

THE FURZEBROOK RAILWAY - *Wagon No.28*

There were in total over 100 wagons on the Furzebrook Tramway, built by either the Cambrian Wagon Co. or locally. No.28 is the sole surviving wagon in complete condition and was constructed to a unique sledge-braked design. It was built locally in Wareham in about 1865 for use with the gravity worked trains that ran from the Furzebrook weathering beds to the wharf at Ridge. This was the original part of the railway and was constructed in a dead straight line with a constant falling gradient favouring the loaded trains.



No.28 is a 4-wheeled wagon with wooden frames and sides. In common with the other wagons it has sprung buffers at one end only, with dumb buffers at the other end. The springing for the buffers is highly unusual, consisting of a transverse laminated spring placed on its side behind the buffer beam.

The two ends of the spring are fixed to the buffer shanks, while at the centre it passes through a hole in the coupling shank. The wagon has an end-door at the buffer less end which was opened to allow the clay to be removed. The braking mechanism consists of two metal-faced sledges mounted between the wheels which acted downwards on to the rail surface. The sledges are worked by a long lever mounted on the side of the wagon.

No.28 was one of the last wagons to survive at Furzebrook and, at the request of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, the scrap dealers dismantling the line released it for display at the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn, North Wales in July 1957. Photographs of its arrival there suggest that it was renovated at Furzebrook before dispatch.

In December 2001 Purbeck Mineral & Mining Museum Group approached Tywyn Museum. Discussions on the future of the wagon followed, resulting in the setting up of a long-term trust agreement on behalf of the Purbeck Mineral & Mining Museum. The wagon was returned to Dorset by Tywyn Museum in April 2002

