



Australia

Compiled by Leon Oberg

Narrow gauge locos restored for NSW private railway

Australian author and rail historian, Peter Neve OAM, has taken delivery of a fully rebuilt Hunslet 0-4-2T steam locomotive.

The 9.5 tonne 610mm gauge locomotive, built by Hunslet of Leeds (UK) as No. 1187 in 1915, was stripped to the bare chassis and re-assembled by one of the few Australian specialists involved in steam restoration, K and H Ainsworth Engineering Pty Ltd, based in Goulburn, New South Wales (NSW).

Last commercially operated by the Inkerman Sugar Mill in Carstairs, Queensland, it worked under the name *Torpedo* until displaced by 1960s dieselisation, when it was put on static display in Wangaratta Park at Queens Beach, near Bowen in Queensland..

Mr Neve, a retired NSW State Rail heritage officer, acquired the “rather sorry looking” relic from the local council in January 1975. After several years in storage at his then Loftus home (in outer Sydney, NSW), he rebuilt the locomotive and



Above: After completion of its overhaul, the rebuilt Hunslet 0-4-2T *Torpedo* is loaded onto a semi-trailer in Goulburn on 30th June, for delivery to Junee.

ran it in his yard for friends until its boiler certificate expired in October 2004.

A 2015 change of address to a property that offered an opportunity to construct a 600 metre hobby railway at Junee in southern New South Wales, south led to Ainsworth

Engineering being invited to undertake the rebuild.

Over the past four decades, that firm has specialised in restoring heritage steam equipment such as traction engines and steamrollers for a wide variety of Australia collectors. In addition

it has undertaken work for the Australian War Memorial, the Sydney Power House Museum and the Australian National Museum in Canberra.

But in recent years following a revision of the boiler code, the proprietor, Mr Ainsworth, has been able to construct new boilers for locomotives and to date this has included one for a 610mm gauge Fowler 0-4-0WT for the Wee Georgie Wood Steam Railway in Tasmania.

With the Hunslet well underway, Mr Neve brought his 610 mm gauge Ruston Hornsby diesel locomotive to the workshop for overhaul as well. Built in 1954 and initially used in the United Kingdom, it later found work in South Africa before making its way to the Gin Gin sugar mill in Queensland. Like the Hunslet loco, it was stripped to the bare chassis and completely rebuilt, receiving a new silencer to enable it to run in a semi-residential area.

Both were collected by road transport on 30th June and delivered to their new home.

Below: Mr Neve's four-wheel diesel-mechanical (4wDM) Ruston-built locomotive is pictured as it is moved by crane from the workshops for loading onto road transport. *Both: Leon Oberg*

