



# C&TS Dispatch

Vol. 10 No. 2

SUMMER 1997

## Friends Receive Preservation Award

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad have received a 1996 Stephen H. Hart Award from the Colorado Historical Society. Fifteen Friends' members from California, New Mexico, and the Colorado Front Range were in Denver for the presentation of the award at the Society's 117th Annual Meeting on Thursday evening, December 12, 1996.

The Friends received this prestigious award for their "dedication to the ongoing preservation and restoration of one of America's premier scenic railroads."

The Friends were among ten individuals and organizations chosen this year to receive awards for their work in historic preservation and restoration. Other awards were presented for work on historic sites at Cokedale, Fort Morgan, Central City, Grand Junction, Fort Collins, Denver, and Lamar.

In May 1994, the State of New Mexico awarded the Friends a Heritage Preservation Award for their restoration work on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad (see the May 1994 issue). 🙌



The Colorado Historical Society  
proudly presents

*The Stephen H. Hart Award*

to

*Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec  
Scenic Railroad*

*in recognition of outstanding achievement  
in preserving Colorado's  
cultural heritage.*

12/12/1996  
Date

*Frank A. Lygler*  
Chairman of the Board  
Colorado Historical Society



*President Terri Shaw, holding the Stephen H. Hart Award, and proud members of the Friends. From the left (back row) Roger Briggs, Bob Tully, Mona Tully, Terri Shaw, Bill Lock, Spencer Wilson, and Geoff Gordon; (front row) Bob Akers, Doris Akers, Frank Maly, and Howard Bunté. Also present (but not in photograph) at the 117th Annual Meeting of the Colorado Historical Society were Kevin Corwin, Jenny Lock, Keith Hayes, and Sam March.*

# C&TS Dispatch

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/drichter/focts.htm>

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The C&TS Dispatch is published four times each year by the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc., 5732 Osuna Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109. The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc., is a New Mexico nonprofit corporation.

The Friends is the official museum support group for the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, a 64-mile-long operating railroad and museum of railroad history and technology between Antonito, Colorado, and Chama, New Mexico. The railroad is owned by Colorado and New Mexico and is operated by The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Corporation. As the museum support group, the Friends is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the railroad.

Family membership in the Friends is \$25.00 per year, outside the USA membership is \$35.00. All contributions are fully tax deductible and will be gratefully accepted. Please write us in Albuquerque or call us at (505) 880-1311 for information about the Friends. The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is both a National and a State Registered Historic Site.

## Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad



Denver & Rio Grande Railway—1880 to 1886

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad—1886 to 1921

Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad—1921 to 1970

Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad—1970 to 1997

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



In this issue I want to bring you news from three fronts concerning the restoration/preservation work of the Friends.

First, I'm excited to tell you about a new program the Friends have developed with the Western Museum of Mining and Industry in Colorado Springs. In our desire to increase the amount of historic rehabilitation work we can do, we have thought about locating a

work facility closer to one of the major population centers in Colorado or New Mexico. Board member Roger Briggs was instrumental in bringing about discussions between the Friends and the WMMI and will be managing our program there. WMMI is interested in showing the role of railroads with mining in the West and in increasing its volunteer program. The Friends will be able to carry on car work closer to the nearly 200 members living in the Front Range and to tell our story to visitors at the museum. Volunteers from both groups will begin work soon to prepare a former dairy barn on the grounds of WMMI for work on the historic cars of the C&TS. The Railroad Commission and the Operator have cooperated in the development of the program and in the selection of pipe gondola 9558 for the first project. It will be moved to the facility to be rebuilt from the frame up. In time, we hope to restore one of our coaches at this facility. Members of the Friends or WMMI are eligible to work in the program. If you live outside the area but would be interested in working there, contact Roger at 6305 High Line Place, Colorado Springs, CO 80908; (719) 495-4973.

Second, the Friends' plans for an enclosed work facility in Chama are progressing. At the March meeting of the Board of Directors, member Kip Merker, a retired architect-engineer, presented the conceptual drawings and cost estimates for a phased development evolving from the work of a board committee headed by Bill Lock. Further site testing and surveying will take place this summer, and two board members have accepted assignments to develop plans for the fundraising and construction phases of the project.

And third, at meetings in March, Chief Mechanical Officer Jack Campbell spoke to the commission and the Friends board proposing a three-way cooperative effort to construct new roundhouse stalls on the site of the historic roundhouse in the Chama yard. Only two stalls currently remain of the original nine-stall brick roundhouse built about 1900. When a new engine house was built in 1977-78, only two of the nine locomotives delivered to the C&TS by the D&RGW were operable. Now there are six plus rotary snowplow OY. A roundhouse would benefit historic preservation as well as the daily operation of the railroad by providing covered protection for the maintenance and display of the operational locomotives and certain nonoperational equipment →

which could be restored more easily if deterioration is slowed down. A roundhouse operation needs a turntable and the C&TS now has one. Elich Gardens in Denver, having recently acquired property from the Colorado and Southern Railroad, made a historic 100-foot through-truss-bridge turntable available to the C&TS for the cost of the freight delivery. The Railroad Commission judged it a good investment and the turntable was delivered in early May. The Friends

support the development of plans for such a building. Kip Merker volunteered his services here, too. He will be talking with railroad personnel and interested Friends members during the work sessions this summer to identify the uses for the building and the factors to consider in designing it.

I'll tell you more about all of these developments in future issues.

—Terri Shaw 🍀

## LIBRARY DONORS

Spencer Wilson reports a very good response to his request in the winter 1996 issue for books, magazines, photographs, and memorabilia for the Friends' library at the Albuquerque headquarters. Contributions have been received from Charles Brown, Frank Burton, John Conron, Mike Duggan, Bill Lock, Ben Read, John Smith, and Alvon Thoman. If you have items to donate to the library, Spencer would like to hear from you. His e-mail address is swetsrr@swcp.com. 🍀

### NINTH ANNUAL MOONLIGHT TRAIN

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 1997

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## FRIENDS ACQUIRE HISTORIC SWITCHES

The Friends have purchased two historic 70-lb switches to install a repair-in-place (RIP) track at the site of the future car restoration facility in Chama. The Board of Directors approved such a purchase at its November 1996 meeting. The two switches, one left hand and the other right hand, were located by Director Drake Rice in Oklahoma.

The left-hand switch was installed in 1917 for the Belle Isle power plant lead off the main line of the Oklahoma Railway, which was an electric railway that operated out of Oklahoma City to Guthrie, 35 miles north. At one time the Oklahoma Railway also operated approximately 35 miles south to Norman and 35 miles west to El Reno. In 1929 the power plant built a switching yard for materials, and the right-hand switch was installed.

When the Oklahoma Railway was sold in 1947 to the Rock Island, the Santa Fe also obtained trackage rights to the power plant. The rails and switches were removed in the winter of 1986-

87 after the power plant had been decommissioned in the early 1980s.

Bob Hussey Construction removed the switches. Bob Hussey, Jr. is a member of the Central Oklahoma Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society



*Right-hand switch frog cleaned and ready for painting. Photos by Drake Rice.*

and serves on its board of directors. Hussey has the original building prints for the track to the power plant, showing the switches and when they were installed. The Friends thank Gibson Trucking for transporting the switches to the C&TS. 🍀



*Right-hand switch points ready for cleaning.*

## Commission Report

By Leo Schmitz—Executive Director,  
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad  
Commission

A 50 percent increase in the number of reservations compared with one year ago was reported to the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission meeting on March 14 in Antonito, Colorado. Group reservations were also reported up with charter trains 300 percent above last year's season.

The positive report was made by George Bartholomew, president of the C&TS RR Corp., the new operator of the railroad. He also proposed that ticket prices remain the same for 1997, except for a price reduction from \$50 to \$44 for trip #5, Antonito to Cumbres and return.

In other business the commission  
—heard that the construction of two

passenger cars was proceeding with the first car to be completed by April 1. Because the project is under budget, funds remaining will be used to begin construction of a third car. Chief Mechanical Officer Jack Campbell is working on the assembly of prototype truck sets.

—heard the proposal that the commission and the Friends consider constructing additional stalls on the original roundhouse to provide necessary additional space. When the new engine house was built there were only two operable locomotives and now there are six.

—heard that Elitch Gardens in Denver was making a 100-foot through-truss-bridge turntable available at no cost other than freight from Denver to Chama. The turntable allows for a shallow pit and will be a key element in the roundhouse approach.

—approved an increase in the price of the meal at Osier from \$6.75 to \$7 for adults and from \$4.75 to \$5 for children.

—approved naming the two new passenger cars Los Pinos and Big Horn.

—heard a report from Superintendent of Operations Earl Knoob that Rotary OY will be used to clear the line of snow in May and that a guest steam locomotive, the Eureka, an 1875 wood burning steam locomotive, will operate special excursions for 10 days in June.

—heard that Bartholomew is working with chambers of commerce in both Antonito and Chama to develop special trips and events and about other developments on the railroad.

Ray Kersting contributed to this report. 🍀



Regional managers of the Union Tank Car Company were in Chama during the 1996 summer work sessions. On July 27 they rode the railfan charter train, which was run in cooperation with the company. The charter included the tank cars brought back to the railroad from Alaska by the Friends in 1992. Union Tank Car Company helped in the effort to bring back the tank cars. The managers are shown here at Cumbres. From the left, Elmer Justice, Marion, OH; Doug Trollope, Cleveland, TX; Dave Gildea, Altoona, PA; John Choens, Valdosta, GA; Ken Manuel, Sheldon, TX; Gilbert Olson, Evanston, WY; Gus Vaznonis, East Chicago, IN; Dave Donham, Eldorado, KS; Bob Enloe, East Chicago, IN; Danny Bouchee, East Chicago, IN; Chuck Ferczok, East Chicago, IN; Ken Fischl, Chicago, IL; Art Chesna, East Chicago, IN; Gene Kavanagh, Oakville, Ontario; Ray Lavergne, Ville Platte, LA; John McKechnie, Oakville, Ontario; Jeff Towne, East Chicago, IN; Jay Lloyd, Muscatine, IA; and Friends director and former president Bill Lock. Photo by Tom Cardin.

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We will print e-mail addresses of members. Please send the editor an e-mail message or a letter with your e-mail address requesting that we print it.

### Visit the Friends' Web Site at

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/drichter/focts.htm>

## Projects Committee Report

By Roger Breeding

In the work sessions that start in a few weeks, we plan to finish up some projects started last year, like the Cumbres Section House Roof, and continue work on some long-term projects, such as the Chama stock pens. We will continue painting cars and mileposts, and lettering cars painted in previous years. We hope to get a new set of stencils this year which will make the lettering crews' task easier. The building painting crew will move on to the Cumbres Car Inspector's House having finished up at Sublette last year.

In the Chama yard, work on the cook car 053, and the long and short refrigerator cars will continue, as will our efforts on inspection car MW02. With the structural and cosmetic restoration of the six sheep cars complete, we will turn our attention to the brakes. Art Randall has secured the cooperation of the operator to perform this running gear work under the supervision of Chief Mechanical Officer Jack Campbell. New projects in Chama are the Night Watchman's House, located by the Oil House, and the Sand House and Tower. The former needs only a little refurbishment, but the latter is a major undertaking. The roof leaks so badly that the dried sand is getting wet, and the gravity feed system from the tank up on the tower is not working. An inspection of the house and tower revealed rotten roof rafters and serious decay problems in most of the timbers forming the tower. Roger Briggs will lead a thorough rebuild of both the roof and the tower. As two legs of the tower rest on the roof, currently with no bracing to take the additional weight, the roof and tower must be treated together.

In Antonito there will be five projects. Work on the restoration of short caboose 0579 will continue. The observation car project and the

complete rebuilding of a flat car were discussed at some length in this column in the previous issue. The most expensive project this year will be the placing of concrete aprons along each side of the repair track to improve the working conditions. Finally, the three-rail track obtained some years ago in Alamosa will be installed at the end of the three-rail display track in front of the station. We had planned to install the switch in the loop track, but the operator deemed the switch too worn to be placed in track that sees trains every day.

At Osier, work will continue on fixing up the interior of the Section House. Historical preservation funds derived from gambling in Colorado have once again been secured by Leo Schmitz for this work. At Sublette the rough

plywood nailed over the windows will be replaced with smooth-finish plywood cut to fit in place and painted to resemble glass with curtains, etc.

As always, there will be the critical support functions without which nothing could get done. In addition to food preparation, chronicling, manning the tool car, and registration, there will be loading and unloading crews before and after the June work sessions. The August work sessions will take place only in Chama and Antonito, so we will not have to move material to and from Cumbres, Osier, and Sublette in August.

*Roger is a long-time Friends' volunteer and a member of the Board of Directors. He also serves as cochair of the Projects Committee. ♣*



*Volunteers working on the roof of the Osier Section House in 1995. This year the volunteers will continue to work on the interior of the building. Photo by Tom Cardin.*

### A VOLUNTEER'S PRAYER

Lord—Thank you for the majestic mountain scenery that challenged the builders of the narrow gauge railways. May I be aware of both my strengths and my limitations in this high altitude and highly stimulating environment.

Thank you for the men who faithfully ran and maintained this railroad over the years, and those who now come to see and experience it. To any visitors that may come my way, may my words and my actions convey my respect for its heritage and for their safety.

Thank you for the Friends who volunteer and what we have accomplished. May I do my part with care and concern for the hazards, so that our work may long continue.

—George Swain



## NARROW GAUGE NEAR AND FAR: NO. 10

By Earl Knoob

1997 marks the 45th anniversary of the "big snow" of 1952. In the Spring 1996 issue, we printed a letter and some photos that John D. Smith of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, sent us of the snow clearing efforts that winter. Since then, I've received requests for more info on this activity, so I dug out some books and other reference material and came up with the following.

Remember, at the time there were only 11 big locomotives on the Alamosa-Durango line. The remainder were up on the Salida-Gunnison lines. The Alamosa-Durango was blocked to traffic from December 28, 1951 to January 29, 1952.

On Friday, December 28, a three-engine Cumbres Turn left Chama at 8:50 PM with 493, 494, and 491. 493 and 494 returned to Chama, 491 ran light to Alamosa. 491 got stuck in a drift at MP 321 (Long Creek) early in the morning of December 29. The same morning a flanger/Jordan spreader left Alamosa behind 497-492, got as far as MP 319 (Osier), and returned to Osier for the night. The caboose, flanger/Jordan spreader, and 492's tender derailed during backing and 492's front coupler was pulled out in the rerailling effort. They tied up at Osier at 10:30 PM. Meanwhile, 494 and 493 left Chama with a flanger train and got stuck in a snowslide at MP 331 (Windy Point). Getting out, the drawbar was pulled from the back of 493's tender. Trainmaster John Norwood left the train and snowshoed toward Osier. Finding 491 and crew still buried, he spent the night with the crew.

On December 30, 498 left Alamosa pushing rotary OY. With only one locomotive, it took days to reach the marooned trains. The only locomotive remaining in Alamosa was prepared to head west with a relief train of coal and supplies but was canceled as the continuing storm left little chance of getting through. At Osier, 492 ran out of coal and was killed. Trainmaster Norwood snowshoed from 491 at MP 321 to Osier.

For the next few days, 498 clawed slowly westward. Airplanes dropped food to the crews at Osier. Durango sent the last two large locomotives it had (495 and 496) to Chama where they pushed rotary OM up the hill on January 1, reached the stalled flanger train, and returned to Chama for repairs. On January 2, OM broke down again and returned to Chama. At MP 321, 491 ran out of coal and was killed. 491's crew snowshoed to Osier.

On January 3, snow cats arrived at Osier to relieve crews stranded there as well as the crew of the OY and 498, still banging away at drifts near Rock Tunnel. The next day, 498 and OY finally arrived at Osier. January 5 and 6 were spent rerailling 492 and train. On January 6, OM ventured forth from Chama only to break down again just beyond Cumbres and had to return to Chama.

On January 7, Osier was finally cleared and OY, pushed by 498 and 497, departed taking two days to reach 491, still buried at MP 321, and two days to dig out 491 and get it back to Osier. Meanwhile, OM was digging out the line east of Cumbres. Finally, at 8:15 PM on January 10, OY plowed up to Los Pinos Siding to find OM, 495, and 493 waiting. Crews rested as the storm continued. The next morning, OM continued east and OY ran on to Chama, turned, and doubled back toward Alamosa. Returning to Osier, they found OM had broken down again. The next morning, with OY in the lead and 498 and 497 still pushing, they headed home arriving in Alamosa at midnight. With 495 and 493 pushing, and dead 491 and 492 trailing, OM arrived 30 minutes later.

But . . . old man winter wasn't done yet. While the equipment was being repaired another storm came in blocking the line again. On January 16, OY departed Alamosa with 493 and 494 pushing and spent all day getting as far as Sublette where buried rocks damaged OY's blade, forcing a return

to Alamosa. The storm continued for four days. On January 20, OY left Alamosa with 493 and 495 pushing, arriving at Sublette at 9:00 PM. Three more feet of snow fell that night blocking the path home. The only thing left to do was to push toward Cumbres.

For the next five days crews plowed, tying up at night at Toltec Creek, Osier, and Los Pinos. By January 27, nearly out of food and coal, an air drop solved the food problem but not the coal. They figured they might be able to make it to the Cumbres Yard Limit at Tanglefoot Curve where four cars of coal and a flat car of lumber sat on the siding on the upper side of the curve. OY and crew just made it to the yard limit with the coal they had. Using the lumber, they created a chute to transfer coal to the lower track. After refueling, they plowed on to Cumbres arriving at 8:30 PM.

After spending the next day coaling and servicing equipment at Cumbres, on January 29 they headed down through the 10-foot drifts around Windy Point, returning to Chama on January 30. However, through freight service wasn't resumed until February 2, 1952. In the 37-day blockade, over 250 carloads of freight, mostly gas field pipe, had arrived in Alamosa headed west. Once the line was open, the snow had to be unloaded from the cars before they could be loaded and sent westward.

Through the years there have been several snow blockades on Cumbres, but 1952 was undoubtedly the worst in terms of locomotives and crews stranded and limitations of available equipment. As I write, we're preparing to do battle with the snows of Cumbres on May 3, 1997. Hopefully, we'll fare better than those brave (and very tough) men back in 1952.

*Earl is Superintendent of Operations of the C&TS. He is a consulting director of the Friends, and his column appears regularly in the C&TS Dispatch. ♣*

## LETTERS

### Rock Tunnel

I enjoyed the article in the summer 1996 Dispatch concerning the tunnel workers' camp at Rock Tunnel. Further confirmation of the age of these ruins has been published in *Thomas Moran: The Field Sketches, 1856-1923* by Anne Morand (University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). The book chronicles known field sketches by Moran over the years.

In September of 1881, the D&RG commissioned a party of Moran; a woodcut engraver named Karst; the photographer W. H. Jackson; the author Ernest Ingersoll; and party to travel over their trackage for publicity purposes. Among the field sketches made by Thomas Moran on this trip is a rough, faint sketch of "Workman's Cabin Toltec Tunnel."

Many of Moran's sketches became illustrations for Ingersoll's "Crest of the Continent," a well known travel guide of the time. As far as I know, this sketch was never turned into a finished illustration. It shows a small square cabin dug into the hillside with a low pitched roof on it. It is above the rail grade, but details are really lacking. The original is presently part of the collection of the library of East Hampton, New York.

*John Gries  
Wichita State University  
Wichita, Kansas*

### The Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway

I was lucky enough to visit the Cumbres and Toltec during September 1993, and having spent some time travelling, and filming, was immediately impressed. I joined the Friends right away and am now looking forward to a return trip, hopefully in 1997.

In the United Kingdom, we have many preserved steam railways and, whilst we have nothing to compare with the C&T, I thought fellow "Friends" might be interested in the railway that I am proud to be associated with in the UK.

The Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is located totally within the Lake District National Park in the North West of England in an area of great natural beauty. The railway runs for seven miles from Ravenglass on the Cumbrian Coast to Eskdale, at the foot of England's highest mountains.

Our railway was opened in 1874, initially as a freight carrier for iron ore from mines situated in Eskdale to the main line railway at Ravenglass. This is a mountainous area and whilst not as challenging as the Rockies the hills still climb from sea level to over 3,000 feet.

The R&ER, known locally as the "Ratty," was built to 3-foot gauge (a connection with the C&T!) due to the difficult terrain. A passenger service was introduced in 1875, and for some thirty years the railway struggled on depending on such local freight and passenger traffic as was available.

The mines failed, leaving the railway to finally close in 1913 having proven to be hopelessly uneconomic. This was not to be the end. In 1915 the first part of the line reopened to the very narrow gauge of 15 inches. By 1917 the whole line was back in service to a gauge more

usually associated with toy or miniature railways. The following years proved that the R&ER was no toy. A granite quarry was opened on railway owned land and the hard granite was transported to a railway owned crushing plant. Here the granite was crushed to size and transported, once again on the R&ER, to the main line at Ravenglass for onward distribution. At the same time passengers were encouraged, giving visitors the opportunity to explore one of the most beautiful parts of England.

Quarrying continued until 1953 and passenger services lasted until 1960 but this was expected to be the last season of the R&ER. The line was to be auctioned at the end of the summer season but, if no suitable buyer was found, the line and stock were to be sold off separately. A Preservation Society was formed and, with the help of some wealthy enthusiasts, the railway was saved. It remains a private railway company with assistance and labour provided by the Preservation Society. The railway employs around 25 full time staff. Volunteers provide the majority of Guards (Conductors), man the ticket offices at intermediate stations and work on track relaying and repair. There is a thriving Heritage Group protecting and restoring items from the railway's history. The major project at present comprises the rebuilding of one of the first 15 inch gauge locos to run on the R&ER. ➔



*Engine River 1rt (0-8-2) brings a train of empty coaches into Ravenglass station from the carriage sidings.*

## Letters

*Continued from page 7*



*Engine Northern Rock (2-6-2) near Beckfoot with a Ravenglass to Eskdale train.*



*Northern Rock approaches the turntable at Eskdale after arriving with a train from Ravenglass.*

Ravenglass is the Headquarters of the R&ER and here can be found the workshops, engine shed, museum and catering facilities. The Company has built diesel and steam locomotives in its WWII workshops, including two steam locomotives for a tourist railway in Japan. The main line station is adjacent to the R&ER and is still open to passengers. The main line station building is now owned by the R&ER and has been converted to act as the railway's own pub—The Ratty Arms.

Most trains on the R&ER are steam operated although early and late trips can be diesel operated, as are some relief trains at peak times. In peak season 15 trains leave Ravenglass for the 7 mile journey to the terminus at Eskdale (Dalegarth).

Trains are despatched by radio and only at Ravenglass will traditional semaphore signals be found. The line is mainly single track with three intermediate passing loops at Miteside, Irton Road and Fisherground. The rolling stock comprises a variety of saloon coaches, semi open coaches and full opens somewhat similar to the open gondolas on the C&T.

From the Ravenglass Station area the line drops down a steep 1 in 40 gradient to run alongside the River Mite. Ahead there is a beautiful panorama of all the high lakeland peaks, including England's highest mountain: Seafell Pike.

The first stop is at Muncaster Mill. Here, an ancient watermill originally built in the 15th Century was purchased by the R&ER in a derelict state and has now been fully restored. Many passengers break their journey at Muncaster Mill to tour the old building before continuing their journey. Leaving the Mill the gradient increases to 1 in 42 uphill and the line hugs the side of Muncaster Fell. Passing the remains of the old crushing plant at Murthwaite the line rounds Rock Point with the River Mite now some 60 feet directly below the line. (The R&ER answer to the High Line on the D&S!)

Next comes one of the main intermediate stations on the line: Irton Road. This is an original stone built structure dating from the original opening of the line and serves Eskdale Green village. The R&ER now passes from the valley of Miterdale to the valley of Eskdale and trains then call at The Green Station. With a gradient of 1 in 36 the next section is the steepest part of the whole line. With a heavily loaded train locos have to work really hard here. The line now clings to the hillside and there are tremendous views across the valley.

After 45 minutes travelling the train arrives at Eskdale (Dalegarth), the end of the line. The scenery here is superb with many excellent walks being possible. Passengers are free to return on any train that day.

Whilst the R&ER cannot offer K36 and K37 Mikados, we do have two 2-8-2 locomotives (River Esk, built 1923, and River Mite, built 1966). River Irt is an 0-8-2 originally built in 1894, and Northern Rock is a 2-6-2 built in the railway's own workshops in 1976. Bonnie Dundee is last of the "mainline" steam locomotives and is an 0-4-2 and is fast approaching its centenary.

The Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway has had a fascinating history and it still offers its passengers some of the best scenery in the UK. It continues to offer the wonderful sound of narrow gauge steam locomotives working hard amongst some of the best scenery in the British Isles.

I was given a tremendous welcome during my visit to the C&T and I am confident the R&ER offers its visitors the same sort of welcome. If any fellow Friend is able to make the long journey from the States (or any other country) to Ravenglass please make yourself known to any member of staff or volunteer. Please contact me at the address below if you would like further information on the Ravenglass and Eskdale.

Keep up the good work C&T.

*David Jenner  
7, Orchard Place  
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Kent ME13 8AP  
England*

## The Ffestiniog Railway

I have ridden the C&TS many times in my association with the Friends, and I enjoy each ride as much as the one before. The same can be said of my three railroad trips to Britain. In 1990 I had the privilege of being chaperoned by Paul Malery; in 1993 I went with the tour organized by the *Model Railroader* magazine; and in 1995 it was the turn of Al Carstens and his charming wife to lead us through that model rail paradise.

I have ridden many lines in the United Kingdom, some several times. In this letter I would like to acquaint you with the Ffestiniog Railway. Located in north Wales, this 2-foot gauge line was first laid in 1836 to carry slate from the quarries in Blaenau Ffestiniog 13 miles to the Porthmadog Harbour Station. Horses provided the pulling power to bring the cars to the quarries, and gravity on the continuously falling gradient brought them back to the harbor. In 1863 steam engines were introduced, and passenger traffic started in 1865.

The line operated until 1946, when it was abandoned. In 1955, thanks to the efforts of volunteers and the support of a small staff, the line resumed passenger service only, now that trucks had taken over the ferrying of slates. From 1955 to 1982, the entire line was revived, and today it boasts service to over 100,000 passengers a year, including dogs.

Stations along the line, which had been boarded up, have been reopened and the small communities have seen their populations increase as former tourists are coming back to build homes in the beautiful valley.

There is another line I should mention: the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, an 18-mile-long standard gauge steam railway linking Pickering with Grosmont. Started in 1836 by George Stephenson, it was closed by British Rail in 1965. It was purchased by a preservation society, and it now carries 200,000 passengers a year—three times the number moved under British Rail.



*A Fairlie's double-boiler patent locomotive at Porthmadog Harbour Station on the Ffestiniog Railway. This type of locomotive was first used on the railway in 1869. Photos by Guy Combe.*

This leads me to speculate that if the British phenomenon of reviving abandoned railroads spreads to the United States, we can look forward to the C&TS helping to populate the Chama Valley, Cumbres Pass, Osier, and Sublette as former passengers build permanent or summer homes. Why not also foresee the rails to Durango since most of the structures are still in good shape? Railroading is a disease and I think I have a good case of it.

*Guy P. Combe  
Shawnee, OK*

## More on C&TS or D&RGW

I am writing in response to the letters to the editor in the Fall 1996 issue of the C&TS Dispatch regarding the lettering of the water tank and various cars with the Cumbres & Toltec herald.

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad serves a dual purpose: to provide an enjoyable excursion trip and to preserve a portion of Rio Grande narrow gauge history. The C&TS was declared both a national and a state registered historic site as the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, not as the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. Being both an operating railroad and a "living museum" is certainly a precarious position in which to be, since it strives at being a profitable business and a historic property.



*Buffet car, Ffestiniog Railway.*

The C&TS is unique in that, with the exception of the passenger cars, the three ballast hoppers, and the diesel locomotive, all of the equipment is indigenous to this property. Other excursion railroads with which I am familiar maintain a hodgepodge of equipment from various sources—which are usually repainted for the new road in order to project a uniform image. The painting and lettering of equipment and structures with the C&TS herald hopefully gets our name out to the public. It is a good promotional tactic. This seems to be primarily objectionable by railfans who want history to cease on or before 1968. For your readers' information, the previous water tank in Chama had a C&TS "toilet seat" herald on the south side of

*See Letters, page 11* ➔

## PRESERVATION PERSPECTIVE: NO. 8

### Narrow Gauge Main Line

By Keith E. Hayes, AIA

In the last issue I raised the question "Where did the D&RGW store all the rolling stock?" At over 1500 miles, the Rio Grande narrow gauge system was the largest in the United States, with all the components of a standard gauge main line operation. I recently read that up to five trains per day each way were operated between Durango and Alamosa during the height of the Farmington, New Mexico oil boom in the 1950s and 1960s. Sometimes eastbound trains between Cumbres Pass and Alamosa would reach 100 cars!

I recently ran across some interesting research in the January/February 1980 issue of the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*. In an article, Dr. Robert Sloan has an analysis of the rolling stock owned by several narrow gauge railroads. For example, in 1965, the Rio Grande had 22 locomotives and 1156 pieces of freight equipment broken down as follows: 288 boxcars; 252 stockcars; 57 refrigerator cars; 358 gondolas; 39 tank cars and 162 flatcars. That works out to an average of 53 freight cars per locomotive near the end of operations. Dr. Sloan's point is to contrast the Rio Grande as a relatively modern railroad operating large locomotives and long trains with the much shorter, steeper Uintah Railway near Grand Junction, Colorado, which had an average of only 7 freight cars per locomotive. Also, note the 1965 figure of 1156 freight cars, all operating on 300 miles of trackage between Alamosa, Farmington, and Silverton. Assuming five major storage yards, that is over 200 freight cars per site! The operation of the railroad must have been a real handful for the train crews and dispatchers! The Rio Grande wasn't necessarily the cute, old, rickety anachronism we might think.

Look at the photograph of locomotive 483, heading eastbound from Antonito; this is a long and varied consist. First, a standard gauge boxcar is cut in between two idler flat cars; the remainder of the train is narrow gauge



Locomotive 483 eastbound out of Antonito with a 73-car train on June, 14, 1941. Photo by Otto C. Perry, Denver Public Library, Western History Department.

boxcars, refrigerators, and tank cars, likely all loads heading to Alamosa. At 73 cars, this is probably the most that the locomotive can handle by itself on the flat and tangent track.

A video tape produced recently by KRMA TV in Denver documents the reminiscences of five long-time railroad enthusiasts. While the discussion encompasses all Colorado railroads, a significant portion of the program is devoted to the Rio Grande narrow gauge, with wonderful footage of operations in the 1950s and 1960s on Cumbres and Marshall passes. Historian and author Jackson Thode compares the Rio Grande with the narrow gauge Colorado and Southern lines:

*The Colorado and Southern operated with small locomotives built for the railroad in 1880 and modern steel frame freight cars while the Rio Grande purchased large modern locomotives in the 1920s and hauled wood frame freight cars behind them.*

A very interesting observation, I think, given Dr. Sloan's research.

In the last column, I extended an invitation to readers to send copies of historic photographs. If you have done any research, measured drawings, or have photographs of the Cumbres and Toltec, please contact me as your materials may be of value to the Friends. Many model railroaders have

taken the time to carefully measure and photograph buildings and rolling stock, and information gathered prior to 1970 can be useful for future project planning.

As you may gather, I am a model railroader, and have spent this past winter constructing models of several of the cars in the C&TS collection. It has been very informative, as the models help me understand how the full-size cars are constructed. It is also stunning to me, the difference in scale, volume, and mass. Last summer, I personally moved a full-size freight car with my bare hands. Okay—six of us did the work, and it was a steel flat car with all the wood decking removed, but it was amazing the effort it took to get the car moving and then stop it all in a distance of 20 feet. In contrast, I can move a model with the barest touch of my finger and drop a coupler on my toe with no consequence. Try that with a full-size coupler—I don't think three people can lift one together! This is all food for thought for this summer's work on Cook Car 053. In June, a crew will turn six large, heavy pieces of oak into a new platform for the former RPO.

*Keith is a long-time volunteer. His column appears regularly in the C&TS Dispatch.* 🍀

## Letters

*Continued from page 9*

it, but which was so faded no one noticed or complained about it.

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad has come into its own with a 27 year history, which is 23 percent of the railroad's total 117-year history. There should be pride in the C&TS and its accomplishments. There are also legal questions surrounding the use of the D&RGW herald on equipment other than historic equipment. I think the locomotives in Antonito should be lettered C&TS because of their strategic vantage points for advertising.

One of your readers expressed disgust at seeing C&TS lettered equipment in charters. The railroad tries to accommodate the sponsor of the charter as much as possible. When someone charters a train, it is usually possible to get the equipment lettered for whatever is desired. This, however, adds additional cost to the charter. It is up to the party sponsoring the charter to cover the cost of painting, lettering and relettering the equipment if they so choose, not the railroad. The sponsor can also choose what equipment will be used, if it is in operable condition or can be made so easily.

Achieving the optimum with regards to this dual purpose requires a delicate balance. There needs to be a compromise between the histories of the C&TS and the D&RGW. I think the replica freight trains should continue being lettered Rio Grande, while the excursion trains and non-D&RGW equipment acquired for work trains should be lettered C&TS. I have no problem with replacing Rio Grande heralds with Cumbres & Toltec ones on structures that had them.

As an employee of the C&TS, I am proud of the railroad and its accomplishments in the past 27 years. It has achieved national and international attention in the railfan community in its own right as the C&TS for its rotary operations, excursion trains, and the replica Rio Grande freight trains. Of course, much credit goes to the Friends for their work over the years in acquiring more equipment and in restoring the freight equipment and structures to make the replica freight trains possible and to preserve the historical aspect of the railroad along the line. Personally, I was proud that Rotary OY was lettered C&TS when it

ran in 1991 after a long hiatus. Although I was not an employee at the time, I felt it represented the pride and determination of the people who operated and maintained it. I have continued to get that same feeling each time I know it is operated. In 1995, I had the opportunity to experience that feeling first-hand as I was one of the firemen on Rotary OY. It was a great feeling of accomplishment to finally break through a major drift. I take pride in this railroad and my job, as I think all of its employees do. Hopefully, this pride is reflected in its name.

That is my thirty-two cents (the cost of postage) worth on this subject, which seems to have irked some of your readers. Hopefully, a balance will be struck in the dual purpose of being an operating railroad and a historical property to the satisfaction of all in the near future.

Also, for your readers' information, attached is a list of equipment lettered for the C&TS.

*Mark Yates  
C&TS Employee  
Chama, NM*

### ROSTER OF C&TS LETTERED EQUIPMENT

November 1, 1996

#### Box Cars

401 Friends' storage  
3016 Friends' storage  
3484 paint storage

#### Drop Bottom Gondolas

700  
731  
755  
848

#### Gondolas

1204 former open rider  
gondola—bad ordered  
1746 former open rider gon-  
dola—bad ordered, frame  
lettered D&RGW, sides  
lettered C&TS

#### Idler Flat

6708

#### Refrigerator Car

169

#### Railway Post Office Cars

54  
65

#### Work Equipment

0472 auxiliary water car  
for Rotary OY  
OK flanger  
OY rotary

#### Caboose

0306 lettered Rio Grande

# 1997

## Schedule of Events

June 16, Monday—June 20, Friday  
Volunteer Work Session "A"

June 20, Friday  
Annual Dinner and Meeting

June 21, Saturday  
1870s Freight Train: The Eureka

June 23, Monday—June 27, Friday  
Volunteer Work Session "B"

August 11, Monday—August 15, Friday  
Volunteer Work Session "C"

August 15, Friday  
Dinner and Meeting

August 16, Saturday  
Ninth Annual Moonlight Train

October 19, Sunday  
Planned Closing Day



*Cumbres as the volunteers first found it in the fall of 1970, when they moved equipment over the line from Antonito to Chama. This photo by Art Bain is one in a series he took showing the 1970 equipment moves.*



**Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec  
Scenic Railroad, Inc.**

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