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## “Old Rube restoration, A blast from the past part 1”

This document was written by Paul Naylor in early 2025 and is the first article in a restoration project. The articles were published more or less simultaneously in the Frimley and Ascot Locomotive Society newsletter.

Some of you may have heard of a recent visitor to the track...Graham, the son of the builder, was trying to find a home for his father's 'magnus opus': a rather large 7.25" gauge loco to a US design. The loco was a regular at Frimley when I joined the club and I remember it hauling prodigious loads in the late 1990's with the builder and his brother manning it. To cut a long story short, I remembered that at the time I thought it was a 'well used' but impressive loco that just slogged around the track all day long but I never dreamt that one day I would own it...

After a chat with Graham, I agreed to take it on and late in November 2024 hired a big car trailer and collected it from Basingstoke where it's home was a lock up garage. Fortunately, it was on a purpose made '11 foot long' wheeled trolley, so it was a matter of winching this onto the trailer and strapping it down well. It had been stripped down in that all the pipework had been removed along with all the fittings etc, and the boiler is 'loose' but in place. This meant that in addition to the loco on its trolley, there are numerous boxes of bits and we spent some time trying to make sure we had collected all of it!

For those interested, the salient details as far as I can estimate them are:

- Made around 1980, possibly from Milner drawings. There was a similar one running at a rally at Abbeydale in 2023 and this can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4rgsKGYQyA>
- It is a model of a Baldwin consolidation loco class 70 built in 1881, and this one carries the number 5713 which was called 'Old Rube'.
- It is 3.2m long including 'sit-in' tender and 420mm wide across the cylinders.
- The cylinders look to be about 3" diameter and the driving wheels are 7.25" diameter.
- The pressure gauge suggests operating pressure is 100psi and there is a rather large and impressive double feed pump for water feed.
- The controls are 'agricultural' and mainly standard gas fittings by the look of it.
- The weight.....yes well, according to the size of my rupture, it is about 300/350kg without water or the boxes of bits removed. Conveniently, the bits with it include an old but good quality engine crane....

Here is a picture of it in my garage as it arrived:



I have had a good look around it and also had a brief but informative correspondence with a professional boiler company, the things wrong with it include:

- The driving wheels have rail wear so they are more like pulleys than wheels. They will need re-turning.
- The Boiler is a monstrous (for miniature locos) steel affair 11 inches (225mm) diameter and made, presumably by a professional, from 10mm steel plate. Unfortunately, without provenance and paperwork (which I do not have) it is *definitely* condemned. With it, it probably is anyway though.
- It is in bits and needs tidying up....but that is all 'patina' and it will 'polish up nice'!

I thought that some of you might be interested in this adventure...I have though a few questions for anyone that knows useful answers:

- Has anyone got any (preferably electronic) photos or film of Old Rube in operation at Frimley?
- Does anyone know of any paperwork for the boiler, especially when it was first made...if only for an archive record?
- Has anyone got any – ideally helpful - comments that they might recollect that will affect my attempts to get Old Rube back working?!

I will provide updates from time to time, but don't hold your breath to see it at the park yet, a new boiler waiting list is around 18months anyway...