

Works number 2513 'Empire'

IN BRIEF. **Built: 1934. Last used: 1952. Approximate working life: 18 years. Scrapped.**

SPECIFICATIONS. **Wheel arrangement: 2-4-2PT. Gauge: 2' 9". Weight: 19.5 tons. Boiler pressure: 180 psi. Driving wheel diameter: 30". Cylinders: 10" x 16".**

Waihi Gold Mining Company's *Empire* was the last steam locomotive supplied to New Zealand by Bagnall. It is believed to have been the only 2-4-2 tank locomotive built new for New Zealand, and the country's only locomotive fitted with pannier tanks. *Empire* was also the only New Zealand Bagnall, steam or diesel, fitted with a leading bogie

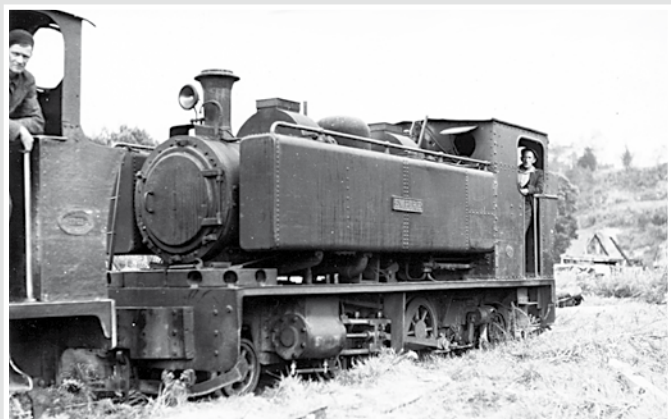
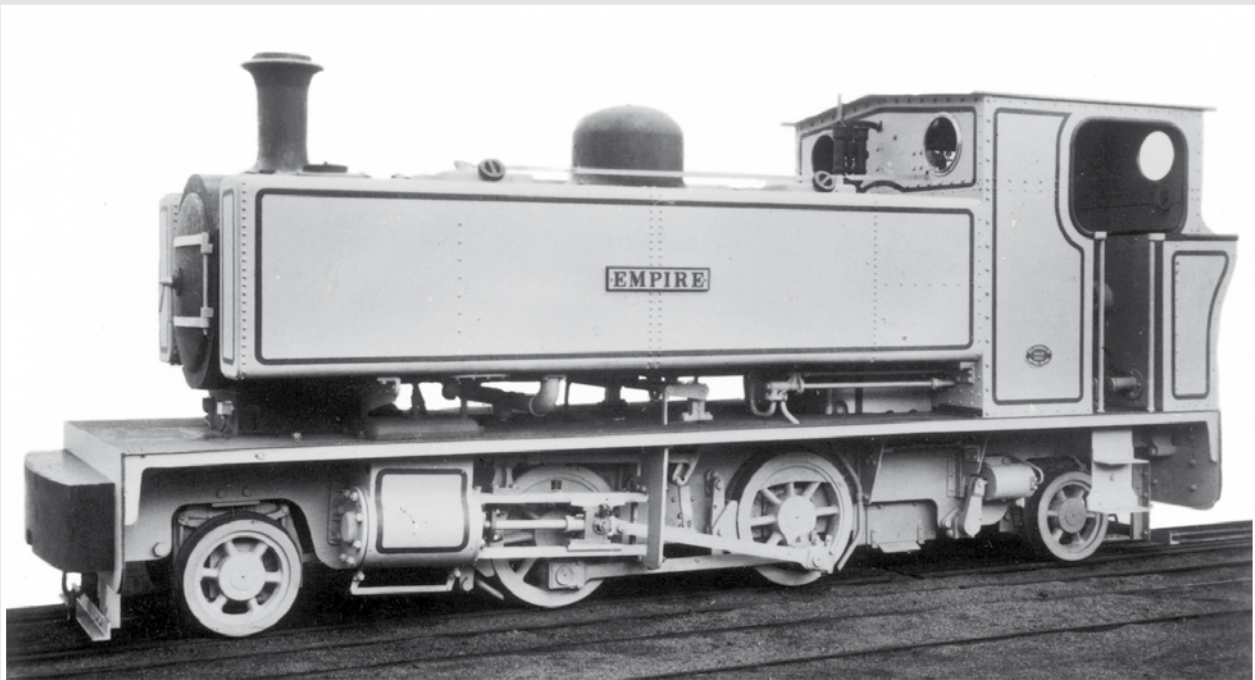
Empire's entire life was spent on its owner's 2' 9" gauge system near Waihi. Coincidentally, the country's first Bagnall, No. 416, had also worked in the same area and, briefly, also in the gold mining industry there.

The Waihi Gold Mining Co railway was over seven

miles in length, including branches. Locomotive operation commenced in about 1896, and continued until closure in 1952. Its history is described in Peter Dyer's book *Jubilee Selections from the New Zealand Railway Observer* (NZRLS, 1969).

Empire was the Company's sixth and final locomotive, the previous five having been supplied by another English manufacturer, Manning Wardle & Co.

Empire's unusual gauge counted against its further use elsewhere. Sadly, this unique locomotive failed to survive long enough to attract the attention of preservationists, and was scrapped.



Above. A builder's photo of *Empire*. Alan Bellamy collection.

Right. *Empire* at Waihi. W W Stewart photo, Alan Bellamy collection.