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NARROW GAUGE WORLD

ISSUE 151
SEPT 2020



■ GARRATT K1 BACK IN ACTION AT STATFOLD

SUMMER STEAM

POSITIVE SIGNS AS LINES REOPEN



NG MODELLING



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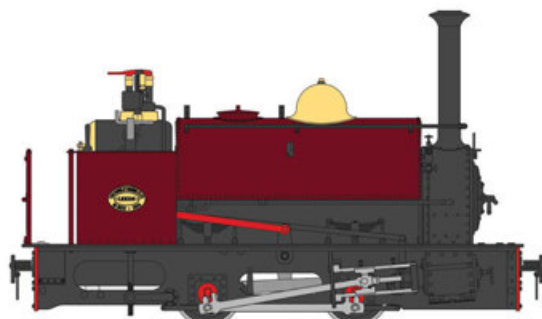
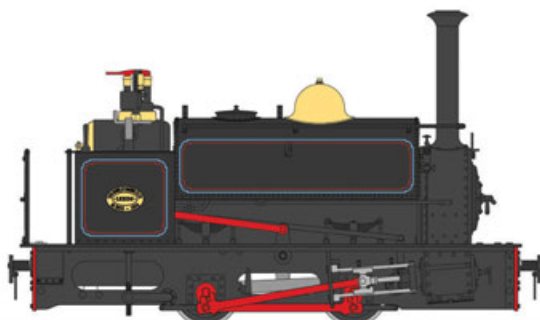
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UK: \$40.50; Rest of Europe: \$52.00;
Outside Europe: \$60.00

DISTRIBUTION
News trade
Warners Distribution – Tel: 01778 392417
Model Trade
Warners Trade Sales – Tel: 01778 392404
Overseas Agents
JAPAN: Eriai Co, Ltd, 1-1-12
Toyotama-kita, Nerima-ku, Tokyo 176

Printed by: Warners Midlands Plc
Lincolnshire

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PUBLICATIONS PLC 2020
ISSN: 1466-0180

Cover: The UK's narrow gauge lines are largely operating again and the Ffestiniog Railway's newly restored England 0-4-0ST 'Welsh Pony' has been put straight to work on trains to Tan-y-Bwlch. The inset shows Garratt K1, star attraction of the first post-lockdown enthusiast's day at Satfold Barn
Photos: Kenny Felstead and Andrew Charman

NARROW GAUGE WORLD is published nine times per year.

This issue on sale 28th August 2020
Next issue published 25th September 2020



www.warnersgroup.co.uk

Issue No 151 September 2020

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Back to some kind of normal...



"I felt nothing but keen anticipation as I set off for my first proper narrow gauge event of 2020..."

Main photo: A familiar scene of the summer, loco crews relaxing by their charges at a sun-kissed Statfold Barn. But it's the kind of view we've missed for a good while now, and now our railways are back we have to make the most of them. Photo: Andrew Charman

Welcome to *NGW*151, and in this edition, for the first time in several months putting together the news pages has felt almost typical, reporting on narrow gauge lines operating services and making plans for the future.

Of course these services are anything but normal. To reopen every line has had to do a whole lot of work to ensure social distancing and the safety of its visitors and staff. While the trains are in many cases selling out, they are sold-out services running to much lower capacities than has been the norm in the past, and that of course means less revenue.

Even if we do not suffer a second wave of the pandemic, I reckon many railways will not know the true cost of Covid-19 until the end of this coming winter. Some, such as the South Tynedale, are already feeling the effect in no uncertain terms, worrying times as we report on our news pages.

Still, this is a situation that isn't going to change and we are going to have to get used to it and make the best of it. And I must admit, after months of a working life of sitting in front of the computer in my home office and little else, I felt nothing but keen anticipation when I set off for my first proper narrow gauge event of 2020, the Statfold Barn Enthusiasts' Day on Saturday 8th August. And what an excellent day out I had.

Playing safe

Going to Statfold gave me a prime opportunity to observe the new world of socially-distanced public events in action, and overall I was impressed with what I saw.

It was clear that the Statfold team had gone to great lengths to ensure the safety of its visitors and those providing the entertainment. We all had to pre-book, providing track and traceability should it be needed. All of the Statfold staff dealing directly with the public were provided with full-face coverings, masks were mandatory in the Roundhouse museum and on all the trains, and there were hand sanitisers everywhere...

More than this, however, it was evident that the Statfold team were concerned that all those attending (and the numbers were significantly restricted compared to previous events) not only enjoyed themselves but felt safe. I noticed Henry Noon and his fellow staff members making time throughout the day to talk to as many people as possible and to gently ask if they were happy with the measures taken.

Henry admitted to me at the start of the day the atmosphere was a little odd and it was, but one soon got used to the 'new normal' (I hate that phrase) and enjoyed what was there to see, some 13 engines in steam and of course the highlight, the return of Garratt K1 – a loco I last saw in steam in 2011 when

I rode its footplate on the Welsh Highland Railway...

It was a fun day, with most of the visitors also appearing to take things seriously and to police themselves where social distancing was concerned (although one very long-time friend of mine clearly did not understand the concept...). No-one enjoys the restrictions we now have to conform to but if they bring the end of the pandemic a little closer, and crucially if they allow us to again have the types of day out that I so enjoyed at Statfold, they are a small price to pay...

Keep riding the trains

I make no apologies for repeating the plea I made last month – if you are able to, please visit the railways now that they are open again. Settling into a compartment occupied by just myself on a train at Statfold, I was shocked to think that it was August and this was only my second train trip of the year. Circumstances mean that I will be very unlikely to crew a steam loco footplate in 2020, which will be very disappointing. But for all the railways who have seen the vast majority of 2020's revenue taken by Covid-19, the future remains very difficult, even with the success of their fundraising appeals. Every visit, every ticket bought by a *NGW* reader will be one more little bit of help that they really need.

Andrew Charman



'Strong take-up' as lines start post Covid-19 passenger trains

As this issue of *NGW* went to press the majority of UK narrow gauge lines were operating services, and their management reporting generally an encouraging response from visitors.

However social distancing measures meant trains were generally running at between a third and half their normal capacity, producing revenue far below what would normally be expected in August.

The **Lynton & Barnstaple Railway** reopened on 18th July, the **Ffestiniog** two days later, the **Ravenglass & Eskdale** on 30th July. A host of lines reopening on 1st August included the **Welshpool & Llanfair**, **Talylyn**, **Apedale** and **Amerton** lines, while the **Sittingbourne & Kemsley** ran its first public services five days later.

On the **Isle of Man** the **Steam Railway** reopened on 23rd July and the **Manx Electric Railway** two days later, though the **Snaefell Mountain Railway** remained closed at press time.

All lines had put a complete range of Covid-19 measures in place, ranging from

social distancing and hand sanitising to mandatory pre-booking of tickets. Several also cut their journey distance to accommodate more passengers each day.

The **Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway** is running over half its route between Llanfair Caereinion and Castle Caereinion, the **Ffestiniog** only between Porthmadog and Tan-y-Bwlch, while the **Llanberis Lake Railway** is only running from its Gilfach Ddu main station and not using its Llanberis town centre terminus.

Other lines made good use of their infrastructure. With two separate platforms at its Woody Bay station, not typical on the narrow gauge, the **Lynton & Barnstaple Railway** was able to separate arriving passengers from departing ones, a measure also adopted by the **Bure Valley Railway**.

Reactions to the return of trains have been generally positive with strong visitor numbers, particularly on the **Talylyn**.

"We've been running 10 days now and the feedback has been almost universally good," TR general manager Stuart Williams

told *NGW* on 11th August. "Visitors like the separate compartments in carriages, they like the PVC screens which enable them to see each other and we are keeping every other compartment out of use."

Brave experiment

Stuart added that available tickets on trains had been selling out each day. "We are only carrying 50 to 70 passengers per train but the flow is so much better, and in the cafes too, compared to last year where the first two trains of the day would be rammed and the rest really quiet – it's basically proving to be the experiment we've never been brave enough to try."

Measures taken by the TR have included having three marshals on site, two at Tywyn Wharf and one at Abergynolwyn, to ensure visitors are kept informed but mainly to avoid loitering, gently moving people along to ensure there are no bottlenecks.

"It is a whole new learning game for all of us. At night we have a fogging machine which completely cleans each train and then we surface clean them between every trip."

"We are using Tywyn and Abergynolwyn stations only – no intermediate stops because if you do that it's so difficult to adequately clean the compartments."

"The weak points are the toilets – people just don't read instructions and it's difficult to enforce social distancing without allocating someone to toilet duty for a day, which is not fun for anyone."

Stuart added that the TR intends to run four trains a day until the end of September and is committed to operating until the end of November. "We hope to re-introduce some of our discounts too. Overall I'm very pleased with how it's gone so far."

The **Welshpool & Llanfair** was also pleased with the take-up of its services.



Above: Local MP Liz Saville-Roberts flagged away the first post-lockdown train on the **Talylyn Railway** on 1st August, Fletcher-Jennings 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch' wearing a suitable headboard.

Photos: TR

Left: Fireman Alan Regan is suitably masked as he flags a **Welshpool & Llanfair** train across the line's **Dolarddyn** crossing on 13th August. Photo: Andrew Charman

"With all the special Covid-safety precautions, reopening was a huge amount of work, and with paid staff mostly on furlough it was almost entirely done by volunteers," said GM Charles Spencer.

"But I'm delighted that so many visitors have wanted to come in August – their evident happiness has made all the preparatory work worthwhile."

The **Bala Lake Railway** was the first Welsh line to reopen on 9th July and chairman Julian Birley reported a very positive response from visitors.

"Back in May we really did not expect to run any trains this year due to the pandemic, but having now been allowed to do so we are enjoying a very busy summer," he told *NGW*. "With so much foreign travel not possible people still want their holidays and north Wales is certainly seeing the effect of it."

The line had a 'soft opening' before the summer holidays really began to ensure that all the new safety practices that had been devised worked. "Staff and volunteers had to learn new procedures to ensure the safety of themselves and our visitors," Julian added. "This has proven very effective and thanks to one of our volunteers designing and implementing an online booking system all is working very well."

"We are monitoring visitor feedback very carefully and listening to visitors' views and comments, all of which have been close to 100 per cent positive."

Fluctuating bookings

The Bure Valley line stepped up its services through July as more carriages were fitted with social distancing screens, and general manager Andrew Barnes told *NGW* that all three weekends in July were sold out.

"Bookings for the first weekend in August dropped off a cliff and we thought possibly that supporters had all come out to travel on the July weekends but there was not much interest from the general public," Andrew added.

"On 30th July I went on BBC Radio Norfolk to talk about taking all our staff back off furlough and also our continuing insurance case in the high court. Thankfully this pulled out the visitors and we were virtually full that weekend."

Andrew said that visitors appear to be booking a maximum of 48 hours before travel. "What we are now seeing is that holidaymakers are back in the area, but all want to travel in the week."

"Our weekday trains are running with good numbers – around 600 passengers per day which is about 65 per cent of normal passenger numbers for an August weekday. The weekends are much quieter at around 300-350 passengers per day – this is around 55 per cent of normal August weekend passenger levels."

Andrew added that a major drawback had been an inability to operate popular combined train and broads cruise tickets. "The boat operator has operated an entirely different social distancing arrangement and



The Ffestiniog Railway's use of its England and former Penrhyn Hunslet locos and its period compartment stock on services between Porthmadog and Tan-y-Bwlch has sparked memories of the line's operation in the 1960s. 'Linda' passes Bron Madoc on reopening day, 20th July.

Photo: Kenny Felstead

is selling space on the boat rather than per head and is therefore incompatible with our pricing arrangements."

The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway reopened with a newly designed 'pink' timetable on 30th July, again only using the terminus stations and with various measures in place similar to other lines.

"The biggest change are the handcrafted 'social distancing screens' fitted to the carriages, giving a 1920s Bassett-Lowke era feel to the opens in particular," the R&ER's Keith Herbert told *NGW*.

"The screens were designed, made and fitted by long-serving joiner Richard Rothery, who had to make 80 of them in order for the railway to be able to re-open."

"At Ravenglass there are dedicated arrival and departure platforms, which prompts a lot of additional shunting throughout the day, with 1930s-built Lister diesel 'Cyril' usually rostered as station pilot."

Some lines were still to reopen as *NGW* went to press and one of the first will be the **Welsh Highland Railway**. The FF&WHR planned to resume services on its sister

line on 18th August, but only between Caernarfon and Beddgelert.

The initial schedule plans one train a day, departing Caernarfon at 11.00 and arriving at Beddgelert at around 12.45. The return was scheduled to leave at 14.15 and arrive back at Caernarfon at around 16.00.

As with several other lines all tickets must be booked in advance, and only full trips are available – passengers will not be permitted to leave or join the train at intermediate stations.

WHR tickets were initially released through to 19th September, with the railway planning to announce later dates after reviewing take-up.

Sadly further railways have joined the list of those that won't operate at all in 2020, including the **Great Whipsnade**, **Corris**, **Leadhills & Wanlockhead** and **Launceston** lines.

■ Please remember to check the latest updates from any line you are intending to visit before travelling. A full list of open lines and contact details is on page 49.

■ **Vandals attacked the North Bay Railway at Scarborough on the night of 9th August, kicking out new dividing screens that had been fitted in carriages parked at Peasholm Park station to provide social distancing measures and enable the 20-inch gauge line to reopen post Covid-19.**

"The only reason we are up and running is due to these screens being in place," a NBR spokesman said. "Fortunately none were broken and our team has quickly managed to get them reinstated so we can open as normal today."

"We just don't understand how anyone could get pleasure from this, like most other businesses we are struggling and we need to keep running to survive the winter."

The NBR shared pictures of the damage on its social media feeds, which sparked wide condemnation both across the heritage railway movement and beyond. Photo: NBR





■ The Snowdon Mountain Railway has revealed the final appearance of its two new hybrid-electric locomotives, following the delivery of the 12-seat passenger pods that are attached to the front of each. The locos, built by Clayton Equipment Ltd, have also been named – no 14 on the line's roster takes the name 'Glaslyn' after the lake around 600 metres (2000ft) above sea level which can be seen from the summit on the eastern sides of Snowdon, and no 15 is to be called 'Moel Eilio', which is a 2382ft high mountain around three miles north-west of Snowdon. The SMR reopened on 10th July, running only to its highest intermediate station of Clogwyn for the 2020 season. *Photos: Peter Johnson*

Redundancies loom as Tynedale faces up to tough future

The South Tynedale Railway is to make all of its paid staff redundant as the Cumbrian 2ft gauge line faces a difficult future following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The line is not expected to run this season, and in a letter to members acting chairman David Granath admitted that tough challenges lay ahead.

"It has been evident for some time that the railway is losing money year on year and this situation cannot be allowed to continue," David continued.

"The trustees have therefore taken the decision to seek professional financial advice on what options there may be for the future of the railway," he added.

The line has suffered recently from the resignation of a number of trustees and

directors while David added that "with great regret" the remaining members of paid staff would be made redundant at the end of August.

The STR hopes to stabilise its situation over the winter and make a return in 2021. An appeal for more volunteer help is being made and updates will be issued using the line's website.

"We will essentially be a non-paid staff organisation over the autumn and winter and will need help with site security and maintenance as well as the less obvious planning work behind the scenes," David added. "We have a great railway in a great location and an excellent team of volunteers and we have the will to make it through this trying time."

Network Rail comes to aid of Wicksteed

The Wicksteed Park Railway, which was threatened with being the first UK line to be permanently closed by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic after its owning company went into administration, has recruited some unlikely assistance, from the 'big railway'.

As reported last month, the business operating the Kettering amusement park in which the 1¼-mile long 2ft gauge line runs was threatened with collapse, due to the critical impact on its business by the Covid-19 outbreak. But instead a new, streamlined company was formed to work towards a full reopening of the park's attractions in Spring 2020.

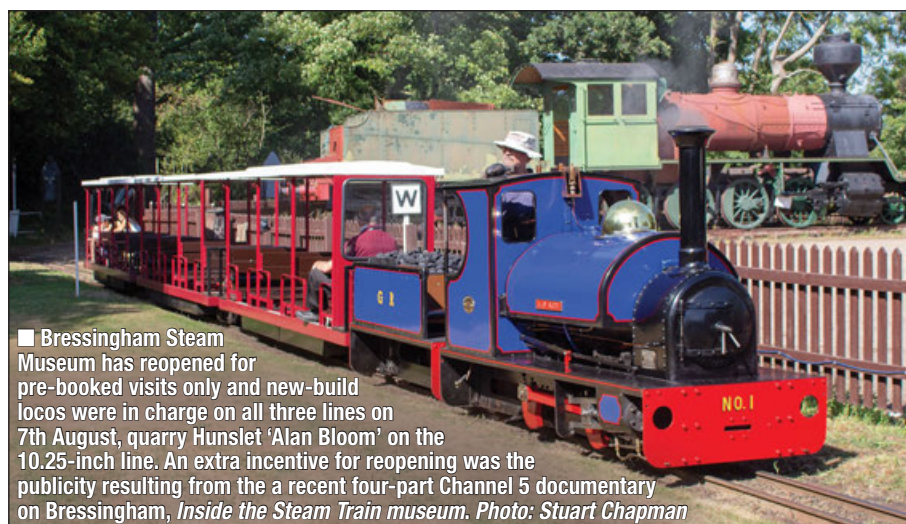
Meanwhile around 20 staff from main-line infrastructure body Network Rail volunteered to carry out essential track maintenance free of charge.

The idea came from Ben Darling, distribution and plant section manager for Network Rail in the East Midlands. Knowing that the operator encourages its staff to take volunteer leave, he suggested their expertise should be applied to the Wicksteed line.

"The park, and its famous train which takes visitors around the lake and woodlands is a big part of the community in Kettering," Ben said. "We are pleased to be using our experience on the railway to repair this track."

Wicksteed Park MD Lee Scragg said that all involved were very grateful for the assistance. "Without them we would not have been able to complete the work and get the trains up and running again so quickly," he said.

Network Rail has regularly carried out work at heritage railway sites in the past, notably on the Ffestiniog Railway.



■ Breckingham Steam Museum has reopened for pre-booked visits only and new-build locos were in charge on all three lines on 7th August, quarry Hunslet 'Alan Bloom' on the 10.25-inch line. An extra incentive for reopening was the publicity resulting from the a recent four-part Channel 5 documentary on Breckingham, *Inside the Steam Train museum*. Photo: Stuart Chapman



Petition bids to rebuild Isle of Man line to Peel

A petition has been launched seeking to Areopen the Douglas to Peel line of the Isle of Man Railway.

The first part of the Manx system to be built in 1873, the 11.5-mile long Peel route was closed, along with the 16.5-mile long Ramsey line, in 1968 following a short-lived revival by the Marquis of Ailsa, leaving only the 15.3-mile southern route to Port Erin that still runs today.

Most of the Peel line has since been turned into a heritage trail for walkers and cyclists, while the first section out of Douglas also serves as emergency access during the TT motorcycle races each June.

According to the instigators of the petition, Peel would benefit from a direct rail link to Douglas, bringing in tourism and increased visitors. "Many Manx people combine a day out with a train trip, and adding Peel to the network with its castle and museums would increase visitor numbers," the petition states.

"The railway would reduce congestion, particularly during TT and Festival Of

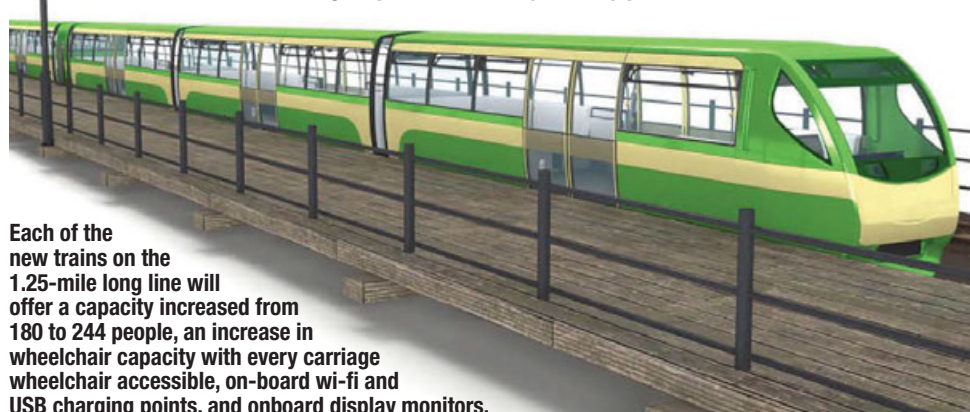
Motorcycling periods. There are also many visitors who only travel by rail, visiting the Island during the Rush Hour event and the Transport Festival and do not go to Peel – by reopening the railway, visitors to the city would increase and Peel would become a very attractive day-trip destination."

The petition argues that Isle Of Man Railways would benefit from being able to operate commuter services to Peel, similar to those operating from Port Erin, bringing in more revenue and getting people out of their cars as a time when the island has declared a climate emergency.

Anyone wishing to add their name to the petition can find it at www.change.org/p/isle-of-man-government-re-open-the-douglas-to-peel-railway-line

Photo: Those behind the appeal want a return to scenes such as this – the former County Donegal Railway railcars at Peel in 1962. The railcars are still on the island, stored in part-restored condition in Douglas sheds. *Photo: Paul Myatt*

■ Southend Council has revealed the livery of the new battery-electric train sets set to be introduced to the Essex sea resort's 3ft gauge pier line in 2021. The two new battery-electric sets, currently under construction by Severn Lamb to replace two diesel sets also built by the company in 1986, will be finished in a green and cream livery. The winning design of a vote held amongst Southend residents, the design replicates the livery worn by pier trains between 1949 and 1978.



Each of the new trains on the 1.25-mile long line will offer a capacity increased from 180 to 244 people, an increase in wheelchair capacity with every carriage wheelchair accessible, on-board wi-fi and USB charging points, and onboard display monitors.

BRIEF LINES

Low-key 60th for Ratty

Plans for the Ravensglass & Eskdale Railway Preservation Society to celebrate its 60th birthday this year have been delayed by Covid-19 but on the actual anniversary, 9th August, a low-key ceremony was held at Ravensglass before the departure of the 15.10 service, for which loco 'River Esk' carried a commemorative headboard.

Six-wheel carriage at IOMR

Former Manx Northern Railway six-wheeled carriage no N.45 was returned to the Isle of Man Steam Railway's Douglas base in late July after full restoration. The carriage, which remains in private ownership, is intended to be eventually displayed in the line's museum at Port Erin.

Statfold Road & Rail

Following its successful return to enthusiast days in August the Statfold Barn Railway is planning a Road & Rail Festival on 12th-13th September. As well as the railway operating the event will feature vintage road vehicles including steam, tractors, US trucks, music and entertainment. Tickets can be booked through the website at www.statfold.com

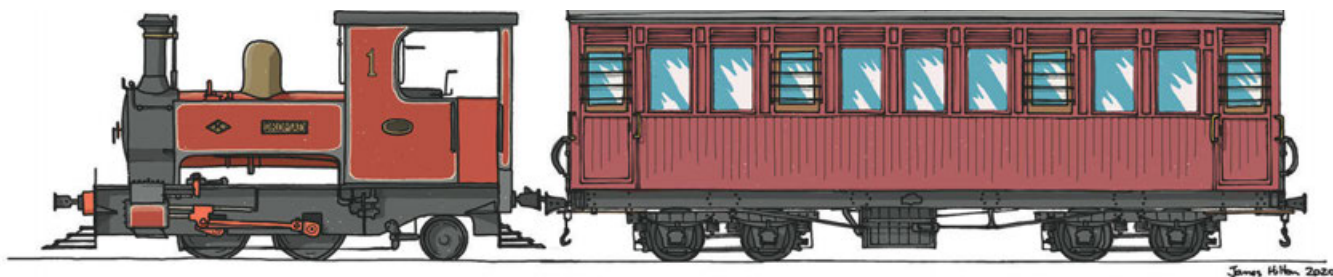
Volks trains back on beach

Among the lesser-known narrow gauge lines reopening at the end of July was the Volks Electric Railway. The pioneer 2ft 8½-inch gauge electric line restarted services on the seafront at Brighton, Sussex on 22nd July, running on Wednesdays to Sundays.

Online festival proves hit

A virtual version of the Isle of Man's Heritage Transport Festival, organised by various groups on the island after the real event fell victim to Covid-19, attracted a worldwide reach of almost 500,000 views. Broadcast on Facebook between 29th July and 2nd August, the event included features on all the Manx railways, 'walks' of closed lines, views inside 'hidden' areas such as Douglas station clock tower, a tour of the new horse tram depot, virtual shed tours and live-stream events.

News from your railway not on these pages? Then ensure that Andrew.charman@warnersgroup.co.uk is on your mailing list!



Cavan project aims for full train

Following the successful return to steam of Avonside 0-6-0T 'Nancy' (1547/1908) the Cavan and Leitrim Railway is now planning to restore an entire train.

The project will see the preserved C&L's first steam loco, Kerr Stuart 'Dromod' (3024/1916) overhauled, as well as former Tralee and Dingle Light Railway (TDLR) third class carriage 7T of 1890, built by the Bristol Wagon and Carriage Works.

Dromod returned steam traction to the preserved section of the C&L in 1994 after 50 years, and was last steamed in 2001. The pairing of the loco and 7T is very appropriate as Dromod was heavily rebuilt with the outline of a Tralee and Dingle cab and is based on the original TDLR Hunslet 0-4-2T no 4, with Hunslet-style cab back windows and cow catchers.

Kerr Stuart 4T was sent to the C&L upon closure of the T&D to passengers in 1939 and hauled the last train on the Cavan line, double heading with 5T on March 30th 1959 from Dromod.

"The primary goal of this project, funding dependent, is to have Dromod and Nancy in steam together, with 7T providing additional service capacity," said the CLR's Darragh Connolly.

"This would be the first time this has been achieved on a 3ft gauge CIE line in the Republic of Ireland since the elimination of steam on the Cavan and Leitrim (ironically) in 1959 and also the closure of the County Donegal in 1959. If we raise sufficient funding this will be an epic sight and a must for enthusiasts."

Restoration of Dromod is expected to begin soon, with funding required to assess the condition of the boiler. Work on 7T is at a preliminary stage, with the chassis currently being assessed.

Original bodies

"We are fortunate to have three original Tralee and Dingle bogies also awaiting assessment – it is envisaged work will progress as funding allows," Darragh added.

A donation scheme has been set up with incentives to donors ranging from a limited edition print to an exclusive charter with Dromod and 7T once in service. Details are available at <https://cavanandleitrim.wixsite.com/home/vintage-train> or by writing to Cavan and Leitrim Railway, Dromod, Clooncolly, Co. Leitrim, Ireland.

"The Vintage Train Appeal is the most ambitious project undertaken at Dromod,

and it is completely unique," Darragh added. "We aim that our visitors will be able to travel in a vintage carriage and experience what it was like to travel on the narrow gauge railways of Ireland, but we need funding to progress the project".

The CLR steamed Nancy on 3rd August, the first loco to run on a non-miniature railway in Ireland since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project's site at Dromod remains

closed to the public however. "We are required to do annual checks on all our locos and rolling stock, so we took the opportunity to steam Nancy and do some refreshers for our volunteers," said C&LR manager Micheal Kennedy, adding that social distancing was observed at all times during the exercise.

Above: Artist's impression of the new Vintage Train appeal.

Success of €100K appeal will bring Drumboe home

County Donegal Railways 2-6-4T no 5 'Drumboe', which headed the last passenger train on the system in 1959, will make a triumphant return to Donegal in 2021 after the success of a 100,000 Euro appeal launched on Valentine's Day, 2019 (writes *Hugh Dougherty*).

Donegal Local Development CLG has awarded a grant of €65,000, which, along with private donations to the appeal, will now allow work to start on the reassembly and cosmetic restoration of Drumboe at the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland's Whitehead base.

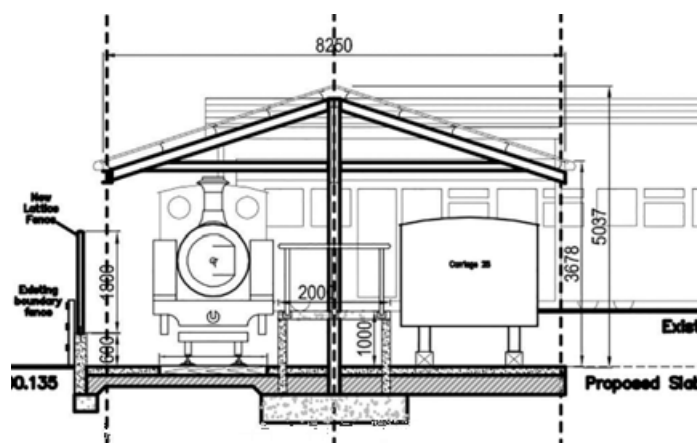
The announcement was made on 29th July at Donegal Railway Heritage Centre, newly reopened following the Covid-19 crisis. The cash injection will also allow work to start on rebuilding the exterior space at the centre, including the erection of a section of platform and canopy, under which the 1907-built, Nasmyth Wilson

loco will be put on permanent display with items of rolling stock.

The return is being described as the most significant development at the former station site since the heritage centre was opened there in 1995. The ultimate intention is to return Drumboe to steam at the centre.

Donegal Railway Heritage Centre chair Mark McDaid described the loco's return as a "milestone heritage railway and tourism project for Donegal," and Frank Kelly of Donegal Local Development CLG added; "The return of the locomotive will be of great benefit to the community and tourists alike, helping bring the Donegal Railway back to life."

While the bulk of the funding is now in place, further donations are being sought to help meet a small shortfall in the appeal target. Details are at <http://donegalrailway.com/donate/>



Architect's drawing of the plans for the display of Drumboe under a platform canopy at the heritage centre.

Plan courtesy McMullan Associates



■ More of the Glyn Valley Tramway's former Chirk station is being revealed as the Glyn Valley Tramway Trust has returned to clearance work ahead of the planned reinstatement of a railway. "We've been busy on site since restrictions were lifted – there has been plenty of vegetation to remove that had grown during our enforced site absence," the Trust's Rick Wilson told NGW. Photos: GVTT



No train services in 2020 but plenty of effort at Corris line

The design of the Corris Railway's passenger rolling stock has proven a crucial factor in preventing the mid-Wales 2ft 3in gauge line reopening this season.

The recreated bogie carriages follow the design of the line's original stock with an internal open saloon layout accessed by a shared entrance in the centre of the vehicle. This makes social distancing measures almost impossible to apply, as does the tight loading gauge of the vehicles.

It would also be difficult to socially distance the talk and shed tour offered to passengers on arrival at Maespoeth Junction, and in the shop and refreshment area at Corris which in wet weather often becomes a waiting area until the train arrives.

Therefore the line will remain closed for the rest of the 2020 season but the volunteer workforce is using the time to press ahead on several projects. Work on building the embankment for the extension south of Maespoeth continues, construction of the new heritage wagon shelter at Maespoeth Junction is underway and once the wagons are in their new home more space in the carriage shed will be available.

Carriage 23 is approaching completion and should be available for traffic in 2021, while building clerestory-roof carriage 24, which will eventually bring 1st-class travel to the Corris for the first time since 1930, is progressing.

Meanwhile the line has taken advantage of the delivery to the neighbouring Tallylyn Railway of newly restored carriage no 17, ironically an original former Corris bogie

carriage, built in 1879. The vehicle was returned to the line on 13th November from Stangate Restorations in Northumberland, which had carried out the work and the Corris was asked if it had any items requiring a return movement.

The opportunity was therefore taken to remove the boiler and smokebox for the new-build Falcon 0-4-2 no 10 from the carriage shed at Maespoeth Junction and deliver them to the workshops of Alan Keef Ltd near Ross-on-Wye. Alan Keef has almost completed the bottom end of the loco, after which the boiler will be mounted on it.

Donations towards the Corris General Fund, which will assist with the continuing costs during the suspension of operations and their eventual resumption, and also for the works on the ongoing Southern Extension can be made via Paypal at www.corris.co.uk

Below: Falcon no 10's boiler had headed south to find its chassis at Alan Keef Ltd. Photo: CR



BRIEF LINES

Apedale plans Joffre finale

■ Having reopened in early August the Apedale Valley Railway in Staffordshire is hoping to run its long-planned 'Farewell Joffre' event on 12th-13th September, marking the final appearance of Kerr Stuart Joffre 0-6-0T no 3014 of 1916 before the loco is withdrawn for a 10-year overhaul.

North Bay gets boiler deal

■ The Bure Valley Railway has awarded the contract to produce new boilers for its ZB-class 15-inch gauge locomotives to North Bay Engineering of Darlington. The decision was made after a tender process and delivery of the new boiler is expected later this year.

Arsenal track needs points

■ Extension of the 2ft gauge Royal Arsenal Railway at the Crossness Pumping Engines, at Abbey Wood in London, has proceeded well. However the terminus is to be built initially without a run-round loop while funding is secured to source a pair of points.

One-man Richmond

■ Having been forced to cancel its traditional August open day due to Covid-19 restrictions, the private Richmond Light Railway in Kent has continued with 'single-man' working parties, primarily relaying part of its trackwork. Restoration of Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Elin' is also proceeding.

FR plans small loco shed

■ Ffestiniog Railway personnel have been making use of lockdown to discuss online design proposals for the new small locomotive shed that is to be built in the back of Glan Y Mor yard at the line's Boston Lodge works. The shed will house under cover occasionally-used locos that are part of the FR roster such as Hunslets 'Britomart', 'Lilla' and 'Hugh Napier', Baldwin no 608 and Lynton & Barnstaple new-build 'Lyd'.

Asbestos removal on IOM

■ Work has begun to remove asbestos boiler lagging from Isle of Man Railway Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T 'Douglas' at the line's Port St Mary goods shed. No 5 'Mona' will undergo similar treatment.



■ Latest progress at the Darlington workshops of North Bay Engineering in recent weeks has seen the chassis of the Southwold Railway Trust's new-build 'Blyth' sitting on its wheels with motion attached, NBE's David Humphreys expecting the loco to be tested on compressed air shortly after NGW goes to press. Behind the loco the overhaul of the Llanberis Lake Railway's quarry Hunslet 'Thomas Bach' is almost complete.

NBE is also working on a new-build version of the Crewe Works shunter 'Nipper', while the firm's latest project is a 15-inch gauge new-build loco based around the 0-4-0T 'Effie', the first loco designed by minimum gauge pioneer Sir Arthur Heywood in 1874, but with the addition of side tanks. NBE expects to offer examples of the loco, dubbed 'Euphemia' for £37,500 plus VAT.

Photos: NBE

Scotland's oldest miniature line to close in September

The Kerr's Miniature Railway looks set to close with the end of its 2020 season in September due to continually falling visitor numbers.

The impending closure was announced in an emotional video message shared on Facebook by John Kerr, proprietor of the 10¼-inch line in Arbroath that has been run by his family since 1935, and which is Scotland's oldest miniature line.

John revealed that despite the Covid-19 pandemic leaving the line without revenue for more than four months, a consistent decline in visitors in recent years had led to the decision. "In 2019 the line carried 3,500 people but that was operating 97 days, five hours a day, so it's not very many people at all," he said.

"Ten years ago the railway was carrying 13-14,000, so we've lost 10,000 people and on those numbers we just can't continue – 20 years ago it was closer to 20,000.

"Five years ago the council took the bold decision to move the play park and our numbers slackened. With the numbers

we are at now we can't keep the railway going, it's costing me money but more importantly, emotionally it's too much to keep the enthusiasm going."

John revealed that he had explored an option with the local council to relocate. "There are other options with other locations and councils who would love to have the railway, but if these changes were to take place it would be a new railway using the equipment, not the Kerr's Miniature Railway. As of the end of this year, Kerr's Miniature Railway will cease."

"It's very difficult for me to say this," John added, "my family has been running this railway for 85 years now and I wanted to see it go on for ever, at least make its centenary. But passenger numbers have been lowered to a point where we feel we are almost wasting our time.

"There are those that come and who love the railway but speaking as a volunteer myself, it's becoming more and more difficult to keep the motivation and enthusiasm to keep the railway going."

Teifi Valley revival reaches halfway

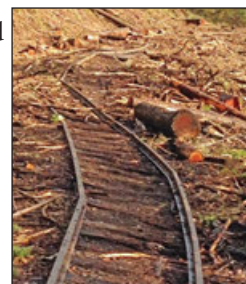
The Teifi Valley Railway celebrated a milestone in its efforts to get back up and running on 22nd July when track relaying reached Pontprenshitw, around halfway along the 1.9-mile route.

Originally opened in 1983, the 2ft gauge south Wales line had been out of use since 2014, initially when an Office of Rail and Road inspection criticised track standards, and then when a manager allowed tree felling on the furthest part of the route, virtually destroying the track (NGW100).

The current management has been working to relay the damaged route and restart services.

The line reopened to visitors in August, trains running to Pontprenshitw.

Teifi Valley has faced a long road back from 2014 devastation. Photo: Andrew Charman



■ Statfold Barn's increasing influence in the narrow gauge engineering market was evident at the Enthusiasts' Weekend on 8th-9th August. Jung 0-4-0WT 3698, built in 1925, has come to Statfold's Tamworth workshops for major repairs following 39 years service on the Gullbacka Railway



heritage line near Stockholm in Sweden, while the wheels of the Isle of Man Steam Railway's Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T no 10 'G H Wood' (4662/1905) are being fitted with new tyres. Photos: Andrew Charman

Beyers to Bowaters – was the enquiry made as early as 1945?

Andrew C writes: Last month we revealed the existence of a drawing suggesting that in the 1940s to '50s Bowaters Ltd, owners of the Kent paper mill system that partly survived into preservation as the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, had expressed serious interest in acquiring to two Beyer Peacock 0-6-0Ts 'The Earl' and 'The Countess' from the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway. We speculated that had this sale gone ahead the effects on later narrow gauge history could have been highly significant.

Now Phil Crook, a member of the W&LLR footplate and workshop team, has contacted us with some pertinent further points that may suggest Bowaters' initial interest in the locos was as early as 1945...

Very interesting story about the potential use of the W&LLR engines on the Bowaters system in *NGW150* (*writes Phil Crook*). I did not know about that.

However, on careful inspection of the general arrangement drawing pictured (no 70251) it is of the locos prior to their rebuilding with new boilers by the GWR in 1929. This is evident from the chimney, safety valves, outline of builder's plates, length of cab and such.

We have a copy of that drawing in the WLLR engineering archive, a copy of which I've enclosed (*right*). I understand that the general arrangement drawing (70251) is an original Beyer Peacock (BP) one.

I have also enclosed a copy of the original BP safety valve drawing No. 70320. This can be seen to be the same as the one on the BP GA drawing. The valves on the locos post the 1929 rebuild are of standard GWR design, just like other components on these locos now; for example the fire hole doors, driver's side injector and steam lance fitting on the smokebox.

I don't think that the GWR ever produced an equivalent detailed general arrangement drawing of the locos post rebuilding, although a small number of drawings were undertaken for different components for the original locos by the GWR post 1923; mainly associated with the new design of boilers. Most of these are in the WLLR engineering archive.

Late – a GWR note

Post 1923 the GWR have added notes to the original drawing, including 'Late Welshpool & Llanfair Engines No.1 & 2', and added their own drawing no 70251. The drawing number 61953 in the top right hand corner of the print is I believe a BP or possibly a Cambrian Railway one.

I am sure that the 1945 GWR Swindon Drawing Office stamp (on drawing 70251)

is the date that the General Arrangement print was printed from the original amended Beyer Peacock drawing and issued by the GWR to Bowaters. This was typical drawing office practice (including in the railway industry) when issuing a drawing print, particularly to outside organisations.

It is also often standard drawing office practice for the receiving organisation to record and log in any received drawing prints from outside bodies, and that is what I think Bowaters has done, also giving this received print the firm's own unique number, B7105. In other words the Bowaters design office had a 'Drawing In system for any drawings of bespoke or proprietary items that were undertaken by any non-Bowater organisation'. The GA drawing No. 70251 is the same as the one in the WLLR archive and hence this GA drawing was not prepared by Bowaters.

Sufficient information

For purposes of evaluating the suitability of the locos for use at Bowaters, I feel it is not

of great significance in this case that the GA drawing is not entirely correct, as it provides information on the overall dimensions, wheelbase and such, that would be sufficient to undertake an initial study of the suitability or otherwise of these locos for use on the Bowaters system.

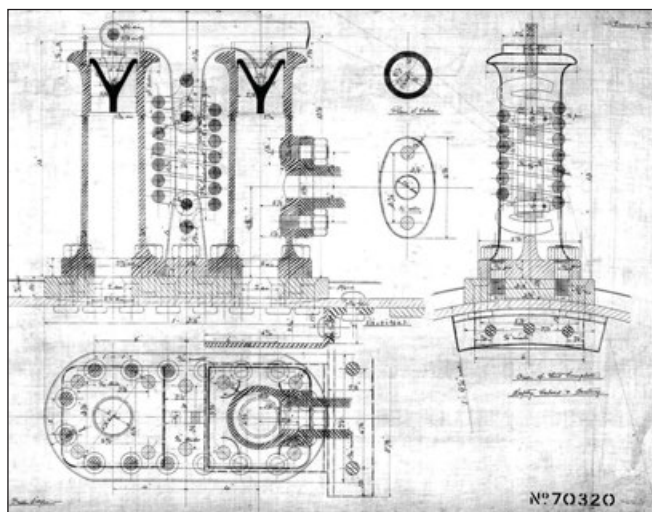
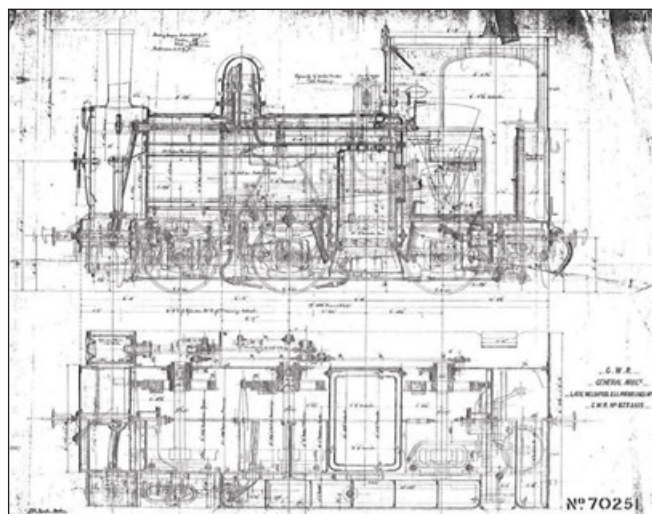
I suspect that one reason that the firm did not proceed to purchase the locos was that in 1945 both were fairly run down, and the railway was still operating. Whilst the W&LLR line may have been commercially a donkey case, the line was still carrying a not insignificant amount of traffic at that time – as in 1929 when the commercial department of the GWR first considered closing the line but the engineering department had just spent a lot of money on new boilers! Similarly after World War 2 both engines were overhauled at Swindon (circa 1948) so presumably a

decision was made to continue to operate the line for a further period of time in order to get some return for these overhaul costs!

Perhaps if Bowaters had said that it would buy the locos in overhauled condition in 1945, this might have swung the argument for closure of the W&LLR and the sale of the locos. However, if the GWR had offered to overhaul the locos, or suggested another organisation or even Bowaters undertake this scope of work, the total cost may have been considered too high by Bowaters. I suspect that we will never know.

The situation at Bowaters was alleviated somewhat when the firm was alerted to the existence of the Manning Wardle 'Chevallier' (by Ralph Russell, later to become general manager of the preserved W&LLR). Acquiring this loco in 1950, and later Monarch in 1953, would have solved the firm's motive power needs.

Sale of Beyers 'an insurmountable obstacle' – see Viewpoint, page 46





Loco camera films collision on crossing

Sugar cane producer Wilmar Sugar has shared a frightening video following the latest collision between a train and a vehicle at a level crossing on the 600mm network in Queensland, **AUSTRALIA**.

The accident, on 8th July, involved a fully-laden train of sugar cane, which collided with a harvester as the agricultural vehicle made its way across the line.

In the video the train driver can be heard frantically sounding the horn but to no avail as the harvester continues to move onto the line.

The heavy impact spun the loco round by 180 degrees and derailed the train. Both the loco and the harvester were significantly damaged, but fortunately there were no injuries.

Wilmar Sugar released the footage following a concerning spate of crossing incidents during the crushing season.

The footage can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/ABCtropic/videos/617544985799170/>



Harz tops out its new Wernigerode depot

The Harzer Schmalspurbahnen GmbH (HSB) celebrated the topping out ceremony for its new steam loco workshop in Wernigerode, **GERMANY** on 24th July.

Saxony-Anhalt's Transport Minister Thomas Webel, who gave the official go-ahead last autumn, said he was delighted with the rapid progress on the largest construction project in HSB history to date:

"We only laid the foundation stone here nine months ago," Mr Webel said. "Now the construction project continues to take shape as planned – the new workshop is a good example of what can be achieved when everyone pulls together."

Built close to Wernigerode station and the existing depot dating from 1926, the new facility will offer significantly more space particularly for major overhauls of Harz locomotives, which are scheduled every eight years.

The project, costing 14.5 million Euros, will create a 14-metre high new depot building with some 2,450 square metres of internal space.

Included in the facility will be an elevated gallery enabling visitors to watch overhauls of locomotives taking place below. The depot is expected to be completed in the Spring of 2021.



A host of guests witnessed the topping out of the new building, including Saxony transport minister Thomas Webel who signed off the project in the Autumn of last year. **Photo: HSB**



Three injured in crossing crash on Maltanka line

Just one month after *NGW* published a page in our *World News* section almost entirely comprised of level crossing collisions, the Maltanka Park Railway in Poznan, **POLAND** has joined the list.

In the latest incident, on 12th August, a train on the 600mm gauge line was hit by a car as it traversed a crossing.

The diesel locomotive Wls50 (1563/1964) was pitched onto its side by the impact, and the driver hospitalised. Luckily the carriages remained upright but two children travelling on the train suffered injuries which were treated at the scene.

Speaking to the media following the incident, inspector Andrzej Borowiak of the Greater Poland Police stated that preliminary findings of the investigation suggested the car driver had ignored stop signs when moving onto the crossing.

■ The much-challenged Zig Zag Railway in New South Wales, AUSTRALIA passed a milestone on 24th July when one of its diesel locomotives was able to traverse the full line to Clarence for the first time since July 2012.

The Zig Zag Railway has been trying to rebuild following devastating bush fires in October 2016, which caused a massive amount of damage just at a time the line was preparing to reopen after meeting new safety requirements from Australian transport authorities.

Rebuilding has been underway since, despite in December a further bush fire destroying three carriages on the 3ft 6in gauge line.

Staff at the line emphasised that there is still much to do and a date has not yet been set for a reopening for passenger services.



New loco back on the rack...



One of four oil-fired steam locomotives built in recent times for the Nilgiri Mountain Railway in INDIA has been returned to the line after a major overhaul (writes **Peter Jordan**).

The metre-gauge rack line from Mettupalaiyam to Ooty (now Udagamandalam) has been experimenting with a second through train at weekends to cater for tourism, regrettably currently suspended due to Covid-19.

From Mettupalaiyam to Coonoor the rack section of the line is operated exclusively by X-class 0-8-2 steam tank locomotives. The top section from

Coonoor to Ooty has much easier grades, and is run (operating four trains a day) using YDM4 diesels.

In recent years, the Southern Railway's Golden Rock Works at Tiruchirapalli has built four new oil-fired locomotives for the rack section of line, despite the service only requiring one steam loco.

All four are now in use on the line and one, 37399 'Fern Queen' has revisited Golden Rock for an overhaul. It was returned to Mettupalaiyam in pristine condition for further service.

Photos: Indian Railways via Peter Jordan

Covid-19 spike dashes Darj reopening

Hopes that the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in INDIA would be able to reopen following the coronavirus pandemic were dashed when a spike in Covid-19 infections saw a lockdown in the area extended to 31st July.

The lockdown was later further extended until 9th August, particularly

unfortunate for the much-challenged 2ft gauge line as it comes in the middle of the domestic tourist season, when trains are at their busiest.

After many months with no trains operating the line was understood to be planning to reopen as soon as possible after the end of the lockdown.



■ The Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways in FRANCE resumed work on the extension of its running line beyond Rotangy station towards the municipal and inter-municipal border of Regnonval on 26th July. The two-day session saw a little over 250 metres of track laid, with the next session planned in September.

Photo: Olivier Janneau/MTVS



■ Rio Grande Southern 4-6-0 no 20, dating from 1899, made its public debut following restoration at the Colorado Railway museum, USA on 1st August. **Bill Jolitz** was there for **NGW**, and we expect to carry a full report in our next issue.

A Grand Day Out..

Editor *Andrew Charman* offers some of his favourite images from a visit to the Statfold Barn Enthusiasts' Day on 8th August, and a return to some kind of normal...



Above: Covid-19 restrictions meant fewer visitors allowed into Statfold Barn for the delayed first Enthusiasts' Day of 2020, but those that were there made the most of the space available.

Left: It might have only been built in 2005, but it's still a quarry Hunslet – 'Statfold' and its sister 'Jack Lane' had a central role in the day's activities.

Below: Two original Hunslets that once worked in rival Welsh quarries, one making its Statfold debut. Former Dinorwic loco 'Cloister', leading, has recently joined the collection from the Hampshire Narrow Gauge Society, seen here double-heading with ex-Penrhyn Hunslet 'Sybil Mary'.

All photos by Andrew Charman





Above: Star of the event was of course the 'pioneer' Garratt locomotive K1, previously on the Welsh Highland Railway.



Above right: No this is not an overcrowded footplate, but two locomotive footplates!

Right: The other former Hampshire loco, Bagnall 0-4-OST 'Wendy', shared duties with new-build Hunslet 'Jack Lane'.

Below: A visit to the Roundhouse museum is never short of interest and some interesting combinations, such as former Llechwedd quarry locos 'The Eclipse' and 'The Coalition' framing Statfold's Land Rover railcar.



Strasbourg Legacy

James Waite outlines the links between a former tramway system in Baden and the preserved Selfkantbahn. This attractive line in the most westerly part of Germany was visited in September 2019.



The origins of the metre gauge Mittelbadischen Eisenbahnen, on the right bank of the River Rhine, lie in Strasbourg's street tramway system. Today Strasbourg is the capital of Alsace and one of France's major cities, as well as the principal home of the European Parliament, but between 1871 and 1918 it was part of Germany, as was nearly all of Alsace.

The city's tramway company built an extensive standard gauge system through its streets from 1877. The trams were horse-drawn, but extensions out into the countryside followed and they were worked by

steam locos. By the 1890s the Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft had acquired a controlling interest. It set about converting the system to metre gauge and electrifying the sections within the city.

In 1892 the Strasbourg tramway company built a metre gauge line from Kehl, in Baden on the right bank of the river opposite Strasbourg, to Bühl, 38km away to the north east. The only link to the main Strasbourg system was by ferry until a bridge over the Rhine was completed. A standard gauge steam tram line was laid over it, but in 1898 this line was

Above: MEG 0-4-0T no 101 (Krauss Maffei 17627/1940) rests under the tree canopy at Birgden station, midway along the Selfkantbahn. The main photo on this spread shows the loco and its mixed train earlier in the journey leaving Schierwaldenrath.

Photos by James Waite, Sept 2019

converted to metre gauge and the Bühl line became physically connected to the rest of the system.

The Strasbourg company built a second line on the right bank which headed south from Kehl to Ottenheim. Here it joined another rural tramway system which ran from the bank of the Rhine, through the sizable town of Lahr and on to Seelbach, in the foothills of the Black Forest to the east. It had opened for business in 1894.

For the most part all these lines in Baden ran on their own rights of way through the countryside but in the towns they mostly ran through the streets. The Strasbourg company worked its right-bank system with a series of 11 0-4-0Ts, all built between 1891 and 1905 at what had been in French



days the SACM factory at Graffenstaden, in the outskirts of Strasbourg, but which was known after 1871 by the German title of Elsässische Maschinenbau-Gesellschaft Grafenstaden.

These locos were distinctive machines and betrayed their tramway origins with their inside cylinders. They also had unusual forward-mounted side tanks, though they were never fitted with the bodywork often found on tramway locos.

The railway through Lahr never came under the control of the Strasbourg company. It started out with four small 0-4-0Ts, and replaced two of them with somewhat larger ones in 1900 and 1901.

Extensions were built, particularly to the north of Kehl, and by 1918 the network was 114km long. Major changes took place after the First World War when Strasbourg reverted to French control. Its tramway authority refused to operate services to the east of the Rhine and both the former Strasbourg and the Lahr lines became the property of the Baden state authority.

For a brief period in the early 1920s these lines were worked by the newly-formed Deutsche Reichsbahn but in 1923 they were reorganised as the Mittelbadischen Eisenbahnen Gesellschaft or MEG for short. At first they were run from the old Lahr company offices until new offices were built in Kehl, along with new repair shops as access to facilities in Strasbourg was no longer possible.

Most of the network survived until after the Second World War, though operation became very difficult as much of Kehl was destroyed towards the end of the war. The railway was severed there and the operating headquarters moved back to Lahr, while new repair shops



were later built at Schwarzach, a junction on the Bühl line. Closures began in earnest in 1950 – the last passenger services ended in 1970 and the last section, between Schwarzach and Scherzheim, closed completely ten years later.

At first services were worked by the 11 former Strasbourg 0-4-0Ts and the four from Lahr but the first diesel loco appeared as early as 1925. It was withdrawn in 1950 but two more were acquired, one in 1957 and one in 1967. Between 1934 and 1941 11 diesel railcars arrived on the lines and soon took over most of the passenger services.

Two much more modern 0-4-0Ts were supplied new from Krauss Maffei in 1948. They weren't an unqualified success, mainly because of problems with their steel fireboxes. One was withdrawn in 1956 and the other in 1959.

Another loco, generally similar though fitted with a copper firebox, was built in 1949 for the Oberrheinische Eisenbahn, which operated a metre gauge system around Mannheim and Heidelberg. MEG bought it in 1958 and it



Top: The Krauss 0-4-0T is here standing at Gelindchen halt...

Above: ...and shunting at Schierwaldenrath after completing the journey.

proved much more satisfactory. It kept its Oberrheinische number 101 and ran until 1969. All three of these locos were built as 900mm gauge contractors' machines, and must have been regauged almost immediately.

Selfkantbahn revival

It's now 40 years since the last section of the MEG closed. Although none of the railway was preserved several pieces of rolling stock, including two locos, have survived and now operate on the Selfkantbahn, up near the Dutch border north of Aachen. This volunteer-run heritage railway is the »





short remaining section of the old Geilenkirchen Kreisbahnen, which in its prime operated two railways out of Geilenkirchen – one to Alsdorf, close to Aachen, and one to Tüddern in the Selfkant, a somewhat impoverished district to its northwest. Altogether it was just under 38km long and opened in 1900.

Border issues

The line's prosperity in later years wasn't helped by the fact that

Tüddern found itself in the Netherlands following a border adjustment in 1949 and the farther end of the line was summarily closed by order of the new Dutch authorities. Tüddern was returned to Germany in 1963 but by then passenger services had come to an end and freight traffic was being gradually withdrawn. Its last section closed to regular traffic in 1971.

The Selfkantbahn's heritage operation began in a small way in



Left: MEG 0-4-0T no 46 (SACM 4805/1897), last survivor of the 11 ex-Strasbourg locos built when the city was part of Germany, in Schierwaldenrath shed awaiting restoration. Inside cylinders and curious side tanks display the loco's tramway origins.

Above: Interior of one of the former MEG carriages.

Centre left: The small 4w diesel (Humboldt-Deutz (1844/1937) was built as no Ko1 for the line on the North Sea island of Langeoog. It was acquired by the Selfkantbahn in 1989.

This page: No 101 again, between Gelindchen and the terminus at Gillrath.

1969 and by 1973 had become firmly established on the section running northwest from Gillrath to Schierwaldenrath which soon became the operational centre. MEG stock now preserved there includes no 46, the last survivor of the 11 ex-Strasbourg 0-4-0Ts, the much later 0-4-0T no 101, two diesel railcars and four carriages.

None of the Geilenkirchen line's steam locos survived, though two diesel locos were exported to the West African country of Togo after the closure, and one has now returned and is being restored. The Selfkantbahn also has interesting locos and carriages from other German railways but it's fair to say that the MEG stock forms the main part of its collection.

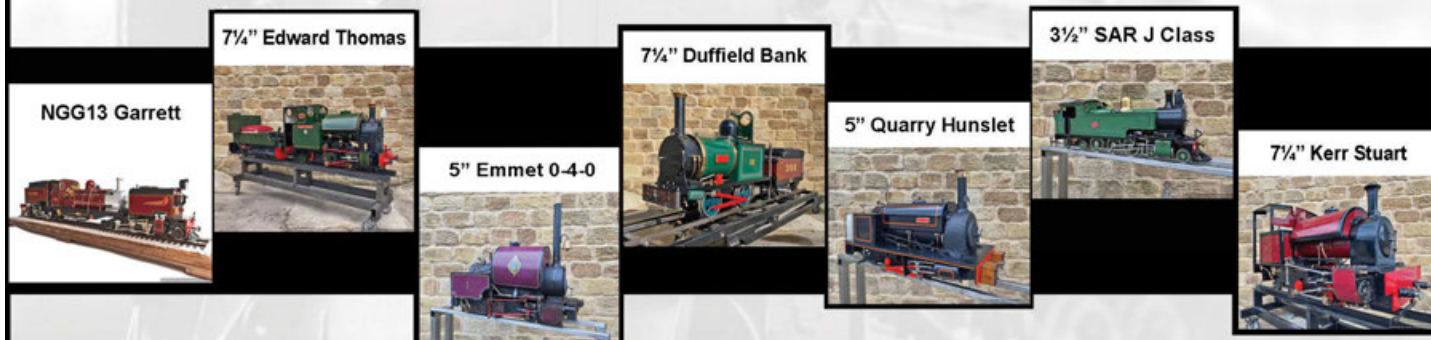
No 46 awaits restoration but when I visited in September 2019 no 101 was in regular use. This is a very pretty railway, easy to reach from the UK, and is run by friendly and hospitable volunteers. Aachen has a wealth of historic architecture, some of it dating from the days of Charlemagne who made it the capital of his empire. The district is very well worth visiting and hopefully this will be possible again before too long once the Covid-19 pandemic is behind us. **NGW**



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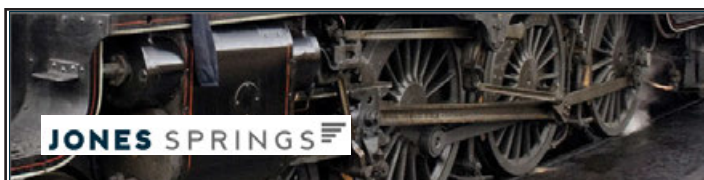
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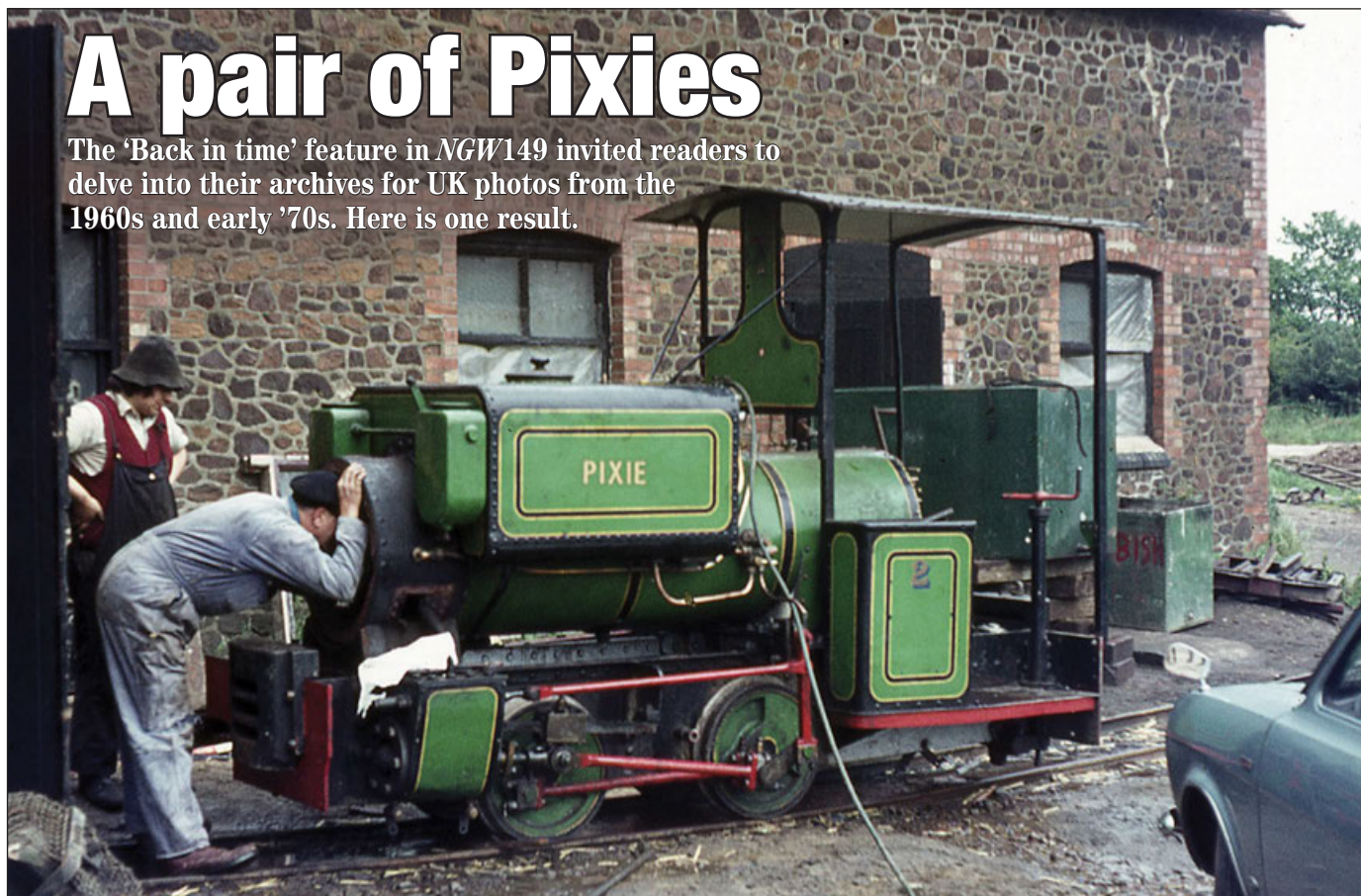
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A pair of Pixies

The 'Back in time' feature in *NGW* 149 invited readers to delve into their archives for UK photos from the 1960s and early '70s. Here is one result.



Above: Moment of truth as, stripped of her chimney, the Leighton Buzzard's Wren class 'Pixie' has attention paid to her boiler on 10th June 1972.

Left: 'Pixie' stands in front of the repurposed LBR workshops at Stonehenge on the same day.

Facing page, above: 'Pixie' and its train trundle across a small bridge on the LBR 26th May 1973. It is very doubtful if such a scene is remotely possible today.

Facing page, right: The Leighton Buzzard line was remarkably rural at the Page's Park end in the early 1970s.

Photos by Keith Chester

The recent suggestion in *NGW* for readers to spend some lockdown time rediscovering interesting photos in their archives resulted in Keith Chester submitting some fascinating colour images of visits to the Leighton Buzzard and Cadeby railways in 1972 and 1973 (*writes David Joy*).

I felt these pictures were highly evocative of this period and deserved more than just captioned photos in the magazine. A clear theme was that they depicted two very different 2ft gauge locomotives both named 'Pixie'. The choice of name is understandable as it denotes an impish or mischievous creature in English folklore and is thus well suited for a steam locomotive when it severely tries the patience.

Keith and I agreed that he would recall personal memories of his visits to these lines if I would summarise the history of the two locomotives.

Pixie at Leighton Buzzard is a diminutive Kerr Stuart 'Wren'-class 0-4-0T (4260 of 1922). It formed part of the largest single order ever placed for this class – and there is a certain irony that the 22 locomotives were used to help build a new road linking London with Southend. Three of the four Wrens preserved in Britain today are from this batch.

When this contract was completed in 1929, Pixie was sold to Devon County Council for subsequent service in two roadstone quarries.



The loco was purchased by the Industrial Locomotive Society in 1957 and thus will soon have spent twice as long in preservation as in working service. In 1969 it became the second steam locomotive on the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway.

The second Pixie became legendary through its owner, the Reverend E R 'Teddy' Boston. A committed narrow gauge enthusiast, he heard that a Bagnall 0-4-0ST (2090 of 1919) was languishing in a shed at Cranford Ironstone Quarry in Northamptonshire. In what became almost a fairy-tale saga the quarry management agreed in 1962 to sell it to him for £75 and the next stage was

***"It was
when seeing
this
0-4-0ST,
sans its
chimney and
standing
forlornly
in the
rain, that
the penny
dropped..."***

laying a railway in the rectory garden at Cadeby in Leicestershire.

Regular open days raised money for church funds and when Teddy Boston died in 1986 his widow Audrey purchased the rectory to keep both the railway and Pixie operating through to 2005. The line was then dismantled and Pixie found new owners, most recently being acquired by the private Richmond Light Railway in Kent.

Converted to the cause

I met regular *NGW* contributor Donald Brooks during my first year at university (*writes Keith Chester*) and he was always enthusing about

the Ravenglass & Eskdale line, strange machines called Listers and narrow gauge railways in general. Brought up on a diet of Bulleid Pacifics, which I then thought of as big engines, I didn't quite see the appeal of small locomotives and especially those with internal combustion motors. That was until one rainy Saturday towards the end of summer term when we went to see a steam special hauled by 'Clun Castle' on the main line and ended up at Leighton Buzzard.

A small diesel or petrol loco was pottering up and down with some home-made carriages, and merited little more than a cursory glance. »



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There was also a contraption of ancient appearance, which turned out to be 'Chaloner', a De Winton vertical-boiler locomotive. I had never seen anything like that before and my curiosity was beginning to get the better of me.

Moving on to the workshops at Stonehenge, which if I recall correctly were converted farm buildings, we found Pixie with two gentlemen peering into her private parts. It

would be too much to speak of a Damascene conversion but it was when seeing this 0-4-0ST, sans chimney and standing forlornly in the rain, that the penny dropped and I finally began to understand about narrow gauge railways.

For the next three decades as I travelled the world in search of steam I always took care to include narrow gauge lines in my itinerary, especially if they had tiny four-coupled tank

Above: Cadeby's 'Pixie', with student drivers, in action in the low afternoon sun on 22nd February 1973.

locos on their rosters. To this day the charms of miniature railways elude me, not to speak of the products of Lister or Motor Rail, but the passion for narrow gauge steam locomotives has only grown.

We went back to Leighton Buzzard a year later and this time Pixie was in steam. We walked the line to Page's Park, which veered between the urban and very rural, took photographs and had a ride behind the small Kerr Stuart.

Looking at these photos nearly half a century on two things strike me. The first is how easy and laid back everything was. Many things have improved our lives since the early 1970s but the loss of the freedom to simply wander around a workshop or along the track is not among them. And what child today has the thrill and wonderful experience of riding on the footplate of a steam locomotive in motion?

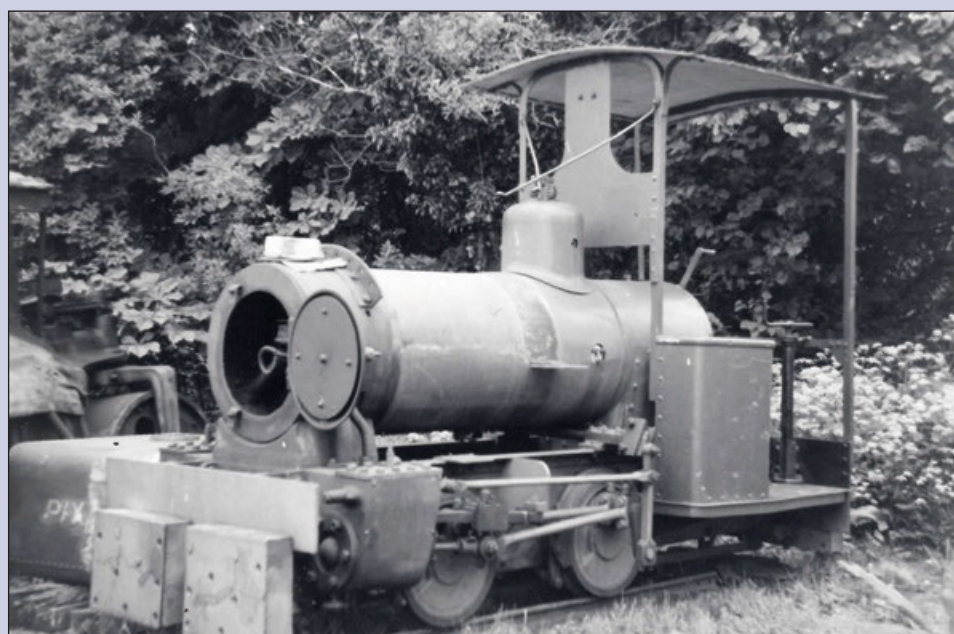
Secondly, whilst Pixie and her carriages were clean and well tended, there was a slight but welcome air of scruffiness about them and the tracks they graced. The supershine and high gloss finish commonly applied to the stock of most preserved railways today often bears little relationship to the working narrow gauge steam locomotives I saw around the world. To see the difference, if you still have *NGW* 149 to hand, just compare the pictures of the engines at Penrhyn and Padarn in 1961 with recent (pre-Covid-19) photos in that issue.

Memorable afternoon

In February 1973 I organised a visit for the university railway society to a number of locations in the East Midlands, ending up in the early afternoon at Cadeby Rectory to see another Pixie, the one owned by the Rev Teddy Boston. The sun was shining and she was in steam awaiting our pleasure.

What pleasures they were as we all had turns driving the small Bagnall to and fro over the Cadeby Light Railway, which was laid in a U-shape around the rectory garden. As passengers, there was a party of school children, which added to the boisterousness of the day.

Despite the photo opportunities being somewhat limited on the 100 or so yards of track, our group took many photos. The visit was rounded out with afternoon tea, a film show featuring the Isle of Man Railway in the early 1960s and finally a session operating the extensive model railway that occupied almost the whole of a large garden shed. Teddy Boston was a wonderful host, a man who had a great passion for life and for narrow gauge railways. **NGW**



Pixie pictured at a pub...

Michael Bishop also responded to the plea for 'vintage' narrow gauge photos and sent us this picture of Leighton Buzzard's Pixie prior to its return to service in 1969. It was taken in May 1965 when the loco was stored on a piece of ground behind the Leather Bottle public house at East Hyde, Hertfordshire. Renovation by Peter Bland was in progress following its acquisition eight years earlier by the Industrial Locomotive Society.

Further photos taken by Michael in the 1960s will feature in a future issue of *NGW*.

Reclaiming an almost-lost Summer

August saw a host of railways and venues getting back to some form of operating schedule and *NGW's* photographers gratefully heading back out to capture the action on offer...

Right: One of the first photographers back out and about was *Kenny Felstead*. On 26th July he was standing alongside a benign Banwy river to capture U-class ZB2 'Zillertal' on a Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway test train prior to the line reopening to the public on 1st August...

Below: ...whilst six days later Kenny climbed high above the Cob embankment to picture the Ffestiniog Railway's former Penrhyn Hunslet 2-4-0ST 'Linda' on a reopening-day service to Tan-y-Blwch.

Following pages: Statfold Barn's first post lockdown enthusiasts' day presented this scene of variety, newly returned to service Garratt K1 running alongside Hunslet 0-4-2T 'Howard' and the 3ft 6in gauge Burton & Ashby tram car.

Photo: Andrew Charman





**NARROW
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Above: The 2ft gauge Garden Railway at Statfold Barn is a haven compared to the busy main lines. *James Kindred* caught the Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-OST 'Roger' giving rides at the 8th-9th August Enthusiasts' Weekend. We suspect many a *NGW* reader would be more than happy to have this in their garden!

Below: Star of the Statfold Barn Enthusiasts' Wweekend was of course the Tasmanian Garratt K1, the Beyer-Peacock built locomotive here producing something of a smokescreen as it sets off on another trip around the line. *Photo: Joey Evans*



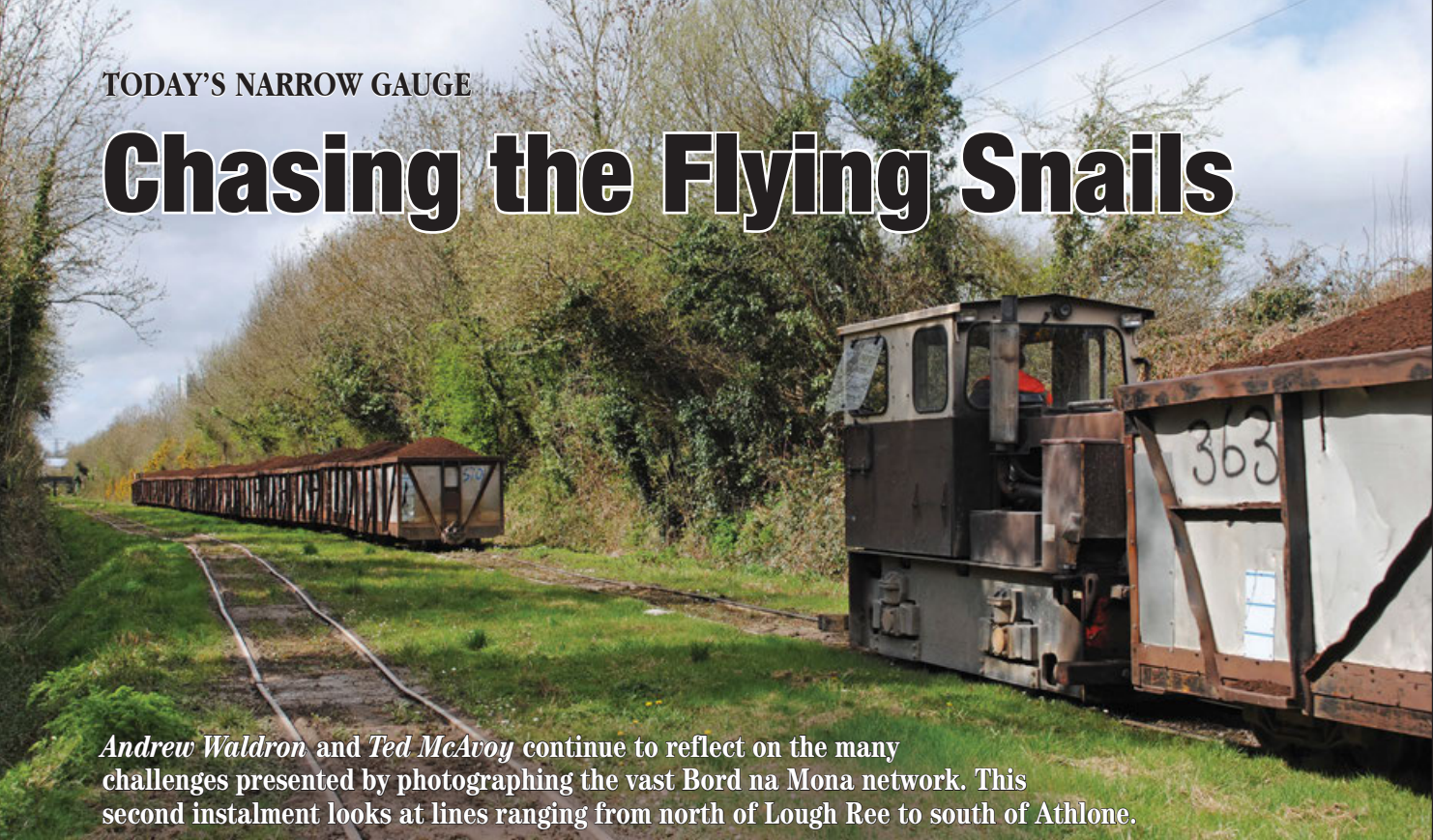


Above: *Matt Ditch* headed for some of his favourite locations in Cumbria to take pictures at the newly reopened Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway on 6th August. Davey Paxman 2-8-2 'River Esk' was caught at Beckfoot Forge with the first return train of the day from Dalegarth.

Right: Definitely the centre of attention on the Ffestiniog Railway at present is the newly restored, well effectively rebuilt, 'large England' 0-4-OST 'Welsh Pony', especially as the loco has been pressed straight into service on services to Tan-y-Bwlch. *Michael Chapman* caught the loco in reflective mood at the end of another working day on reopening day, 20th July.



Chasing the Flying Snails



Andrew Waldron and Ted McAvoy continue to reflect on the many challenges presented by photographing the vast Bord na Mona network. This second instalment looks at lines ranging from north of Lough Ree to south of Athlone.

On the Mountdillon system one of the most interesting haulage runs is from Cloneeny Bog to Lough Ree power station ('L' on the map in *NGW* 150). The line passes over four level crossings, under a minor road bridge and over the splendid new Royal Canal lifting bridge, only recently installed due to the northern section of the canal having been restored for use once again.

The canal lifting bridge, complete with Victorian-style lamp posts, is easily reached just to the north of Begnagh on the minor road between Killashee and Cloondara. There are two level crossings and the bridge, all within half a mile of each other. If a train is heading for the power station, one can see it over the lifting bridge and then driving like Stirling Moss,

one should be able to reach the next level crossing on the minor road to Kilnacarrow Island.

At the other end of the system, the line from Dereaghan ash cells to the power station offers several excellent vantage points. Shortly after leaving the cells the line passes over the R 392 via what is possibly the busiest industrial railway level crossing on any main road in the British Isles.

Roscommon Bogs in the north are connected via the longest single-track main line on that system. It heads for the River Shannon, crossed by another splendid lifting bridge, connected at each end by a long steel viaduct. Another line passes close to the village of Clontusket – this line originally commenced from Cloondara but has since been cut

Above: The yard for Lough Ree – one of two peat-fuelled power stations due to close at the end of 2020. Nearest of the two loaded rakes is headed by BnM-built 4wDH no LM 438. April 2015. Photo: Paul Carpenter

Photos in this feature by Ted McAvoy unless stated

back to begin at a tiny little place called Cappagh. There are several good vantage points and it then intersects with the main line south of Mountdillon level crossing.

Trains using this far outpost from Cappagh are very seldom seen. In fact the only one spotted in more recent times was a ballast train at the underbridge on the R 371 at Erenagh. The line curves round in a deep cutting at this point to dive down under the bridge, passing a ballast loading point followed by a very stiff climb out onto the bogs – great sound effects if nothing else!

The line heading south from the far north Roscommon Bogs, beginning near Derrymoylin, is also only occasionally used. The first vantage point is near to Cuilbeg tea station, where it comes in under a concrete overbridge, and then a further three miles takes it under a minor road close to the village of Cloonmore. After about two miles it passes over the main N5 via another underbridge before crossing a long 120-yard concrete viaduct over the Feorish River and marshes – not an easy place to see the trains, given the wet terrain.

There is then a long run of 2½ miles to Mountdillon level crossing controlled by gates. Beyond is a run through No Man's Land for a little over three miles to cross the Shannon lifting bridge, but on the way it is joined by the line coming from Cappagh and a now disused branch.

The branch once served the original 1947 works, formally used for wagon repairs and now to become the new BnM Museum of Design





and Technology, in which locos and railway design developments will feature (or will if we have anything to do with it!). South of the lifting bridge the line skirts a minor road for over half a mile to draw into Lough Ree power station yard.

In 2014 I watched a stone train leave the Cuilbeg overbridge and hoped to see it again at the Moundillon crossing, but my hopes were shattered after we got stuck behind a combine harvester on some narrow road. When we reached the crossing we had missed it by just a few minutes, and all I got was a long parting shot as it headed for the Shannon river. The luck of the fairies was not with me that day!

South of the Shannon

Two lines head for the bogs from West Offaly power station yard ('S' on the map). One goes north, via Blackwater Works (map – 'Bl'), while the south line crosses the giant Shannon viaduct, the largest single-span concrete railway bridge in the Republic of Ireland. It then heads for the likes of Clonfert, Kilmacshane, the Kylemore branch and the remote bogs of Cornafulla and Drumlosh in the area known as The Vale.

The Cornafulla line offers some splendid opportunities for chasing trains with photography in dramatic locations, but workings on the long branch are few. Perhaps only two rakes per shift and even that is no guarantee that trains will run on more than one day in any one week.

The idea has always been to find out from the shift supervisor where the trains will load. If that is at

Below left: Twice-rebuilt LM 252, a former Wagonmaster loco, is bound for Lough Ree power station as it comes off the Begnagh branch. The woods at Shannon level crossing show that not all BnM systems are peat wasteland. February 2019. Photo: Paul Carpenter

Above: The recently installed Royal Canal lifting bridge with its out-of-character Victorian-style lamp posts. Hunslet 4wDH LM 376 is heading for the Begnagh branch and another load to feed Lough Ree power station. July 2012.

Right: Shift change during the night hours at West Offaly power station. Two drivers exchange a bit of banter before LM 406 departs for Clonfert, south of the Shannon. January 2019.

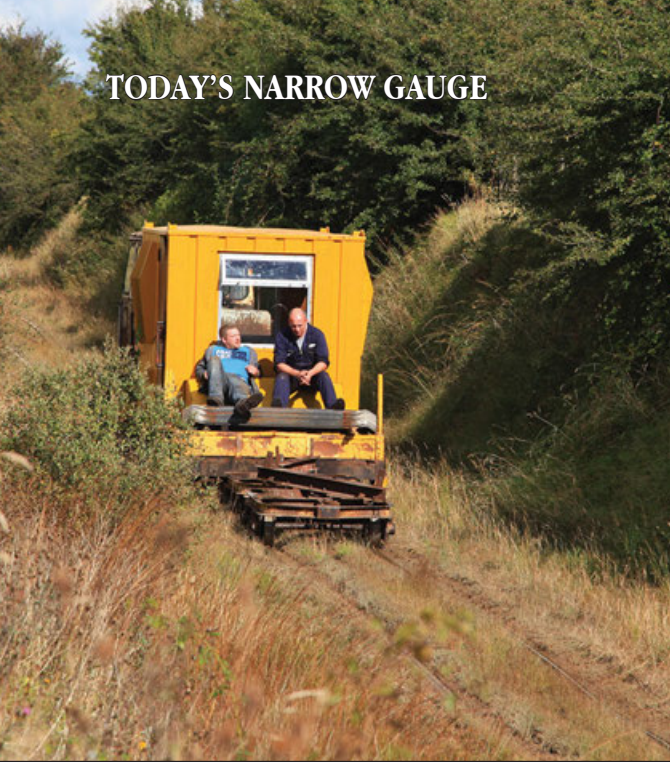
Cornafulla, then one has the chance of a good chase. It can begin at Cornafulla level crossing, which is normally home to a bog rail taxi. Once the trains have cleared the crossing, then it is boot to the floor along a very rough bog road to reach Coolumber level crossing. If all has gone to plan, having seen the trains across, there is normally just enough time to make the next vantage point at Cloonburren level crossing, where a tiny siding serves the old depot, normally full of interesting items of stock – a rail tractor, fuel train and a number of rail service vehicles. However, these should be left for another day if it is the peat rakes you want to catch.

The next location requires some hard driving to get ahead of the trains

to make the impressive Cornaveagh cutting and overbridge. From there another mad dash will take you to the R 357 overbridge, then after having seen the rakes pass through, it is an easy drive back to the power station sidings to see the trains haul up from the south over the giant viaduct to enter West Offaly yard. If you have done all that of an evening, then you deserve a couple of pints of the 'black stuff' as your just reward!

The southern branch lines offer a myriad of interesting locations and engineering features. The River Suck iron viaduct is one good location but there are also Clonfert Bridge and Kylemore Lock. Here the former and long-closed Ballinasloe canal bed has been taken over by BnM and a single-track railway laid along it. The line »





passes through the old lock chamber, which still has its rotting gates. Kylemore Lock offers the visitor a little tea station with several sidings where a couple of service wagons and locomotives are kept.

To see a pair of peat rakes cross the viaduct is quite spectacular. A tiny road leads from the R 357, just west of Shannonbridge village, and heads round the quintessentially-named Sugarloaf Hill to reach the BnM rail line, from where it is but a ten-minute walk to the viaduct. Trains using the Cornaveagh and Cornafulla lines must cross the viaduct, as must those on the scenic Culliaghmore branch. This includes three little level crossings, all on minor roads.

Reaching Clonfert or Kylemore from West Offaly power station involves a lengthy drive, as the River Shannon prevents direct access to the far southern bogs. No roads cross it, more is the pity, so if one intends to

Above: The Irish narrow gauge at its most evocative. A van and a pair of track bogies are hauled up barely visible track from Galros on the Boora system. The sun was blazing down and the crew decided to ride on the van's toolbox rather than inside. September 2012.

Below: A rare double-header with LM 439 and 440 was required to haul 25 wagons at Killaranny Bog on the Boora system. Bog dog Pete supervises the operation. January 2019.

travel south to see trains on either the Kilmacshane branch or that via Kylemore to the Lismanny Bogs, then you must be prepared to divert via the bridges at Banagher or Ballinasloe – a long detour.

Loaded trains from the north cross the Suck viaduct, meet up with those from Kylemore on Garryduff Bog and then turn north to cross the Shannon. Good access points are the southern end of the Suck bridge, reached from Kylemore bridge, and the southern end of Shannon viaduct via a track from Clonfert. Trains coming west from Kilmacshane Bog pass through Clonfert and can also be seen from the little Garryduff level crossing, but these are the only vehicle locations on this branch.

Boora system

The Bellair system, once a separate and isolated collection of bogs with its own tippler, was eventually joined to the Boora system by a long connecting link line, with a journey of some 19½ miles from Bellair Works to West Offaly power station. The biggest problem is that, although it runs through some superb scenery, there are very few vantage points to see the trains.

A cutting through solid rock not far from the Cloondarragh Hills, reached by a farm track, is one very good place. There is also a level crossing on the minor road south of the unusually named Cappenclossett Cross Roads – that's a mouthful after a few pints I can tell you! The line passes under the main Portarlinton to Athlone Irish Rail line through a tunnel, but to reach that location from the nearest and very minor dirt track requires a walk of over two miles each way.

The easiest and probably the most photographed location on the line is

the overbridge at Cooldoragh. A BnM dirt road connects here to serve a little and seldom-frequented tea station at a place known to BnM staff as Corracullin. Fuel trains occasionally stable here and there is a quarry from which ballast is loaded for use on the Bellair system and all lines in the vicinity of Lemanaghan Bogs.

The approach to the tea station takes the visitor close to a deep cutting, amid spectacular scenery. In fact it is hard to believe that this is really an industrial railway, because it is akin to the old Irish narrow gauge, such as the Cavan & Leitrim or the West Clare. Another odd feature is the little wooden footbridge that spans the track and carries the only known public footpath to cross any BnM line in this way.

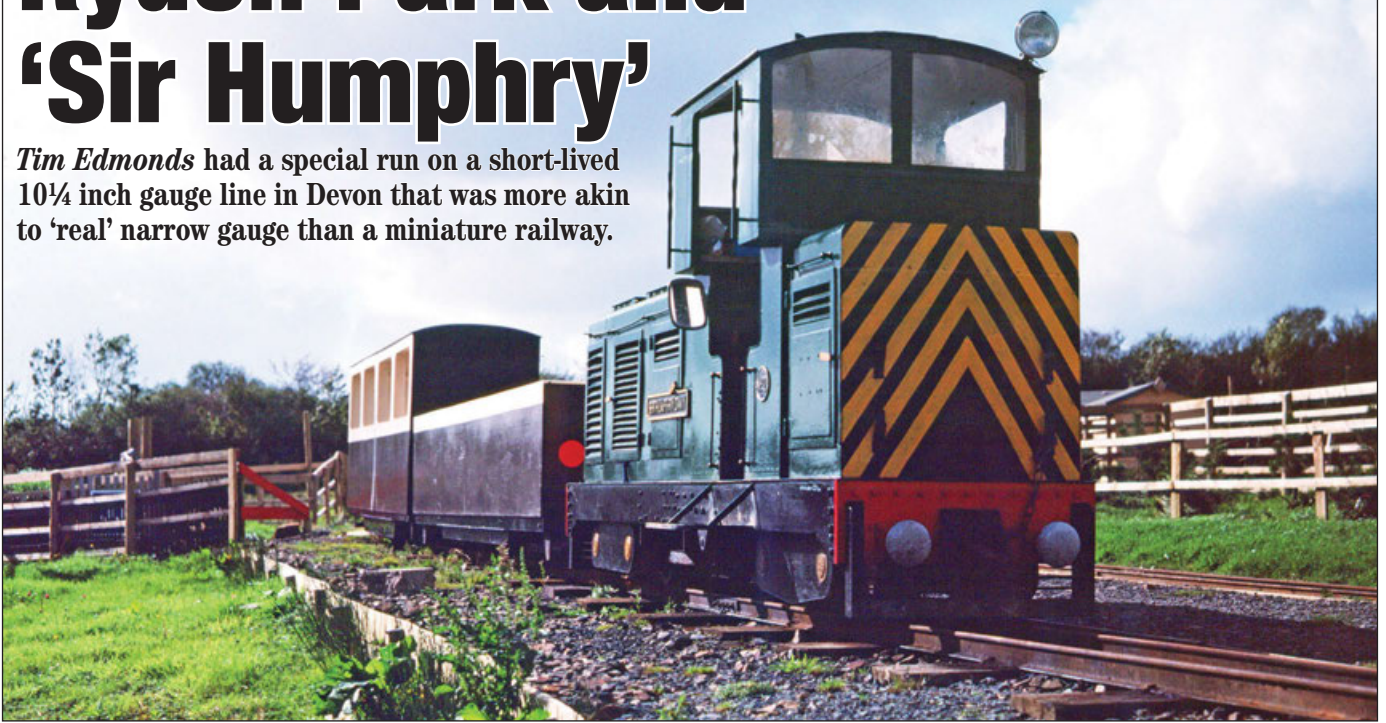
Trains coming from Lemanaghan or Bellair to West Offaly power station (and before that the old Shannonbridge power station) used to swap locomotives at a lovely little place called the Endrim sidings. Here were two twin loops so that the empty rakes going to the bog would meet the loaded rakes in the other direction and the drivers changed locomotives. There was a little tea hut with a toilet and another siding on which lived an old fuel tanker, just in case fuel was required. Boora crews now work the line throughout, but because of the distance of 21 miles one way, they only do a single run. To see a train on that or the equally demanding Bellair line, one must choose carefully where to catch it. If you mess it up there is no second bite of the cherry. **NGW**

■ The final part of this feature will cover locomotives, heavy haulage and future prospects.



Rydon Park and 'Sir Humphry'

Tim Edmonds had a special run on a short-lived 10¼ inch gauge line in Devon that was more akin to 'real' narrow gauge than a miniature railway.



A photograph in the September 1987 *Railway Magazine* made me aware of a new railway that had just opened at Holsworthy, in North Devon. The picture showed a diesel locomotive and single carriage traversing a low embankment of coarse stone and gravel on what was clearly a new formation.

The following year a family visit to the area provided me with an opportunity to investigate the railway, so on the afternoon of 28th September, 1988 we pulled into

Above: 'Sir Humphry Davy' and the two carriages wait for business at the terminal station.

Below: Drawn from the 1986 planning application, this map shows the railway and the extension that was never built.

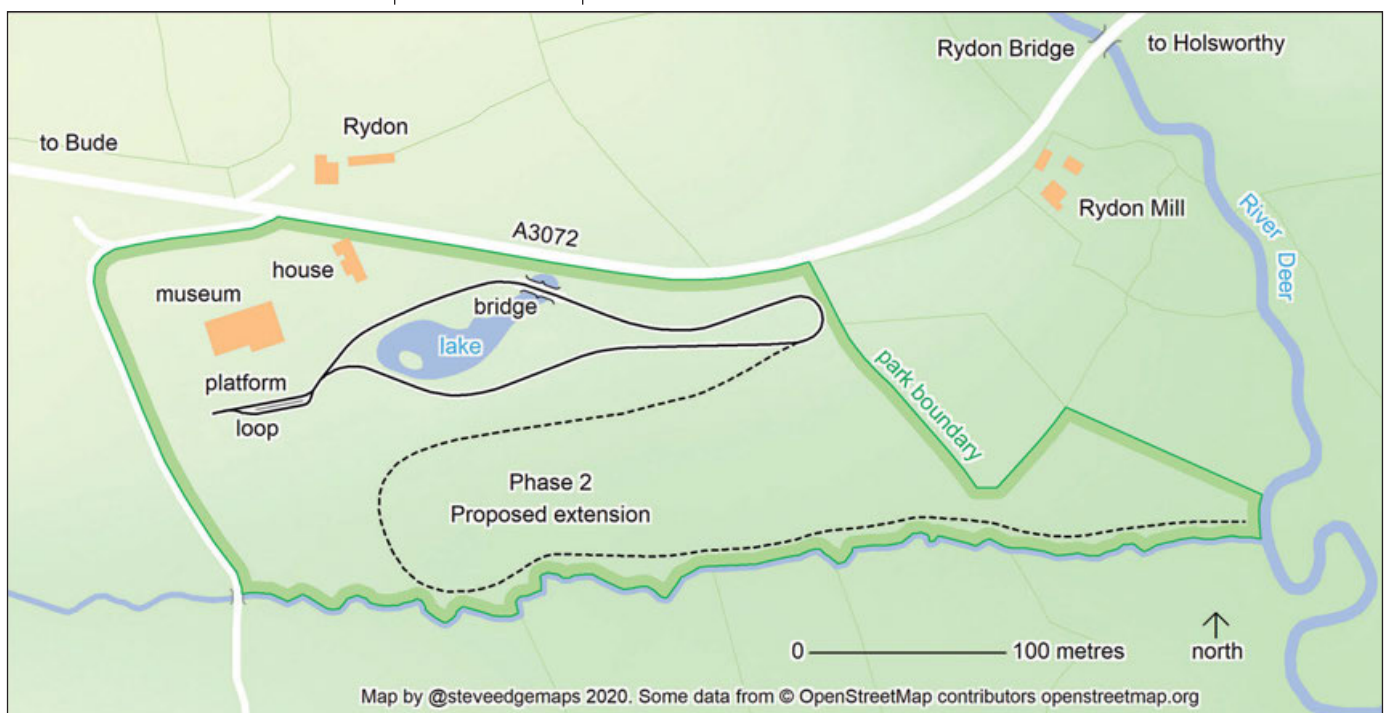
Rydon Park, south of the A3072 Bude road.

An informative leaflet revealed that this was a new railway and country park, designed by the owner, Bob Dennis, and developed in the spring of 1987. There had been a limited opening in the summer of that year, so 1988 was the first full season of operation and had included hosting the Holsworthy Vintage Vehicle and Engine Rally.

The park had been landscaped from fields behind the owner's house

and the newly-built features included a museum with a café, picnic areas and a small lake.

The main attraction was the railway, less than half a mile in length, which had been built by a team of five men using equipment from the closed Penwith Pleasure Park, near Penzance. Steel 14lb/yard track was spiked to ex-BR wooden sleepers cut into thirds and laid on a trackbed of more than 2,000 tons of quarry stone and waste. The layout was a balloon loop, terminating at the »





west end of the site with a passing loop and a short shunting neck. Inside the passing loop was a low gravel island platform, but there were no station buildings. Part of the line at the end of the balloon was embanked, which is doubtless where much of the stone was used, and on the north side it crossed the narrow end of the lake on a bridge.

The place was quiet, hardly surprising since it was mid-week towards the end of the season, and we found the train empty and stabled in the station. It comprised one closed and one open carriage in chocolate and cream livery, headed by a large 4w-4wPM loco with a tall off-centre cab and carrying the name 'Sir Humphry Davy' and the number 2.

The flyer explained that the loco had been built by Trevor Guest of Stourbridge and was 'one of the most powerful petrol-engined locomotives in Britain'. It weighed 2¼ tons and was fitted with a 1948 six-cylinder Daimler engine, a pre-selector five-speed gearbox with a fluid flywheel, and a final reversing box driving all eight wheels through flexible shafts and enclosed chain drive. It was painted green, with red buffer beams, a yellow and black chevron warning panel at the short end and plain yellow at the long end.

The train worked on demand and we were the only passengers, so a trip round the line was run especially for us. Tickets cost 80p each for me and my wife, with our toddler son

Above: 'Sir Humphry Davy' runs round its train after another trip around the balloon loop.

Below: View from the train of the balloon loop at the eastern end of the line. The town of Holsworthy is visible in the distance.

Photos by Tim Edmonds, September 1988 unless stated

travelling free. The train proceeded in an anti-clockwise direction round the balloon loop. After returning to the station the loco ran round the carriages and that was that. There were no more potential passengers, which meant that I was unable to get any lineside photographs of the train in action.

Ambitious plans

Rydon Park was clearly an ambitious scheme into which much money had been invested, but it was still rather bleak and bare because the planting that had taken place had not had time to mature. The landscaped area was planned to be extended south with wildlife ponds and nature walks, and a second phase of the railway was to include a branch line into this area. The leaflet stated that the park was eventually to be put into a trust, with any profits used to support cancer charities.

Alas, this was not to be. Following the death of Bob Dennis's wife, the railway and park was closed at the end of the 1989 season and never reopened. Sir Humphry Davy and the carriages were disposed of, as were the points, but the rest of the track was left in situ.

The site was sold. The new owner had plans to revamp the project and it was hoped that an operator would be prepared to take the railway under a leasing arrangement but, although there was some interest, there were no takers. Today there is a pub called the Rydon Inn where the house was situated and much of the area at the west end of the site has been redeveloped for housing. Remnants of the park survive, including at least part of the lake, but there appears



to be nothing left of the railway.

One consequence of the short life of Rydon Park is that it did not exist long enough to be included on Ordnance Survey maps. The map accompanying this article is a 'best guess' representation, based on details submitted with the planning application to Torridge District Council in 1986.

Sir Humphry Davy

The story of the locomotive is a complex one, involving several rebuilds and at least five different engines. Based in Worcestershire, Trevor Guest had started building locomotives in the 1930s with two 10¼in gauge miniature steam locos. He built or part-built at least 20 steam and internal combustion locos, mainly of 10¼ and 15in gauges, through to the 1960s – perhaps two of the best-known steam locos are the 2-4-2s 'Sian' and 'Katie'. The latter was built for the 15-inch gauge Dudley Zoo Railway in 1954 and ended up on the Fairbourne Railway in 1965, joining her sister which had been delivered new to the Welsh line a year earlier. Today the two are reunited on the Kirklees Light Railway in Yorkshire.

Guest had other interests, including operating the Dudley Zoo line for many years, which meant that locos could take several years to complete. Sir Humphry Davy may well have been one of these since its build date has been given by different sources as both 1957 and 1960. Perhaps these were the dates that construction started and finished.

The loco was delivered in 1960 to the Shillingstone Light Railway, Sir Thomas Salt's private estate railway in Dorset, the main function of which was to serve his pig farm! With a central cab and a Petter PC3 diesel engine it became the SLR's no 2 'Cyclops'.

The engine proved rough on the track and it was soon replaced with a Ford unit, presumably petrol. This was underpowered and so in 1962 the loco was rebuilt with a 35hp Daimler Scout engine from an armoured car. As part of the rebuild the cab was moved to an off-centre position and the loco changed identity, becoming no 3 'Ulysses'.

Sir Thomas died in 1965 at the age of 59, which effectively ended use of the railway. The track and stock were auctioned in 1975 and much of it, including no 3, went to Cornwall where it was used to equip the railway at the new Age of Steam leisure park at Crowlas, near Penzance, which opened in 1977. There it was given 'No 2' and 'Sir Humphry Davy' plates, taking its

name from the inventor of the Davy lamp born in Penzance in 1778. Painted in an attractive blue livery with white lining, the loco lost a distinctive single headlight that it had carried at Shillingstone but retained the engine and cab.

Age of Steam closed in 1982, then reopened as Penwith Pleasure Park, only to close completely a couple of years later. Sir Humphry Davy was among the equipment that went to Rydon Park, and for its new location the height of the cab was raised, giving the loco a somewhat unbalanced appearance.

The next move was in 1991 to the new Smokey Oak Railway at Woodland Park near Westbury in Wiltshire. There the somewhat elderly Daimler engine was replaced by one from a Ford Granada, presumably another petrol engine.

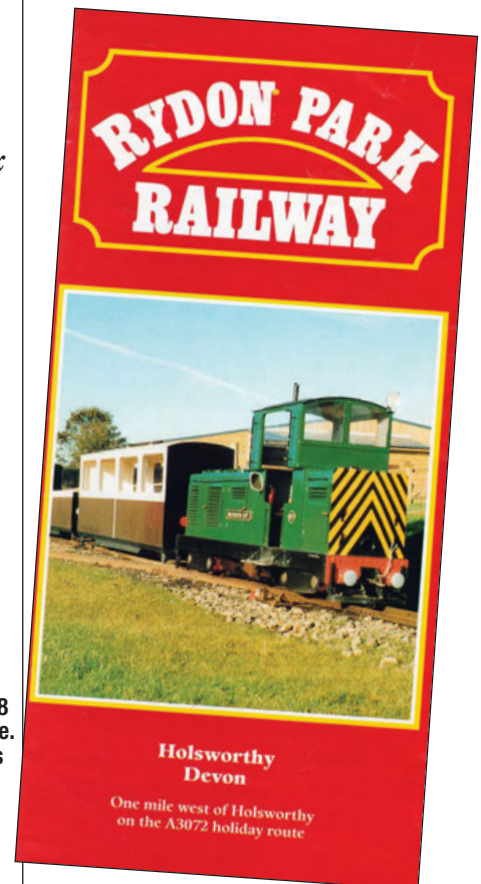
From there it went to the Beale Railway at Beale Wildlife Park, near Pangbourne in Berkshire. This was originally built as a steam-worked 7¼in gauge line, opened in 1989, but was replaced in 1994 by a 10¼in gauge railway on a similar alignment.

At Beale, Sir Humphry Davy retained the tall cab but underwent another power change, this time to a Mercedes-Benz diesel engine. It remains there at the time of writing, making this its longest stay at any one railway. However in February 2018 Alan Keef Ltd supplied a new locomotive to the Beale line, since when Sir Humphry Davy has been spare and is used infrequently. **NGW**

"The story of the locomotive is a complex one, involving several rebuilds and at least five different engines..."

Above right: Promotional 1988 leaflet for the line. The photo shows the museum building in the background.

Below: 'Sir Humphry Davy' in more recent times, here at work on the line at Beale Wildlife Park in Berkshire on 30th May 2010. The loco remains there today. Photo: Jonathan James

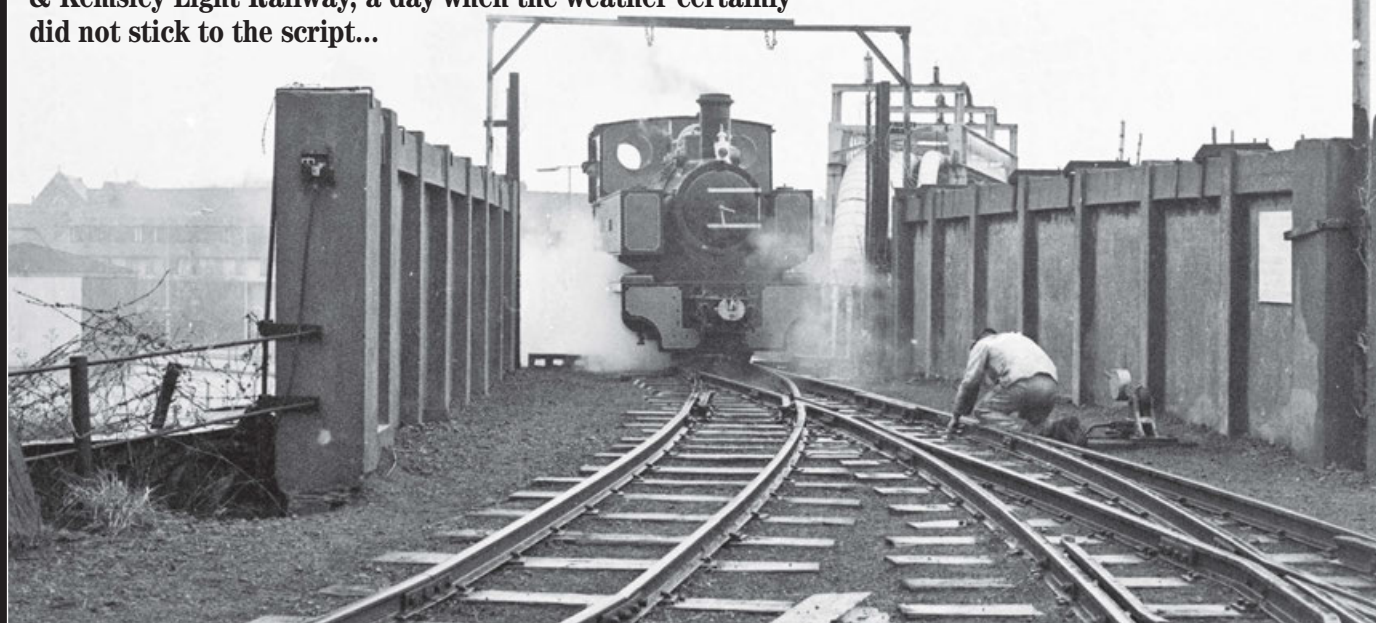


■ Restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic made finding and checking some of the information for this article challenging. For help I am grateful to Hannah Furnell and Patrick Keef of Alan Keef Ltd, Graham Allen, Andrew Edmonds and Murray Tremellen. Thanks also to Steve Edge for drawing the map.



A grey day in Kent

Andrew Charman recalls a 1986 'grice' to the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, a day when the weather certainly did not stick to the script...



By 1986, with my friend from schooldays and fellow rail enthusiast John Clark, I had made the most of the freedom a driving licence brings and we had visited many a narrow gauge line. But we had never been to what was the closest line to our Surrey home, if you excluded the recently closed Brockham Museum and the Volk's Electric Railway in Brighton.

We put this right in April of that year, heading for the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway on what was a horribly grey and damp day – I came away with some washed-out colour pictures (which I still need to find) and a fair amount of black and white, which I shot a lot more of in those days as I could process it in the darkroom of the local newspaper I was by then working at.



Industrialised...

Having got used to the by then reasonably sanitised tourist-pitched lines in Wales, we found the S&K a bit of a culture shock. This was as close to a 'proper' industrial railway as we'd ever seen, though conversely when today I study the photos I took then it looks rather tidier than when I visited at the end of last season – mainly due to the vegetation that has become somewhat more established in the intervening 34 years...

It was a little rough-and-ready of a railway but a fascinating place and we enjoyed our day, despite the gloomy weather. I would visit again around four years later, with my new wife in



Heading: First view of the line, the fireman securing the point at Sittingbourne Viaduct station.

Left: Crew chat at Kemsley Down – not sure what the function of a ‘Mishap Controller’ was...

Lower left: Heading into Sittingbourne riding former Chattenden & Upnor/Welshpool & Llanfair stock.

Top: Kemsley in 1986 was less cluttered than today, but little has changed in the stock shed (top right).

Above: Bagnall 0-6-2T ‘Triumph and its train are checked out by John Clark.

Above right and below: The concrete viaduct remains the big industrial feature of the line.

tow that time, and I remember that day the train pushed its way through such rampant lineside growth that having spent most of the train journey leaning out of the semi-open carriages, I came away with terrible hay fever! But I didn't really mind – the Sittingbourne line has always exuded a unique atmosphere, and long may it continue to do so. **NGW**



The mystery of pioneers Decauville and Couillet...

Mark Smithers has been continuing his research into a complex 19th century tale...

Andrew C writes: The saga that began with a line-up of locomotives in a Spanish scrapyard in NGW146, and the links between some of them and narrow gauge pioneer Paul Decauville's early demonstration railway in Paris in 1878 detailed by Mark Smithers in NGW148, continues, as Mark relates...

With the assistance of James Waterfield, I have been doing some more 'digging' into the story of the 500mm gauge Decauville demonstration railway in Paris (now re-incarnated as the Jardin d'Acclimation line) and the tale is certainly more complicated than anyone thought.

My hunch that the Corpet-built 'Lilliput' Decauville works no 1; (Corpet no 242 of 1878) was not the loco shown in the engraving in *La Nature* in 1880 proved to be right as this locomotive was an 0-4-0T with four inside single-acting cylinders arranged in a V-configuration driving onto the leading axle. The locomotive is shown in photo 1 and it can be compared to the loco in the engraving, photo 2.

Photo 3 shows the modus operandi of the cylinder arrangement of this engine, utilizing slip-eccentrics reversed from the cab by means of a 'rack-and-pinion' arrangement. This gives rise to two technical peculiarities from the point of view of Lilliput – firstly, given the restricted clearance between the inner faces of the crank webs (which would have incorporated the stop-pins for the eccentrics), the crankshaft would have had to have been fabricated (using keys) to have accommodated the sleeve carrying the eccentrics and reversing pinion as this could not have been 'split'.

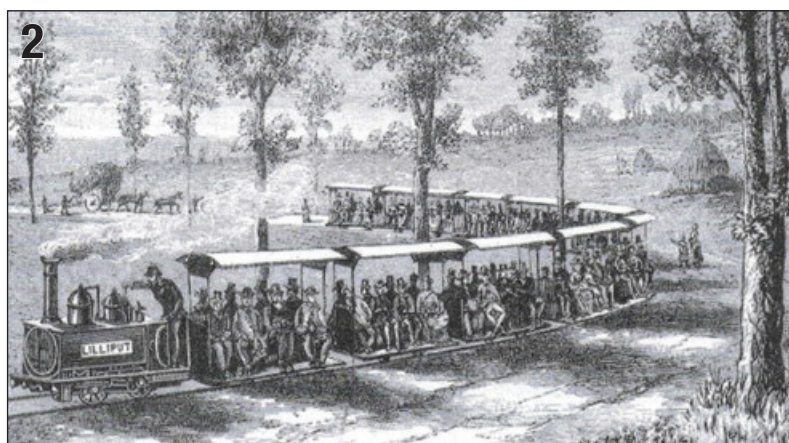
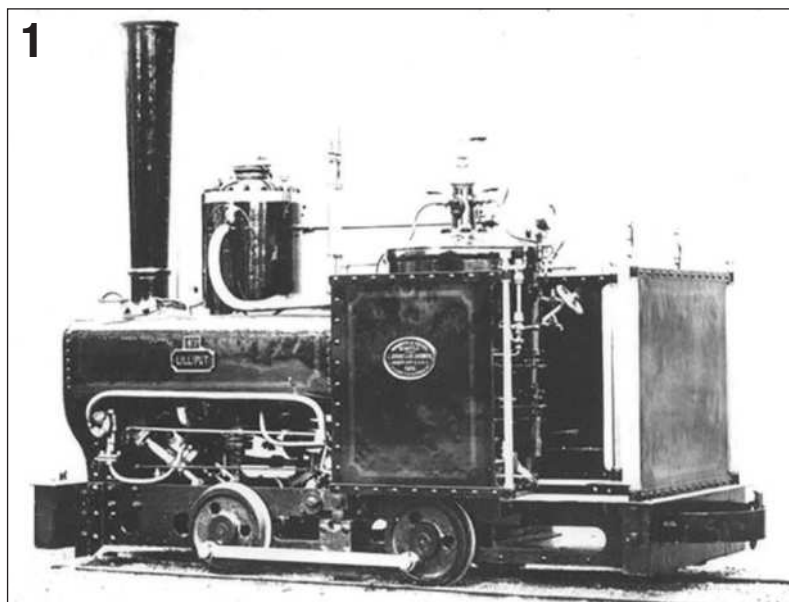
Secondly, as the reversing pinion would need to revolve with the crank axle, the reversing 'rack' would need to 'clear' the pinion every time forward or reverse was selected. This, over time, would give rise to the sort of wear that is associated with a 'crash' gearbox.

"The tale is certainly more complicated than anyone thought..."

Photo 1: The real 'Lilliput', built for Decauville by Corpet in 1878.

Photo 2: The famed engraving in *La Nature* shows a loco titled Lilliput but almost certainly not the Corpet-built locomotive.

Photo 3: Cylinder arrangement of the Corpet engine, boasting technical peculiarities.

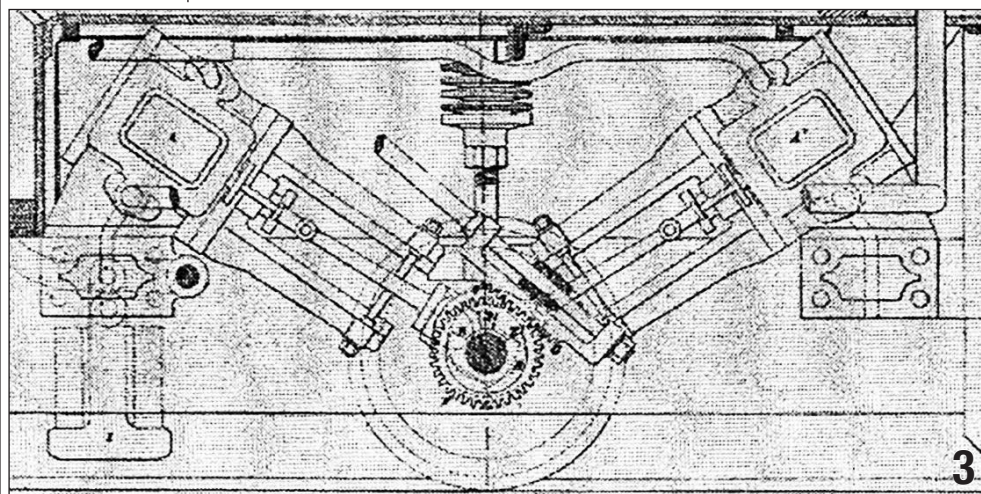


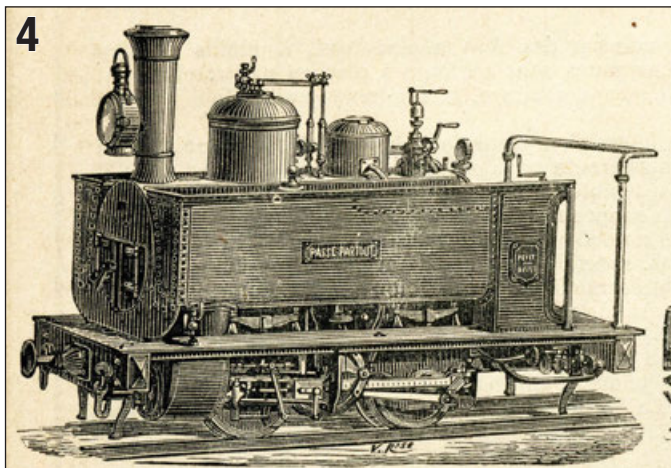
In choosing this arrangement, I cannot help feeling that the Corpet engineers had seen the locomotives 'Billy' (as built) and 'Dickie' in the *Vignes Atlas* of 1878 and tried to come up with a footplate-reversible slip-eccentric system that dispensed with the need for the countershaft eccentric arrangement found on Dickie. The boiler design was a type used on other Corpet locomotives, being of the semi-Cochrane pattern.

So if the locomotive in the *La*

Nature engraving is not the true Lilliput, then what is it? Firstly, I am certain that it is a Couillet product, but the question is: which one? There are many similarities with the 550mm gauge locos that survive in Madrid and Zaragoza, but it should also be noted that unlike the latter it has spoked rather than disc wheels.

My initial thoughts turned to Decauville works number 2 'Passe-Partout', especially as this is shown as being supplied to a Parisian buyer. As





luck would have it, an engraving survives of a locomotive, clearly of Couillet origin that purports to be this locomotive (Photo 4) and its superstructure is very similar to the one shown in the 1880 engraving. Unlike the latter, however it has outside frames.

Two options?

Therefore I believe there are two possible explanations. Firstly that the locomotive shown in the 1880 engraving is an inside-framed Couillet product that did not pass directly through Decauville's books. This would be backed up by the fact that a Corpet product of 1881 is known to have appeared on the Jardin d'Acclimation line in these circumstances (and the total number of early steam locos on the line and their identities are not fully known).

The second possible explanation is that the name Passe-Partout has been 'faked' into an engraving of a slightly later Couillet-Decauville 0-4-0T of the early 1880s (Photo 5) which may be the same loco photographed from the other side. There is the possibility that despite the differences such as in the frames and the weight, from subsequent Couillet-Decauville locomotives, Decauville may have regarded works no 2 as the prototype for the typical early 0-4-0T and have adopted Passe-Partout as a 'class name'. This is not beyond the bounds of possibility, given the later 'doctoring' of the engraving in *La Nature*!

Another illustration turned up and this is shown in Photo 6. This, I believe, is the 600mm gauge demonstration line from the 1889 Paris Exposition using an 0-4-0T similar to 'Chuquitanta' (Decauville no 36, Couillet 810).

Finally, Photo 7 shows the 500mm gauge demonstration line built by UK manufacturer Fowler at the Kilburn R.A.S.E. Show of 1879. Although there is the inevitable artistic licence, the gauge, the cab

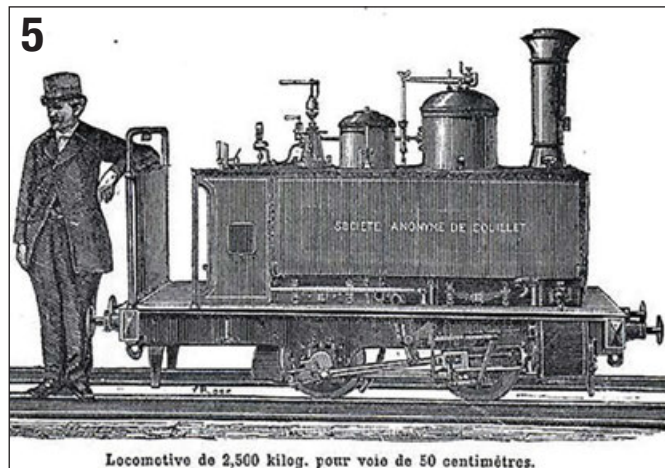
Photo 4: The second Decauville locomotive built, 'Passe Partout.'

Photo 5: A later Couillet-Decauville product, built in the early 1880s.

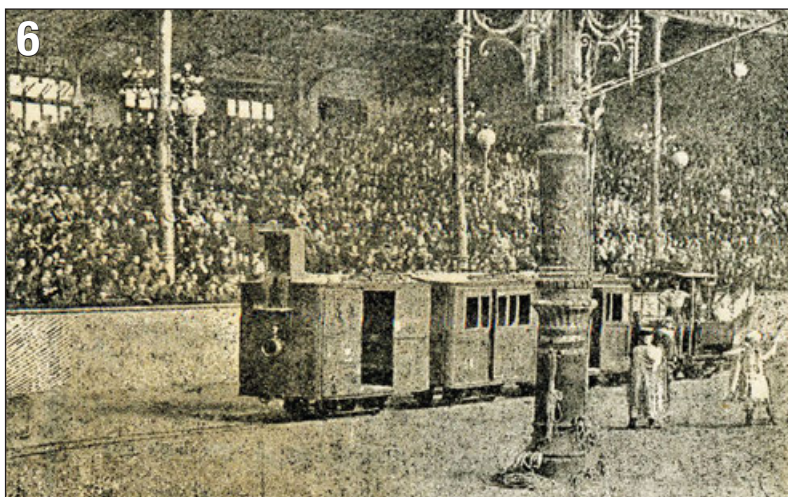
Photo 6: Believed to be from the 1889 Paris Exposition, this engraving shows a loco similar to Couillet-Decauville 'Chuquitanta'.

Photo 7: John Fowler built a 500mm gauge demonstration line in the UK.

All photos from Mark Smithers collection



Locomotive de 2,500 kilog. pour voie de 50 centimètres.



design and the deep side tanks identify the locomotive as 'Little Beauty' (Fowler works no 3821 of 1879). Given that the identity of the other locomotive used on this line is known, (Fowler no 3688 of 1879) and that *The Engineer* magazine of the time stated that the Kilburn line was the first 500mm gauge locomotive-hauled portable railway built by Fowler, we are left with an intriguing possibility.

It is known that Fowler built a slightly earlier 2-4-0ST for portable railways classed as 'Hercules'. An

1878 Fowler Catalogue refers to a loco suitable for 16-inch or 20-inch gauge whilst the noted minimum gauge engineer Sir Arthur Heywood refers to Fowler producing a loco using his boiler but against his advice a leading pony truck (as was fitted to Hercules) but giving no gauge. Could Hercules, after all, have been built to 400mm (16-inch) gauge? Still more questions to answer, I think! **NGW**

■ We hope to carry more on the early history of Decauville in a forthcoming issue of **NGW**.



Davenport from Doncaster

The latest and somewhat different to the norm live-steam locomotive model from Roundhouse Engineering is tried out by *Steve Blackmore*.

US prototypes are rare subjects for the UK's well-known live steam model locomotive manufacturer, Roundhouse Engineering, and in 1:22.5 G Scale even rarer, the firm tending to focus on 16mm scale (1:19) subjects.

Davenport was one of the lesser-known American locomotive builders but built a number of steam and diesel narrow gauge locomotives. The product included outside-frame locomotives enabling Roundhouse to produce a model with wheels adjustable between 32mm and 45mm gauge, widening its appeal.

Davenport locos were exported all around the world, sugar cane lines proving a major market for the prototype, so the model from Doncaster-based Roundhouse could find a place on many a garden line.

The model is broadly based on 'Kiama', a 2ft gauge 0-4-0ST built by Davenport in 1913 and used on various construction projects in New South Wales, Australia.

Today the loco is preserved at the Illawarra Light Railway Museum south of Sydney, and the museum co-operated with Roundhouse's designers, providing drawings of the original engine.

An initial study of the model reveals that whilst this is a different prototype it boasts lots of proven Roundhouse engineering features. The model measures 310mm over the buffers, with a width of 115mm and height of 165mm, and weighs in at 3.4kg.

Those gauge-adjustable wheels are located in the outside-framed chassis with Roundhouse's Walschaerts valve gear, though less usually this is mounted internally, maintaining the correct look of the full-sized loco.

The frames do move away from the prototype, being of plate construction rather than the US-standard bar design but they are of reduced height to normal – this allows plenty of daylight to show under the boiler and so produces the right effect. It

also allows one to watch the clearly visible inside valve gear in action, which can be quite mesmerising. Standard Roundhouse cylinders are fitted but with the slide valves moved inside the frames, while further efforts to maintain the look of the full-size loco include dummy steam chest castings mounted on top of the cylinders complete with dummy valve rods.

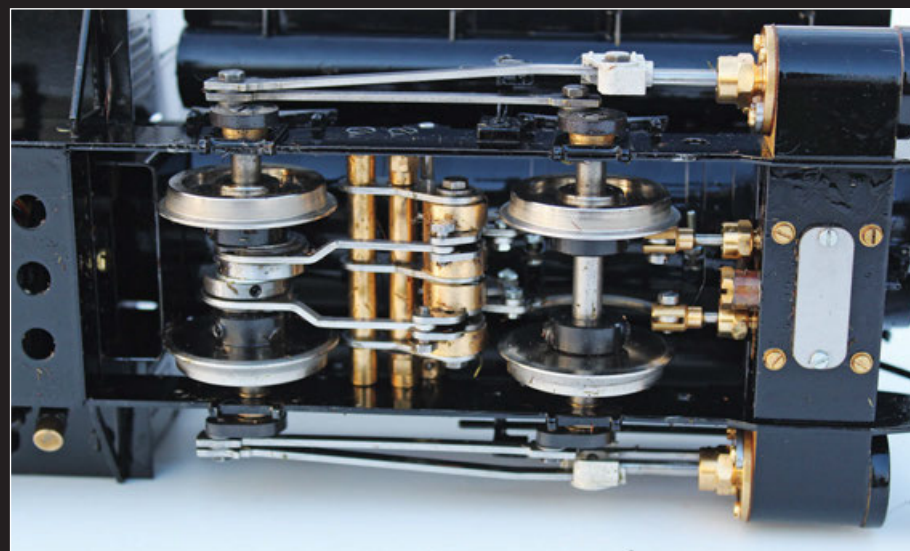
Another nice touch are the front and rear buffer beams – these real wood items not only replicate the prototype but provide useful hand-holds when carrying a hot loco. They are fitted with industrial style multi-height couplers and neat tie

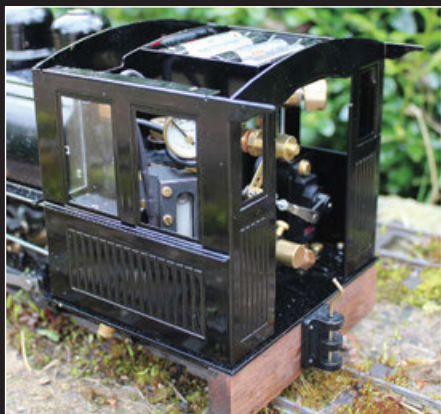
Davenport Locomotive Works

Davenport produced its first locomotive in Iowa, USA in 1902, and went on to build initially small steam locos, followed by petrol locos from 1924 and a great many diesels from 1927, as well as converting tractors into road-rollers and assembling earthmovers under licence.

Most of the firm's customers were industrial companies though some US railroads made use of Davenport product, as did the US Army on trench railways in the First World War. The firm was taken over by the Canadian Locomotive Co in 1955 and closed a year later.

Many Davenport locos are preserved across the world – the best-known example in the UK is the 1918-built 0-4-0 rescued from India by Statfold Barn in 2013 and since restored (below).





rods running to the footplate. Some buyers might consider the buffer beams a little bare but this does reflect the prototype.

The saddle tank includes lots of lovely rivet detail, as does the cast smokebox door. Also cast are the very neat dome and sand pots on top of the saddle tank, along with a brass bell and safety valve.

The cab roof is held in place by a pair of magnets and removing it allows easy access to the water top-up valve which is located behind the pressure gauge. A water gauge is also fitted, which my tests would show is a rather more essential feature than on some other locos. Mind you its presence does make accommodating a crew somewhat of a challenge.

Batteries for the radio-control are also easy to access, mounted just under the roof while the gas control knob can be reached through the right rear window. Notable details include glazed cab windows.

The review model was supplied finished in gloss and satin black and natural daylight shows a pleasing contrast between the two shades. The loco can be ordered in any of Roundhouse's standard colours.

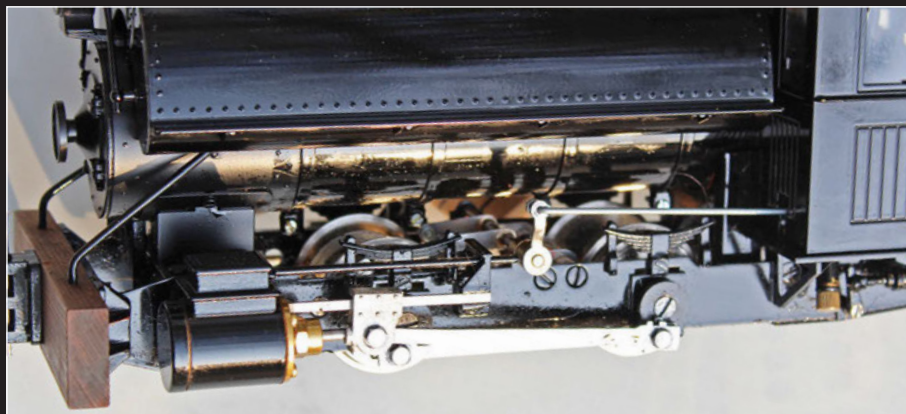
Running the loco

In preparing to run the Davenport for the first time I adopted the standard Roundhouse procedure. First I made the essential check that the radio control control was working, and then oiled all the parts that move with lubricating oil.

The lubricator was filled from the supply of steam oil provided with the model and the gas tank filled with butane gas. Finally I filled the boiler with distilled water – it took 130ml – and then I lit up.

It took six minutes before the pressure gauge registered 20 psi, at which point I ran the loco light engine for a minute to clear all the tubes before I backed it onto a short goods train.

It is important to note at this point that the Davenport does not include a safety feature that has long been a standard on Roundhouse engines – namely that the gas runs out before the water in the boiler does. Due to the combination of the firm's standard gas tank with the smaller capacity boiler of the Davenport prototype, on a single filling of the gas tank you will need to add water at least once during a run. This is no problem at all, however. The



water sight glass is totally reliable and an efficient water top-up bottle is included.

The train set off smoothly on its first run, trundling around my level upper circuit without fuss. After 10 minutes and with the water halfway down the glass I topped it back up to the top and achieved another 15 minutes running before the gas ran out with the gauge glass quarter-full.

The second run saw the engine tackling my main line, which has some gradients, and again after taking seven minutes to raise 25psi the loco ran for 26 minutes up and down my hill, with a couple of water refills on route. Further runs during the afternoon averaged 30 minutes and a faultless performance at all times. One train consisted of four bogie carriages and my video wagon (20 axles in total) and the loco easily started the train even on the steepest part of my line. And while doing this it makes a lovely sound courtesy of the exhaust enhancer fitted as standard.

Coupling issue

Just two minor potential problems showed up during my testing, involving the couplings. While at 285mm the loco is quite long, it has a short 72mm wheelbase offset to the front. The back coupling therefore has to endure quite a lot of lateral throw on tight corners. On the four-foot radius curves of my line and with the hook-and-chain couplings I use there was no issue, but it could be for potential purchasers thinking of fitting chopper or

knuckle couplings who also have tight curves on their line.

The other issue involved the shape of the cab roof, which in prototypically-correct fashion overhangs the coupling. Running a passenger train late in the day I started suffering frequent derailments of the leading carriage going downhill, and soon discovered that as the carriage tries to overrun the loco's coupling on a curved descending grade the two roofs clash, pushing the carriage bogie off the rails.

There is a simple solution to this – fitting a larger rear coupling will provide a little more clearance between the two roofs. Covid-19 restrictions prevented me discussing these minor issues with Roundhouse when I returned the loco (the factory in Doncaster was shut!) but I'm sure they will be sorting any problems with production resuming this summer.

This is an interesting looking model, that will appeal to American outline modellers in particular but possibly others too. It combines excellent levels of detail with the exemplary running qualities we are used to from Roundhouse – and watching that miniature internal valve gear at work is a delight! **NCW**

More Information

Produced by Roundhouse Engineering
Tel: 01302 328035
E-mail: mail@roundhouse-eng.com
Web: www.roundhouse-eng.com
Price £1625.00 (manual) £1850.00 (radio control)

Heading picture: Latest from Roundhouse a good representation of the prototype (inset).

Left: Inside motion a joy to behold and watch in action.

Top left: Packed cab leaves little room for crew.

Top: Level of detail throughout is very pleasing to eye.

Right: Loco shows its paces on author's line.

All model photos by Steve Blackmore



Modelling the ASG Siaurukas



Tony Olsson, a regular NGW correspondent, recreates his passion for Lithuanian narrow gauge in miniature.

Readers of *NGW* will know that I have a passion for Lietuva (Lithuania) and its railways, in particular the Aukštaitija Siaurukas Geležinkelis, known for short as ASG Siaurukas. It is all that remains of an extensive Soviet-era 750mm narrow gauge system which covered the Baltic States and extended into Belarus.

Today a 68km single track line extends from Panevėžys where it has an interchange with the Russian-gauge railway (using separate stations) and offices and workshops, and a ride through forests to Anykščiai which is the main operating base in summer, on to a terminus at Rubikiai beside a tranquil lake with restaurant, bar and entertainment facilities.

In summer, trains stop at Rubikiai for a few hours before returning to Anykščiai. Except for special trains, there is normally no service between Panevėžys and Anykščiai by train. There is also a network of closed lines north of Panevėžys which are earmarked for restoration (see *NGW* 114).

Readers of the specialist magazine *Continental Modeller* are often told that a loco has been built by someone they've never heard of, certainly not one of the well-known model suppliers. One of those elusive model makers who help to keep modellers of 'obscure' railways equipped with suitable rolling stock is Jindra Jiri, run by Jiri Jindra in the Czech Republic (jindra.750@tiscali.cz).

Cottage industry

The model of an ASG train in H0e scale pictured above was made for me by Jindra Jiri. You won't find the firm advertising in

modelling magazines – like many small manufacturers it trades by word of mouth and tends to build small batches of particular models, personalising them to suit customer needs.

The full-size TY2 (TU2) diesel-electric locomotives were built in the USSR at Kaluga between 1956 and 1959, and were widely used by narrow gauge railways throughout the former Soviet Union. A TY2 with original and modernised bodywork was shown in the *Viewpoint* pages of *NGW* 148.

My loco is in historic Soviet green livery with a red star at each end. Most existing heritage railways have abandoned this livery, but when I first encountered ASG Siaurukas in 2003, it had a large collection of derelict locos in a lighter shade of green (and a lot of rust), plus several in experimental liveries. It's clear that a universal livery for locos and coaches was abandoned in favour of a riot of colour.

My model train has a Pafawag carriage in green and three PV40 carriages in red. The full-size railway has several Pafawags in various liveries, some used for catering and also uses a multitude of colours for its PV40s. All the models are fitted with the usual narrow gauge coupling as used by Peco on its Lynton & Barnstaple stock.

The diorama background, by the way, is a photograph of a piece of genuine Lithuanian forest near Raguvėlė.

The ASG Siaurukas exists only for tourism now, but up to the end of the 20th century it also carried freight including silica sand mined near Rubikiai and transported to a glass works in Panevėžys,

transported in unique wagons built by the railway. One of these wagons has been preserved in the railway museum at Anykščiai Station.

Shortly after closure there was a mass extinction of freight vehicles which were loaded into high-sided Russian gauge trucks and taken away for scrap. A few freight vehicles have survived including an insulated ice van which is now used to provide storage on special trains, and a low-sided wagon which is piled high with passenger's bicycles on the educational cycle rides the line runs during the summer.

There are a couple of non-working Polish-built KP4 steam locos on the railway, but I've failed to locate someone who models those, or anything that looks close enough to be customised.

Latvia and Estonia

The Banītis Railway in Latvia uses similar rolling stock to its Lithuanian neighbour, albeit painted in different colours. It has a couple of operational steam locos.

Estonia's Lavassaare Museum Railway is basically a large collection of narrow gauge steam, diesel, and electric equipment based on a former peat farm with a single-track line to Lavassaare on which it operates steam trains during summer weekends. Whilst it does have a TY2 and PV40 carriages, a typical train will consist of a steam locomotive and ancient wooden-bodied passenger vehicles. Other than the TY2 and PV40, I know of no source of models of trains that operate on the Lavassaare railway. It could be a challenge for a scratch-builder.

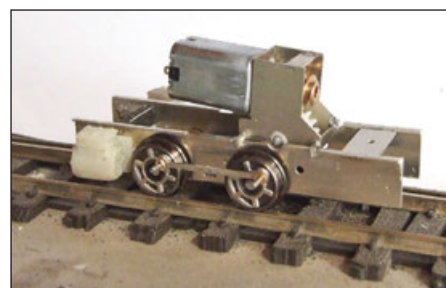
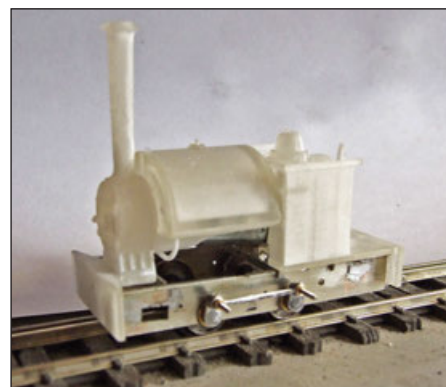
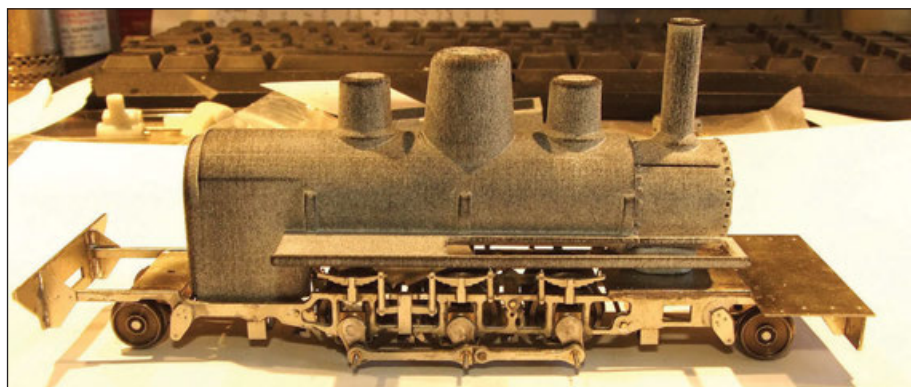


■ Latest from Tony Harwood, who produced the Kerr Stuart geared loco in an unusual 11mm/ft scale detailed in *NGW* 147, are these two whimsical but attractive Shays. Tony will describe their building next month.

MODEL LINES

No Midlands ME show in 2020

■ The Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition, normally held in October, has sadly become the latest victim of the Covid-19 pandemic. Organisers Meridienne Exhibitions stated that the show, which usually includes plentiful narrow gauge content, will not take place this year as restrictions would make it difficult to present the event to its normal size and format for everyone's enjoyment. The show will return on 14th-17th October 2021.



Lots of Locos n Stuff on the way

Mark Clark, the man who produces highly detailed mostly 7mm scale equipment under the banner of Locos n Stuff, has brought us up to date with his latest projects. There is certainly lots for modellers in this scale to get excited about, though unsurprisingly Mark admits to suffering delays to production stemming mainly from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alco 2-6-2T

This kit, long-awaited by especially modellers of First World War trench lines and the Ffestiniog Railway, is progressing – Mark had been hoping to launch it at the annual 7mm show in June at Burton-on-Trent but Covid-19 put paid to that, and he has since been significantly delayed by an issue with his etch supplier, still awaiting a final chassis etch to test build.

This model will be offered with War Department or Ffestiniog style cabs. Having found what he describes as an extremely helpful 3D printer in China, Mark expects sample prints and castings

shortly, and he will then need to test build the chassis and cabs before ordering them in bulk. “While waiting for the etches and castings I will have to squeeze in finishing off the instructions,” he adds.

A builder will be able to finish their model in 16.5, 14, 13.3, 12.7 or 12mm gauge and the kit will come complete excluding the couplings.

He predicts the model will be available in late September at the £250 price previously quoted. The initial batch will be 20 strong, of which 14 have already been pre-booked by customers, and he will release a further batch of 20 later.

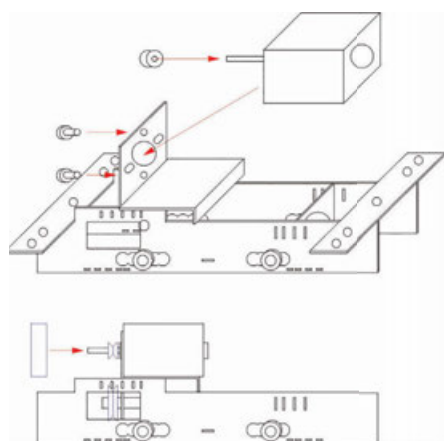
Bagnall Sipat chassis

Also on Mark's most recent orders with his casting and etch supplier is a chassis for the popular Bagnall Sipat loco. The 0-4-0 chassis will fit under the 3D printed body offered by Shapeways or anything of a similar size and will be supplied as a complete kit which can be built to any gauge from 9 to 16.5mm.

As well as the inside-framed Sipat, Mark is offering an outside framed version of the chassis for general use under small loco bodies. Both are complete with motor and gears and use 9.5mm disc wheels, jig drilled for cranks on the inside-frame version.

Included are 3D-printed Bagnall cylinders while the rods can be assembled with or without Bagnall/Price valve gear.

Above, working clockwise are the first trial fitting of the 7mm scale Alco boiler on its chassis, the outside-framed Sipat chassis with a Shapeways body mounted, the inside-frame Sipat showing the compact motor, and the highly detailed Alco chassis. At left is the design of the new and versatile larger diesel etched chassis.



Mark adds he can easily draw different cylinders for other makes of loco as the need arises.

Larger diesel chassis

Next in line after the above kits will be a useful diesel chassis. It is designed as an outside-frame generic design and is a very simple etched kit with only nine parts – Mark adds that there is no reason why it cannot be glued rather than soldered together and he intends to try this with one of the test builds.

The kit will build to eight wheelbases ranging from 17 to 30mm and any gauge from 9 to 16.5mm. The frames are 64mm long but can be shortened by up to 15mm by trimming the ends before assembly.

The chassis has a central layshaft to drive both axles and a gear ratio around 33:1. Mark intends to offer it with a choice of motors and wheel sizes from 8.5 to 14mm diameter, while in most cases a flywheel can be fitted.

The kit was inspired by problems in fitting gears into a 3D printed chassis in 9 or 10.5mm gauges – the frames having to be too thin to be practical. “The solution was an etched kit and I have several people waiting on it, two of which are for an Indian Railways NDM6 in OO9 scale,” Mark says. “It can be used in all scales from OO9 up to anything that uses 16.5mm track and probably larger, I can just put longer axles in the pack.”

Certainly a productive time at Locos n Stuff, which should keep the model constructors busy...

Locos n Stuff
Tel: 01634 575081 (before 8pm)
E-mail: borsig1958@gmail.com

The Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway – Jonathan James and Paul Best

■ The latest in the series of albums being produced by publisher Mainline & Maritime to raise funds for heritage railways hit by the Covid-19 crisis focuses on a line that will certainly welcome any additional funding. In its entire 50-year preservation history the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway has existed a little on the edge of the scene and faced many challenges, a pity as it remains a rare example of a narrow gauge line still exuding much of its pre-preservation industrial atmosphere.

Regular *NGW* contributor Jonathan James and S&KLR stalwart Paul Best join forces to produce this inexpensive A4 softback running to 64 pages. It follows the style established by these books, being basically an album of pictures, each used typically over half a page.

The introduction includes a useful map of the system in the pre-preservation times when it was the Bowaters paper mill system, before separate chapters concentrating on the locos and rolling stock (including those that have gone elsewhere), a trip along the line, running the railway, special events and milestones and even a section on the model and miniature railways on site. The photos are well chosen with some unusual angles, especially from above, and modellers in particular will find the book very useful.

At just £12.95, with £4 of each sale going to the S&KLR, the interesting book is a very worthy purchase. It got your editor thinking though – we've had plenty of albums of the Bowaters system and the S&KLR, when is someone going to produce a definitive history of this fascinating industrial location? *AC*

ISBN 978-1-90034-071-7 Published by Mainline & Maritime, Tel: 01275 845012
Email: iaim@mainlineandmaritime.co.uk, Web: www.mainlineandmaritime.co.uk
Price £12.95

Going Narrow Gauge – 7mm Narrow Gauge Association

■ A new and highly useful publication from the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association, custodians of a modelling scale that lives perennially in the shadow of the hugely-popular 4mm scale 009 but offers a lot of advantages – not least a vast range of highly reliable 00 loco mechanisms that can go under 7mm scale body kits.

This book is not so much about getting started in the scale (the Association publishes a separate book on that very subject) but about achieving the essential atmosphere to raise your layout to the level of something unique and memorable. Essential information, such as choosing a suitable prototype, setting the scene, using the correct trackwork and such like are included, complete with data tables offering useful information such as loading gauges, even sleeper spacing, and there are plenty of good quality photos of both models and prototypes to illustrate the points.

Equally as important, however, are the contributions from experienced modellers, describing how they built their top quality layouts – several of which have wowed many a visitor to shows. These range across subjects from a fictitious but accurate Welsh slate line to one serving watercress in rural Dorset, the Welshpool & Llanfair to Australian industrials and the Canadian Rockies. In short you will get a lot of useful information from this book, and a lot of inspiration too... *AC*

ISBN 978-0-95498-119-8. Published by 7mm Narrow Gauge Association
Available from Association sales stand at shows, online at www.7mmnga.org.uk/sales/publications or by post from 7mmNGA Publications, 5 Link Hill, Storrington, Pulborough RH20 4LS
Price £9 plus £2 post

The Story of the Scamp – Colin Edmondson

■ *NGW* readers who are also model engineers will likely be well aware of the 7¼-inch gauge internal combustion loco the 'Scamp' – despite only being launched just five years ago it has become a staple at many a club track and with those who want a loco they can easily carry in their car and be running around a track behind within minutes of arrival.

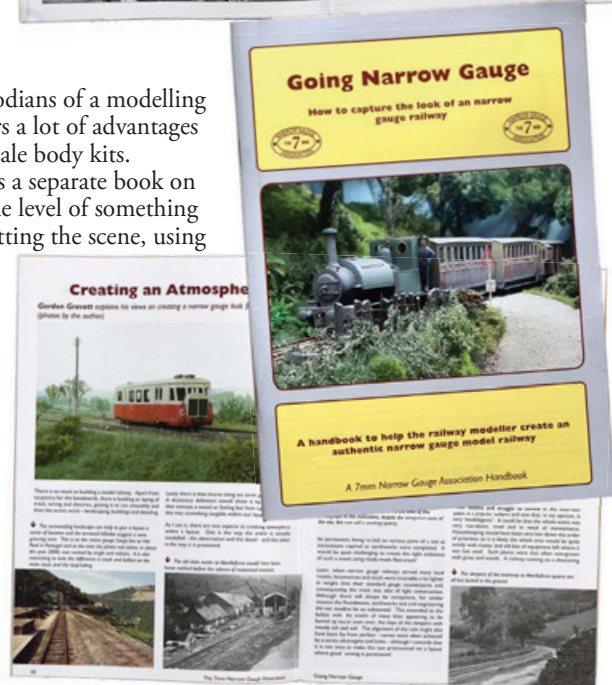
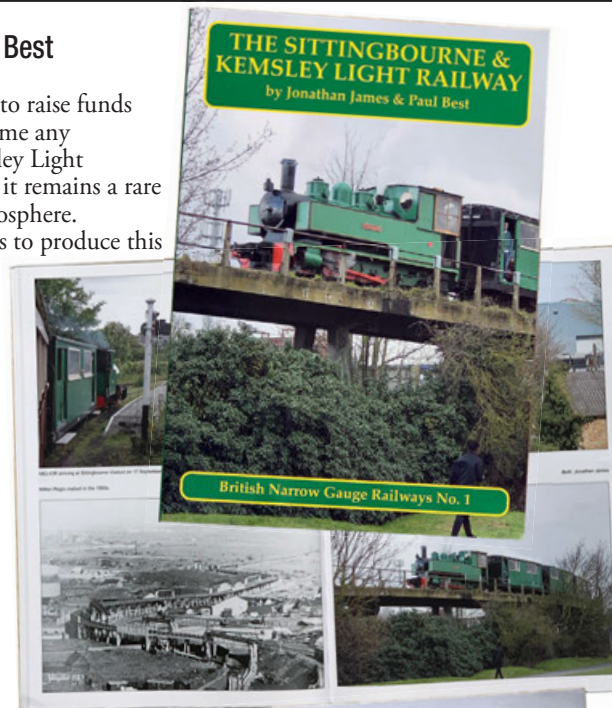
The Scamp will immediately appeal to narrow gauge fans as visually the original design is based around the ubiquitous Lister Auto-Truck. It was designed by Colin Edmondson as an easy-to-build kit, and now Colin has told the story of the loco in this very inexpensive A4 softback.

Scamps are very easy to put together even for those with little engineering experience – much-missed *NGW* correspondent the late Dave Billmore described the build of his in the December 2019 edition of our sister magazine *Engineering in Miniature*.

Running to 44 pages the book includes a great deal of information, starting by describing the author's background and how an A-level project became the inspiration for Scamp, and how the project evolved into what we know today.

Also included is a chapter on building the loco, experiences of those who have built and owned Scamps, and a look at various examples of the loco, far and wide. It's a highly enjoyable read at a bargain price but be warned, you could easily be tempted into building your own... *AC*

ISBN 978-1-83853-396-0 Published by Colin Edmondson, available from author at colinedmondson.com, soon to be available from Camden Miniature Steam Services and *Miniature Railways* magazine
Price £5.95 plus £2 post



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An insurmountable obstacle?

Thank you for your 'exclusive' in *NGW* 150 regarding the possible disposal of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's two Beyer Peacock 0-6-0 tank locomotives following closure of the line in 1956. There are two aspects I'd like to comment on, including a factor not mentioned in your article which makes the dating position even stranger in my view.

The blueprint you illustrated clearly shows one of the locos in its 'as-built' 1902 condition, at any rate certainly pre-dating 1929, when the first of them went to Oswestry to be 'Westernised' by the Great Western Railway, including a new boiler, copper-capped chimney and distinctive trumpet safety-valve cover.

Despite the subsequent addition of the word 'late' in its caption, can the blueprint really have been drawn by or for the Bowater-Lloyd Company or its staff after or shortly before the 1956 closure of the W&LLR (or indeed by the GWR in 1945)? More likely it was donated or otherwise obtained from an ancient store somewhere, I surmise, but maybe for the abortive purpose you described.

However, I think I can also surmise, with rather more confidence, what the future of the W&LLR would have been had the locos been sold away or scrapped at that stage – and the answer is none.

My suspicion – in which I am certainly not alone – is that Oliver Veltom, the British Railways (Western Region) Divisional Supervisor at Oswestry in 1956, may have quietly ignored any instructions he might have received to the contrary from Paddington, and stored the engines to be available for a W&L revival effort if it came about.

In his day job, Veltom was also energetically promoting the Vale of Rheidol Railway at the same time to deter its closure by BR, and he would have been well aware of the progress in narrow gauge preservation initiatives since 1950 at successively Towyn and Portmadoc (as then spelled). Allan Garraway, the former Festiniog Railway General Manager, described Veltom as a "great friend of the narrow gauge" in a 1962 edition of the Talylyn Railway's *Talylyn News* magazine.

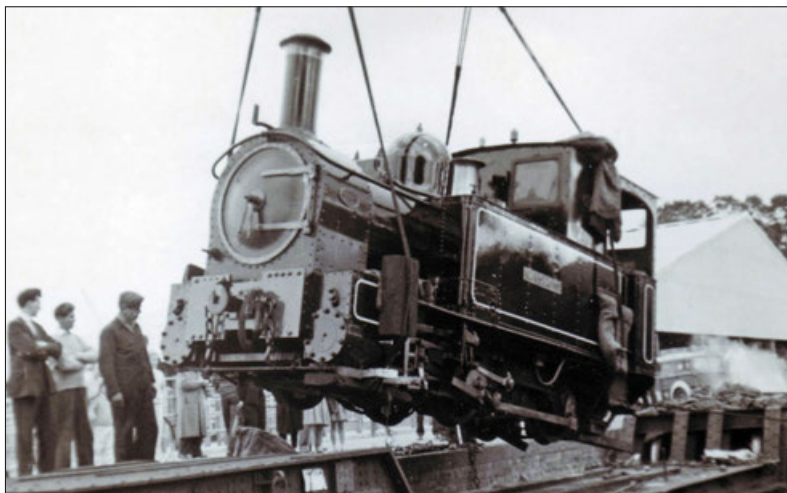
The Talylyn's, and later the Festiniog's, preservationists were able to work with both an extant trackbed (more or less) and also surviving locos and passenger rolling stock, however dilapidated or even derelict some of these had become.

Without nos 822 and 823 at Oswestry, those wanting a future for the W&LLR would have had nothing to start with other than a trackbed

"I personally doubt that the will to rebuild a railway from that unpromising base would have been there at that stage of the preservation era..."

Above: Return of Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway 0-6-0T 'The Countess' to the line in October 1962. Philip Williams (see his letter) agrees that if these locos had not been available, the W&LLR revival might never have happened... Photo: Dick Johnson/W&LLR Archives

Below: A long-lost scene on the Isle of Man, taken by reader Michael Farr in 1968 after some exercise! See his letter.



alone – apart from a few aged freight wagons with no means of moving them except a carthorse – and with a then hostile Town Council at the headquarters end of the line.

I personally doubt that the will to rebuild a railway from that unpromising base would have been there at that stage of the preservation era. It has been difficult enough for the W&LLR sourcing new motive power and carriages from elsewhere as it is; to have had to do it from scratch would (I admit I speculate) have been an almost unsurmountable obstacle.

So in my view the survival of the engines at Oswestry for a possible future life on home metals in Wales was and remains the key to the entire subsequent history of the Welshpool & Llanfair line. *Philip Williams*

Andrew C replies: Thanks to Philip, another great friend of the W&LLR, for his pertinent observations – and the subject of the original specification drawing is considered elsewhere in this issue. I fully agree that a lack of locomotives would very likely been a major deterrent to restoration of the W&LLR at that time in preservation history...

Errata...

I think that John Prideaux (chairman of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways) might be a bit surprised to read (*NGW* 150 page 43) that Gordon Brown was the last of the original authors of Brown, Prideaux and Radcliffe's account of the Lynton & Barnstaple when he died in March... *Tony Nicholson*

Andrew C replies: We can only apologise – a sub-editing mistake...

Wee Georgie Wood

I read with interest the *Encounters* page in *NGW* 149 regarding the 1924 Fowler 0-4-0WT 'Wee Georgie Wood' located in Tasmania. As an OAP I am old enough to remember Wee Georgie Wood the person.

'Wee Georgie' (1895-1979) was a diminutive squeaky-voiced English music-hall comedian, on stage from the age of five. He appeared in silent films from 1919 into the sound era, and was still in films in the 1960s – he was a contemporary of 'Little' Jimmy Clitheroe. I've no idea if Wee Georgie was married to a Mary? (*Wee Mary is the equally obscure name of the other loco on the Tasmanian line - Ed.*)



By coincidence the day before *NGW* 149 dropped through my letterbox, I was watching a television repeat of the Palladium show from 1965 – the young host, a certain Jimmy Tarbuck, gave a name check to “Wee Georgie Wood”. I am not online, so I wonder what comes up if you Google the name – the comedian, the locomotive or the railway in Tasmania? *Chris J Minter*

Andrew C replies: A correspondent remarks that the origin of locomotive names “is obscure” and another comes up with the answer – you get educated in *NGW*! In answer to Chris’s question, Googling the name brings up the comedian first, followed by the railway and locomotive. No evidence of a spouse called Wee Mary though...

Welcome back...

I have just bought issue 150 of *NGW* so firstly congratulations on that milestone.

How wonderful it is to see the photos in the *News Gallery* of those railways back up and running again. Not only are they superbly taken photographs but they also inspire to get out and support those lines that are able to operate. As an armchair member of the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway Society I am eagerly awaiting the day that trains depart once again from Pages Park.

Let us hope that we have no further setbacks and that all preservation sites will flourish as they return. *Andrew Elshaw*

Sparking Manx memories

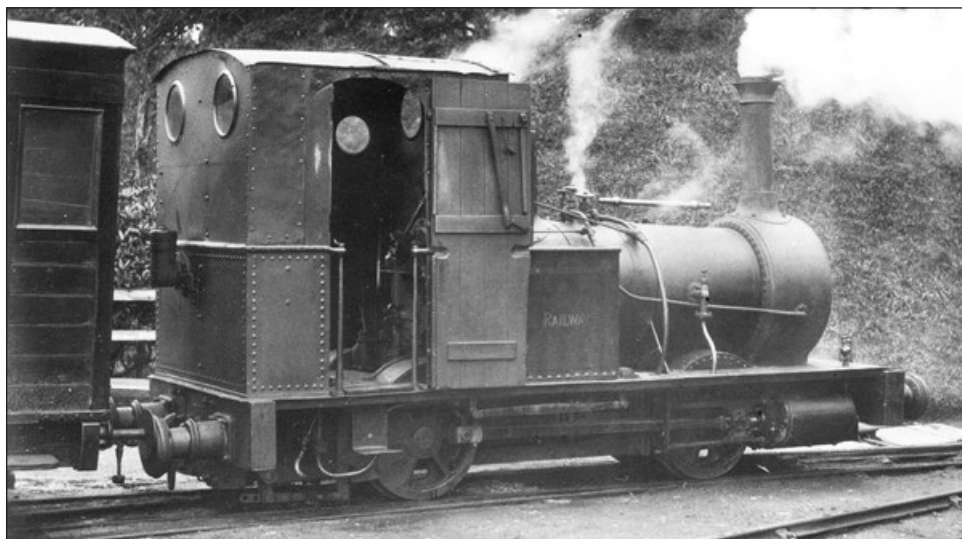
I was interested to read (*NGW* 150) that the bridges on the Ramsey line on the Isle of Man are to be rebuilt for walkers; this brought to mind my adventures in May 1968.

I eventually reached the island railways in '63 and returned in '64 and '65. Sadly, the Isle of Man Railway closed in 1966 and so, needing something else to do, I got married! Pauline and I returned to Douglas in 1968 and, having been loaned a car, we could explore away from the railways.

At the time just one train a week ran to Ramsey on the briefly reopened section and I tried to plan our route so I could see the train. Either the train was running early or (more likely) I was late and as we pulled up on the road nearest Glen Mooar viaduct I heard the loco whistle. Pauline has since said she had never seen me run so fast but I arrived by the bridge, panting, pulled out my trusty Retinette and pressed the shutter. Luckily the shot came out.

Michael Farr

From a Different Age...



■ Regular *NGW* correspondent Keith Chester responds to our suggestion of delving into photo collections to find what long-forgotten delights lie within, having found in his collection some very period shots, at least two of them apparently from contemporary postcards. The shot of the Talyllyn Railway’s ‘Dolgoch’ (top) was taken in August 1931, the loco already looking somewhat careworn and set to serve for another couple of decades yet! The postcard of ‘Talyllyn’ (above) is undated but possibly comes from the same period.

We don’t see many period pictures of the North Bay Railway at Scarborough, regarded as a miniature line despite being of 20-inch gauge. The line, with its diesel-hydraulic steam-outline locos, opened in 1931 – was this image taken soon after?



That was the year that...

Narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy, with a miniature theme this month...

From 40 years ago

Decision time on RH&DR

As members will no doubt be well aware the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway management has asked for financial assistance from Shepway District Council in order that essential renewals may be undertaken on the permanent way. The main task would be the replacement of almost all main-line rail, now required as a matter of some urgency.

At its July meeting the Shepway District Council turned down the request for assistance, subject to ratification in full council. This decision leaves the RH&DR in a virtually untenable position and will no doubt have far-reaching consequences on future operations.

It is quite obvious that decisions have already been taken as a result of the Shepway District Council's deliberations, the *Railway Magazine* for September 1980 carried the advert reproduced below;

SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER

Grand special to celebrate end of double-track operations on the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. Two trains will leave Hythe simultaneously at 2.10 for the journey to New Romney and will continue double-headed to Dungeness (this may be the last train to Dungeness).

Returning to Hythe by 5pm, approx...

Obviously there are many different and some quite fanciful versions of future operations on the RH&DR, however the recent renewal of some 2,000 sleepers on the Dungeness section will possibly give a more accurate pointer to future prospects. (NGN, Sept 1980).

What a bleak-sounding news story... Thankfully none of what was predicted came to pass. The council changed tack, the Romney survived in its complete form. Today parallel runnings on the double track (below) are often operated, usually as specials at the end of another successful season.



Photo: Steve Town

The Fairbourne Railway sold

After years of uncertainty over the future of the Fairbourne Railway reliable sources report the sale of the line to the Isle of Wight-based Medina Valley Miniature Railway organisation under Tom White. Although the sale is subject at this time to final confirmation, it is expected 1980 will be the last season of Fairbourne Railway operations in their present form.

According to our informant future services will be operated on a new 7¼-inch gauge line laid on the same formation as the present 15-inch gauge line. (NGN, Sept 1980)

Fortunately on this occasion the 'reliable sources' were anything but. In fact the Medina Light Railway wanted to move the 15-inch operation to the Isle of Wight and another enthusiast, Brian Hollingsworth, was interested in building a 7¼-inch gauge line on the remaining formation. Thankfully none of this came to pass – as reported in last month's column the Fairbourne would not move but it would be regauged, some six years later and then only to 12¼-inch gauge to suit the former Réseau Guerledan stock that in 1980 owner John Ellerton had put up for sale, before deciding to buy the Fairbourne.

Extracts from *Narrow Gauge News*, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join up, see the advert on page 45 or go to www.ngrs.org.uk.



Special Events

Only events of interest to rail enthusiasts are included in this guide. Particularly due to the Covid-19 situation please check with venue before travelling – for contact details see Diary on following page.

■ **Wed to Sun in Sept; Devon Railway Centre Open Day** Museum near Tiverton, 2ft gauge line. <http://devonrailwaycentre.co.uk>. Pre-booking only due to Covid-19 restrictions, see website.

■ **12th-13th Sept; Apedale Valley Railway Farewell Joffre** Last event for Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST before 10-year overhaul.

■ **12th-13th Sept; Statfold Barn Railway Road & Rail Festival** Railway running, road steam, vintage & US vehicles, music.

■ **19th-20th Sept, Leek & Rudyard Railway Steam Gala** Check website for further details.



The Apedale Valley Railway plans a celebration for its Kerr Stuart Joffre 0-6-0T before the loco is withdrawn for its 10-year overhaul in September. Photo: Andrew Charman

Organising a post Covid special event with a narrow gauge theme? Send all the details to us so we can fully publicise your event amongst the narrow gauge community.

E-mail andrew.charman@warnersgroup.co.uk or send to 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfaer Caereinion, Powys SY21 0BD

Miniature Railways

- **Audley End Railway** (10.25in): Essex 01799 541354, www.audley-end-railway.co.uk Daily to 6th, then weekends
- **Beer Heights Light Railway** (7.25in): Devon 01297 21542, www.pecorama.co.uk Closed throughout 2020.
- **Lappa Valley Railway** (15, 10.25, 7.25in): Cornwall 01872 510317, www.lappavalley.co.uk Daily from 10am.
- **Littlehampton Miniature Railway** (12.25in): Sussex www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com Closed until further notice
- **Moors Valley Railway** (7.25in): Hants 01425 471415, www.moorsvalleyrailway.co.uk Daily to 13th then weekends
- **North Bay Railway, Scarborough** (20in): Yorks 01723 368791, www.nbr.org.uk, Open daily from 10.30am
- **Rhyl Miniature Railway** (15in): Clwyd 01352 759109, www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk Open 1st, 2nd, then weekends

Tramways

- **Douglas Horse Tramway: Isle of Man** 01624 662525, www.rail.im/ Not operating in 2020 due to promenade work.
- **Great Orme Tramway: Conwy** 01492 577877, www.greatormetramway.co.uk No reopening date yet announced.
- **Manx Electric Railway: Isle of Man** 01624 662525, www.rail.im Current dates 1st, 5th-6th, 7th-8th, 12th-13th.
- **Seaton Tramway: Devon** 01297 20375, www.tram.co.uk Daily services, every 20 minutes from 10am.
- **Snaefell Mountain Railway: Isle of Man** 01624 662525, www.rail.im No reopening date currently announced.

More railways running, but still vital to check ahead...

Once again we are able to print a diary of lines expected to be running throughout September, correct up to our press day of 14th August.

As last month a line not being listed below does not necessarily mean it will not be open, but that plans were not revealed by our deadline. **It remains essential** that anyone planning to visit a line checks on its website before travelling for latest news. Timetables may change at short notice, many are operating via pre-booked tickets only to control numbers and provide Covid-19 traceability, while there will also be other restrictions in place – some lines for example are not running over their full length.

Any change in the coronavirus situation, such as the imposition of fresh lockdowns, could change the situation at short notice – again we will publish latest information we receive on **NGW's** social media feeds, listed on page 3.

Subject to all that we hope you can visit some railways, the early take-up at reopened lines has been very positive and they need it to continue...



■ The Bala Lake Railway was the first Welsh line to reopen on 9th July – Hunslet 0-4-OST 'George B' is seen here working a service back to Llanuwchllyn on 29th July. *Photo: Joey Evans*

What's On

	Tue 1st	Wed 2nd	Thu 3rd	Fri 4th	Sat 5th	Sun 6th	Mon 7th	Tue 8th	Wed 9th	Thu 10th	Fri 11th	Sat 12th	Sun 13th	Mon 14th	Tue 15th	Wed 16th	Thu 17th	Fri 18th	Sat 19th	Sun 20th	Mon 21st	Tue 22nd	Wed 23rd	Thu 24th	Fri 25th	Sat 26th	Sun 27th	Mon 28th	Tue 29th	Wed 30th
Amberley Museum: 01798 831370 www.amberleymuseum.co.uk																														
Amerton Railway: 01785 850965 www.amertonrailway.co.uk																														
Apedale Valley Rly: 0845 094 1953 www.avlr.org.uk																														
Bala Lake Railway: 01678 540666 www.bala-lake-railway.co.uk																														
Bressingham: 01379 686900 www.bressingham.co.uk																														
Bure Valley Railway: 01263 733858 www.bvrw.co.uk																														
Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway 01472 604657 www.cclr.co.uk				Expected to be open but dates not announced at press time																										
Evesham Vale Light Rly: 01386 422282 www.evlr.co.uk																														
Exbury Gardens Railway: 023 80891203 www.exbury.co.uk																														
Fairbourne Railway: 01341 250362 www.fairbournerrailway.com																														
Ffestiniog Railway: 01766 516000 www.festrail.co.uk				Services Porthmadog - Tan-y-Bwlch only																										
Groulle Glen Railway: 01624 670453 www.ggr.org.uk																														
Hayling Seaside Rly: 07775 696912 www.haylingrailway.com																														
Heatherslaw Light Rly: 01890 820317 www.heatherslawlightrailway.co.uk																														
Isle of Man Steam Rly: 01624 663366 www.gov.im/publictransport																														
Kirklees Light Rly: 01484 865727 www.kirkleeslightrailway.co.uk																														
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Llanberis Lake Rly: 01286 870549 www.lake-railway.co.uk																														
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Perrygrove Railway: 01594 834991 www.perrygrove.co.uk																														
Ravenglass & Eskdale Rly: 01229 717171 www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk																														
Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Rly 01797 362353, www.rhdr.org.uk				Open in September, timetable days to be confirmed at press time – check website for latest details																										
Ruislip Lido Railway: 01895 622595 www.ruislipidorailway.org																														
Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway: 01795 424899, www.sklr.net																														
Snowdon Mountain Rly: 0870 450 0033 www.snowdonrailway.co.uk				All 2020 services to Clogwyn only, summit closed																										
Talylyn Railway: 01654 710472 www.talylyn.co.uk																														
Threlkeld Msm: 01768 779747, www.threlkeldquarryandminingmuseum.co.uk																														
Wells Walsingham Rly: 01328 711630 www.wwlr.co.uk																														
Welsh Highland Railway 01766 516000, www.festrail.co.uk				Services Caernarfon - Beddgelert only, see website																										
Welsh Highland Heritage Railway 01766 513402, www.whr.co.uk				Expected to be open in September, timetable days to be confirmed at press time – check website for latest details																										
Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway 01938 810441, www.wllr.org.uk				Expected to be open in September, timetable days to be confirmed at press time – check website for latest details																										
West Lancashire Light Railway 01772 815881, www.westlancs.org				Hopes to open in September – timetable days to be confirmed - check website for latest details																										
KEY Trains (steam or diesel), Special events, No trains	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

No responsibility can be accepted for dates on this list - check with line before travelling. Not listed? Send details to address on page 3 or to andrew.charman@warnersgroup.co.uk

A 1920s Talyllyn family outing

Tim Edmonds makes a remarkable discovery while sorting through a collection of old photographs.

Sorting through old family photos is one of those tasks that raises mixed emotions. There is usually a large dollop of nostalgia and poignancy, perhaps with fond memories of favourite aunts, uncles or grandparents. There is often also a fair amount of frustration when pictures show forgotten faces and there is nothing written on a print or negative envelope to identify the people portrayed.

Sometimes a picture is found with an undoubted 'Wow!' factor and whilst sorting through the oddments from my father's photographs, comprising mainly family and railway shots, I came across such a picture. It is a wonderful period-piece showing a family group of six people posed on a narrow gauge railway wagon.

There was no information with the photo about the date, location, or people but I recognised my grandfather Frank holding onto the brake lever and my father Bernard and his sister Irene in the centre. Next to my grandfather was my grandmother Olive, who died in 1935, and looking through some old photos identified the older of the other two women as Frank's sister

Alice. The photo was taken on my father's camera, so I surmised that it was Alice's husband Alfred who took the picture. I have not managed to identify the woman on the right.

As to the date, among the earliest surviving pictures by my father are a couple he took of Talyllyn Railway locomotive no 2 'Dolgoch' at Abergynolwyn in 1927, when he was 17 years old. This would fit in with him wearing a school cap in the family picture and confirmed what I had already suspected, that this was taken on the Talyllyn. The wagon is one of the TR timber slate wagons and is, unsurprisingly, one of the fleet fitted with a handbrake.

Frank was from Birmingham and in about 1920 had purchased a terraced cottage at Arthog. It was used for holidays by family and friends and these would usually include outings to Welsh narrow gauge railways, with the Fairbourne being the closest and the Talyllyn just a short train ride away.

Required reading

For my seventh birthday present my father gave me my first 'proper' railway book and one which I

treasure to this day: P B Whitehouse's classic *Narrow Gauge Album*, which had just been published. It describes how slate wagons were added regularly to TR trains in the summer months and were popular as open carriages: "Indeed, it was quite in order to hire a wagon for the day and arrange for it to be attached to the morning or afternoon train from Towyn and removed at Dolgoch or some other beauty spot, where the party would picnic in the woods or by the waterfalls, returning at its convenience by gravity power."

J I C Boyd also mentions this practice in his pioneering book *Narrow Gauge Railways in Mid-Wales*, noting that "someone had the bright idea that Up passengers, anxious to spend a full day out in the hills, might prefer to return to Towyn by gravity after the last train had left at 4pm. They were catered for by allowing them to hire a wagon, left in the former bay platform at Abergynolwyn until they wished to return."

Which of these scenarios applied here we have no way of knowing, but both would be unthinkable today and one wonders what provisions there were to avoid accidents. **NGW**

"Passengers anxious to spend a full day out in the hills, might prefer to return to Towyn by gravity after the last train had left at 4pm..."



The Edmonds family outing in a hired slate wagon on the Talyllyn Railway in the summer of 1927. Photo: B B Edmonds collection

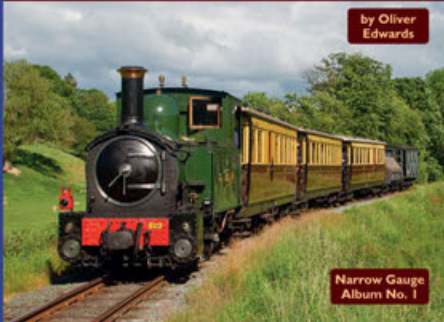
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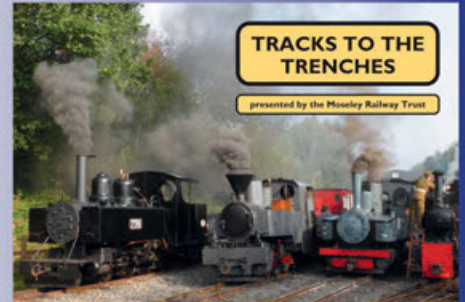
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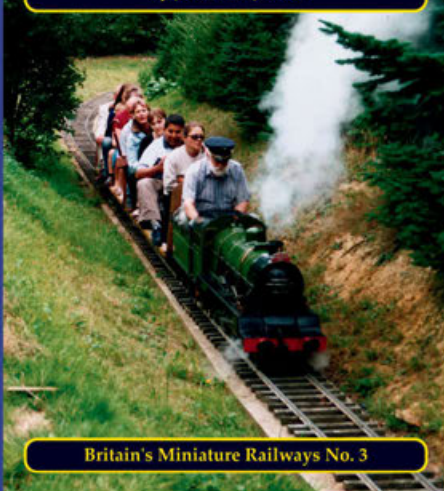
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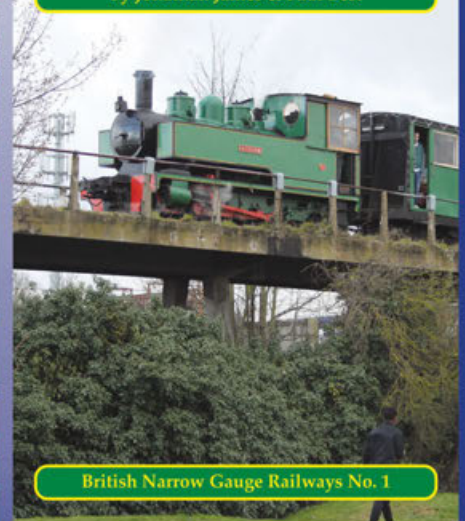
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