

Australian Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Society

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ANGRMS Collection: Caledonian Colliery Fordson Rail Tractors

- Name: Fordson Rail Tractors
- Wheel Arrangement: 4wPM (chain drive)
- Built By Forrers Pty Ltd of Ipswich using a 4 cylinder Fordson tractor
- Weight:
- Build #:
- Horse Power: 22
- Year: 1928, 1938

Background

Caledonian Collieries operated a two foot gauge tramline connecting its pit mines and a QR siding near Thagoona (between Ipswich and Rosewood). Fordson tractors, stripped of their rear wheels and front axle, were placed on the frame of an ex-QR leading bogie from a B15 or PB15 steam locomotive. The steering wheel was used as a brake wheel and an overall canopy, the remains of which can be seen in the second locomotive in the picture above, covered the locomotives. The two locomotives operated the line until it closed in 1965.

Eight inch rolled steel channels were bolted onto each side of the ex-bogie's top, with the channel facing out on the 1928 vehicle and in on the 1938 vehicle. Wood buffers on each end were later replaced on the rear with the spring side buffers from an Orenstein and Koppel steam locomotive. A sheet metal shield protected the sprocket and chain connection between the tractors's rear axle and the extended rear axle of the bogie. An internal sprocket and chain system connected the front and rear axles (see photo above) to power all four wheels.

Information from John Armstrong's draft collection guide and from John Knowles' letter to *Light Railways* 170, April 2003, pp 24-5. A photo of one of the tractors with its metal canopy accompanies John's letter. A history of the Colliery can apparently be found in the *ARHS Bulletin*, August 1968, p 178, and a letter in that *Bulletin*, April 1974, p 94.