historic locomotives. All donations will go towards supporting East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad preservation projects.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28TH

10:00am Park Opens

View and photograph the morning locomotive preparations after the park opens. The Train Shop will be closed to visitors at this time, but available for a tour later in the day.

10:30am-5:30pm Memorabilia Room is open in the Tweetsie Junction

See historic and rare artifacts from Tweetsie Railroad's past, and view documentaries about the ET&WNC and Tweetsie Railroad's historic locomotives.

10:30am-5:00pm Locomotive No. 190 (former White Pass & Yukon "Yukon Queen") Wild West Train

Ride behind steam locomotive No. 12 (built 1917) as she transports Guests and Railfans alike on a 3-mile journey back into the Old West. Boarding on Main Street.

11:00am-4:45pm Locomotive No. 12 (former ET&WNC "Tweetsie") and Coach No. 5

Climb aboard Tweetsie Railroad's 1870s vintage Coach No. 5 and ride behind locomotive No. 190 (built 1943). Guests will be transported on a 3-mile journey into the past. Boarding is in the Tweetsie Junction. A \$5 donation per rider is required for this special train; all donations go to ET&WNC railroad preservation projects. Due to the design of Coach No. 5, it is not wheelchair accessible. There will be no entertainment shows on this train.

2:00pm Train Shop Tour

See the equipment, tools, and machines that help keep our locomotives operating. Meet in front of the Shop five minutes prior to the scheduled tour. (Age 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.)

6:30pm Evening Photo Special

An exclusive opportunity for ticketed Guests to photograph Locomotive No. 12 with Coach No. 5, and Locomotive No. 190 with the excursion cars. Locations for the photo run-bys will be at the Trestle and the Frontier Outpost, with two run-bys at each stop. (Guests must be 16 years or older to be permitted to get off the train at the designated photo run-by locations.)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29TH

10:00am Park Opens

View and photograph the morning locomotive preparations after the park opens. The Train Shop will be closed to visitors at this time, but available for a tour later in the day.

10:30am-5:30pm Memorabilia Room is open in the Tweetsie Junction

See historic and rare artifacts from Tweetsie Railroad's past, and view documentaries about the ET&WNC and Tweetsie Railroad's historic locomotives.

10:30am-1:00pm Locomotives No. 12 and No.190 Double-Header

Enjoy a rare opportunity to witness two steam locomotives working in tandem. Headed up by Locomotive No. 12, Guests will be transported on our Wild West train ride with the assistance of Locomotive No. 190. Boarding on Main St.

1:00pm-5:00pm Locomotive No. 190 Wild West Train

Ride behind Locomotive No. 190 as she transports Guests and Railfans alike on a 3-mile journey back into the Old West. Boarding on Main Street.

1:00pm-4:45pm Locomotive No. 12 and Coach No. 5

Climb aboard Tweetsie Railroad's 1870s vintage Coach No. 5 and ride behind locomotive No. 12 for a 3-mile journey into the past. Boarding is in the Tweetsie Junction. A \$5 donation per rider is required for this special train; all donations go to ET&WNC railroad preservation projects. Due to the design of Coach No. 5, it is not wheelchair accessible. There will be no entertainment shows on this train.

2:00pm Train Shop Tour

See the equipment, tools, and machines that help keep our locomotives operating. Meet in front of the Shop five minutes prior to the scheduled tour. (Age 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.)

No photography will be allowed at the Trestle or the Frontier Outpost during the day. Photos may be taken from the Hacienda. Check our website at www.tweetsie.com 🚂

National Narrow Gauge Convention Exclusive Event at Tweetsie Railroad

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2ND

The 41st National Narrow Gauge Convention Committee has made special arrangements with Tweetsie Railroad to hold a private event on Thursday, September 2nd for convention attendees only. Approximately 550 seats are available in two trains. This event will be FREE to all PAID Convention Registrants. This includes paid attendees and vendors who purchased tables. In order to reserve a seat, you will need to submit the extra fare registration form with your convention registration and indicate that you want to participate in this private event. Tweetsie Railroad always goes to extra effort to provide a good experience for railfan events, including photo runbys at two photo locations, to show just what a narrow gauge steam locomotive can do. A shop tour and other photographic events will be part of this special narrow gauge experience. The first train will pull out at 1:30 pm, with a second run at 3:30. For more information, visit www.41nngc.com 🚂