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## Meeting Calendar

- **May 17, 2008**  
TWVRPS Annual Meeting  
Walkersville Southern RR  
Walkersville, MD  
1:00 PM
- **June 11, 2008**  
Online Monthly Meeting
- **July 9, 2008**  
Online Monthly Meeting
- **August 13, 2008**  
Online Monthly Meeting

Online Monthly Meetings take place at 8:00 PM on the second Wednesday of every month, in the TWVRPS chat room: [www.wvrps.org/chat](http://www.wvrps.org/chat)

## The Journal Box

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[www.wvrps.org/newsletter](http://www.wvrps.org/newsletter)

## TWVRPS Membership

Individual TWVRPS membership dues are \$20 annually, payable to:

The Western Virginia Railroad  
Preservation Society, Inc.  
PO Box 124  
Natural Bridge, VA 24578

Or join online at:  
[www.wvrps.org/membership.html](http://www.wvrps.org/membership.html)

## Article Submissions

Submit articles for publication in the *Journal Box* to:  
[newsletter@twvrps.org](mailto:newsletter@twvrps.org)  
Hard copies may be mailed to TWVRPS, attn: Journal Box.

The deadline for submissions for the next issue of the *Journal Box* is **August 15, 2008**

## The Lost Engines Revisited

By *Richard Jenkins*

When I stepped off the US Airways turboprop at the Roanoke airport on the evening of March 10 of this year, it had been almost nine years since I last set foot in Roanoke to visit the remarkable steam survivors of the Virginia Scrap Iron & Metal yard. The following afternoon, a small group of TWVRPS members consisting of Andrew Martin, David Collison and myself returned to the yard for a closer look at the equipment.

A lot has changed in those nine years, both visibly and behind the scenes, including the formation of TWVRPS, the death of scrapyard owner Sam Golden, and subsequent donation of the equipment to the Virginia Museum of Transportation. Last time I was here, there was no Link Museum or Railwalk, the only engine under roof at the VMT was the 611, and the 1218 was still hidden from view in the Norfolk Southern shops. The changes are obvious along South Jefferson Street as well. Several new office buildings have gone up south of the VSI&M yard. The burial vault maker across the tracks, whose parking lot provided the most convenient access to the equipment outside the scrapyard fence on my previous visits, is now gone, replaced by a new medical center. The yard itself is in the process of being cleared out to undergo a similar transformation. Gone are the towering junk piles and overhead crane, and several buildings in the yard are in various stages of demolition.

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*Raiders of the Lost Engines, David Collison (left) and Andrew Martin (right). R. Jenkins photo*

## Mullens Motor Barn

By *Andrew Martin*



One of the primary long-term goals of TWVRPS is to acquire a historic railroad property for use as a restoration facility and museum. Almost from the outset, our sights have been set on the old C&O shops complex in Clifton Forge, Virginia, but it also makes sense to explore other possible alternatives that come to our attention. One such site is the former Virginian Railway motor barn in Mullens, West Virginia.

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## Machine Tools Report

By *David Collison*

Ever since the generous donation of a group of machine tools to TWVRPS from the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, and the successful move of those machine tools to the Walkersville Southern Railroad, the society has devoted multiple work days in an effort to return these tools to operation. Our collection of machine tools consists of a large steam hammer, a 24" lathe, a 60" vertical milling machine, and a radial-arm drill press.

From our inspections back at the museum, we had decided to attempt restoration on the lathe first, as it was the only piece that had been stored indoors the entire time. After the tools had arrived at the WSRR, we discovered that our initial assumption of the lathe being the most complete piece was in fact false, as it was missing several key pieces for restoration that would need to be recast.

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## The Lost Engines Revisited *(Continued from page 1)*

The four steam locomotives, two diesels, two water tenders, and the flatcar still sit where they have for decades, but the four hoppers that stood on the coal dock at the end of the siding have already been relocated to their new homes (three went to the VMT, the other to a private owner). The steam locomotives no longer have that “lost in the back woods” appearance that inspired the name of the website all those years ago. They have been stripped of their cover of vines, along with their crumbling boiler jackets and asbestos lagging, in preparation for a move that has yet to happen. Touches of green were beginning to appear here and there, signs of spring just around the corner, but the trees and ground were still bare, revealing the secrets of the once-mysterious “lost engines” for all to see.

As we explored the line of engines, it was interesting to note parts that were present on some engines, missing on others. Every piece of old iron has a story to tell, and taken as a whole, these glorious old machines speak volumes. Mismatched part numbers and date stamps tell us about their rebuild history and the efforts of generations of Roanoke shop men who kept these engines in tip-top shape, and each layer of peeling paint on the cab sides is another turned page in their incredible story. Just as interesting as the parts on the engines was the treasure trove of parts scattered in the underbrush beside them. Among them, the missing smokebox front from 1151, air pumps, side rods, steps and footboard sections, and perhaps the most interesting of all, a complete, disembodied pilot truck from a long-scrapped 4-8-0. When the site is excavated, we may well find that these incomplete engines are not so incomplete after all.

We spent the better part of the afternoon in the yard, working our way down the line of steam locomotives, the flat car, the diesels, and finally the two water canteens, inspecting and photographing each piece of equipment inside and out, followed by a visit to VSI&M’s other yard for a look at the amazingly complete 1910-vintage N&W steam crane. What we came away with at the end of the day, apart from several hundred photographs, was a renewed sense that all of these unlikely survivors can and should be preserved, one way or another, to tell their story to future generations. 📷



Many of the photos from our visit can be seen on the *Lost Engines of Roanoke* website, <http://lostengines.railfan.net>. A CD of photographs will also be available through the Society’s website, <http://www.wvrps.org>.

## Machine Tools Report *(Continued from page 1)*

We decided instead to focus on the more complete pieces first, starting with the vertical milling machine. Despite the fact that it has been stored outside for almost 20 years, we have been successful in clearing out much of the rust and debris that has accumulated throughout the castings. The majority of the bearings have little to no pitting, most of which can be patched. Many additional pieces of the boring mill have been disassembled, cleaned and are currently being painted. We have secured a replacement motor and hopefully soon will have the boring mill back in operation, so that we may move on to the drill press. Dates for future work sessions will be posted on the TWVRPS website as they become available. 📷



March 2008 work session in Walkersville, (left to right) Patrick McKnew, Ben McKnew, Andrew Martin. (D. Collison photo)

## Mullens Motor Barn *(Continued from page 1)*

Once an enginehouse and repair facility for the Virginian Railway’s mighty electric locomotives, the motor barn has been out of use for a number of years and is currently owned by Norfolk Southern. For our purposes, the site has several things going for it. It is smaller and more manageable in size than the Clifton Forge shops, and there is a disused and quite scenic branch line nearby that could potentially be rehabilitated for excursion trains in the future. There is local interest in saving the structure in the form of the Rural Appalachian Improvement League (RAIL), a non-profit group that has been trying to promote the preservation or adaptive reuse of the facility. However, the site also has its share of drawbacks, not least of which is its remote location, about a three-hour drive from Roanoke and at least 20 miles from the nearest city of any size.

On March 13, 2008 a meeting was held in Mullens to discuss the future of the motor barn. Present at the meeting were members of RAIL, representatives of the town, region, state, and EPA, and David Collison and myself representing TWVRPS. Several topics were discussed at the meeting, including Norfolk Southern’s requirements for a transfer of ownership (such as relocating the access road off NS property, and the assumption of environmental liability), the city’s vision for reuse of the property as an industrial park, other potential suitors for the site, and the proposed timeline for re-development.

For TWVRPS to be looked at as a viable solution in Mullens, we would need to prepare a good business plan and a proposal that would show that we are willing and readily able to raise the monies required for the rehabilitation of the motor barn, its associated buildings, and the environmental cleanup that would be needed. Given the timeframe and other potential drawbacks of the site, it was decided that the Mullens property is not the best option for our organization at this time. 📷