

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

ISSUE 149
JULY 2020



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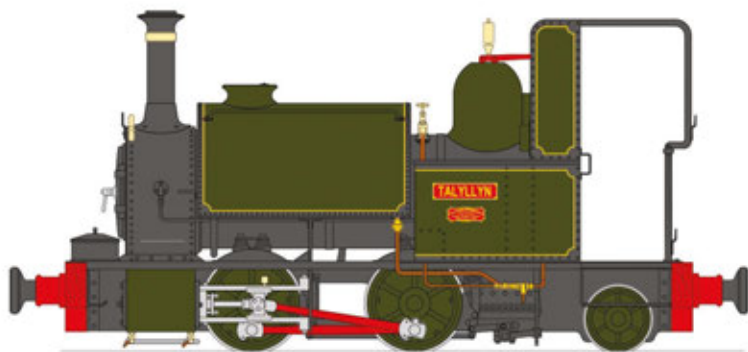
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The model is built to a scale of 16mm:1' (1:19 scale) and follows our standard design brief being internally gas-fired with a centre flue boiler and available in either 32mm ('O' gauge) or 45mm ('1' gauge). The axles run in bronze bearings and all the rods and valve gear (piston reverse) will be manufactured from stainless steel. The cab roof is fixed, access to the regulator and reverser is via the cab doors, water via the boiler filler cap, gas via the toolbox and the lubricator filler is in one of the bunkers. The copper boiler is fitted with a gauge glass. The model is built from stainless steel and brass. Although fitted with TR buffers and couplings the model will accept our Z1/Z2 chopper couplings for those who wish to use them. The model will be available in TR green, Indian Red or black. Estimated UK RRP £1650.00. We would like to thank David Fletcher for the superb drawings and members of the Talyllyn Railway for their help in providing data for the model.



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Cover: Many locomotives have visited Beamish Museum's growing 2ft gauge railway in recent times, including John Sutton's new-build Decauville 'Edgar', seen here during running trials in July 2018 with another new-build, the replica of Stephen Lewin 0-4-0WTG 'Samson' completed at Beamish in 2016. In this issue we describe the accelerating progress on the museum line.
Photo Paul Jarman

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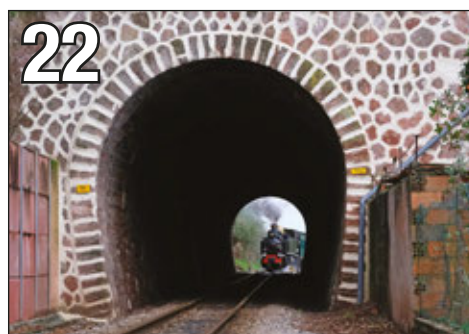


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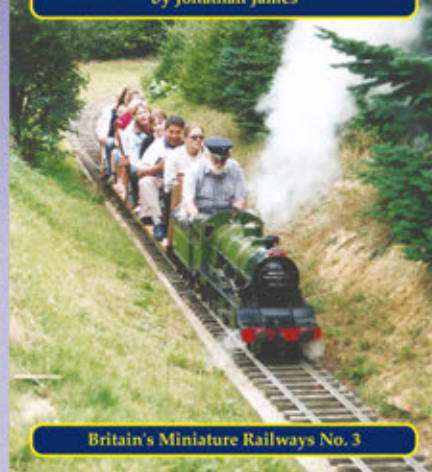


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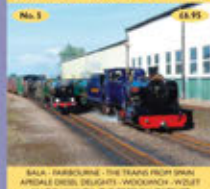
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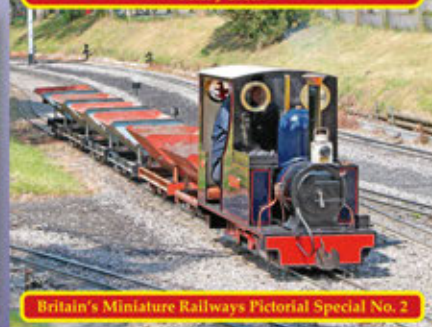
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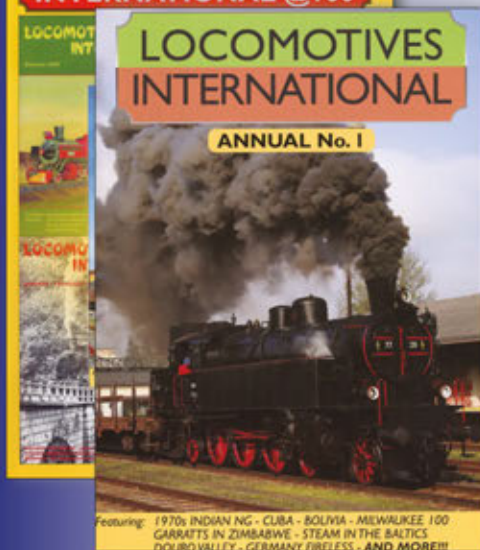


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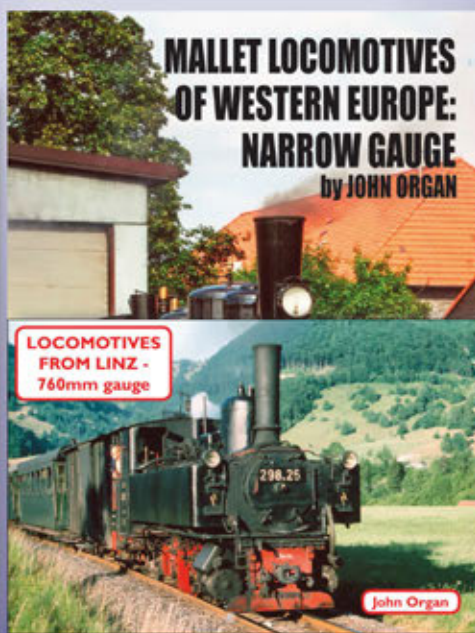


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Return to a new normal...



Main photo:
The Groulle
Glen Railway's
locomotives have
been slumbering
in their shed for
much longer than
might have been
expected, but
it now looks as
if this little line
could lead the
reawakening of
narrow gauge in
the British isles....

Photo: Richard
Booth/GGR

Welcome to *NGW* 149, and while I write these words approaching the end of a third successive month of absolutely no narrow gauge action in the British isles (in fact no public services on any UK heritage railway), the signs for the future are far more positive than at any time since the pandemic started in March.

As you will read over the page, unless we see a significant reversal of the current easing of coronavirus restrictions, by the time you pick up next month's issue of *NGW* several lines in the British Isles will be running trains again – joining a growing number of lines across Europe and parts of the globe which as I write this have already reopened, several on them over this weekend of 13th-14th June.

I'm careful to write 'British Isles' because remarkably it appears that the first 'British' narrow gauge line likely to welcome passengers back will be not only one of the shortest, but one that is not actually in the UK. The Groulle Glen Railway will be taking advantage of a determined lockdown programme on the Isle of Man that was instigated early and which as a result appears to have resulted in the island ridding itself of the virus long before the rest of the British Isles.

We should not fool ourselves – this is not the end of the crisis by any means, and writing this seems somewhat ironic at *NGW* Towers

in Wales, where the Government is taking a much more cautious tone than its Westminster counterpart.

Here as of 14th June we remain effectively in lockdown, strongly discouraged from travelling more than five miles, and with potential visitors coming over the border from England being told "please go home, Wales is still closed..." There is currently little prospect of the Great Little Trains of Wales, which of course include a majority of the UK's leading narrow gauge railways, joining the return to steam any time soon. In fact one line, the Vale of Rheidol, has told us it doesn't currently expect to run passenger services at all in 2020...

A different world

Of course even as the number of lines reopening grows, this will not be a 'return to normal', not at least the normal we have known before. Initially the required social distancing and sanitisation measures will make taking a narrow gauge train ride a much less relaxing pastime than it once was. Even when hopefully the virus recedes to an extent that such measures can be relaxed (perhaps even removed?), the damage done by the virus will be felt for a very long time in our industry as it will across the world.

however, let's be positive – locos are undergoing steam tests, train services are on the horizon. We are sure that, subject to the current

health concerns and restrictions, *NGW* readers will be champing at the bit to get out and back on the trains, so if you can please support our railways when they reopen – there's a lot of recovering to do in the near future...

Business as usual

Regular readers will notice that with 'non-essential' shops reopening in England from 15th June, we feel able to remove the panel that has formed part of this page over the last couple of issues, explaining how to access *NGW* from home. However if you are still isolating, you can order single printed copies of the magazine from www.world-of-railways.co.uk/Store/Latest-Issue/narrow-gauge-world while details of how to obtain digital issues are on page 49.

Finally can I again thank the many readers who have taken the time to write or email with positive comments on our efforts to publish as normal during recent weeks, when many specialist magazines have suspended publication. Your comments are much appreciated and despite as I write many of the head-office production team still working from home, our 'business as usual' mantra remains!

Let's get back to normal – I'm currently researching what could be an amazing exclusive narrow gauge loco story, which hopefully we will tell you all about next month...

Andrew Charman

Groudle set to lead way as lines prepare to reopen



One of the shortest narrow gauge lines in the British isles could be the first to restart passenger services following the coronavirus pandemic.

As *NGW* closed for press on 13th June the **Groudle Glen Railway** was preparing for reopening on Sunday 5th July. The kilometre-long 2ft gauge line on the Isle of Man planned to restart services almost three weeks after the island, which is not part of the UK, was expected to lift its social-distancing regulations. However the island remains closed to outside visitors.

The **Isle of Man Steam Railway** was predicted to follow soon after the Groudle line, though *NGW* understands that as of

13th June staff on the island's Government-run lines had not received a promised four-week advance notice of reopening.

As the UK's narrow gauge lines completed a third successive month of closure, there were glimmers of hope that by the time we close the news pages for *NGW* 150 on 18th July, some lines will be close to reopening if not already running trains and others making plans.

Following the Isle of Man the next reopenings will almost certainly be in England, as Prime Minister Boris Johnson continues to relax the restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. 'Non-essential' shops in England were set

to reopen on 14th June, along with theme parks, zoos and such like, and several railways were considering when they could safely consider restarting services.

A major factor in future plans could be social distancing rules, which when *NGW* went to press the Prime Minister was under increasing pressure to reduce from the existing two metres. As reported last month enforcing the two-metre rule in narrow gauge carriages would cut passenger capacity to levels that in many cases would make running trains not economically viable for the line concerned.

Narrow gauge lines responding to a survey compiled by the Heritage Railway Association considered that halving social distancing to one metre, the distance recommended by the World Health Organisation, would have a major effect on the viability of their services.

Half could mean double

The **Talylyn Railway** suggested such a change could both double potential train loadings and the capacity of catering outlets. The **Ravenglass & Eskdale**

Above: On 7th June Groudle Glen Railway Bagnall 2-4-OT 'Sea Lion' was undergoing a steam test in advance of plans for the line to reopen on 5th July. *Photo: Richard Booth*

Left: Trains have been running on our heritage lines in recent weeks, principally on weed-killing duties, here on the Festiniog Railway on 2nd June. *Photo: Alasdair Stewart*



Railway added that one-metre distancing would permit use of a guard's carriage rendered unusable by the two-metre rule, allowing two more trains to be operated each day with potential earnings improvements of almost £3,000, and the **Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway** suggested that as well as doubling train capacity one-metre distancing would help with work to prepare the line for reopening, making an earlier return to operating the whole eight-mile route more likely.

Prospects for reopening remain rather less positive in Wales, the hub of UK narrow gauge operations with the majority of major lines located in the nation. The Welsh Government has been much slower to ease restrictions compared to England and at press time stay-at-home measures were still in place including a requirement to not travel more than five miles.

Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford caused alarm amongst tourist businesses on 7th June when he suggested that the country would "remain largely shut to tourists" over the summer.

Many of the Welsh railways will rely on accommodation businesses reopening both for their passengers and volunteers. Mr Drakeford did later state that reopening the Welsh tourism industry, "is in the forefront of our minds," and that he hoped to make positive moves in July.

In its HRA submission the Talyllyn Railway stated that the overly cautious approach of the Welsh Government was putting the tourist industry in Wales at a competitive disadvantage, while the W&LLR, located close to the Welsh-English border, stated the differing regulations would cause great confusion amongst potential visitors.

Volunteers return

Meanwhile some lines are permitting a limited resumption of volunteering. Volunteers returned to the Talyllyn Railway on 13th June but under strictly enforced conditions. Those attending the railway were only permitted to work outside, effectively on vegetation clearance, and required to practice full social distancing measures. They also had to live within five miles of the railway as per Welsh Government travel restrictions.

Talyllyn GM Stuart Williams also told **NGW** that on advice he had restricted attendance to members aged under 70 and therefore not in the bracket considered particularly vulnerable to the Covid-19 pandemic. "That hasn't gone down well with some of our over-70s members who insist they are fit and healthy and want to come and help," he said.

Stuart is also looking at offering limited takeaway catering activities, managed by himself and commercial manager Lorraine Simkiss, who not being furloughed are on site anyway. "Just something to bring a little revenue in," he added.

One Welsh line unlikely to run in 2020 is the **Vale of Rheidol Railway**, though



CEO Rob Gambrill told **NGW** that the situation would be reviewed in August.

The line, which is run entirely with paid staff, has placed all its employees on furlough until October, though around four of the workshop team may return in August to carry out some commercial work and bring in some revenue.

"It would take us around a week to switch the line back on, however our approach is to protect our staff and having the public on site is just too big a risk to them," Rob said.

Shay shut if possible

Rob added that being married to a front-line NHS worker had given him a personal view of the situation; "We will be back next season and all being well all our key staff will be as well. I know other railways will have different approaches but personally if you can afford to stay shut I think we should."

Among other UK lines, some volunteers have been carrying out essential maintenance on the **Lynton & Barnstaple Railway** in strict compliance with the distancing guidelines, but spokesman Tony Nicholson said any reopening plans would await Government announcements.

The 2ft gauge **Great Whipsnade Railway** does not expect to resume services until at least the middle of July. Whipsnade was among Britain's zoos to make national headlines as they pleaded to be permitted to reopen or face going out of business. A resultant Government U-turn saw the zoos allowed to resume business from 15th June, but Great Whipsnade Railway manager

Above: Any plans for the Manx Electric Railway to join other lines on the Isle of Man in reopening could be complicated by a major relay that the line has undertaken during the lockdown. On 11th June there was a 300-yard gap in both lines between Groudle and Eskdale.

Right: The Great Whipsnade Railway's locomotives 'Superior' and 'Excelsior' were still slumbering in early June but could be running trains again by the end of July.

Photo: Kevin Edwins/GWR

Kevin Edwins told **NGW** that restarting trains is in phase three of Whipsnade's four-phase reopening plan.

Bressingham Steam Museum was planning to reopen its gardens in mid June, with the 2ft gauge Fen Railway following in early July and the 15-inch and 10¼-inch lines around the middle of the month. Bressingham hopes to have its entire site operating by August.

The **Bure Valley Railway** plans to reopen on 1st August. Manager Andrew Barnes told **NGW** that in a Zoom call with the Norfolk 15-inch gauge line's staff it had been agreed to bring them off furlough on 21st July, allowing two weeks of preparation before restarting services. As detailed in our spotlight on page 8, an intense set of measures will be necessary to enable safe operation.

Meanwhile the BVR's continuing fight against insurers refusing to pay out on business interruption cover, detailed in **NGW** 147 and 148, saw Andrew Barnes putting his case on the Jeremy Vine show on Radio 2 in early June.

■ The situation regarding reopenings is changing rapidly and readers are advised to check railway websites for latest updates. The websites are all listed on page 48.



Bure Valley – the work needed to allow reopening

Bure Valley Railway manager Andrew Barnes has described in detail to *NGW* the extensive measures that will be necessary to make possible the Norfolk line's planned reopening on 1st August.

These measures, planning for which Andrew admits has seen him working in the BVR office until after 9pm at night on several days in succession, demonstrate just how big a challenge lines across the country are facing in trying to run trains.

"We have decided to fit screens between the compartments in our coaches," he said. "These will be of clear sail material with a seat-belt type webbing around the edge with brass eyes to allow fastening to the back of the seat and the cantrail."

The BVR rejected using Acrylic sheet or Perspex for the partitions, feeling they could easily be broken by children climbing on seats and could pose a risk in the event of an accident.

"We are only planning on using every other compartment, but the flexible partitions are easily moved by us if we wish to accommodate a family group larger than four people," Andrew added.

Prohibitive costs forced plans to change the line's ticketing system, obliging travellers to book an out and return slot and be allocated a compartment number, to be dropped.

Instead travellers will be asked to select their return train time before boarding the outbound one, the railway hoping to avoid a heavily-loaded last return from Wroxham which has been typical on sunny days.

Timetable changes

"After a lot of careful thought we have decided to throw our published timetable out of the window," Andrew said. "To provide capacity and ensure social distancing, we are looking to operate three train sets each of eight carriages with three locomotives in steam."

"This will allow us to operate a departure from Aylsham every hour on the hour from 10:00 to 15:00 inclusive and



will assist in spreading out the demand over a greater number of trains and avoid the potential for crowding pinch points.

"Running a three-train service we will see a 20 per cent increase in costs, but we consider it worth it to ensure provision of capacity and social distancing compliance."

The line will also only operate five days a week, closing on its traditionally quietest days of Monday and Friday.

Train sets will be cleaned at each turnaround and again each evening using a biological fogging machine. "The carriages will then be left overnight – this is to ensure the fumes are cleared before use."

The BVR is considering allocating specific drivers to locos and guards to individual vans, recommended in guidance issued by the Office of Rail and Road.

One-way platforms

Other potential measures include at Aylsham all trains arriving at one platform and departing from another to avoid two loads of passengers competing for space on a single platform.

A barrier could be placed across the platform at the country end to prevent visitors getting too close to the loco crew, but still providing a facility to allow the taking of photographs.

"At Wroxham we will use one platform for the train to arrive and another platform for passengers to wait before boarding – again to prevent a conflict in movement of arriving and departing passengers. A one-way flow will again operate."

The line intends to allocate a capacity for each day's operation and will strongly

encourage pre-booking. The entrance to the car park will be stewarded – booked passengers will be allocated their boarding pass, those who haven't booked will only be sold a ticket if there is capacity. "If we have no capacity we feel it is better they are turned away before getting out of the car."

The railway will also manage entry to its toilets, alongside regular cleaning by staff equipped with full PPE and biological fogging at the end of each day.

The BVR's shop at Aylsham reopened on 15th June with screens installed to protect counter staff, social distancing guidance and regulated entry numbers.

Other measures have included installing hand sanitising devices and reducing the number of spaces available in the car park.

"The key reason we have taken the decision to open is to send a message to our customers that we still exist and we can offer them a steam train journey in a safe environment," Andrew said.

"If we do not reopen this year, are we sending out the right message to those looking at booking for next year?"

"All our measures are based around what we currently know and we accept that the environment is ever changing."

"The key message is that we will only operate if it is legally allowed and Covid safe compliant."

■ Pleas by the BVR to its local council for rent relief have seen the line's charge deferred but not waived. Andrew Barnes told *NGW* that many councillors were minded that the railway should still be required to pay, despite it already losing more than £1m in revenue this year.

"I also explained that we had a society with supporters donating time and money to support the railway and it would not be good for that money to be used to pay a local authority. Also the double whammy of having to pay £30,000 on insurance and at least the same on rent before we ran a train would do nothing for job retention."

The BVR expects to have to redeck a bridge over the River Bure before it can run trains. "This is the Council's responsibility, but again no action," Andrew said.



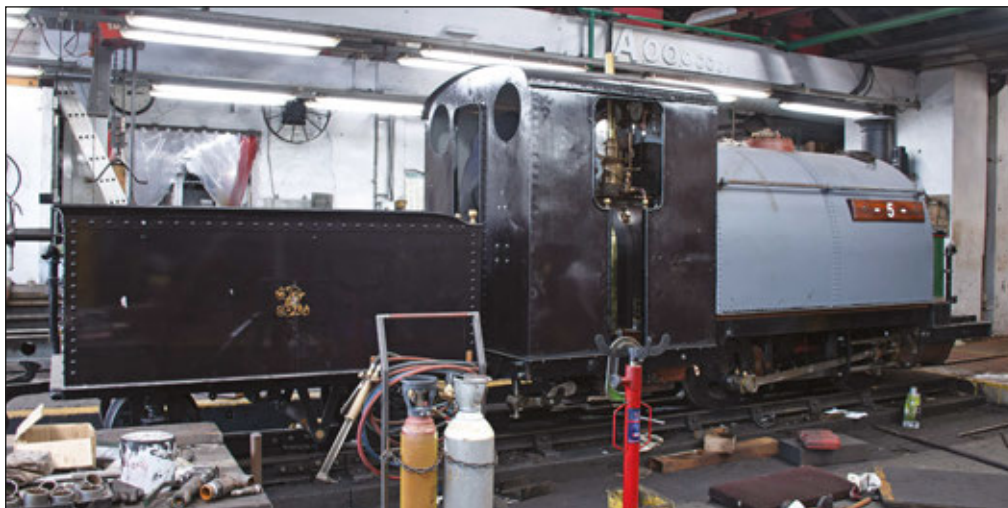
Above: One-way systems on the platforms will be just one measure employed at BVR stations. Photo: Gerry Balding/BVR

Left: All the line's carriages will need fitting with partitions. Photo: Andrew Charman

■ The Ffestiniog Railway's 'large England' 0-4-OST 'Welsh Pony' was looking ever more like a locomotive in early June having been reunited with its tender. Work on restoring the loco, which has never run in preservation, has continued in the line's Boston Lodge works, under strict social distancing measures.

The Ffestiniog is predicted to announce soon when Welsh Pony will be launched into traffic – a planned debut during the 'Fairlie Eventful' Gala in June fell victim to the event being cancelled by the coronavirus pandemic.

Photo: Chris Parry/FF&WHR



Welshpool seeks funding to finish overhaul of original Beyer Peacock

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway has repurposed its 'Tracks to Recovery' appeal in a bid to avoid locomotive issues going into what the mid-Wales 2ft 6in gauge line hopes will be a normal operating season in 2021.

With the benefit of a large legacy of unassigned funding, the W&LLR was able to contract out the 10-year overhaul of 1902-built Beyer Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl' to the Vale of Rheidol Railway. This left the line's workshop team free to complete the much delayed restoration of Franco-Belge 0-8-0T 699-01 'Sir Drefaldwyn', with the prospect of both this engine and the overhauled The Earl being available for the start of the 2021 season when the boiler ticket of sister Beyer Peacock 'The Countess' is due to run out.

The Earl left for the VoR in June 2019 and the overhaul was more than half complete when in March the Covid-19 outbreak closed the Aberystwyth workshop along with all other heritage operations.

As well as delaying the rebuild, the pandemic has also put pressure on the W&LLR's funding. While the Tracks to Recovery appeal has been highly successful, raising more than £55,000, this will be used to meet the railway's fixed costs in the three months so far it has been closed, and the line's reserves will be needed next winter which would normally be funded by revenue from the preceding season.

In this situation spending the £95,000 that is still required to complete The Earl without securing additional funding becomes difficult to justify.

"A critical next step is to reassemble The Earl as a rolling chassis," W&LLR appeals director Iain McLean told the line's members. "If we can raise £30,000 by the time the Vale of Rheidol workshop (and we) reopen, we can ask our contractors to do that straight away.

"If we can raise the whole £95,000, we can ask our contractors to finish the job off, so that The Earl can be back in service in 2021 and feature at the 2021 Steam Gala. That way, after The Countess steps aside for its refit, we will still have one of our original historic locomotives available."

Iain added that without a successful appeal the rolling chassis of the loco would need to be set aside until funds permitted the job to be completed, making it very unlikely that The Earl would run in 2021.

Rapid response

Acutely aware that a next step would need to be decided by the time the VoR reopened its workshop, the W&LLR launched its appeal in early June and in the first week raised more than £19,000.

"During the shutdown I have been struck by the level of support, financial and moral, that heritage railways have had and the confidence that reflects in our cause," W&LLR general manager Charles Spencer told *NGW*.

"In the case of the W&LLR our quickly mounted Tracks to Recovery appeal raised more than £55,000 in a few weeks for the unglamorous cause of paying unavoidable bills while the railway was closed and earning no income from running trains.

"Hard on its heels, a second appeal to finish the overhaul of The Earl without further

depleting our reserves, was over halfway to its initial milestone target within a week of being launched."

Charles believes such donations reflect a confidence that the railway has a future, which the donors want to help assure; "One covering note was very explicit about the donor's confidence that his money was not going in to a 'black hole', never to be seen again, rather that the railway would re-start when possible and that funds were being managed prudently to achieve that goal."

He also paid tribute to the moral support supplied by volunteers, members and the wider narrow gauge community who put up and viewed hundreds of photographs of earlier activity on the railway on social media, keeping the W&LLR in front of internet fans.

"Other railways are reporting the same depth of financial support and I hope they are also benefiting from the same feeling of confidence that heritage railways will be back," Charles said.

"It will be hard work and require creative solutions, but it's essential to protect the decades of work that have gone into preserving and explaining our history."

Details of the appeal to finish The Earl are at www.wllr.org.uk/node/267

Right: 'The Earl' leaving Llanfair Caereinion for the Vale of Rheidol Railway on 24th June 2019 – when it returns will be decided by the result of a new appeal.
Photo: Phil Ellis/W&LLR





Bressingham plans narrow gauge heritage depot project

Bressingham Steam Museum trustees have made public their vision for a new hew heritage project, replacing the current life-expired narrow gauge running shed with a purpose-built building in which heritage rolling stock can be displayed.

"We have acquired over the years a range of wagons, internal combustion and diesel locos that we would like to display alongside out-of-ticket and 'not in use today' steam locos," trustee Rob Ellis told *NGW*.

"The vision is for a building that gives visitors access to both our 2ft and 15-inch gauge exhibits and to which we can add appropriate interpretation on the use of narrow gauge."

Rob added that East Anglia's lack of narrow gauge history compared to other parts of the UK increased the feeling that the Bressingham collection should be more accessible to visitors, "who may have less opportunity to understand its use than those in other areas."

"At the moment it is a vision and an aspiration, but we have formed a working group to try to unpick the challenges and find a way for us to make it become reality."

When Bressingham reopens services on the 2ft gauge Fen line will be worked by no 2 'Bevan', built in the museum workshops in 2010, and Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Gwynedd'.

They will be joined later in the season by vertical-boilered 0-4-0 'Fernlee' after attention in the workshop. Overhaul of Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'George Sholto' continues with the bodywork and tank now painted and awaiting the refurbished bottom end.

Exmoor Steam Railway built 0-4-0T 'St Christopher' will again be in charge of services on the 15-inch gauge Waveney Valley Railway, while the end of lockdown will enable work to resume on restoration of Krupp 4-6-2 Pacific 'Männertreu'.

The design of a new firebox has been completed by Graham Morris Engineering, and is waiting approval by Bressingham's boiler inspectors. The one remaining original Krupp tender was extensively overhauled in 2019 to make it serviceable without altering the outward appearance and retaining the original riveting. The loco's bottom end awaits new tyres on the wheelsets and re-erection – this is on view in Bressingham's 'live' overhaul area.

Meanwhile the museum's profile has been significantly enhanced by a starring role in a documentary TV series. *Inside the Steam Train Museum* was shown on Channel 5 in June.

Above: Bressingham's narrow gauge shed is overdue for replacing. Photo: Andrew Charman

Temporary narrow gauge in Ireland

The first 3ft gauge train ever to run in Connemara, County Galway will arrive at Maam Cross station later this year (*writes Hugh Dougherty*), as part of an ambitious project to bring steam back, 85 years after the last train ran on the standard gauge Galway-Clifden line.

Jim Deegan, director of the Connemara Railway project, plans to run a steam loco and carriages to Maam Cross on temporary narrow gauge track, as a proof of intentions to develop a working steam railway.

"We have already laid standard gauge track at Maam Cross and have a 25-year lease and planning permission to rebuild the station, recreate its original track layout and operate steam trains," Jim said.

"As this will take some time, we decided to bring a narrow gauge train to the site this year, both to make railway history and to show the community and the railway heritage movement that we mean business."

Stock will be sourced in Ireland, though the identity of the engine is not currently being revealed.

Plans to run the train this summer have fallen victim to Covid-19 restrictions, but he still has hopes of staging the event in 2020, the 125th anniversary of the opening of the Galway-Clifden line, built under the Light Railways (Ireland) Act of 1889, although, unusually, to 5ft 3in gauge.

"There is evidence to suggest that it was to be built on the 3ft gauge," said Jim. "So we're really showing what might have been when we run the train."

Details are at www.connemararailway.ie

Maam Cross already has 5ft 3in gauge rails and tracks broad and narrow will meet here later this year. Photo courtesy Connemara Railway



■ The new depot for the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway on the Isle of Man has been completed while the services have not been running during the coronavirus pandemic. The brand-new building visually replicates the previous demolished depot.

Meanwhile in a controversial move the Manx Government's Department of Infrastructure has confirmed that the Tramway is not likely to run over its full length again until 2022. Rebuilding work on the Douglas promenade will be paused on 31st March 2021 to avoid conflicting with visitors to the island, and the southern section of the tramway temporarily replaced with landscaping prior to work starting again over the winter of 2021-22.

Photo: David Lloyd-Jones



Talyllyn and Corris plan Kerr Stuart centenary celebrations

The Talyllyn and Corris Railways will join forces in 2021 for a series of special celebrations marking the centenary of Kerr Stuart Tattoo class 0-4-2ST 'Edward Thomas.'

The loco was built by the Stoke-on-Trent firm in 1921 and delivered to the Corris line where it became no 4. After the line closed, the loco was purchased in 1951, along with Hughes 0-4-2ST no 3, by the fledgling Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society.

At the TR the Kerr Stuart retained the number 4 and was named 'Edward Thomas' after the line's last pre-preservation general manager. Indeed following gauge issues with no 3, named 'Sir Haydn', Edward Thomas effectively proved a saviour of the Talyllyn in its first years, bringing much-needed relief to the only working TR loco, 0-4-0T 'Dolgoch' which was badly in need of heavy overhaul.

The first centenary celebration will be held on the Corris Railway over the 8/9th May Gala weekend. Edward Thomas will return to its former home and work alongside new-build sister, Corris no 7 completed in 2005.

At the beginning of June both locomotives will transfer to the Talyllyn Railway for a Gala event over the weekend of 12th-13th June.

Both celebrations promise special photographic opportunities including no 4 hauling a rake of recreated Corris carriages and also some vintage wagons, and double

heading with no 7. It is also hoped that there will be other attractions for visitors to enjoy.

On the Talyllyn the pair will be rostered alongside 'Sir Haydn', the only other surviving Corris engine, and with newly restored original Corris carriage no 17, which is currently undergoing restoration work at Stanegate Restorations.

The original Corris brake van, which was purchased for the TR at the same time as the two locos, will also be restored in time for the Gala while model Tattoo locomotives and other attractions are promised.

Corris no 7 will be making a second visit to the Talyllyn, providing an opportunity to analyse improvements made since its previous visit highlighted the need for front-end drafting changes that have since been done.

Next year will also mark the 70th anniversary of the first train operated by a railway preservation society on the Talyllyn on 14th May 1951. This event will be marked by celebrations over the weekend of 14th-16th May, more details of which will be announced by the line at a later date.

All these events are of course dependent on a resolution of the current Covid-19 issues.

Above: 'Edward Thomas' and its new-build sister were last together on the Talyllyn in 2012.

Photo: David Coleman

BRIEF LINES

No Hollycombe in 2020

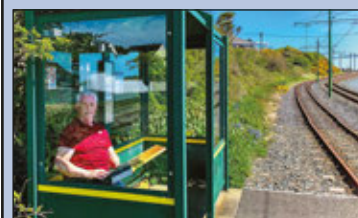
Hollycombe Steam Museum has confirmed that it will not open at all in 2020. The Hampshire museum includes a 1.5-mile ling 2ft gauge line and is home to former Dinorwic quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Jerry M.'

...and no Llanfair Gala

The annual Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Steam Gala, scheduled for 4th-6th September in 2020, will not take place this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has particularly affected locomotive restorations.

Virtual success for Bala

The Bala Lake Railway's 'Virtual Gala', featuring a range of videos streamed on the mid-Wales line's Facebook page on 12th June, proved a major success. More than £2,000 was raised for the line's Covid-19 appeal, taking it past halfway to the target of £25,000. The videos should still be available by scrolling down the Bala Lake Facebook feed and we will have more on this next month.



■ Happy in his work! NGW Manx correspondent David Lloyd-Jones enjoyed the glorious weather on the island last month in the conservatory – or in his case the waiting shelter at the nearest stop for the Manx Electric Railway! With the line closed by Covid-19 restrictions, David was able to work without interruptions...

Statfold plans for 2021

The Statfold Barn Railway is planning two special events for 2021 after the cancellation of its 2020 enthusiast days.

'Quarry Hunslet 150' on 20th March will form a belated birthday celebration for the iconic 0-4-0ST, the first example of which was ordered for the Dinorwic Slate Quarry of North Wales in 1870. "We are in initial planning stages at the moment, but the event promises to be good," Statfold's Henry Noon told *NGW*.

On 21st June the second Enthusiast Day will celebrate 50 years since the building in 1971 of the last commercial industrial steam engine in the UK, 'Trangkil No.4', today preserved at Statfold.

Henry added that the SBR is ready to stage events at short notice in 2020; "but until we are sure of the lockdown being lifted we are loath to mention dates."

Photo: This could be the 1950s but was actually taken in June in Statfold's new loco workshop. Photo: Joey Evans





Restoration progress as Lancs readies to reopen

The West Lancashire Light Railway has launched a discounted 'Advance Return to Steam' family ticket for £6 on its website, as it awaits a date when it can safely reopen.

WLLR chairman Mike Spall told *NGW* that a donations button on the 2ft gauge line's website (www.westlancsrailway.org) had also proved very popular, "particularly with our local community and friends."

A limited return of volunteers has started under strict control measures to carry out maintenance and to prepare the railway for a return to service.

All three operational steam locomotives, Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Irish Mail' (823/1903), Kerr Stuart 0-6-0 'Joffie' (2405/1915) and Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0 'Utrillas' (2378/1908) have been successfully steamed ready for their boiler inspection steam tests.

Remodelling of Beconsall station is underway with the main platform being extended and relaid to accommodate a new toilet block currently being installed. The platform tiles include many from the original West Lancashire Railway station at Hesketh Park in Southport and will be over 140 years old. The reconfiguration is to

accommodate a housing development underway adjacent to the line – an entrance and car park is now being constructed for the railway and will be available for use later this year.

Work also continues on the 10-year overhaul of Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0 'Montalban' (6641/1913) and the restoration of Bagnall 0-4-OST 'Sybil' (1760/1906), with the aim of having both in service in 2021.

Work on Montalban has included significant attention to the boiler – an all-new welded unit built in 1986, it required replacement of a pitted section in the lower barrel.

The frames of Sybil have been reassembled with new brake gear and couplings, ready for a new riveted marine boiler under construction by members of the Sybil Locomotive Trust and Johnson's of Banks. Currently final fitting of the firebox is underway and the railway is aiming for hydraulic testing of the boiler by the Autumn followed by a steam test.

Above: Rapid progress is being made on the new marine boiler for Bagnall 0-4-OST 'Sybil.

Photo: WLLR



Threlkeld takes to the curve

Easing of some Covid-19 restrictions has enabled work to restart on the extension to the 2ft gauge running line at Threlkeld quarry mining museum.

Making use of good weather, the main focus of recent work has been on the horseshoe curve. This has taken some 1800 tons of material to construct using some of the vintage machinery that the museum is known for. The quarter-mile extension has required moving 3000 tons of earth.

Bagnall 0-4-OST 'Sir Tom' (2135/1925) was steamed on 3rd June for footplate crew familiarisation and to check that maintenance carried out over the winter was satisfactory. Threlkeld's Dickon Chaplin-Brice told *NGW* that the exercise also provided an opportunity to assess how the railway could operate as and when restrictions are eased further.

Two further steamings have since taken place to collect data using alternative fuels.

The dry spell at the end of May provided a window to start repainting carriage stock, four being completed over three weeks. The remaining two are expected to be painted by the end of June.

Threlkeld was forced to cancel its annual steam gala planned for the last weekend in July, but Dickon added the event would return in 2021.

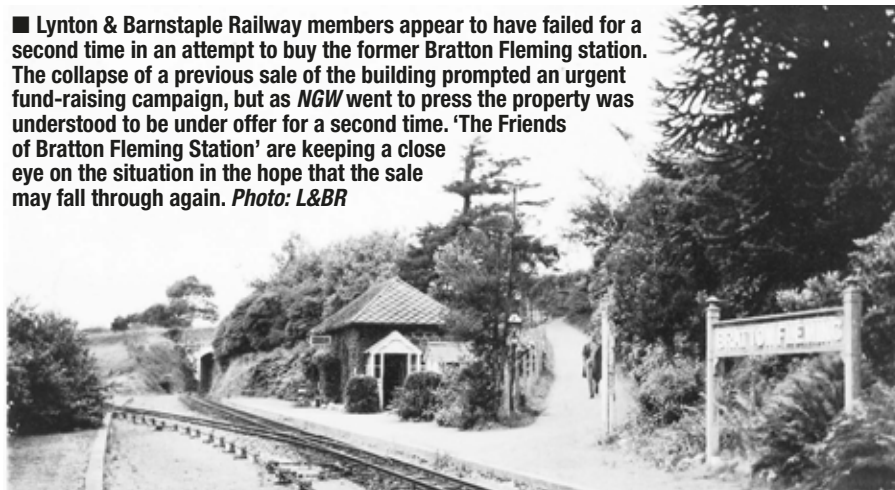
Above: On-site heritage plant has proven useful in construction of the extension.

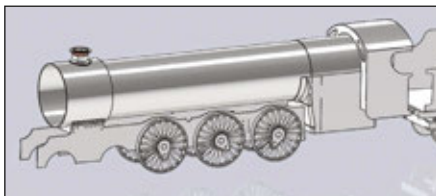
Below: Good weather has aided a carriage repainting programme.

Photos: Threlkeld Quarry



■ Lynton & Barnstaple Railway members appear to have failed for a second time in an attempt to buy the former Bratton Fleming station. The collapse of a previous sale of the building prompted an urgent fund-raising campaign, but as *NGW* went to press the property was understood to be under offer for a second time. 'The Friends of Bratton Fleming Station' are keeping a close eye on the situation in the hope that the sale may fall through again. *Photo: L&BR*





Colossus project launches appeal to fund frames

The group intending to construct a new-build version of 15-inch gauge Bassett-Lowke 4-6-2 Pacific 'Colossus' has announced an appeal to fund the frames of the locomotive.

The original loco was commissioned in 1913 by Captain J E P Howey, later to build the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, for his private railway at Staughton Manor near Northampton. An enlarged version of Bassett Lowke's Class 30 Atlantic loco designed by Henry Greenly, the new engine was designated class 60 and named 'John Anthony'.

The loco was among stock sold to the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway during the First World War and ran on the Cumbrian line until 1927 when it was scrapped and some parts used in the first 'River Mite'.

Four years ago a small group started to acquire drawings and information regarding Colossus. Design work and smaller component manufacture has been started, but now the project is stepping up a gear with a bid to build the main frames.

The project is looking for 60 supporters to donate £60 each, either as a single amount or in six instalments of £10. Each supporter will have their names permanently stamped on the frames and receive a certificate and a Jonathan Clay print of Colossus.

Supporters will also receive a regular newsletter on progress, and an invitation to the first running days of the new engine.

Anyone interested in joining the new-build project can call 07773 185342 or e-mail colossuslocomotive@outlook.com for further information.

Tramathon aids Seaton line

The Seaton Tramway streamed a week of live videos on Facebook between 8th-12th June and on 11th June broadcast a 24-hour tram trip continuously between Seaton and Colyton Stations, to help raise funds for the line while it is closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The tramway hopes to celebrate its 50th anniversary of operating in August. Those donating to the appeal were in line for prizes and experiences including Driver's Eye experiences, tram driving lessons, free tickets and lifetime free travel. Details are at www.tram.co.uk/tramathon



■ Further progress on the Southwold Railway Trust's 'Blyth' new-build project at North Bay Engineering in Darlington has seen the wheels and axleboxes of the Sharp-Stewart 2-4-0T mounted in the frames, along with the brake gear. The next major job will be to add the motion plates and slide bars, followed the eccentric straps and rods.

Since returning to work on 10th May North Bay has also completed the boiler for the project to recreate the 1873 Festiniog Railway England 0-4-0 'Mountaineer', and significantly advanced the overhaul of the Llanberis Lake Railway's Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Thomas Bach.' Meanwhile a new project is to build a 15-inch gauge customer loco, described by North Bay's David Humphries as "basically a Heywood 'Effie' with side tanks."

Photo: NBE

■ Another new-build making significant progress is the Corris Railway's Hughes Falcon 0-4-2ST – the latest component completed for the loco, which will be erected at the Ross-on-Wye works of Alan Keef Ltd, is a stainless steel smokebox. The smokebox is soon to be displayed alongside the loco's boiler at the Corris line's Maespoeth base to aid fundraising for the project.

Meanwhile construction of the embankment to allow the southwards extension of the Corris line has also progressed well with the last of 100 gabions filled on 11th June.

Photo: Corris Railway



■ A grant from the local SSE Keadby Wind Farm Fund has enabled the Crowe Peatland Railway Project in Lincolnshire to purchase a former Lisbon Tram car, no 711. The car arrived at the North Lincolnshire base of the project from its previous location in Essex on 13th June – the plan is to restore it enabling the fledgling project to operate passenger trains on its 3ft gauge running line, the tram car hauled by one of a pair of Schoma diesels.

Photo: CPR

Lines open up as virus fears ease

Narrow gauge railways in Europe have begun getting back to some form of normality as Covid-19 restrictions are eased across the continent.

Typical of the current situation is a full report from **Donald Brooks** describing the latest situation in **EAST GERMANY**. Many services are now operating led by the metre-gauge **Harzer Schmalspurbahnen** which reopened throughout from 18th May – currently six steam-worked services run to Brocken, increased from an initial four, three running through from Wernigerode and three shuttles from Drei Annen Hohne.

Nordhausen to Ilfeld Neanderlinik and Eisfelder Talmühle sees its usual suburban service of trams and railcars, with a minimal railcar service on all other sections.

The Harzquerbahn offers two return railcars between Drei Annen Hohne and Eisfelder Talmühle, while a single railcar runs on all sections of the Selketalbahn, with no more than two daily returns. Only daily departure from Quedlinburg is the 17.28 to Nordhausen via Harzgerode.

On all Harz lines face coverings must be worn and social distancing of 1.5 metres is required. From 6th June Traditionszüge began operating from Wernigerode and Nordhausen to Brocken on selected dates.

The 900mm gauge **Mecklenburgische Bäderbahn Molli** began running 11 steam-hauled services from 21st May (one fewer at weekends) at roughly hourly intervals until November. Again face coverings and social distancing are obligatory, while the trains do not carry refreshment services.

The 750mm **Rügenische Bäderbahn-Rasender Roland** also began its normal steam-worked timetable from 21st May, with hourly services between Göhren and Binz Ost, continuing every two hours to Putbus and five times a day to Lauterbach Mole. The only Covid-19 measure is the State requirement for face coverings on public transport.

No themed trips

All three 750mm lines comprising the **Sächsischen Dampfeisenbahngesellschaft MBH** are now operating again, with face coverings obligatory, but all themed trips and workshop tours have been cancelled until the end of June – later planned events will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Both of the 750mm **Soeg – Sächsisch-Oberlausitzer Eisenbahngesellschaft MBH** lines are working with face coverings obligatory. The Zittauer Schmalspurbahn reopened on 1st May with a limited service and resumed full service from 15th May, following the reopening of all tourist infrastructure in Saxony. Departures from



Zittau are every two hours on Monday to Thursday, two steam sets needed to operate the service to the two upper termini.

Fridays to Sundays see hourly departures using a third set. According to the timetable this is either diesel hauled or, on some Sundays, worked by railcar VT 137 322.

On Fridays to Sundays one of the steam sets becomes a historic train, either the Reichsbahnzug with 2-10-2T 99 731 or the Sachsenzug with 0-4-4-0T IV K Meyer 145. This spends most of the day shuttling between Oybin and Jonsdorf.

The **Döllnitzbahn** is working as usual, with diesel trains between Oschatz and Mügeln or Glossen on schooldays and three return workings from Oschatz, one each to Glossen, Kemmlitz and Mügeln, at weekends, these occasionally steam hauled.

Adults only

The **Dresdner Parkeisenbahn** children's railway resumed running on Wednesdays to Sundays from 23rd May, between 1pm and 6pm. However trains can only be boarded at the Hauptbahnhof an der Gläsernen Manufaktur and round trips taken.

Initially the 385mm gauge line is being staffed only by adults, possibly for the first time in its history, one train in service on weekdays and two at weekends. Steam may operate at weekends, face coverings must be worn in the station building and the number of passengers per train is restricted.

Both the **Pressnitztalbahn** (750mm gauge) and **Waldeisenbahn Muskau** (600mm gauge) are operating with the former forced only to delay the start of its season by a week until 9th May. The Bad Muskau line requires face coverings in closed carriages, but tries to use its open stock as much as possible. Some seats are

blocked off to ensure social distancing.

Trains are also resuming on **FRENCH** lines. Steam services restarted on the **Vivaraix** line on 14th June, though with an adapted timetable, and again with social distancing measures.

The **Petit train de la Haute Somme** welcomed visitors back on Sundays from 7th June, though for now only diesel-hauled services are running. Seats are limited, while for people over 12, wearing a mask is recommended in the train and an obligation in the line's museum, which has also instigated a one-way system.

The **Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways** (MTVS) also planned to reopen at its Crévecoeur base on 21st June, and the **Musée des transports de Pithiviers** reopened on Sundays in June. However only the depot and museum are available to guided tours of 10 people, no trains planned to run before July at the earliest.

In **AUSTRIA** the start of the steam season on the Zillertalbahn, postponed by the pandemic, has been rescheduled for 1st July and in **SWITZERLAND** trains began running on the 800mm gauge **Brienzer Rothorn Bahn** rack line on 11th June.

Globally the picture is very mixed – in **AUSTRALIA** the Puffing Billy Railway remained closed at press time, but the Walhalla Goldfields Railway planned to reopen on 24th June, while in the **USA** the **Cumbres & Toltec** was planning to reopen with strict social distancing measures on 13th June and the **Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum** in Maine on 8th August. The **Durango & Silverton** had earlier extended its closure until 22nd June but was strongly hopeful of restarting services before the end of the month.

Above: Lines back up and running in East Germany include the **Rügenische Bäderbahn** – on 23rd June last year 2-10-2T 99 1781-6, **LKM Babelsberg 32022 of 1953**, was on the rear of the 11.22 from Lauterbach Mole to Göhren approaching Putbus station.

Right: The **Dresden Parkeisenbahn** is also running again, two third-scale **Martens Pacifics** seen on a train in 2012. 'Whillan Beck', a sister loco to these two, is now on the **Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway**.

Both photos: **Donald Brooks**



Maine plans new-build

The Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum in Maine, **USA** has started a fund-raising campaign to build a new steam locomotive (*writes Wayne Laepple*).

Designated no 11, the new loco will be a faithful reproduction of the original railroad's no 7, a 1907 Baldwin 2-4-4RT Forney. No 7 was damaged in a roundhouse fire in 1933 and was then scrapped along with almost everything else on the WW&F in 1937.

During closure of the museum due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a team of WW&F volunteers with engineering backgrounds has been using Baldwin data to create two-dimensional drawings and 3D images of components. These will be used

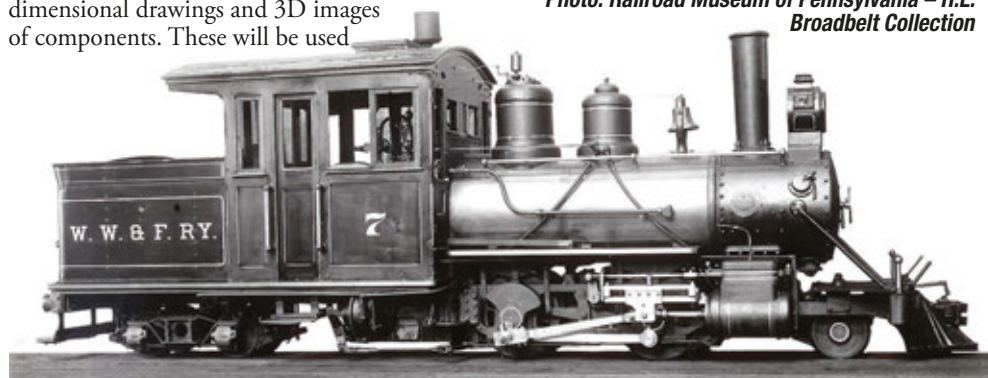
to make new parts to original specifications.

More than 500 images have been produced so far, and the first parts – the main frames and smaller items – are already in production.

To support the project, the museum, which was fully described in *NGW*124, has opened a FundRazr crowd-funding site. The goal for the first round of fund-raising is \$17,000, which will boost the funding for the first year of the project to \$50,000. Donations can be made at <http://build11.wwfry.org>

The new loco will be a faithful recreation of Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway no 7.

Photo: Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania – H.L. Broadbelt Collection



Perry sale to fund Fowler rebuild

Pete's Hobby Railway, a 2ft gauge line created and owned by enthusiast Peter Neve on private land at Juness in southern New South Wales, **AUSTRALIA**, is putting its Perry 0-6-2T locomotive (6771.38.1/1938), up for sale.

The sale of the locomotive, which formerly worked at the Kalamia sugar mill and is currently on static display, will release funds to go towards the line's restoration of Fowler 0-6-0TT 'Perth', built in 1900.

Restoration of the Fowler, which was formerly at the Victoria Mill, has reached the stage with the bottom end complete and ready for reassembly and other parts obtained including replacement boiler tubes and side tanks.

Peter has obtained a quote for work on the Fowler to be completed commercially but considers that it can be finished for much less in-house. But he will still need to raise the funds required.

Peter describes the proposed sale of the Perry as "very reluctant" but adds that even

if restored to working order, the loco would not be able to negotiate the line's sharpest curves of 18-metre radius.

Serious expressions of interest are being sought for the loco, which is unusual in being equipped to haul both 2ft gauge and 3ft 6in gauge stock.

"The purchase cost of the loco would be the least of (a buyer's) total expenditure, dependent of course as to whether the applicant wants to restore it as a relative complete static, or fully operational unit," Peter told *NGW*. He has set 30th July as an initial deadline for expressions of interest but adds that this deadline can be extended if serious enquiries are received.

Full details of the sale, and the railway, are on the website www.peteshobbyrailway.club and we hope to have more from the line in a forthcoming edition of *NGW*.

Sale of the Perry (below) will release funds to continue restoration of the Fowler (below right) seen here before work began.

Photos: PHR



BRIEF LINES



Sandstone Garratt progress

Sandstone Steam Museum in **SOUTH AFRICA** has been donated the power bogies of modified class NGG16 Garratt no 141 to use on its restoration of sister loco 155. In return the museum will undertake a cosmetic restoration of 141. Work on 155, delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, has resumed and we hope to carry more on this project in a forthcoming edition of *NGW*. The photo above shows both 141 and 155 at work on the Alfred County Railway in 1991. Photo: Patrick Hosford, courtesy Shaun McMahon

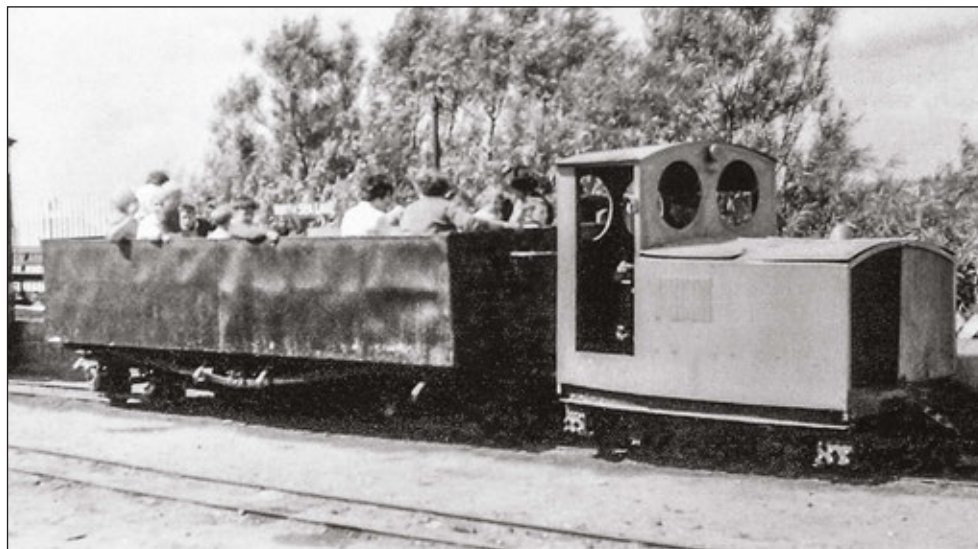
West Coast goes plastic

The West Coast Wilderness Railway in Tasmania, **AUSTRALIA**, is planning to use recycled plastic sleepers in future relays of its 3ft 6in gauge line. According to railway manager Anthony Brown the composite sleepers will last much longer than wood versions, with a lifespan of 40 to 50 years, and each kilometre of line relaid using them will save around 154.5 tonnes of plastic and thousands of trees.

Not that Indian tour

Ian Evans, who contributed the centrespread picture of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in *NGW*148, was a participant on a Ffestiniog Travel Indian Hill Railways trip and not the Darjeeling Tours organised trip, as stated. Our apologies for the error.

Readers can send in news from overseas lines for inclusion on these pages – contact details are on page 3



Back in time...

David Joy describes how a lockdown find is adding to the relations between two northeast railways.

The 60th anniversary of the 60cm gauge Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, celebrated in *NGW* 148 with photos dating back to 1965, has prompted the discovery of some unseen older images from the line's earliest days.

The LCLR, which claims to be the world's first heritage railway to be built by enthusiasts, was originally constructed and opened in 1960 at Humberston, south of Cleethorpes and close to the site now occupied by the 15-inch gauge Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway (CCLR). Closed in 1985, the LCLR reopened in 2009 at Skegness Water Leisure Park, more than 40 miles further south, and has since flourished in its new location.

Spring cleaning

Like all heritage lines both the LCLR and CCLR have been closed since March due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the lockdown gave CCLR director Peter Bryant the opportunity to tidy up old cupboards, drawers and files and see what was at the back of them.

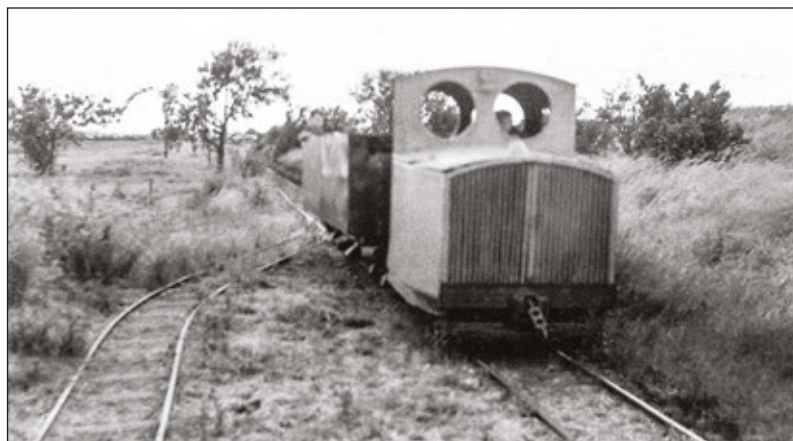
As a result Peter discovered photos of the Lincolnshire Coast line that were taken in 1962, in only its third season, by C W Underhill from Belper in Derbyshire. A selection is included on these two pages – and they certainly capture the line's real narrow gauge atmosphere in those early days.

There are now hopes that the search can be taken a stage further to embrace early images of the time when the CCLR was the Cleethorpes Miniature Railway, using parallel tracks of 10¼in gauge on which trains were pushed and pulled by model locomotives based on the LMS pioneering diesel electrics nos 10000 and 10001.

Members of the LCLR at Skegness have been sent the rediscovered pictures with a request for them to check their own archives to see if they might have photos of the Cleethorpes Miniature line. They have also been made aware of the CCLR's appeal (www.crowdfunder.co.uk/keepusontrack) hoping to raise funds to cover the costs the 15-inch gauge line will need to bear from the



Top: A full train ready to leave the original North Sea Lane station at Humberston behind LCLR no 1 (Motor Rail 'Simplex' 3991/1926).



Upper left: A quiet day at Humberston Beach terminus, the end of the 1960 line, with no 1 and an open carriage built on a converted First World War bogie wagon.



Centre left: This could be a scene on a Lincolnshire agricultural railway a century ago. No 1 passes the run-round loop before Humberston Beach terminus.

Left: Peckett 0-6-OST 'Jurassic' inside the loco shed. The Ruston diesel on its right proved near impossible to start and was broken up in 1968.

enforced closure and protective measures for it to reopen.

The connections between the two lines are close – one of the CCLR termini is called North Sea Lane, recalling the original LCLR headquarters, and there are extension ambitions that would take it closer to the former site of the 60cm gauge line.

Reciprocal gift?

“We’re hoping that our older volunteers, many of whom vividly recall the original Cleethorpes miniature line, will have never-before-seen photos of it tucked away somewhere and we can let today’s Cleethorpes line have them,” said John Chappell of the LCLR.

“We’re working on our own plans to reopen the LCLR when we can, in line with guidance from HM Railway Inspectorate, government regulations and the implications of having part of our site in the Skegness Water Leisure Park, with its variety of facilities,” John added.

Might this quest for early photos be the start of a trend that *NGW* readers of a certain age will emulate? Many of us currently have unusual amounts of spare time and to rediscover such old photos would be doing something positive in these difficult days.

We would be delighted to receive photos that come to light, especially if they depict UK lines taken in the 1960s or early ’70s. Ideally these should be scanned and sent with brief details to the Features Editor at the email address shown on page 3. **NGW**

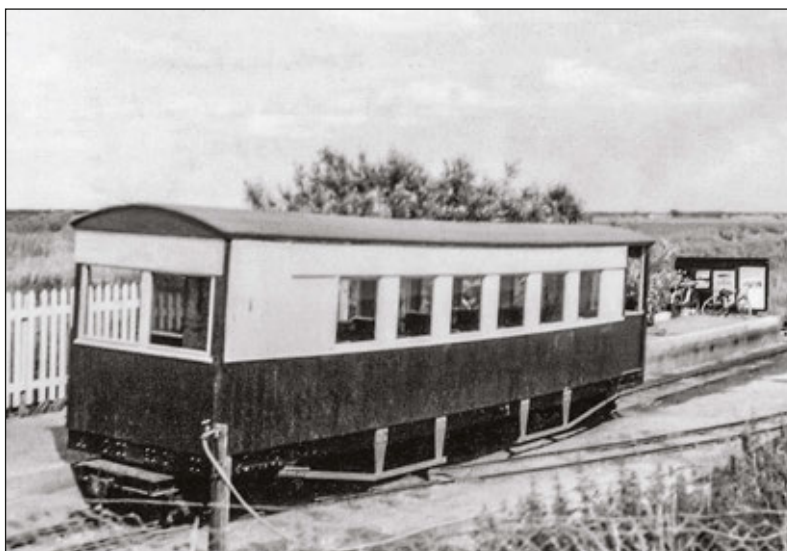
Right: The main station at North Sea Lane, Humberston, with one of the huge Ashover Light Railway carriages and some of the signals that gave the line great character.

Centre right: Ashover carriage at North Sea Lane awaiting adding to a train if warranted by passenger levels.

Below: The modern-day Cleethorpes Coast Railway runs close to the original sites of the Lincolnshire Coast line. Here 1990-built 2-6-2 No.24 emerges from its shed.

Below right: Sister former Fairbourne engines ‘Katie’ and ‘Sian’ at the CCLR’s North Sea Lane, recalling the original LCLR.

Photos: C.W. Underhill/CCLR/LCLR. Modern-day CCLR pictures by Harry Billmore



Industrial action...

Back in *NGW82*, *Paul Jarman* described the beginnings of an industrial narrow gauge railway at Beamish Museum in County Durham. Seven years on, we hear from Paul about the developments since then and plans for the railway's future.

The narrow gauge railway at Beamish Museum has become something of a hidden gem, now being a well-established feature of the museum's ambitious events programme, including the annual April Great North Steam Fair, but retaining its industrial charm and sense of intrigue for the observer. Great care has been taken to create (and retain) the industrial atmosphere of the railway, which has continued to gently expand its compact network of sidings and operating features, whilst ensuring that it doesn't look either 'new' or too tidy!

The development of the railway is still based on the original intent – to create a 'typical' Edwardian colliery

stockyard railway, with elements from other internal-user systems as might have appeared in County Durham and Northumberland around the period of the First World War.

The area around Beamish is pockmarked with former colliery sites and mining activity, and whilst the majority of these were served by horse-drawn waggonways and later standard gauge railways (an extensive network of these being located right outside the museum's front gates), there were also a number of narrow gauge railway lines in the vicinity, notably in nearby Stanley and a few miles further away at Lintz (sites now lost to nature).

The track layout of the museum

Above: Looking across the colliery from the pit heap, with Hunsletts 'Edward Sholto' and 'Hugh Napier' on the narrow gauge sidings.

Below: Typical of recent Great North Steam Fairs, an 1889 Marshall traction engine powering a sawbench. The Moseley Railway Trust's Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0WT No.104 was visiting in 2016.

line is now broadly complete, being formed of a distorted triangle, with sidings and branches leading away from this. The layout is confined by several fixed features, including roads and railways as well as a pit heap and set of colliery buildings. However, it has never been about creating route mileage, rather a setting for carrying out shunting in connection with working displays.

To date these displays have included stone crushing for ground reclamation and timber sawing on steam-powered saw benches. These have been set up for special events, including the now well-known Great North Steam Fair, attracting 23,000 visitors over four days in 2019.

Extended run

Since the article in *NGW82* the railway has been expanded to several times its original size. The purchase of a sizable quantity of ex-Ravenglass 35M rail, and later the sponsorship of some new components or materials that originated from the Eastriggs MoD system, have enabled development to proceed on more structured lines. Consideration has also been given to accommodating the varied dimensions found on narrow gauge railways of nominally 2ft gauge, in particular the differing back-to-back standards between, for example, the Ffestiniog Railway, War Department Light Railways and pure 2ft gauge railways.

Infrastructure is also being developed, with two water towers

being constructed using timber stands and reclaimed iron tank bodies. A coaling platform was assembled from scrap timber and an iron waggon body while there are a number of sheds, with a further one planned, as well as the partially constructed stone engine shed that will one day accommodate our Stephen Lewin new-build loco 'Samson' as part of a permanent period display, based on the narrow gauge shed (and former stable) that still survives at Chadwick Nick in Crich, Derbyshire (part of George Stephenson's Crich Railway).

The collection of rolling stock has grown, with a number of Ffestiniog Railway waggons being based at Beamish at present. The museum's own collection has also been expanded, including the waggon of which we are most proud, our brake van No.V3. This started as a 7/8ths-inch to the foot model built by the author, itself based on a standard gauge waggon used at Seaham Harbour (and which bore striking resemblance to the Corris Railway brake van now located on the Talylyn Railway).

Plans were produced and the chance to utilise the joinery team for a number of weeks one winter enabled substantial progress to be made on this project. The van has proved to be very popular with several requests for its plans to be made available for others to copy, build models of or even base domestic garden buildings on!

Fair dates

The railway has developed in conjunction with the previously mentioned annual transport festival and Great North Steam Fair each April – this being the catalyst for each phase of development and also the opportunity to invite and enjoy a wide variety of locomotives and rolling stock. Highlights have included the Great War Steam Fair event, with visiting First World War traction and rolling stock working alongside a sawbench display that featured volunteers attired in suitable prisoner-of-war costume to recreate domestic forestry activity that took place in the 1914-1918 period.

This was further developed for one of the Great North Steam Fairs, where the Kerry Tramway in Wales was recalled through the appearance of Kerr Stuart 0-4-0T 'Diana' (which worked on the Kerry Tramway) and a collection of timber-carrying waggons from a number of locations. Having a theme certainly helps the narrow gauge railway to have real purpose during such events, and enables it to take its place within the wider



Above: Newly-restored, Phil Mason's Kerr Stuart 'Diana' visited in 2017 to help recreate a First World War timber tramway.

Right: Some of the rolling stock that has been restored or constructed at Beamish including three Ffestiniog Railway granite waggons and the new-build brake van, V3. *Photo: Paul Jarman*



Below 'Statfold', visiting from the Statfold Barn Railway, hauls a mixed FR and Beamish train up the hill from the Sinkers sidings towards Top Yard.

museum, which is, after all, about telling stories.

The railway operates at other times throughout the year, another busy weekend being the museum's celebration of local coal mining heritage, titled 'Old King Coal'.

Two significant developments that have occurred in recent years are the

construction of the replica of Stephen Lewin built 0-4-0WTG Samson (the original dating from 1874) and the restoration of former Durham County Water Board/Penrhyn Quarry Andrew Barclay 0-4-0WT, 'Glyder'. The construction of Samson, the original of which worked locally in Weardale, has been »





Left: Barclay 0-4-0WT 'Glyder', restored in 2019, retains much original paintwork as a result of great care to preserve the working patina acquired at Penrhyn Quarry. It rests alongside the suitably industrial water tower and coal platform. Photo: Paul Jarman

well chronicled in these pages, whilst Glyder's restoration was completed in June 2019.

Great care was taken to retain Glyder's original paintwork and appearance, and this has been achieved more successfully than we expected, with a clean but work-worn appearance resulting. The boiler was overhauled at the Severn Valley Railway, whilst the mechanical overhaul was carried out at Beamish. The loco also worked in Weardale, and will remain at Beamish for at least ten years through an agreement with its owner, Graham Morris.

Volunteer group

A very fruitful development has come through the creation of BINGE (Beamish Industrial Narrow Gauge Engineers). This started as a group of staff volunteering in their own time on narrow gauge projects, to which was added a group of volunteers from

around the region with Ffestiniog Railway connections and who were able to bring additional skills and resource to the restoration of rolling stock for the railway.

Matt Ellis, our Keeper of Transport, has well-established F&WHR links (he is a driver on both railways there) and through this, a collection of unrestored FR waggons have been placed on loan to Beamish and the BINGE group are steadily working through their restoration. Many of these can be seen in the accompanying photos.

The latest development has been an eastward extension of the running line, by around 60 yards, as well as creation of a siding and raised platform upon which a stone crusher has been mounted. This enables shovelling of the crushed arisings to be downhill – a big improvement on previous arrangements! It is bounded on one side by the Museum's Pit

Village housing and café – thus creating a safe arena for displaying both standard and narrow gauge railways as well as some interesting industrial processes.

On public view

Further sidings are planned, and an additional locomotive shed will provide public viewing of the loco fleet when not in use – something that we have received comments about. Samson has its own shed but whilst there are windows, it isn't terribly accessible when out of steam.

In response to the need to improve public access, a series of viewing walkways are planned for the railway, to enable safe access to view the operation, whilst also segregating the public from stored industrial artefacts and the steep slopes of the pit heap. The challenge is creating a walkway that suits the period nature of the site – the paintings of renowned local artist, Norman Cornish, have provided some inspiration for the solution now being developed.

This amply illustrates the challenge of creating an accurate recreation of a working narrow gauge industrial railway – though we are fortunate that the usual visitor facilities that a preservation group might be expected to provide already exist elsewhere within the museum grounds, such as toilets and cafés.

The principle objective is now to enhance the existing railway, carry out some track renewal (a lot of secondhand material was used in the initial stages of construction) and then look to opportunities to operate the line more frequently for the visitors to enjoy and perhaps even take part in.

Below: In April 2015 Graham Lee's impressive steam face shovel visited Beamish. It was put to work for four days, shaping the cutting through which the narrow gauge would be extended later. It is seen here with visiting Kerr Stuart 'Wren' Jennie, and Hunsletts 'Hugh Napier' and 'Edward Sholto'.

All photos by Dave Hewitt, Beamish Museum unless stated otherwise



No. 18, the 1877-built Stephen Lewin locomotive that worked at Seaham Harbour for 93 years, will be withdrawn for overhaul on the adjacent standard gauge colliery railway in the next two years, so our focus will shift slightly towards more frequent operation of the narrow gauge line to ensure regular steam activity in the area – currently No. 18 operates on three days per week during the season, school holidays excepted. This therefore is a very positive opportunity for more use of Samson and Glyder during the year.

Gasworks loco

There are plenty more rolling stock projects to focus on as well, including further BINGE work beyond the current programme of FR granite waggon rebuilds. The restoration of the ex Dundee Gas Works Kerr Stuart No. 721, which is on loan from the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn, commenced in November 2019 and, when complete, it will further enable the operation of locomotives that might not readily find a use on passenger carrying heritage lines.

We also have a Hibberd diesel locomotive named 'Ashover' in store, on loan from the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway and which will be overhauled by the BINGE volunteers, some mechanical work already having been carried out. This will give us a very useful shunting locomotive for the site. A replica of the 2ft gauge Crewe Tractors, assembled around production line Ford Model T cars in the First World War, has also been started, the road vehicle being the author's regular runaround within the museum's

Right: In 2019 a short 15-inch gauge running line was added to the Colliery Railway network, and in April 'River Irt' and 'Katie' visited from the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. The line is laid between standard gauge rails – recreating the post-conversion Ratty between Ravenglass and Murthwaite.

Centre right: The Moseley Railway Trust's Simplex 'Tin Turtle' LR 3090 is the backdrop for this scene at the 2016 Great War Steam Fair, with visiting War Department rolling stock and genuine WW1 Triumph Model H motorcycles.
Both photos: Paul Jarman

Below: Extending the narrow gauge to Sinkers Siding allows locos on three gauges to be compared. On the left is 'Katie' whilst 'Samson' is overlooked by 1871-built Coffee Pot No.1 and 1877-built No.18 on the standard gauge line.



400-plus acre site. Drawings have been obtained for the railway chassis, wheels and adaptations, and these will be manufactured at some point in the future to enable this very early road-railer to be demonstrated. **NGW**

More Information

For those interested in following the narrow gauge railway developments at Beamish, Paul maintains and updates a comprehensive blog at www.beamishtransportonline.co.uk



Metre Gauge Steam in Portugal

James Waite made a final narrow gauge outing before the lockdown of the 2020 pandemic.

It was 4am on the damp morning of Saturday 14th December 2019 as I drove down the long hill towards Sernada do Vouga, the operating centre of the old EF Vale do Vouga. Five hours later the first public steam train for many years anywhere on Portugal's metre gauge railways would set off from Aveiro, the Vouga railway's southern terminus, and the train was being prepared in the yard at Sernada.

I hadn't planned to be up at this early hour but the weather was so dismal that the prospects of successful daylight photos looked poor and

I thought that some night shots might provide my best opportunities.

As the yard came into view I saw that most of it was lit by yellow sodium lights, not conducive to colour photography, but as I drew into the station's parking lot I could see a tell-tale plume of steam lit up by a white light. Sure enough there was 2-4-6-0 Mallet tank no E214 (Henschel 19877/1923), standing just outside the loco shed, with several of its team of enthusiastic supporters preparing the loco for the day's outing.

In 2017 this engine had been restored to working order at Porto's Contumil works, the principal repair facility in northern Portugal run by CP, the state railway. By then two sections of the old Vouga system were the only remaining metre-gauge

railways anywhere in the country.

For several summers past CP had operated a tourist train on the Aveiro-Sernada line using splendidly-restored historic carriages. It had always been hauled by an equally well-restored diesel but many people, both within Portugal and beyond, considered that what was really needed was a steam loco. No E214 had been restored with just this in mind but concerns about the fire risk and other logistical matters meant that it would be another two years before this long-awaited first steam train could run.

Looking back

Like many enthusiasts of a certain age I often visited northern Portugal in the 1970s when steam trains operated on the several magnificent narrow gauge railways which ran to the north of the River Douro. The most westerly of these consisted of a suburban system running out into the countryside from central Porto, and further east were four other lines which served remoter districts in the country's far north.

Back then all these lines were to a greater or lesser extent steam-operated, using a series of old but magnificently maintained locos. From 1975 onwards they were gradually replaced by diesels and by the early 1980s steam operation was largely confined to occasional special workings, mostly associated with local festivals. The last time I saw a loco in steam was in June 1978 and watching no E214 being prepared for operation more than 40 years later was very nostalgic.

Back in the 1970s a warm welcome awaited enthusiasts at engine sheds and other operating facilities all over the country. The welcome from the railwaymen is still there, but I was soon to discover that nowadays the sheds are fenced off and security guards are omnipresent. To be more accurate perhaps I should say that they are almost omnipresent because it would be another hour after my 4am arrival before the one at Sernada, complete with what looked like a Kalashnikov, appeared for duty and I was politely asked to put my camera away. By then I'd completed my photo session and was ready to drive back to my hotel to complete my night's sleep!

The Vouga system was the first in northern Portugal to dispense with steam locos. Much of it, including the Aveiro line, was closed completely with little warning in 1972 after forest fires were blamed on sparks from the locos. The lines reopened as a result of popular pressure in 1975 after democracy was restored in the



Facing page: The crew prepares Mallet 2-4-6-0 no E214 at Sernada shed in the small hours of 14th December 2019.

Above: Waiting on the following day to leave Aveiro station – the Vouga line uses the two most easterly of the station platforms.

Below: A lucky shot! James Waite comments: "I've never before managed to photograph a train entering a tunnel from the other end."

country but all regular trains since then have been diesel-worked.

At first most of these consisted of railcars built by Allan in Rotterdam in 1955 along with some earlier railbuses which had run on the system for many years. By the time I first visited the Aveiro line in 1994 regauged four-wheeled railcars, bought secondhand from Yugoslavia after closure of the 760mm gauge railways in Bosnia, had taken over. They weren't very successful and nowadays services are worked by a series of railcars built in the 1970s for the Porto suburban lines.

The line itself has been relaid with heavy-section rail and looks to be in excellent shape. However this work hasn't stopped occasional threats being made to close it once more though the trains which I saw were well-patronised. Parts run well away from any main road and it's difficult to see how any closure could take

place without causing considerable hardship. The railway, fondly called Vouguinha locally, is clearly greatly valued, and it wasn't a surprise to see that many people had turned out to watch the first steam trains go by.

The Vale do Vouga was built by a French company. Its stations look quite different from those on the lines further north and wouldn't be at all out of place on the French metre gauge. The first section was opened by the King of Portugal in 1908 – one of his first acts after he became King following the assassination of his father and elder brother.

The Aveiro line followed in 1911 but the King couldn't officiate as he was deposed the previous year and had moved to the UK. He soon settled in Twickenham and became an active and valued member of the local community. Several roads bear names recalling him and his family and the Roman Catholic parish

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Above: A return on 4th January with the special train surmounting the steep climb out of Aveiro.

Left: Welcome morning sunshine greeted the train as it left Aveiro.

Below: Sernada station. Behind the Mallet is the preserved Alstom diesel no 9004, built in 1964 for the Tajuna railway near Madrid.

All photos by James Waite



church is still home to the stained glass windows and furnishings with which he endowed it.

Surviving Mallets

No E214 is one of 16 members of its class built by Henschel for Portugal's Estado or state metre-gauge system which operated some of the lines north of the Douro. The first four dated from 1913, two more came two years later and the final ten were built in 1923 as reparations after the First World War in which Portugal fought on the Allied side.

For many years from 1924 some worked on the Vouga system, initially on loan until it was nationalised in 1947. All remained in service until the 1970s and no E214 was one of the last to receive a general overhaul in 1980. The loco remained serviceable for at least the following eight years. All 16 have survived – indeed only one loco from any of the country's several metre-gauge Mallet classes has ever been scrapped.

The Vale do Vouga company's own locos included three Corpet Louvet 0-6-0Ts, seven 2-6-0Ts built by Decauville and by Orenstein & Koppel, four Borsig 4-6-0Ts and three Henschel 2-8-2Ts. The Corpet Louvets disappeared many years ago but examples of all of the others have been preserved on the line, either in Sernada shed or in an excellent museum converted from the old carriage shed at Macinhata do Vouga, the first station south of Sernada on the Aveiro line.

My daytime photos during the first weekend were mostly disappointing because of the poor weather, but the trip was enlivened by a long, and not entirely alcohol-free, lunch with the loco's support crew at Sernada's excellent family-run station restaurant.

A final train had been scheduled for the following Saturday but the rain got steadily worse and it was postponed after an embankment at Macinhata began to collapse. Emergency repairs immediately after Christmas enabled the train to run on 4th January 2020.

I returned, this time with my wife, to see the train once more, to enjoy another fine lunch at Sernada and to explore Aveiro. It's a fascinating city built around canals, a little like Venice but without the crowds. There was a frost overnight but the day with the train was blessed with crisp winter sunshine. It was our final narrow gauge outing before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and we just hope we can soon travel again.

A historical feature based on visits to Portugal in the 1970s will follow in a future issue of **NGW**. **NGW**

Penrhyn and Padarn – 1961

David Mitchell recalls his first and only visit to the two major North Wales slate quarries.

In August 1961, I persuaded my mother that a few days spent in Llanberis, north Wales, would be a good idea. We duly went, my brother and I, together with my aunt and two cousins. I had arranged a visit to Penrhyn Quarry and having recently learned to drive was allowed to take the family car, my father's pride and

'Blanche' has derailed on the very grass-grown track somewhere beyond Tregarth. A passenger discusses the problem with the driver. Photo: R L Mitchell

joy, a silver and black Daimler Century. I also had to take my cousins with me.

On 15th August we went round the quarry and onto the galleries. Here we saw the two Barclay 0-4-0 tanks, 'Cegin' and 'Glyder', at work. We were told the Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Winifred' was in steam higher up,

but lack of time prevented us going further. It was disappointing that we did not see any of the little Hunslet tanks at work.

Presumably we then drove to Port Penrhyn where Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Blanche' was in steam outside the shed. Inside sister loco 'Charles' was out of use and in the carriage shed »





**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**





Left: 'Blanche' at Port Penrhyn about to bump-start diesel no 23. The sand bucket hung on the front was a feature of Penrhyn mainline engines. Photo: R L Mitchell

Below: 'Cegin', a Barclay loco that Penrhyn bought secondhand in the 1930s, hauls a rake of slate on the main level where the cutting sheds were located. Photo: David Mitchell

were a couple of the quarrymen's open carriages and Lord Penrhyn's saloon. A small diesel, no 23, was also in use. At one point it was reluctant to move and Blanche was brought to push-start it.

An Ivatt 2-6-0 was shunting the standard gauge and at one stage stood alongside Blanche. Of much interest was the trackwork – as the Penrhyn Quarry Railway had double-flanged wheels, the points had movable stub ends and crossings. There were a couple of crossings over the standard gauge, which had movable sections that were swung clear when the Ivatt went through.

The Reverend Teddy Boston and a couple of his friends were there and

very tolerant of the youthful interlopers. No doubt through his influence one of the quarrymen's carriages was attached to the rear of the quarry train. It comprised three wagons of coal and about ten empty slate wagons – very loose coupled.

I do not recall the departure time, probably mid-morning. It was a very pleasant ride until a little beyond Tregarth when the train came to a sudden stop. Blanche had derailed. We decided to walk up to the quarry. Part way a diesel came from the quarry direction with a slate wagon carrying four men and a quantity of timber and tools – clearly this was the rescue party.

At Coed-y-Parc, the quarry works,

we saw and photographed the famous line of disused locomotives, never guessing that one day I would see some of them back in steam. In the works were the third of the larger Hunslets, 'Linda' and 'Pamela', the quarry Hunslet bearing the boiler of Hudswell Clarke 'Bronwlyd'.

We met up with the mainline train again back at Coed-y-Par and with some eight loaded slate wagons plus empty coal wagons, we returned to Port Penrhyn on a pleasant sunny afternoon. Blanche went to the shed and we drove back to Llanberis.

The Padarn Railway

The following day was overcast and raining with a low cloud base. I went alone to the Dinorwic Quarry office at Gylfach Ddu, Llanberis. I was shown into the general manager's office, suitably Victorian and with a fire burning in the grate, despite it being August.

I had two options, only having one day available. I could go round the quarry or ride on the 4ft gauge Padarn train. I opted for the ride, not knowing at the time that the line would close in a few months.

The 0-6-0T Hunslet tank 'Amalthea' was in steam, presumably having come up that morning from Penscoins, the top of the incline down to Port Dinorwic and where the loco in use was shedded. Coal was in short supply and the two mid-day trains did not run. I helped the crew scavenge in the coal heap for whatever could be found.

On the 1ft 10¾in gauge, 0-4-0ST 'Sybil', a Bagnall of 1906, was shunting and had earlier pushed the

Facing page, above right: 'Glyder', another secondhand Barclay loco. It is working on one of the lower levels. In the background wagons of waste are being joined to the cable on an electric incline to be taken higher and tipped. Photo: R L Mitchell

All photos taken August 1961 (except those credited to the David Mitchell collection)



wagons to the loading dock. This was roughly where the Llanberis Lake Railway station stands today. It was close to the building where one of the original 4ft gauge engines, 'Fire Queen' of 1848, spent some 80 years like a Sleeping Beauty after withdrawal in 1886.

At the dock the quarry wagons went onto a train of some 12 4ft gauge transporters, each with four loaded slate wagons. The last vehicle had three wagons and the box van for the guard. He could work the brake on the transporters with a handle that protruded between the 'van' and the adjacent wagon.

It was a very dull day and my pictures, on Kodachrome 1, were taken at a 15th of a second and f2.8 – the maximum exposure possible. The train left about 3.30pm and I started by riding in the 'van', but the view was very limited so I moved to the adjacent slate wagon. This was better but it was not very comfortable sitting on the edges of the slates. At Penscoins we drew up to the south-end points and the fireman alighted. The train then set back about 200 yards, before running forward at a moderate speed.

About 40 yards from the points the loco was uncoupled by the driver using a treadle on the footplate and accelerated into the left-hand road. The fireman changed the points and the transporters, under control of the



Below: View of the Giffach Ddu area at Dinorwic circa 1960. Large Hunslet 'Jerry M' or 'Cackler' shunts quarry wagons. The loading dock for the 4ft gauge Padarn Railway is behind the building at upper centre. Photo: David Mitchell collection

guard, ran into the right-hand track. From here they were moved manually to the loading dock for the small wagons to be removed and lowered down an incline to the harbour. The empty transporters then went onto the left-hand track to form up behind the engine for the next train back to the quarry.

From Penscoins I walked down the incline to the quay at Port Dinorwic and took a very poor picture of shunting on the quayside. I

then caught a bus to Caernarfon and a second one back to Llanberis, damp but happy.

Final reflections

Thus ended my first and only visit to the two major North Wales slate quarries – a schoolboy's outing with my mother's camera and film. It would have been nice to go again a year or two later when I had a better camera and more knowledge, but life is too short for regrets about what »





might have been done. Today we have the superb pictures of Ivo Peters and Dick Blenkinsop, which allow us to recall these two fascinating industrial railways.

The part of the Padarn trackbed alongside the lake was relaid with 2ft gauge as the Llanberis Lake Railway. A preservation scheme at Coed-y-Parc, the Penrhyn Railway's workshops at the south end of the line, relaid a short length of track a few years ago. For a brief period it was possible to see Penrhyn engines on their home ground, but sadly the scheme failed and the track was lifted a couple of years ago. **NGW**

Previous spread: 'Blanche' prepares to work the train from Port Penrhyn up to the quarry. In the background an Ivatt 2-6-0 is shunting wagons to take up to the main line. Photo: David Mitchell

Top left: 'Amalthea', the second of the three 4ft gauge Hunslet 0-6-0 tanks that worked the Padarn Railway. Built in 1886 it was named 'Pandora' until 1909. It is at Gilfach Ddu waiting to depart to Penscoins, the interchange point above Port Dinorwic. Photo: David Mitchell

Left: 'Sybil', a Bagnall tank of 1906 and one of the few non-Hunslet engines at Dinorwic, takes water by the works building (now the Slate Museum). It was working between Gilfach Ddu and the main quarry yard at Hafon Owen, further south. Photo: David Mitchell collection

Below: Penscoins in 1959. The dock and head of the incline are in the building behind 'Amalthea'. The building to the left with the doors is the shed that housed the magnificent saloon used by the owner, Mr Assheton-Smith, and also once a week to convey the wages to the quarry. Photo: David Mitchell collection



Rails in Vietnam

Adrian Garner experienced two contrasting railways just before tourism came to a halt.



Vietnam is not known for its railway attractions but a holiday taken earlier this year – and arriving back to the UK on 9th March just as the world went into lockdown – revealed both an interesting mainline and a fascinating preserved narrow gauge railway.

The railways in Vietnam were built to the 'standard' narrow gauge of one metre adopted by the French whilst Vietnam was part of their colony of IndoChina. To limit costs the lines were nearly all single-track. The main route running the length of the country from Ho Chi Minh City in the south, still often referred to locally as Saigon, to Hanoi in the north was substantially damaged

Above: On leaving Hanoi main station trains have to crawl between buildings and cross many side streets on their way south.

Below: The train to Hanoi enters Gia Lam station to the north east of the city on 6th March, 2020. It was crowded with locals shopping in Hanoi but they were relaxed about being joined by tourists.

during the wars that finally finished in 1975. This line has since been rebuilt and is now operated with diesels built by the Czech engineering firm CKD Praha in the late 1980s.

Whilst little of the original rolling stock exists, around Hanoi there are two areas of interest. To the north of the city, towards China, the line has to cross the Red River and does so by the Long Bien Bridge designed by Gustav Eiffel, of Eiffel Tower fame. The bridge is 2.4km long, took three years to build and opened in 1903. It was bombed during the Vietnam War but escaped destruction and has since been repaired.

Near to the main station the line becomes reminiscent of an oversize

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway as it crosses roads with makeshift level crossing gates and heads through the narrow streets. Until recently locals spread their shops and restaurant chairs out over the tracks. These are now kept clear by the authorities who have introduced flowerbeds, but there is still minimal room for the train to pass.

Escaping the heat

Of greatest interest is the preserved section of hill railway at Da Lat. The summers in Vietnam are hot and, akin to the hill railways in India, the French began building a line in 1903 to connect the low-lying area of Thap Cham with the cooler hill town of »





Da Lat. Its 84 kilometres opened in stages and the full route was not completed until 1932.

About 1600 metres needed to be climbed from near sea level to reach

Da Lat and this was achieved by four sections of Abt rack track. To haul the trains metre gauge rack-enabled steam locomotives were required and all but two were built by the Swiss

Type HG 4/4 locomotives supplied direct to Thap Cham – Da lat line

Dalat Rly No	Works No	Vietnam Rly No	Status
701	SLM 2937/1924	40-301	Destroyed in Second World War
702	SLM 2938/1924	40-302	Scrapped
703	SLM 2939/1924	40-303	Unknown
704	SLM 2940/1934	40-304	At DFB, Switzerland
705	SLM 2941/1924	40-305	Destroyed in Second World War
706	MFE/1929	40-306	At DFB, Switzerland
707	MFE/1929	40-307	Destroyed in Second World War
708	SLM 3413/1930	40-308	Now at DFB
709	SLM 3414/1930	40-309	Destroyed in Second World War

Of the three type HG 4/4 locos repatriated to Switzerland, no 704 has been restored to working order, 708 is being restored and German-built 706 is being used for parts.

Type HG 3/4 locomotives transferred from Furka Oberalp Bahn in 1947

FOB No	Works No	Vietnam Rly No	Status
1	SLM 2315/1913	31-201	All four type 3/4 locos have been repatriated and are now at the DFB. No 1 'Furkahorn' and no 9 'Gletschorn' have been restored to working order.
2	SLM 2316/1913	31-202	
8	SLM 2418/1914	31-203	
9	SLM 2419/1914	31-204	



firm of Schweizerische Lokomotiv und Maschinenfabrik (SLM).

The first group of five HG 4/4 locos were delivered by SLM in 1924, followed by two of the same type manufactured by Maschinenfabrik, Esslingen, Germany in 1929. Subsequently a further two HG 4/4s were supplied by SLM in 1930 and four of type 3/4 were acquired in 1947 from the Furka-Oberalp Bahn in Switzerland after it was electrified. Incidentally the H in the designation indicates a rack locomotive, the G means narrow gauge, the first numeral represents the number of powered axles and the second the total number of axles.

Although the line was attacked during the Vietnam War, the railway was south of the main war zone and high up out of major strategic military importance. It thus survived and remained in operation through to 1969. Indeed, the Art Deco station at Da Lat, designed by the French architects Moncet and Reveron in 1932 with its stained glass windows, was largely untouched. So too was the nearby Summer Palace built as the King's summer retreat in Da Lat. Both these buildings along with the attractive Xuan Huong Lake have made Da Lat a tourist attraction, particularly for the Chinese.

Unfortunately, whilst the line survived the war, albeit closed from 1969 to 1975, the authorities in Vietnam decided to use its rail to rebuild the main line from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi and most of the rails vanished in 1976. Even worse, it appears that the rails did not match those of the main line and eventually ended up as scrap.

Changing times

This could have been the end of the story for both the railway and its surviving locomotives but luckily two events changed matters. Firstly in Switzerland the original route of the Furka Oberalp Bahn was restored and operates as the preserved Dampfbahn Furka-Bergstrecke, or DFB for short. In 1989 a Swiss team arranged the repatriation of seven locomotives – three of type HG 4/4 and the original four Furka Oberalp Bahn type HG 3/4. The fortunes of the line's locos are shown in the table.

The second positive event stems from increasing tourism in Vietnam. More people want to visit the 50-metre long Linh Phuoc Pagoda built in 1952 in Trai Mat, the first station out from Da Lat. With both stations still existing, along with the track bed, the authorities allowed the 7km upper section of the line to be reopened. There were plans in 2002 to reopen the whole line for both

Above: The grand Art Deco terminus at Da Lat is now preserved and a major feature of the town.

Below: Japanese built C12 class 2-6-2T no 131-428 is displayed at Da Lat station.

Facing page, top right: To reach Trai Mat the line heads through the back streets of Da Lat before emerging into the hills.

Top far right: After 25 minutes the journey ends at Trai Mat where there is a simple run-round loop. Just beyond was a steep descending grade where the locos engaged with the rack.



passengers and freight but this is unlikely to happen as it would not only require the track and the rack to be re-laid but also the acquisition of new locomotives.

The reopened line now has only a bare minimum of operational stock which is kept at Da Lat station. It includes a Russian-built diesel locomotive D4H 866 TL.24T, two bogie carriages – VNR nos 51620 and 51622, and a quartet of four-wheeled carriages – nos 1060, 1080, 3044 and 4160.

Preserved on the disused platform is C12 class 2-6-2T no 131-428. Built in Japan in the 1930s to 3ft 6in gauge, it was converted to metre gauge around 1938-39 for use on the Datong to Pazhou Railway. When this system became standard gauge in 1956 the loco was transferred to Vietnam to work on the line to Da Lat. It is not a rack engine and was presumably used on the flatter lower section and hauled up for display before closure. Also on display is covered wagon VNR no 13103.

In high season this line is very popular with Chinese tourists and up to four return trips are made each

Right: DFB no1 on the Furka Pass in 2008. After the electrification of the Furka Oberalp Bahn the loco was sold to the Da Lat line where it ran until closure. Since returning to Switzerland it has been restored on the Dampfbahn Furka-Bergstrecke.

Below: On 27th February, 2020 the train at Da Lat awaits its passengers. Cases of coronavirus were minimal in Vietnam at that time and no restrictions were being imposed. Those running the railway were relaxed about climbing on the engine for photos.

All photos by Adrian Garner

day. A minimum of 20 passengers is required for a train to run but luckily, despite the coronavirus, this number was met at the time of my visit, while

a shortage of usual passenger numbers meant photography was easy. Tourism came to a halt shortly after we left Vietnam. **NGW**



New Era at East Broad Top

As reported in *NGW146*, this famous Pennsylvania railroad has a new owner and should soon reopen after slumbering for more than eight years. *David Joy* looks at its tangled past and future plans.

The USA's only original 3ft gauge railroad surviving east of the Rocky Mountains has a long history that makes the line of compelling fascination. It goes back to the early 1830s and the beginnings of iron smelting at Rockhill Furnace, 30 miles south-east of Altoona in south central Pennsylvania.

Plans for a rail connection were delayed by the American Civil War, but a consortium of mine owners and business associates finally formed the East Broad Top Railroad & Coal Company in 1871. Two years later iron from the furnaces was being hauled northwards to Mount Union for onward shipment over the main line of the standard gauge

Pennsylvania Railroad. Passenger services began the same year.

Southwards the ultimate destination was the coal-mining town of Robertsdale on Broad Top Mountain. A relatively easily graded line as far as Saltillo gave way to a tortuous 1 in 25 climb with two tunnels, these fitted with doors at their northern ends in a bid to reduce icing in winter. From 1874, coal was taken down from the terminus to Rockhill where a new furnace proved capable of producing over 28,000 tons a year.

Here also were the main yard and

Above: The power of the East Broad Top Mikados captured in this view of no 15 (Baldwin Loco Works 41196/1914) crossing the Aughwick Creek Road near the northern end of the preserved line.

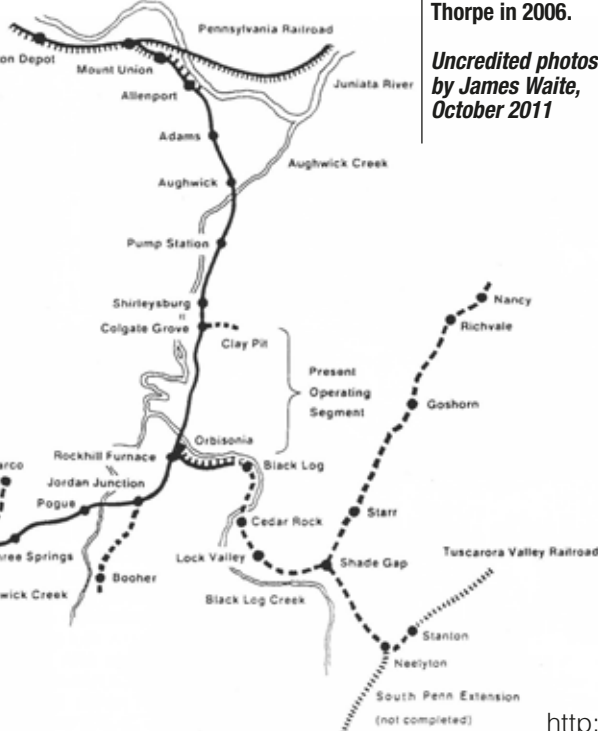
Left: Map of the East Broad Top Railroad and its associated lines, drawn by J Craig Thorpe in 2006.

Uncredited photos by James Waite, October 2011

workshops of the railroad, roughly midway along its 33-mile length and the heart of a community that was virtually self-sufficient. Rockhill as a place-name was not unique in Pennsylvania, so a new station opened in 1906 was named Orbisonia, after a larger town on the other side of Blacklog Creek.

Apart from the main line there were several branches including one from Saltillo to Narco, built to serve a quarry producing ganister rock used in manufacturing firebricks at Mount Union. The EBT became a profitable enterprise and the only US narrow gauge line to convert to an all-steel freight car fleet. In the early 1900s it was able to upgrade its main line with heavier rail. This enabled the use of much larger locomotives than was common on many 3ft gauge lines, giving its heavy freight trains a sense of power and purpose.

As might be expected in Pennsylvania, the sole supplier of motive power was Baldwin, which delivered the original pair of 2-6-0s from its Philadelphia works in 1873. The first loco fitted with a trailing truck, 2-6-2 no 11, arrived in 1908, and then three years later the first of a succession of six 2-8-2 Mikados – nos 12 and 14 to 18. Supplied at roughly two-year intervals, each one had the design improved and enlarged when compared with its predecessor. The company also owned a pair of standard-gauge tender 0-6-0s for shunting the mixed-gauge yards at Mount Union.





The good times did not last with iron traffic fading away at the same time as the loss of timber transport. An overhead electric crane used to transship lumber at Mount Union was ingeniously adapted to serve as a bogie changing facility, enabling standard-gauge wagons to work through onto the EBT thanks to its generous loading gauge. It was a move that virtually eliminated transshipment costs, which were the downfall of so many 3ft lines during this difficult period.

Equally enterprising was the approach to passenger traffic that was proving increasingly uneconomic. In 1927 a unique gas-electric railcar, no M-1, was built in the Rockhill workshops using plans and parts supplied by J G Brill, a leading streetcar manufacturer. Westinghouse Electric was also involved and the result was a gasoline-powered generator that supplied electricity to motors on all four axles. The railcar had a 12-seat passenger compartment plus additional space for packages and US mail. The following year saw the workshops scratch-build a four-wheel inspection saloon which became no M-3.

Changing times

Coal and ganister rock traffic enabled the railroad to survive as a common carrier longer than most, but there »

Above: No 15 at Orbisona heading a typical tourist train in September 2011 – the last year of operations. It was then the only serviceable locomotive, the Kovalchicks having paid for a three-year rebuild that extended its boiler certificate until 2015. Note the sagging stock.... Photo: Wayne Laepple

Right: The unique gas-electric railcar, M-1, at McMullen's Summit midway along the line. It is the last working 'doodlebug' of its kind in the USA.

Below: Night time at Orbisona station with the smallest of the Mikados no 12 (BLW 37325/1911) alongside no 15.





were ominous signs when Jim Jarvis experienced the last years of the real American narrow gauge in an epic journey in 1952. Highlights recalled in one of our first issues, *NGW07*, in 2000 included the Denver & Rio Grande and he arranged to travel in a caboose from Durango to Antonito. The double-headed freight about half a mile long finally got under way in the early afternoon, reached Chama after midnight, occupied the whole of the next day by splitting into three portions for the climb up to the 10,000ft summit at Cumbres and only reached its destination late in the third day after a journey time of over 50 hours to cover 180 miles.

It was narrow gauge railroading at its most challenging, uncomfortable and exhausting, but it did not deter Jim Jarvis from including the East Broad Top on his travels. Arriving at Mount Union, he found Mikado no 16 assembling a long line of empty hoppers with a single saloon car at the rear as an apology for a passenger service. The 'mixed' paused at Orbisona, where lack of investment meant the workshops were still a marvel of overhead shafts and antiquated machine tools. The

journey continued with a return trip to Robertsedale, the back verandah offering ample opportunities to enjoy vistas of pleasant agricultural country followed by wooded rolling hills.

Jim Jarvis was just in time. Passenger operations ended in 1953 when the Post Office began moving mail by truck. Services for coal miners continued for another year, but the end came when the last of the mines closed in 1956. It fell to Mikado no 17 to haul the final coal train into Mount Union on 6th April.

The last rites seemed imminent when the EBT was purchased by Kovalchick Salvage Co of Indiana, Pa – a company that was thriving through scrapping abandoned railroads. A small amount of rolling stock was sold off and a couple of short branches lifted but that was all. The main line, the installations at Rockhill Furnace and the six Mikados were left untouched in a state of suspended animation. Nothing more happened and rumours abounded.

Then in 1960 it was the turn of Orbisona to celebrate its bi-centenary and an approach was made to Nick Kovalchick, now by default the EBT president, to see if he would

"The coaches may sag and squeak but have delicious interiors. The engines are not immaculate and several tenders look to be sagging on their springs..."

display one of the locomotives as a major attraction. The response could scarcely have been better, as he offered instead to reopen a section of the railroad. Former employees were re-hired and set to work clearing five miles of track from Orbisona north to Colgate Grove, where a picnic area was provided and a wye was constructed to turn whole trains.

Mikado no 12 was named 'Millie' after the president's daughter and brought back into service along with no 15. Week-long festivities proved such a success that trains continued to operate at weekends well into the autumn – and thence every subsequent summer. On special occasions they were spectacularly quadruple-headed. The remainder of the railroad gradually reverted to nature with hundreds of trees growing up through rusting steel cars abandoned at Mount Union and sleepers bleached away to a pale grey.

Gradual decline

In 1964 the EBT was designated a National Historic Landmark – a form of protection in the US similar to listed building status in the UK. It embraced the complete main line as well as the cluster of buildings at Rockhill Furnace including the eight-road roundhouse, turntable, boiler house, paint shop and impressive sand house.

Many of these buildings were of wood and certainly in need of tender care, but just as in the UK a designation is not a total safeguard. In 1988 the US National Park Authority declared the railway to be a threatened landmark. The EBT could still claim to be the last operating 3ft gauge railroad east of the Rockies but it was undoubtedly in a work-weary time warp.

Following a visit in 1995, Peter Jones penned a superbly evocative account in *NGW13*. On a dull humid Sunday he found Orbisona to be "real small town America barely ticking over – a community stuck on treacle with an utterly timeless air about the place".

The railroad produced mixed emotions: "A lot of American preservation strikes this observer as almost being in the Disney mould – all a bit shiny and twee. But the EBT is slightly down at heel and running with original equipment. The coaches may sag and squeak but have delicious interiors. The engines are not immaculate and several tenders look to be sagging on their springs."

"The decrepit nature of the railroad is worrying. It is giving the impression of a working railway that is in decline. The standards have slipped alarmingly. Certainly there is



Above: All-steel hoppers – a noted East Broad Top feature – provide a complement to no 15 as it heads evocatively into the night.

Left: Four-wheel inspection saloon M-3, which like railcar M-1 was built in the Rockhill works.

a surreal atmosphere. The famous wood shops lean drunkenly with the subsidence and are painted red. There is more than a hint of High Plains Drifter about the site. Even the working tracks are now very weed-grown and the alignment is not of the best, to put it mildly. But to lovers of atmosphere, here is one of the world's great locations."

A year later the EBT had the dubious distinction of being placed on the annual list of America's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places. Fortunately there was increasing support from the Friends of the East Broad Top, which maintained buildings and leased part of the paint shop to restore rolling stock.

Receiving careful attention was 'Orbisona', the former private car of the EBT president and virtually unchanged since its purchase in 1907 from the Big Level & Kinzua Railroad in northern Pa. It was often included in seasonal tourist trains along with a combine, a flat fitted with seats, a cut-down boxcar and a caboose.

The EBT continued to grow old gracefully until change loomed in 2009 when the Kovalchick family pulled out of operating the line and granted a three-year lease to a not-for-profit organisation. In fact little fundamental change occurred, although a busy season in 2011 culminated in the final train running on 23rd December. The lease was not renewed when it expired in April 2012 and once again the EBT resumed its slumbers with its six Mikados languishing in the silent surroundings of the roundhouse.

A new future

The closure period was marked by all sorts of rumours and scaremongering, but negotiations were patiently taking place and the long silence was finally broken on 14th February 2020. In a special event appropriately held at Orbisona, two of the Mikados were hauled out into the sunshine and positioned with the president's private



"There is hope eventually to use all six Mikados..."

Above: No 17 (BLW 48075/1918) was hauled out of the roundhouse onto the turntable for the sale announcement on 14th February 2020. Photo: Wayne Laepple

Below: No 12 is positioned between the president's car 'Orbisona' and a caboose for the much anticipated event on 14th February. Photo: Wayne Laepple

car and a caboose. The announcement of the EBT sale was fronted by Joseph Kovalchick, who took the opportunity to make the family's position clear: "When my father bought the company, it was never his intention to scrap the railroad. At the time he was the only one to stand for the EBT, and his role in the history books is assured. My generation has struggled to balance the need to preserve this national treasure with running it as a business, and I take pride in our role in its survival. But it is clear that a for-profit business model is not sustainable."

The purchase negotiations were led by Brad Esposito of the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad, who is now the general manager. He is committed to a three-part mission – "first, to preserving and operating the EBT as a steam railroad; second, to educating visitors about the role of railroads in local and national history; and, third, to promoting local and regional tourism and economic growth."

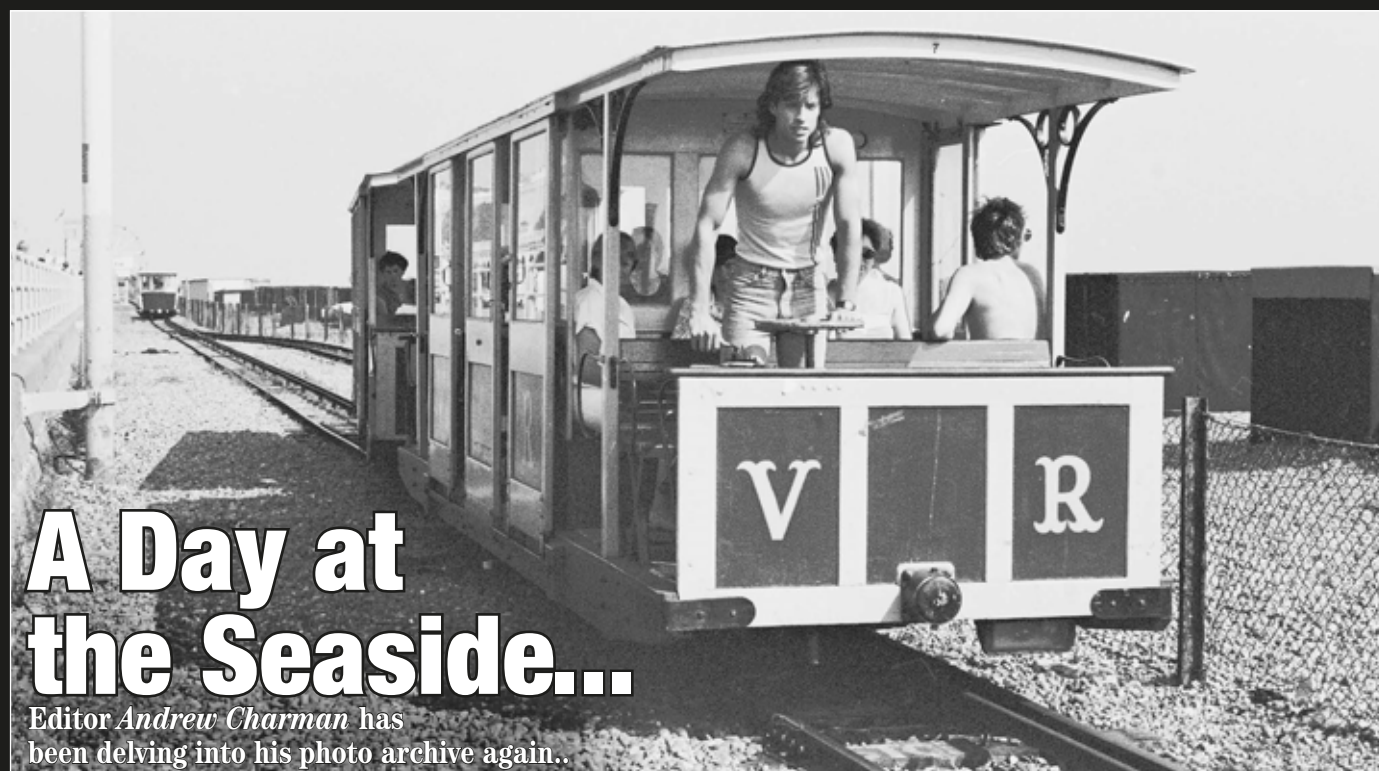
The chairman is Henry Posner III, a former Conrail manager who is also chairman of the Iowa Interstate Railroad and a knowledgeable enthusiast. Along with many rail-industry and preservation heavyweights there is an impressive

team dedicated to ensuring a new future for the EBT. The initial plan is to resume operation between Orbisona and Colgate Grove, using the M-1 railcar while other equipment is overhauled. There is hope eventually to use all six Mikados and questions about reopening to Robertsedale or Mount Union have received the response: "We look forward with enthusiasm to discussing possibilities for expanding our operations, which would be tremendously exciting."

Much has already happened in the few months since the sale. A modern loco servicing facility complete with such luxuries as underfloor heating has been provided at one end of the roundhouse. A detailed assessment has been made of all six locos, resulting in an announcement that the first to be returned to service will be nos 14 and 16. This last never ran in preservation but was overhauled shortly before the 1956 closure and is in good condition. Despite these difficult times, hopes run high that the 60th anniversary of the first reopening will be celebrated in style later this summer. **NGW**

■ The author thanks Wayne Laepple and James Waite for help in preparing this feature.





A Day at the Seaside...

Editor *Andrew Charman* has been delving into his photo archive again...



Brought up in the 1960s and '70s within walking distance of Gatwick Airport, a day out by train to Brighton, just 25 miles south, became a familiar experience for me, and of course the highlight was always going for a ride on the Volk's Electric Railway – in fact it was quite possibly a combination of regular rides on this quirky survivor from 1885 and an early experience of the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway when I was just two that likely sparked the passion for narrow gauge that would bloom later on caravanning holidays to Wales.

Even by 1984, when I had a driving licence and new-found freedom, I needed little excuse to enjoy a nice trip on a sunny day to Brighton, and these pictures were taken in July of that year when the resort was heaving with trippers.

As explained last month, at the time I was shooting mainly black and white, partly because I was freelancing for a local paper that would employ me in the following year and partly because I was really a photographer who liked railways rather than a railway enthusiast taking pictures – I

Top: Unchanging scene as a Volk's train leaves one of the several passing loops having paused for the opposite-direction service to pass.

Above: The line's aquarium station testified to its history but this was not really celebrated much.

Above right: Busy summer's day in Brighton with a train ready to depart – note the long-abandoned bay platform road.

Right: The VER's depot always looked very basic and fragile but survived a very long time.

All photos by Andrew Charman, July 1984



loved shooting black and white and spending hours playing with prints in my shed darkroom.

Familiar scene

The thing about the Volk's Electric Railway, over 40 years plus of visiting, it never seemed to change, always appearing slightly down-at-heel, fulfilling its function without making any headlines.

In fact the biggest changes have taken place in much more recent times, with the major investment resulting in refurbished stock and a brand-new depot and museum building, replacing the very rickety affair pictured below – I often wondered how this depot survived as long as it did. Time I think, once we are allowed to travel again, to make another visit to the seaside... **NGW**



Wisteria Collop, Somershire

Originally created to learn more about 009 scale, this attractive layout built by Dave Simpson incorporates a great deal of atmosphere into a compact space.

Wisteria Collop, according to its creator Dave Simpson, emerged as a result of the explosion in new British outline ready-to-run narrow gauge prototypes in 009 scale.

Dave's main layout is OO standard gauge, built since 2008 in a 22ft x 10ft shed, set in the fictitious county of Somershire and portraying the 1970s era.

At the time he began building the layout Dave was also the owner of Gas Cupboard Models in Trowbridge, Wiltshire and so he soon became aware of the new 009 releases on the way from the likes of Peco and Bachmann. Knowing little about narrow gauge, he took himself off to the Small and Delightful show in Shepton Mallet in 2009 to find out what it was all about.

"I was instantly hooked," Dave admits, highlighting a lack of snobbery among

narrow gauge modellers, the sheer variety of the subject matter from closely researched prototypes to "fabulous imagination or just a little sprinkle of magic", and the fact one could build something in a small space with tight curves without having to downsize to 2mm N scale. By the time he left for home a 009 addition to Somershire was already in his head, plus perhaps a small exhibition layout, an idea suggested by show organiser Howard Martin.

Before thinking about exhibiting, however, Dave felt he needed

to learn more about the scale, making his mistakes behind closed doors and becoming accustomed to 009 and in particular how it could be incorporated into his existing layout. From this emerged Wisteria Collop.

Multiple uses

The layout was designed from the start to fulfil a number of functions, firstly to both »

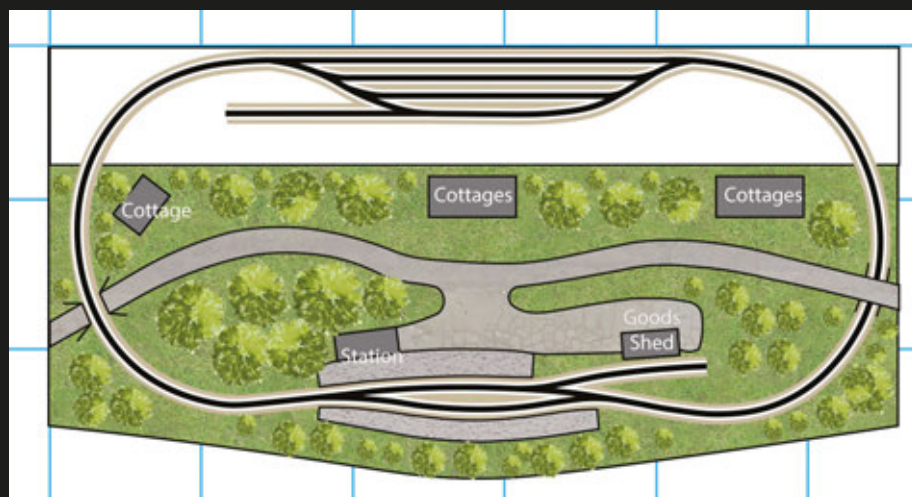




promote and make use of the new 009 items that Dave would be selling over the counter at Gas Cupboard Models. He wanted to use the layout as a small display unit in the shop, operating it single-handedly or even leaving it to run unsupervised. Finally he wanted to be able

to take the layout to shows, so it needed to be easily portable.

Wisteria Collop is very much an example of the compact modelling that our editor loves, contained within a space of 5ft 7in by 2ft 10 in, and built on a baseboard acquired several years previously – Dave



admits to being a terrible hoarder!

While of the perfect length, the board was slightly lacking in width, this soon solved by a small extension added following consultation with 2mm finescale modeller Jerry Clifford, a friend of Dave's since schooldays. This addition was also built using leftovers.

With plans to exhibit the layout in mind, the board was also significantly lightened, principally by removal of as much of its heavy chipboard surface as Dave reckoned he could get away with; "None of the trackbed is on the original board level; it is all raised above on polystyrene risers and balsa wood supports."

As can be seen from the track plan the concept is a simple one – an oval with on the viewing side a station boasting a passing loop and siding, and on the hidden operating side a fiddle yard with four loop roads and a siding/test area.

Careful use of scenics helps to break up the plan, principally a road which passes under the railway at one end and over it at the other. The station boasts a simple waiting room/ticket office and goods shed/store while extra interest is added by three pairs of cottages at the back of the layout's viewing side. These evoke another of Dave's interests, football – their names Memorial, Twerton and Eastville Cottages recall the home grounds over the years of Bristol Rovers FC.

Trackwork

Once construction of the main board was complete, Dave worked on a small board which would contain all the track for the station area and the goods siding. "This was an 18-inch x 6-inch board where I worked on the trackwork first and then fitted the point motors."

Peco 009 flexi track was used on the visible side of the layout, laid on trackbed roll produced by Woodland Scenics for N gauge use. Three Peco small-radius points are electrically operated by the same brand's point motors and polarity switches.

In the fiddle yard Peco N gauge track and Setrack points are employed, the points manually operated.

"Once I was happy that it was all functioning as I expected, I attached the trackboard to the main board raised up and resting on a couple of balsa wood blocks. I then ran Woodland Scenics Polystyrene Incline Sections in a down direction from both sides of the station area, including a cut out where the rail over road bridge would be sited."

Top left: Scratchbuilt diesel uses a Graham Farish N gauge chassis. Freight stock is a mixture of ready-to-run and kit-built items.

Upper left: Trackplan shows simple premise of layout – fiddle yard enables a wide variety of operation.

Left: Peco tram engine kit was originally built in 1970 but has been rebuilt since. Eggerbahn carriages are of similar vintage.



Scenics and structures

As he began to create the landscape, Dave remembered the words of highly respected modellers that had hosted advice sessions in his shop; "the landscape came first, the railway was built into it..."

The first step was to lay large A1 cardboard sheets to create the roadway and the flat areas for the buildings/station, adjusting the levels of the flat areas with the addition or subtraction of blocks of balsa wood for the various heights. Once those areas were decided on, they were glued to the balsa wood underneath.

The roadway then naturally flowed up and down so it was then painted firstly with poster paint, topped with Greenscenes textured paint (a mix of light & dark tarmac and thinned) and then spray matt varnished to seal and protect it.

Woodland Scenics Shaper was used to create the grass areas. "This was the first time I used this product as it had just been released in the UK so I decided to do some product testing for the shop. It certainly wasn't as straightforward as the YouTube instructional video suggested; however, with perseverance a decent rendering of your vision can be achieved."

Dave has since used the sheet on other projects and says he would be happy to use it again; "It's basically a thick sheet of silver pliable foil with a cloth covering on one side. You mould the product into the desired shape with the silver side down and then paint over the fluffy side with a thin plaster mix."

While Woodlands Scenics provides a suitable plaster mix, Dave used a thinned generic Plaster-of-Paris mix which had previously proved effective on his non-mobile layouts.

The track was ballasted with a mix of mainly medium and some fine grade Woodland Scenics ballast, five parts grey, one part brown, one part black. "I hate the job of ballasting," Dave admits, "but luckily I had a willing volunteer in my shop, Rachael Field, who happily spent her time painting the rails and sleepers with Railmatch Sleeper Grime acrylic and then ballasting the front of the layout for me."

Trees are a mix of Woodland Scenics, JTT and scratch built, with Rachael producing the purple Wisteria tree. The plastic tree trunks and branches of the Woodland Scenics & JTT trees were painted with matt grey paint and while it was still wet 'moss' thrown at the tree. Some extra foliage was also added while Dave created trees and bushes on the

Top right: The bridge started life as a tunnel mouth – a suitably weathered Mini tackles the climb into the station.

Upper right: Attention to detail, here around the goods depot which used parts from three Wills kits, raises this layout above the norm.

Right: The Royal Navy bus certainly looks as if it has seen better days.



backscene and around the station area using Woodland Scenics fine leaf Ffoliage packs of various greens.

Greenscenes summer and spring colours static grass, selected in small and

medium sizes mixed together, was applied with a homemade static grass applicator and Noch/Gaugemaster Puffer Bottle.

Dave has since used static grass applicators made by Peco, Greenscenes and Noch; "I »





Above: More excellent detail – note the replaced door on the Morris van.

Above right: This rail van started off as an Oxford Diecast Commer van, its body mounted on a Farish switcher chassis.

Left: Cottages are a mixture of Hornby and Bachmann – in this case the detail extends to a clearly leaking water pipe...

Below: Awaiting the train at Wisteria Collop – note the careful ballasting and realistic tree cover.

All photos by Andy York



can highly recommend the first two.”

The two station buildings were created from three kits produced by Wills, the Station Country Halt Building, Goods Yard Store and Wayside Station Ticket Office. Combining these has produced bespoke-looking buildings without the need to scratchbuild.

Dave describes himself as a big fan of the Hornby Skaledale and Bachmann Scenecraft ranges of resin building models. Memorial Cottages are the Bachmann Scenecraft Rural Workers Cottages with additional weathering and enhancement, while Hornby's Skaledale Miner's Cottages form the basis of Twerton & Eastville Cottages again with further weathering and enhancements, such as the window boxes made by Rachael.

The other major structures are the bridges, the one under the line is a Modelscene Single Tunnel Mouth and the right-hand one over the line built from Peco's N gauge Single Road Bridge Sides.

The essential extra detail is added using figures from Dart Castings/Montys Models, these painted with various acrylic paints and washes by Humbrol, Railmatch and Games Workshop, and animals and wildlife from Noch, Prieser & Springside. Vehicles are from the extensive Oxford Diecast range, again weathered and enhanced, while road signs from Ancorton/Miniscene Models complete the effect.

Rolling stock

While the layout was originally built primarily to showcase new releases in 009, the resident stock is rather more vintage, consisting of Peco and EggerBahn ready-to-run items plus some scratch built and kit-built models.

The two resident steam locos are a Peco Tram Engine, originally kit built in the 1970s, rebuilt by Jerry Clifford and running on an old Graham Farish Class 08 chassis, and a Baldwin War Department loco which is a Gem kit mounted on an Arnold chassis.

Additional motive power is provided by a diesel scratchbuilt by Jerry on a Graham Farish N-gauge switcher chassis, a railcar built by Dave from a 3D printed kit on a Kato 11-103 chassis, a railcar scratchbuilt by Eddie Field again on the Kato 11-103 chassis, and a Rail Van which Jerry built by mounting an Oxford Diecast Commer Van body on the Farish Switcher chassis.

Various visiting locos and guests have also appeared on the layout over the years.

And the name? Dave is a fan of anagrams and acronyms; "The layout's working title was 'Pasteboard Chug' an anagram of 'The Gas Cupboard' but that didn't feel right. I eventually settled on a different anagram for the layout name. 'Wisteria Collop', which is a combination of three model railway manufacturing companies – can you work it out? **NGW**

More Information/appearances

Wisteria Collop is currently scheduled to appear at model railway exhibitions at High Wycombe on 7th November and Andover on 5th-6th December. Let's hope by then they can go ahead. Meanwhile you can see more of Dave's Somershire shed layout at www.somershire.co.uk

This page, main: The diesel reverses its train into the goods siding. We wonder if Dave might be a fan of Minis...

Right: Freight clearly outnumberers passengers as the Alco pulls its train into the platform.



Tiny WD loco from Narrow Planet

New from Narrow Planet in 4mm/ft 009 scale is this tiny Baguley McEwan Pratt '677' 10hp 0-4-0PM locomotive.

The 677 class was the result of an order from the War Department for use on First World War trench lines, requiring a lightweight loco capable of running on the lightest 9lb rail used in the portable track employed on the front line.

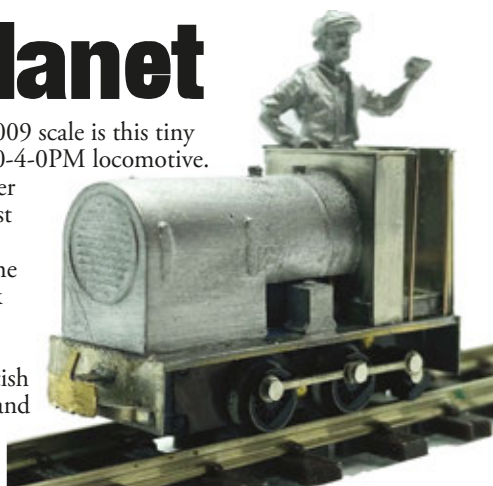
While not a great success in this role more than 50 locos were used by the British military, mainly in rearward operations, and many found their way onto other lines after the conflict so will be suitable for many a model line.

Designed by Stuart Brewer, the Narrow Planet kit uses whitemetal and etched parts to give it some useful weight. The whitemetal driver figure is sold as an extra, and highly recommended, while a Tsugawa TU-DB 158 chassis is required to power the loco.

The body kit only is £30 including UK postage while Narrow Planet is also planning a limited quantity of kits complete with the chassis and remoted with the more effective Tramfabrick 12-volt 0615 coreless motor.

Produced by Narrow Planet Ltd. Web: <https://shop.narrowplanet.co.uk>

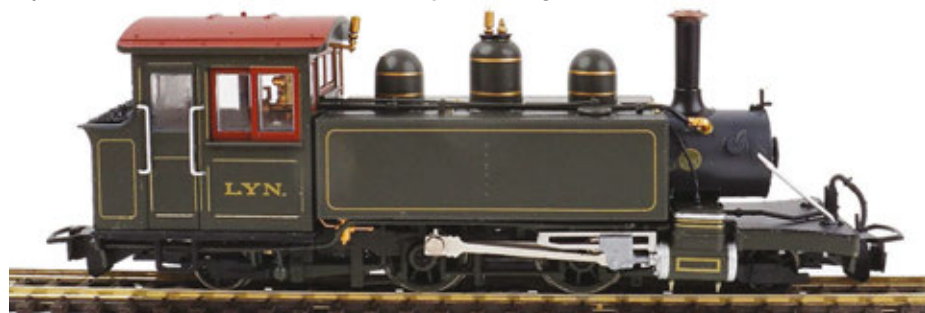
E-mail: info@narrowplanet.co.uk



Lyn revealed in six liveries



■ Pre-production versions of Heljan's much-anticipated 009 model of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Baldwin 2-4-2T 'Lyn' have been revealed in livery, ahead of the model's anticipated launch in late 2020. On the production versions Heljan promises working LED headlamps, a 6-pin DCC decoder interface, detachable couplers, etched metal cowcatchers, and numerous parts specific to period and livery, including coal rails, chimneys, smokebox doors, water tank filler hatches, whistles and safety valves. The model will be available in six variants – undecorated black, L&BR dark green in pre-1906 and 1906-22 versions, Southern Railway dark green (1923-29) and two versions of the Southern Railway Maunsell green between 1929-32 and 1932-35.



Online-only sale of model collection to benefit Llanfair line

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway will be the beneficiary from a major auction of the collection of a prominent Leicestershire model railway enthusiast.

Gildings Auctioneers are offering the extensive collection of more than 70 locomotives in the firm's Live Steam Auction, which due to Covid-19 restrictions will take place as an online-only event on Tuesday 18th August.

The collection forms part of the estate of Kenneth Abbott and includes several live-steam locos from many leading manufacturers such as Accucraft.

"The collection dates back to the 1990s and includes passenger carriages, wagons and accessories of mostly gauge 1/ garden scale, – both pre-built and kit-built models," commented Gildings' model railway specialist, Andrew Smith.

Part 1 of the auction will be devoted to gauge 1 and G scale locomotives including many LBG products, including electric, diesel and steam locomotives.

In part 2 the focus will be on OO scale gauge locomotives, many DCC fitted and mainly unused and in their original boxes.

"If restrictions are eased further, we hope to hold private viewings safely and responsibly," Andrew added. "However, if this is not feasible, condition reports will be available, and I will be very happy to speak to interested parties who wish to discuss the condition of any item in the sale. The catalogue will also be available at www.gildings.co.uk in due course and clients can register their interest now via the website."



■ Lifecolor, which produces just about every paint shade and finish a modeller could require, has launched two new sets containing popular basic and primary colours. Allowing blending of limitless colours with ease, the sets will suit a wide range of applications and cost £14.99 each. Details of the new sets are at <https://airbrushes.com>

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Through the Years

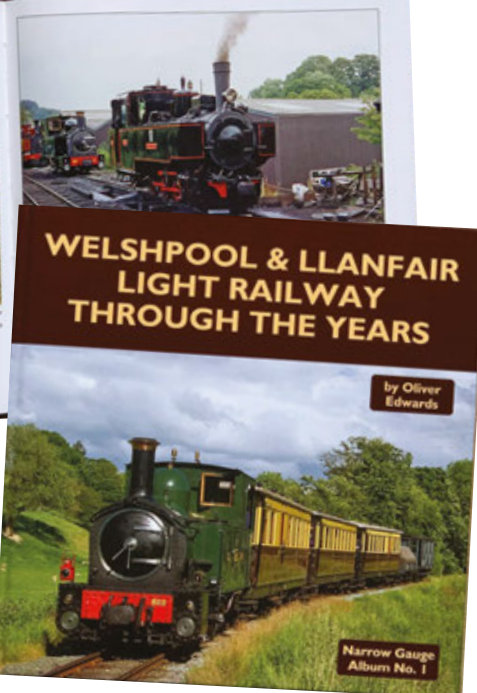
Oliver Edwards

■ As mentioned last month publisher Mainline & Maritime has kicked off a laudable project to help various railways affected by the coronavirus pandemic, by publishing a series of photo albums and making donations from each sale to aid any fundraising the railway concerned is undertaking.

First in the series is this hardback album put together by Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway trustee Oliver Edwards and drawing heavily on the railway's own archives. Having said that your editor has good access to much of this railway's archive material and there are pictures in this book he hasn't seen before!

The complete history of the railway is covered, from its earliest days, through closure by British Railways and the 60-plus years of preservation. While the tale is brought right up to date with pictures of Barclay 0-4-0ST Dougal on its 2018 visit to Taiwan and the arrival of Austrian loco 'Zillertal' on hire in 2019, particularly enjoyable are the rich selection of period photos, especially as they are reproduced to high quality over a nice large full-page format.

Mainline & Maritime is donating £5 from each copy sold to the W&LLR's Tracks to Recovery appeal (see news pages). **AC**



ISBN 978-1-90034-063-2
Published by Mainline & Maritime
Tel: 01275 845012
Email: ian@mainlineandmaritime.co.uk
Web: www.mainlineandmaritime.co.uk
Price £16.95

Railways of Mann Seen & Unseen

Phil Barnes

■ The second two offerings from the Mainline & Maritime fundraising appeal are both landscape format softbacks, with this one by Phil Barnes helping initially to support the Groudle Glen Railway with £2 donations from each sale – after the crisis donations from further sales will go to other Manx narrow gauge projects.

While all the photos are up-to-date, all taken in September 2019, they include a lot of 'behind the scenes' shots, featuring for example works trains and going inside the workshops of each line – even meeting the horses of the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway in their stables!

All the lines on the island – the Isle of Man Steam Railway, Manx Electric and Snaefell Mountain Railways, the Groudle Glen and Great Laxey Mine railways - are covered, while Phil also sneaks in a visit to the Manx Model Engineers' Orchid Line at Curragh Wildlife Park and the Jurby Transport Museum.

Again the pictures are of good quality with excellent saturation and used across full pages – for those who are currently missing



their usual trip to the island this album will provide a pick-me up... **AC**

ISBN 978-1-90034-064-9
Published by Mainline & Maritime, contact details as above
Price £9.95

Welsh Highland Railway – 25 Years of Memorable Milestones

East Anglian Group supporting the WHR

■ Finally we have another historical album, compiled by members of the Welsh Highland Railway's East Anglian Support Group – a very active group despite its location on the opposite side of the UK from the line and one which can trace its history right back to the start of the WHR project in 1998.

Starting evocatively with views of the former standard gauge trackbed at Caernarfon, and Dinas junction as a council depot with lots of ugly extra buildings, the pictures are clearly gathered from the personal collections of the members, and as such give a rather different slant of the WHR revival project than the various official histories we have seen.

The complete 12-year rebuild is documented chronologically, the photos highlighting the many challenges faced both physical and personal by the revivalists.

There are several highly interesting photos in these pages, not least of several works wagons created to help the rebuild. As with the Manx book, £2 from each sale will be donated, in this case to



WHR projects, initially helping the line through the virus pandemic. **AC**

ISBN 978-1-90034-065-6
Published by Mainline & Maritime, contact details as above
Price £9.95

■ **NGW** understands that more fundraising albums are in preparation including one on the Tallylyn Railway which we will review next month.

Monarch – opportunities?

I read with interest Donald Brooks's article about the Bagnall 0-4-4-0T 'Monarch' in *NGW*147 and would like to add a few observations.

At the time Monarch was acquired for the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, there were few opportunities to obtain a substantial 2ft 6in gauge locomotive in the UK and the purchase of Monarch in 1966 took advantage of such a rare opportunity.

At the time, W&LLR member R T Russell was an expert on industrial locomotives built in the UK and would have been familiar with the sister locomotives built for use in Africa. Incidentally, after seven years' experience in South Africa with two earlier locos built in 1946, their owner ordered two more of the type in 1953.

At the W&LLR, due to the sparse facilities and shortage of cash at the time, the overhaul undertaken prior to Monarch entering service concentrated on the essential work to get her running again. Today, simple improvements at modest cost would include fitting a full set of eight superheater elements (on the W&LLR she ran with only four) and a Lempor exhaust.

As Donald Brooks mentions, currently Monarch is a static exhibit for visitors to the W&LLR. Although there are no active plans for returning the loco to steam, in my view she would attract many admirers if she did. **Tom White**

Andrew C replies: Certain narrow gauge discussions never go away, and whether Monarch could be made into a useful loco on the W&LLR is one of them! We suspect such a scheme would likely require a sugar daddy with deep pockets...

Black Hawthorne locos

With reference to the Mark Smithers item on locomotives



in Spanish scrapyards in *NGW*147 ('Further thoughts on the NG Barry', page 29), I attach a photo of the New Zealand Railways 4-4-0ST also built by Black Hawthorne in 1883-84 and classified 'G class'.

The four engines were effectively a 4-4-0 version of the NZR F class 0-6-0ST but never matched the F of which 88 were built with some still running in preservation.

The NZR engines were of course 3ft 6in gauge and were sold off to other owners by 1920. G56 in the photo was bought by the four-mile long, Castlecliff Railway Co. at Wanganui NZ in 1917 and ran there until 1956. I was fortunate to see the loco on a train in 1955.

Ron Alexander
Christchurch, New Zealand

Andrew C replies: It's remarkable how much correspondence from readers and contributors one feature in *NGW*146 on a Spanish scrapyard has generated – keep it coming!

How far south?

I'm afraid the gremlins crept into my *Encounters* piece 'Times past in



Above: There was a whole season, in 1976, when 'Monarch' was the regular motive power on the W&LLR – see Tom White's letter. **Photo:** W&LLR archives

Below left: Ron Alexander saw this Black Hawthorne loco in action in New Zealand in 1955.

Below: 'Ogwen' is one of the several used locomotives Penrhyn bought that we will be documenting soon. **Photo:** Andrew Charman

Narrow gauge point to make, question to be answered, memory to share? Drop a line to Viewpoint at the address on page 3...

Greece' in *NGW*148. John Organ has kindly pointed out to me that I was wrong in identifying Kalamata as the most southerly railway station in Europe – that honour goes to Fuengirola, south-western terminus of the Malaga suburban system.

Secondly, the start of the third paragraph should read 'August Borsig of Berlin', and not 'The august Borsig of Berlin', though no doubt August Borsig was a very august person!

Keith Chester

Penrhyn, the used locos

Many thanks for the fascinating feature in *NGW*148 on the travels of the Penrhyn Hunslets after they left the quarry. It makes a good counterpoint to the Dinorwic feature you produced back in 2012.

The question I pose is are we going to have to wait another eight years for the completion of the story with Penrhyn's non-Hunslets, the various secondhand engines, the Barlcays, the Avonsides, and of course the oft-forgotten Baldwins of the main line?

Stewart James

Andrew C replies: Cheeky! Hopefully not, I'm working on just such a feature right now and with a following wind it will appear in these pages soon – so keep reading!



Who what where...



■ So did you figure out the two locos, a very small portion of which you could see in last month's picture? They are Peckett 0-6-0ST 'Scaldwell' and Baldwin 4-6-0T 'Lion', and both were caught by NGW editor **Andrew Charman** at Amberley Museum in the mid 1980s. Neither is there today – Scaldwell has gone to Southwold while Lion has been returned to working order by the Greensand Museum Trust at the Leighton Buzzard Railway.

Okay a new challenge – at what station will you find the clock at right? A clue, the photo was taken much more recently than the one above...

Answers as usual next month...



YouTube Watch: online NG films

The online video site YouTube, which encourages users to upload their own clips, is a great source of narrow gauge items. If you've seen a clip that our readers would enjoy, why not send in the link?



www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ49SGOcIz0&t=14s

Something a little different and perhaps suited to younger narrow gauge enthusiasts in your household! This short film shows how to draw a convincing representation of a Hunslet Wagonmaster Bord Na Mona diesel loco...



www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GsnMVgo2b8

A period gem, from 1976-77, on the Welshpool & Llanfair. Featuring Monarch and diesels in action, the period fascination makes up for not great film quality.....

That was the year that...

In conjunction with the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, news stories from the archives and the legacies they left behind...

From 20 years ago

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway
(2ft 6in gauge)

No 5 'Orion' 2-6-2T worked its first official train on Friday 2nd June 2000. This marked a milestone in the history of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway as it's the line's largest locomotive, which has been at the W&LLR since 1983. It weighs 33 tons and is 31 feet long, easily taking over from the line's previous heavyweight 'Sir Drefaldwyn', at 27 tons and 23 feet.

Use of number five on trains awaited the approval of Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate, which arrived in time for the 4.15pm departure on Friday 2nd June. This proved a pleasant surprise to rostered driver, W&LLR Centenary Appeal director Iain McLean, who along with fireman Kate Billmore and No 5 project director Pasco Rowe, drove the engine on the 16-mile return trip to Welshpool, on what he described as "a miserably wet day – ideal slipping and sliding weather on the W&LLR's steep banks..."

(NGN, July 2000)



'Orion' was certainly an imposing sight when on the W&LLR...

Photo: Andrew Charman

High optimism at the time but not to be fulfilled. Orion's weight proved a problem for the W&LLR and when its now-restored home railway, the Jokioisten, enquired about buying it back a deal was reached, the loco going home to Finland just six years later.

Kirklees Light Railway, (15in gauge)

On 10th June new loco 'Owl' 4W-4WT was rolled out. She is based on the Avonside 'Twin' design of 2-cylinder 'Heisler' with 5in x 9in cylinders and 14-inch drivers. Painted yellow, edged back, she weighs seven tons in working order. Following trials she should enter service in July. In use was 'Hawk', the blue Kitson-Meyer, whilst 'Fox' and 'Badger' were on display outside the shed.

(NGN, July 2000)



Now wearing a black livery, 'Owl' is still a member of the Kirklees fleet.

Photo: Andrew Charman

Owl has since proven a core member of the Kirklees fleet and is still running on the West Yorkshire line today, though as our picture shows in a rather different livery to that the loco was launched with...

Dick Whittington Family Leisure Park (proposed)

This proposed £2m attraction at Blakemore Farm is slated to include a "1/2-mile narrow gauge railway". Subject to planning permission construction could start this summer with opening at Easter 2001. (NGN, July 2000)

Another entry in the long and still growing list of narrow gauge might-have-beens. The theme park attraction was built and still exists today, but there has been no railway constructed for it.

Extracts from **Narrow Gauge News**, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, with kind permission of the Society – for more details and how to join up, go to www.ngrs.org.uk



Unexpected Narrow Gauge...



A little Greek mystery...

Having been a lifelong enthusiast of railways and steam locomotives and over the years developed an interest in particular in narrow gauge (*writes Martyn G Davies*) I have been an avid reader of *NGW* since its inception.

There is a fascination in narrow gauge which to me is unique and has developed over the best part of 70 years. I travelled on the Ffestiniog in 1956, I can remember steam on those funny terraced mountainsides on the other side of Llyn Peris and Llyn Padarn and I visited the Isle of Man in 1966 and again in 1967 – fantastic but 1967 was better!

My first love, however, are Lepidoptera, butterflies and moths, and I have visited many European countries looking at and helping with studies on certain butterflies endangered by changes and contractions of their habitat by agriculture, silviculture or urban encroachment.

What has all of this to do with the title and pictures on this page? In 2015 a small group of us went on a guided butterfly tour of the area around the Gulf of Corinth; our second hotel was above Kalavryta, the terminus of the rack railway which runs north to Diakofto on the Gulf. Any trip out of Kalavryta meant a drive past the station but there was hardly anything to see then, three trains a day and we only ever saw one.

A road goes from the coast up to Kalavryta and in places looks down into the gorge where the railway runs, but it is hard to see any of it, however, you don't need to see the railway to realise that a ride on it would be spectacular. One of the original steam locos has been restored and put back into service for specials and such and in 2017 an article by James Waite on the railway, history and stock was published in *NGW* 118.



If you travel by road you climb high and pass several taverna and shops selling fruit and veg grown locally. At one such roadside stopping place the locomotive pictured here is plinthed. I have been unable to find out much about so if anyone out there knows more, it would be good to hear.

Some information which can be gleaned from the photos include the 'Systeme ABT' on the tankside plate and the fact that the driving wheels are double flanged. Because of the closeness to the Kalavryta – Diakofto railway, I have always assumed it originated



on that line but I have so far found no trace of it on the internet. Wikipedia does not say what happened to two of the steam locos so is it one of these? There are differences – the smokebox door and shape of the tanks but there are also some similarities such as the shape of the cab side arrangement of boiler mountings and also lights on the front. If it isn't from the Kalavryta Railway it is hard to imagine where it did come from.

Diary dates...

For a third successive issue we are not running our Diary and Special Events information this month – at press time every railway remained closed but as our news pages report, some were planning their reopening dates.

We have growing confidence that more lines will announce their reopening and projected remainder of the 2020 season between now and the appearance of *NGW* 150 in a month's time, so it has never been more important to keep an eye on the railways' websites, the addresses of which are again printed below.

We are sure *NGW* readers will not need telling but if you feel able to and subject to any social distancing requirements, we urge you to visit the lines once they are open – they will be very keen for your custom...

We are also very hopeful that come next month, some form of return to normal service will be much closer, at least allowing us to publish a diary. Watch this space...

Almond Valley Railway: www.almondvalley.co.uk/Railway.htm

Amberley Museum: www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Amerton Railway: www.amertonrailway.co.uk

Apedale Valley Railway: www.avlr.org.uk

Bala Lake Railway: www.bala-lake-railway.co.uk

Brecon Mountain Railway: www.bmr.wales

Bressingham Steam Museum: www.bressingham.co.uk

Bure Valley Railway: www.bvrw.co.uk

Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway www.cclr.co.uk

Corris Railway: www.corris.co.uk

Evesham Vale Light Railway: www.evlr.co.uk

Exbury Gardens Railway: www.exbury.co.uk

Fairbourne Railway: www.fairbournrailway.com

Ffestiniog Railway: www.festrail.co.uk

Golden Valley Light Railway: www.gvlr.org.uk

Great Whipsnade Railway: www.zsl.org/zsl-whipsnade-zoo

Groudle Glen Railway: www.ggr.org.uk

Hampton Kempston Railway: www.hamptonkempstonrailway.org.uk

Hayling Seaside Railway: www.haylingrailway.com

Heatherslaw Light Railway: www.heatherslawlightrailway.co.uk

Isle of Man Steam Railway: www.gov.im/publictransport

Kirklees Light Railway: www.kirkleeslightrailway.co.uk

Launceston Stm Railway: www.launcestonr.co.uk

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway www.leadhillsrailway.co.uk

Leek & Rudyard Railway: www.rlsr.org

Leighton Buzzard Railway www.buzzrail.co.uk

Llanberis Lake Railway: www.lake-railway.co.uk

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway: www.lynton-rail.co.uk

North Gloucestershire Rlwy: www.toddington-narrow-gauge.co.uk

Old Kiln Light Railway: www.oldkilnlightrailway.co.uk

Perrygrove Railway: www.perrygrove.co.uk

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway: www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway: www.rhdr.org.uk

Ruislip Lido Railway: www.ruisliplidorailway.org

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway: www.sklr.net

Snowdon Mountain Railway: www.snowdonrailway.co.uk

South Tynedale Railway: www.south-tynedale-railway.org.uk

Statfold Barn Railway: www.statfoldbarnrailway.co.uk

Steeple Grange Light Railway: www.steeplegrange.co.uk

Talyllyn Railway: www.talyllyn.co.uk

Threlkeld Museum: www.threlkeldquarryandminingmuseum.co.uk

Vale of Rheidol Railway: www.rheidolrailway.co.uk

Waterworks Railway: www.waterandsteam.org.uk

Wells Walsingham Railway: www.wells-walsinghamrailway.co.uk

Welsh Highland Railway: www.festrail.co.uk

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway: www.whr.co.uk

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway: www.wlfr.org.uk

West Lancashire Light Railway: www.westlancs.org

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Top: 'Wee Georgie Wood' (18203/1924), the Fowler O-4-OWT.

Above: Romeo diesel under restoration inside the loco shed and workshop. Behind it is one of the original carriages.

Below: On the home loop returning to Tullah station.

Photos by Clive Hawley, January 2020.



Riding the Wee Georgie Wood

Clive Hawley encountered a delightful Australian 2ft gauge line purely by chance in January.

Just outside the town of Tullah in Tasmania is the totally unimposing 2ft gauge Wee Georgie Wood Railway. My wife and I came upon this gem of a line quite by accident, observing signs by the roadside. It operates only on selected Saturdays and Sundays during their summer months (December to February).

As we rolled into an over-generous car park the loco was steaming nicely, ready to greet us. Initially we were to be the only potential passengers. No timetable was necessary as it ran as required.

'Wee Georgie Wood' is the line's one and only locomotive – an O-4-0 built in 1924 by John Fowler of Leeds. It has been lovingly restored and fitted with an American-style spark-arrestor chimney. Steam is raised using wood – it is in plentiful supply and coal is expensive.

Mining line

The slightly over a mile-long line with a return loop at each end is based on part of the former North Mount Farrell Mine Tramway, which was built as the only means of transporting high grade lead and silver ore out of the area. It was 8½

miles long, reaching the main line near Boco.

The tramway's first two steam locos were supplied by Krauss in 1892 and Orenstein & Koppel in 1901. Wee Georgie Wood was a replacement for the aging Krauss engine and 'Wee Mary', another new six-ton Fowler, replaced the O&K in 1928. The origins of both names are obscure, although Wee Georgie Wood was then popular Australian rhyming slang for 'good'.

The two Fowlers shared the workload until 1946 when Wee Mary was withdrawn from service and its parts were then used to rebuild Wee Georgie Wood.

To maintain services a ten-ton Krauss locomotive built for the Mount Lyell 2ft gauge system in 1908 was acquired in 1949 and continued in service until roads linked the mine with the outside world in 1961 and the line closed three years later. The loco carried its original no 9 and can be found in a partly restored state in the loco sheds.

The heritage steam railway volunteers started restoration in 1977, taking ten years to construct the permanent way and reopen the line with Wee Georgie Wood and an original carriage providing the services. The tramway points used are of particular interest.

Exciting ride

My detailed interest in the Fowler was rewarded with the offer of a footplate ride for the return ten-minute journey. This proved to be an exciting experience as the loco swayed and bucked along the track, pulling with ease the carriage and a full water tank.

The friendliness and helpfulness of the volunteers cannot be overstated. During our visit I was given a tour of the work sheds where a vintage Romeo diesel was being restored. The diesel is reported to have spent its final years of service life at Lake Margaret Tramway and arrived at the museum without any engine. The volunteers were very proud that they had rebuilt and installed a Dodge 6-cylinder side-valve engine. **NGW**

More Information

www.weegeorgiewood.com.au



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We are closed currently but hope we will be able to recreate this happy scene at our Picnic Area during 2020 with Isabel drawing in to stop at Chartley Halt

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