

Java Sugar Mill Blog Part 14 11 August 2017

Semboro & Jatiroto Part 1

From our base in Jember, we plan 2 visits to Semboro and 2 to Jatiroto mill over 4 days. Both were new plantations established in the 1920s and their creation involved clearing large areas and putting in irrigation channels, narrow gauge railways, sugar cane fields, workers accommodation and sugar mills. No doubt it also included destruction of forest, resettlement of villagers and the usual heartache of government compulsory purchase. That side of the story will probably never be told. Our first mill, Semboro still uses 2 fireless steam locos and has a steam loco available to charter.



The loco that used to work the 3ft 6in branch to Tanggul has now been moved, painted and plinthed.



The two fireless were both in action but with a diesel on all the empties from the mill, one fireless loco hauled loaded cane trains towards the mill train, cut off to go on the stabling point/charging station and the other loco pushed the loads from the rear to the mill train cable operation.



No. 2 and 3 were delivered one year apart and are not identical as can be seen by comparing these 2 photos.



No. 3 pushes load cane wagons to the mill. No. 2 is already on the stabling point.



The big diesels (Hokuriku rather than Keio) do all of the field work except for a bit of work on some of the temporary track done by small diesels.



This new 'speeder' built using a Chinese agricultural diesel is outside the loco depot and looks almost complete.



There has been a clear out of the stored steam locos. Apart from a few mallets, one Jung and one 0-4-2T survive.



This mallet couldn't be identified.



Mallet 18 and 0-4-2T No. 9 with the mallet 28 behind.



Two passenger carriages survive for the tourist train but this one is unrestored. The bogies are really heavy duty. I believe Semboro once offered a passenger train service for workers and school children.



In the afternoon, we found two fields being cut. This one to the east was flat, hot and had absolutely no shade. We decided to stake out the other one not far outside the mill to the south west.



Three women on bicycles heading home along the railway track.



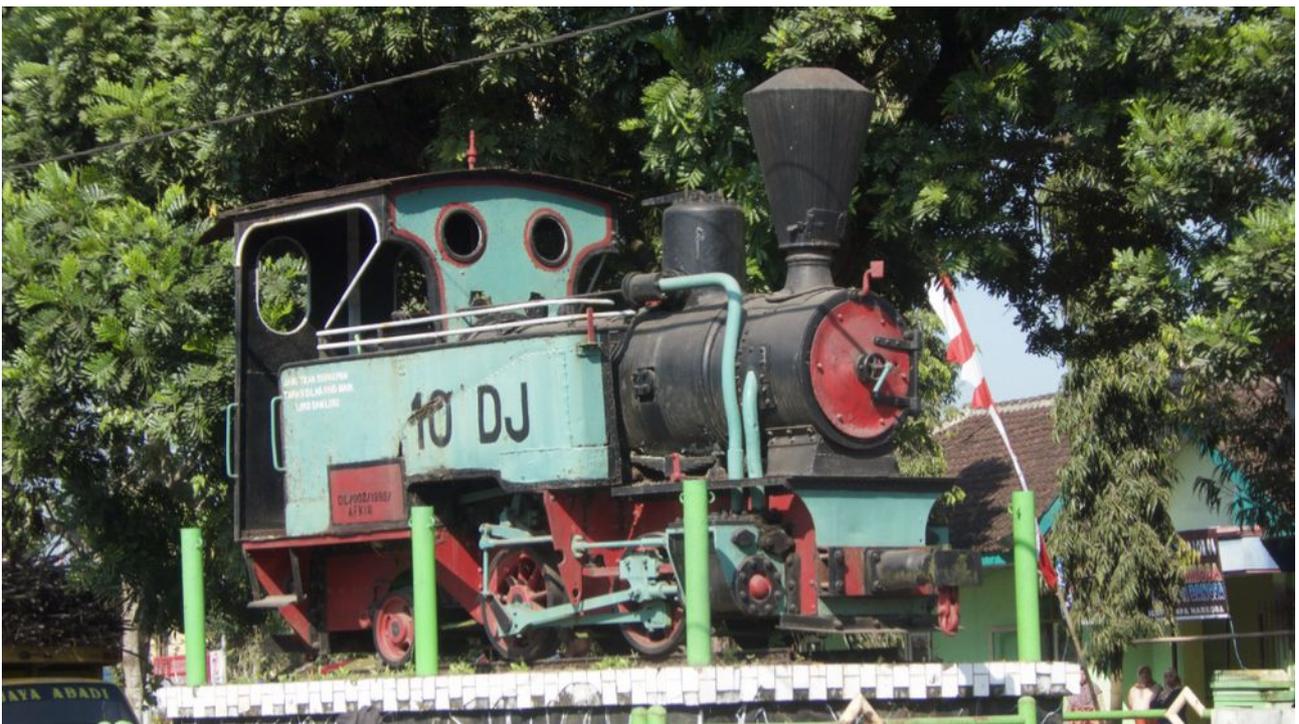
We saw several loco movements including this one with a few empty cane wagons but light went before the loaded cane wagons were collect from the field we were watching.



Ross took this shot of me leaning on a cane wagon.

Jatiroto

There has been a clear out of steam locos here, too. Three 700mm locos remain along with the 2 3ft 6in gauge locos and the loco preserved on the approach to the mill.





We had a brief mill tour which required hard hats and masks. Left to right: John K, Ross, Peter, me, Graham, Chris, Nigel and Conrad.



A large number of locos have gone but some of the thin metal sheeting from the cabs and water tanks remain.

The steam roller survives:



Two of the railcars are dumped.





Loco 100 along with No. 47 J and 50 J survive. At one time, they had U for Uap rather than J for Jatiroto in the number. J would be to distinguish them from Semboro locos. U would have been after the diesels arrived to distinguish them from diesels.





This is the empty steam loco shed. This was home to 20+ steam locos until earlier this year but none had been in steam since the 1980s.



The diesel workshop remains active next door.



From its tapered front (or rear) this carriage probably had a special purpose. Was it motorised? What was the purpose of the end on the right with only a round porthole in the narrow front? Behind is one of 2 regular passenger coaches once used on the school train. The second is out of shot left.



One of the two surviving cape gauge locos. The mill is being redeveloped to increase production. This area is close to some of the new buildings and the locos may not survive much longer.



There was one small 2 axle diesel in use amongst all the 3 axle Hokuriku locos.

At the station to collect Elmar...



...there was a crossing of trains. This train from Banyuwangi to Surabaya was waiting for the cross.



Elmar arriving.



At lunch, the restaurant sent out for some beers. They weren't cold so we added ice.

In the afternoon, John K got to drive a Toyota Landcruiser he took a shine to.



With nothing happening on the back line out of the mill, we headed for the double-track mainline to the south west and saw 4 light engine moves and one short empty cane train.



I climbed a bamboo ladder up a tree to get this shot. It felt high at the time but doesn't really show up here.

John Raby
Jember
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