

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

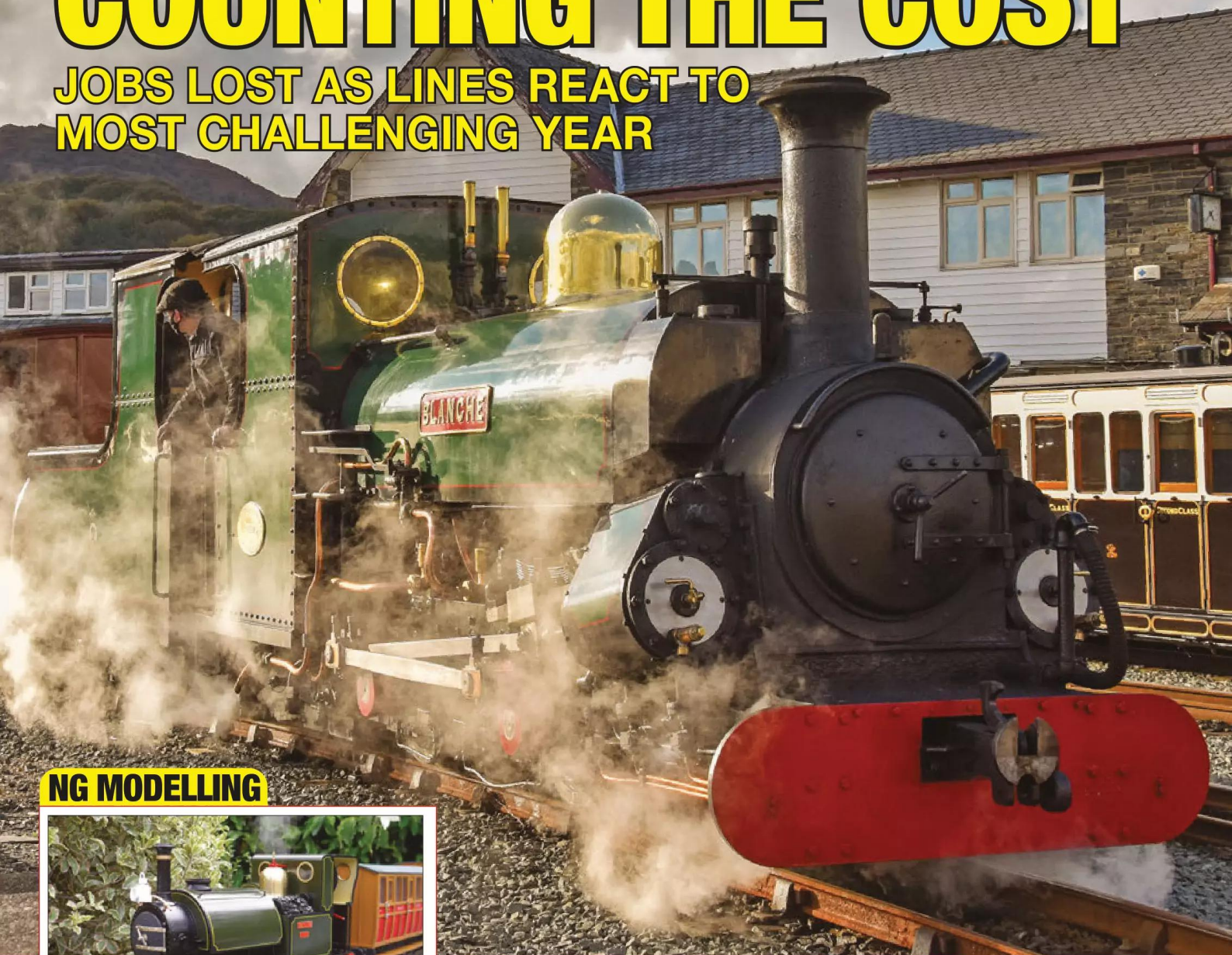
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NOV-DEC 2020



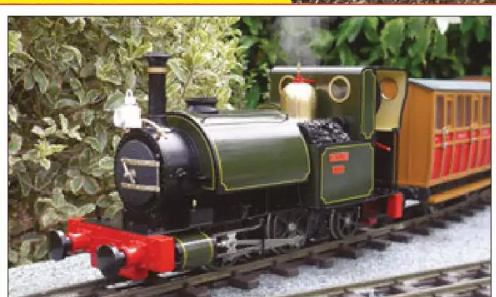
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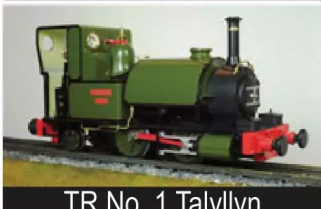
L&B Howard Van



L&E Bogie Van



1:13.7 KS Wren 0-4-0ST



TR No. 1 Talyllyn



I.O.M. 'Mona' 2-4-0T



1:32 'Victory' 0-6-0T



1:32 BR Mk1 Coaches



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Cover: The Ffestiniog Railway's former Penrhyn Quarries Hunslet 2-4-0ST, 'Blanche' about to leave Porthmadog Harbour station on Thursday 8th October, in glorious evening light that was not reflected during the Bygones Weekend over the following three days! More from the Bygones weekend features in this issue.

Photos: Joey Evans and David Joy

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NARROW GAUGE WORLD

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NEXT ISSUE – JAN-FEB 2021
On Sale 18th December

Reflecting on a troubled year...



Welcome to **NGW153**, the first of our bi-monthly 'winter-season' issues – and I must admit, as I was laying out this issue, and in particular the *On the Shelf* pages with the traditional end-of-year round-up of Christmas cards and calendars, I did think to myself, "where on earth has this year gone?"

Of course many, perhaps even most of us will be glad to see the back of 2020. You don't need telling that for the narrow gauge world, as for the whole world, these have been extremely challenging times, and we are by no means out of the woods yet. I expect very few of us, even when we went into lockdown way back in March, thought for a moment that we would be facing similar restrictions in November, and that the word Covid would still be dominating every news bulletin.

In the narrow gauge arena, after months of many expressing fears of what the longer-term effects of the pandemic might be, in recent weeks we have started to see some hard evidence of the kind we didn't want. As you will read on the next page we now have a UK narrow gauge railway operator facing insolvency. We now have redundancies being confirmed, and I fear those already announced will not be the last.

Being a Trustee of a heritage railway, one of the greatest challenges I've found in recent weeks is the unknown. In the early

stages of the pandemic the priority was to ensure survival. While most could see that being closed for between half a season and for some railways a whole season would of course affect planning for 2021, few likely planned for the spectre of Covid still hanging over us as we approach the end of the year. As a result making firm plans for 2021 is virtually impossible, because we really don't know what sort of environment we will be in when Spring arrives and hopefully new operating seasons.

Glass half full

Myself, I'm going to take the optimistic view, as expressed by the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway directors when they drafted out a range of scenarios for next year, and decided to plan on the basis that we will be returning to a sense of normality. For everyone's sake, let's hope that's the case and after what will no doubt be a tough end to 2020, we will head into the new year coming out of the other side of the challenges.

There have been positives of course – the Government aid to English railways is very welcome, and we can only hope the Welsh Government decides to help the 'Great Little Trains' in similar fashion. And those lines that have opened have seen passenger numbers far greater, even on

socially-distanced trains, than they dared to hope.

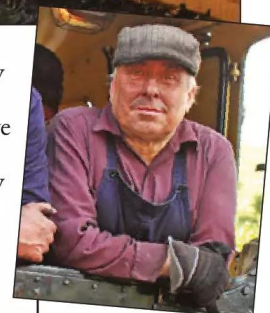
We must build on these positive signs and step forward boldly into 2021. I think all of us will actually breathe a small sigh of relief when the things we are worried about return to being the likes of coal supplies and Brexit...

Good for the soul

For various reasons, mostly Covid-induced, I haven't stepped on a steam loco footplate for over a year now, and my volunteer duties for the Welshpool & Llanfair have been restricted to basically the same stuff I do in my day job – designing magazines, writing press releases and the like. So when my daughter's partner invited me to go and help him for a day in his new role as the engineer of the Fairbourne Railway, I jumped at the chance. As you can read starting on page 36, I had a great time, spending my day on a lathe and in a diesel, and the one day has so far been three...

My point? There are hundreds of roles at railways waiting for volunteers to fill them, and until you try one for yourself you won't understand how much fun it can be. For me working at the Fairbourne has proven an excellent switch-off from the daily grind – see, doing stuff on railways is good for your health! Go on, give it a try...

Andrew Charman



"Making firm plans for 2021 is virtually impossible, we really don't know what sort of environment we will be in..."

Main photo: Yes we know the Ffestiniog Railway's 'Blanche' features on this issue's cover but we couldn't resist this picture, also by Joey Evans, as we move into the twilight of a year that likely won't be remembered kindly by most...



Jobs to be lost as lines count the cost of Covid-19 pandemic

Longer-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have emerged in recent weeks, with the South Tynedale Railway's operator going into administration and joining the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway in announcing redundancies.

In a statement issued in early September South Tynedale Railway Ltd, which operates the Cumbrian 2ft gauge line, announced it was entering administration, and five jobs would be lost. The STR has not opened in 2020, its season having been due to commence five days after the Covid-19 lockdown began.

The line is, however, owned by the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society, which is a charity and unaffected by the insolvency of the operating company. The STRPS has begun working to find ways for the line to open in 2021 and is understood to be in possession of the legal powers needed to operate the line.

Acting Society chairman David Granath told local media that the future remains uncertain, with the Covid-19 pandemic raising questions as to whether such a line as the STR can be run without paid staff.

Aiding the efforts of the volunteers will no doubt be the award of £84,300 of funding, part of a rescue package for heritage organisations announced by the UK Government's £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund (see story on page 6).

The STR has also so far raised more than £5,000 through its Covid-19 appeal. Donations to this appeal can still be made through www.south-tynedale-railway-org.uk/covid-19-appeal

FFWHR staff cuts unavoidable

After consulting staff on 14th September, Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway directors issued a statement warning that the conclusion of the Government's furlough scheme at the end of October would make redundancies unavoidable.

Directors had considered a range of predictable scenarios first for this winter and then for 2021. Even before the onset of the second wave of Covid which appeared

to be happening as *NGW* went to press, the FF&WHR expected a difficult winter, believing it will be unlikely to be able to operate its Santa Special services which traditionally generate strong revenue levels.

For 2021 the FF&WHR board is working towards a more optimistic view that will see both the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland lines open over their full length, which has not been possible in 2020.

Efficiencies will be progressed, including making ticket pre-booking easier and designing a train service more closely aligned to demand, along with focusing engineering staff over the winter on specific projects such as the Boston Lodge restoration, rather than the usual repair and maintenance work that will not be needed due to the restricted running in 2020.

With these measures in place the FF&WHR company believes it can remain solvent and break even in 2021, so long as

passenger levels rise to 80 per cent of those in the last 'normal' year of 2019. However this will require some redundancies, likely to be in excess of 20 posts, and consultation with staff is beginning.

The board also considered a scenario with passenger levels of only 60 per cent, but this would see similar overheads and infrastructure costs for too little revenue – the railway would only be able to reopen in sections and much heavier redundancy levels would be needed, resulting in a slower recovery from the effects of Covid-19.

Above left: Unconfirmed reports suggest that the South Tynedale Railway's extension to Slaggyford in 2017 has not produced the revenue increase that was expected.

Photo: Dave Hewitt

Above: Operating over only half its length in 2020 has significantly hit Ffestiniog Railway revenue in 2020.

Photo: Chris Parry/FFWHR

New Covid restrictions end seasons

As *NGW* closed for press on 17th October new Government tiered lockdowns, in a bid to arrest an apparent second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, were having an immediate effect on the UK's preserved railways.

While the new restrictions only applied to parts of England, the Welsh Government put several districts into local lockdowns, including parts of Gwynedd, home to a number of lines. Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford also strongly hinted that he would consider announcing a nationwide 'circuit-breaker' lockdown of around two to three weeks on 19th October.

As a result on 17th October the Bala Lake Railway announced it would not be running as planned the following day and would review its planned trains for the rest of the season after the Government announcement.

The Snowdon Mountain Railway decided that existing restrictions made ending its 2020 season inevitable and ran its final train on 16th October. Many SMR visitors come from the Liverpool area, one of the most severely locked-down areas.

Other railways suggested to *NGW* that the weekend could see their final trains of the year depending on Government announcements. Any reader planning to visit a line in coming weeks should check for the latest situation on their website.

Bala Lake's season may have ended prematurely.

Photo: Kenny Felstead





Government hands cash help to lines

A host of narrow gauge railways and Avenues have benefited from a package of significant funding announced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage and the Heritage Stimulus Fund, funded by the Government and administered at arm's length by Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, made its first round of grants totalling £67 million to 443 heritage organisations across England.

Among rail organisations to win grants under the scheme was the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society, which was told it would receive £84,300, days after the separate South Tynedale Railway Ltd operating company went into administration (*see story on page 5*).

STRPS acting chairman David Granath, who is leading efforts to ensure the Cumbrian line reopens in 2021, welcomed the grant. "This funding gives us hope that we can once again welcome visitors back to the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to ride through the lovely South Tyne Valley on our trains," he said.

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway received £79,300 which a spokesman said "will see us through the winter."

The Devon line has been running trains following government guidelines since 18th July and has carried more people this year than at the same time in 2019.

"The railway would normally be closed from the end of October until March although our expenditure of course continues throughout that period, notably on premises, costs and staff salaries to supplement the work of the volunteers, and we therefore welcome the grant," the L&BR spokesman added.

A grant of £470,000 was made to the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. General manager Danny Martin commented that the money will ensure the 15-inch gauge line can continue to open

through the winter with additional running days in November, January and February, and be ready for many more visitors in the main season from March 2021. "We are both relieved and very grateful for the chance this gives us and the confidence it shows in our ability to work hard and deliver the best possible railway in 2021 and beyond," he added.

Other grants made as part of the scheme included £435,100 to the Seaton Tramway, £26,500 to the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, £895,000 to the Hollycombe Steam Collection and £80,000 to Amberley Museum.

The Welsh Government is running an equivalent scheme, the Wales Cultural Recovery Fund. The deadline for applications closed at the end of September and applicants, including a number of Welsh narrow gauge heritage railways, are waiting to hear the results.

Photo: The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway will receive £470,000 to help it through the winter. Photo: Chris Kennedy

Buzzrail sells out its reopening weekend

The Leighton Buzzard Railway declared its first operating weekend of 2020 on 19th September a success, with more than 400 passengers carried over the two days across 12 departures.

The latest to reopen in the wake of Covid-19, the Bedfordshire 2ft gauge line sold out every compartment of its socially-distanced trains in advance.

Visitors were able to enjoy most of the features of the former sand railway, with only the internal areas at Stonehenge Works out of bounds.

Rostering resident steam locos, Barclay 0-6-0T 'Doll' (1641/1919) and Baldwin 4-6-0PT no 778 (44656/1917), the railway was planning to run every Sunday until 1st November as well as on Saturdays on 10th and 31st October, and Tuesday and Wednesday 27th and 28th October for the school half term holiday.

However these plans could be changed by the again-deteriorating Covid situation, and in any case the LBR recommends that intending visitors book their tickets online in advance to avoid disappointment.

Photo: Rocky Lancer/LBR

■ Well-travelled Barclay 0-4-0 'Jack' (1871/1925) was able to have a last run on a brief visit to the Amerton Railway on 20th September before the former Granton Gasworks locomotive is withdrawn for a planned overhaul. **Photo: Stuart Chapman**





Rheidol completes new heritage stock shed

The Vale of Rheidol Railway may have remained closed throughout the 2020 season but work on its £2.2 million 'Wales to the World' project has continued, the completion of a new museum collection and heritage rolling stock protection shed concluding the second phase of the project.

The new shed at the line's Aberystwyth terminus has cost £531,000 to build and equip, being constructed in the former station space liberated when the VoR relocated its passenger facilities as phase one of the project.

The structure can accommodate 36 bogie carriages on its three roads in secure covered accommodation. Two full-length roads, each long enough to accommodate 12 carriages, will house the line's two standard seven-carriage service rakes when not in use with additional capacity for further stock storage.

The third road incorporates a section 10 bogie carriages in length, which can be partitioned off with an electric sectional door. This will house historically important locos and stock in a heated and ventilated temperature-controlled environment.

The centre road incorporates a pit near the entrance doors to enable maintenance of bogies and a section of reinforced flooring to accommodate lifting jacks.

The heating and lighting is powered via a

45Kw solar panel array on the south-facing side of the roof, which will also provide electricity for the station building and shop, and the multi-function display and entertainment facility to be developed within the ex-GWR loco shed, while also feeding power back into the national grid.

The line has already mounted solar panels on the roof of the former standard-gauge loco shed to power the works and the new panels make the entire VoR Aberystwyth site electrically self-sufficient.

Construction of the new building began in the latter part of 2019. It was on target for completion in April 2020 until delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Now with the building complete the track connections to the station and ex-GWR loco shed will be laid during November and stock moved inside.

VoR general manager and chief engineer, Llyr ap Iolo described the new shed as a massive asset while chairman, Rob Gambrill, commented; "A massive thank you must go to our contractors who carried on through what has been a really tricky time – it is a credit to them that the project remained on track and budget.

"Seeing the former Great Western Engine Shed revived and given a new life is the next exciting phase of our plans," Rob added.

Above: The new heritage shed, built alongside the former Vale of Rheidol platform at Aberystwyth.

Right: View inside the new shed – the partitioned-off road 3 can be seen to the right.

Photos: Cliff Thomas/Vale of Rheidol Railway



BRIEF LINES

Manx tank goes to Ross

Isle of Man Steam Railway Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T no 10 'G H Wood' left the island on route to Alan Keef Ltd, near Ross-on-Wye in Wales on 8th October, where it is to undergo an overhaul.

Tram in collision with car

Manx Electric Tramway winter saloon no 19 was in collision with a car on a level crossing at Cornaa, halfway between Laxey and Ramsey, on 20th September. No one on the tram car or in the road vehicle was injured in the incident – no 19 sustained minor damage but was able to continue.

Busy trains at Ravenglass

The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway has reported strong passenger levels in recent weeks, despite the reduced train capacity due to Covid-19 social distancing. Passenger levels have been running at around 60 per cent of a normal year and the line's retail outlets are performing well too.

Elin progress at Richmond

Winter projects at the private Richmond Light Railway in Kent include the continuing overhaul of quarry Hunslet 'Elin' (705/1899), which is currently having its bottom end rebuilt and saddle tank refurbished. Major restoration work on the boiler and firebox has been completed and the boiler was set to be retubed as **NGW** went to press.

Progress on Chaloner

The major overhaul of the Leighton Buzzard Railway's De Winton vertical-boiler loco 'Chaloner', which dates from 1877, has continued to make major progress, with the wheels transported to Statfold Engineering for work and the boiler repairs underway in Somerset. Meanwhile the loco's water tank is being restored at the LBR's Stonehenge works.

England error

A sub-editing error led to James Waite's feature on the Ffestiniog locomotive 'Welsh Pony' in **NGW** 152 stating that all four original England locos were rebuilt to match the later large-England class. Of course we do know that original England 'Mountaineer' was never rebuilt into a saddle tank, retaining its original side tanks until withdrawal in 1879. Apologies for the error.



North Bay transporter 'will transform' loco movements by road

North Bay Railway Engineering Services has unveiled its new transporter system which it says could transform the way narrow gauge locomotives are moved around the country.

The Darlington-based mechanical engineering specialist has built a specialised lifting frame which will be used to transport the locos it builds or restores. It will also be made available for other users.

"Traditionally locos have either been craned or winched onto the backs of lorries some away off the ground," said NBRES managing director David Humphreys.

"We looked at the way the construction industry moves plant around and thought we had a lot to learn from the way they use 'hook loading' techniques. We've worked with a local haulage specialist to perfect the NBRES system".

The lifting frame is fitted with rail gauges set at 3ft, 2ft 6in, 2ft and 15-inch, while other gauges can be accommodated by fitting an extra rail.

It can handle locos weighing up to 14 tonnes and incorporates a hydraulic winch to pull the loco onto the frame.

"From the ground, the locomotive is winched onto the appropriate rails. The platform is only ten inches off the ground making it much easier to load than traditional methods. It is then chained down and the whole ensemble is lifted onto the back of an eight-wheel specialist truck".

David adds that the operation is both easier and faster than traditional methods. "From arriving on site, loading the locomotive and setting off takes about 30 minutes, including the loading onto the back of the truck which can be done in under a minute. Unloading is even faster; less than 20 minutes".

NBRES debuted the new transporter when returning the newly overhauled Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Thomas Bach' to the Llanberis Lake Railway on 28th September. The company is now welcoming enquiries for movements anywhere in the UK, while European movements can be considered.

Above and below: 'Thomas Bach' becomes the first engine to be loaded onto North Bay's new transporter system on 28th September.

Photos: NBRES



Corris chairman sounds cautious note for future

The Chairman of the Corris Railway has warned members that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic could mean that hard decisions need to be made to both safeguard what has already been achieved with the revival of the mid-Wales line and its future.

The Corris has been unable to operate at all in 2020 and writing in the latest edition of the Society's magazine the *Corris-Pondent*, Chairman Richard Hamilton-Foyn considered the potential consequences of restrictions on running passenger trains and 'Railway For The Day' experiences continuing into 2021.

The lack of operations in 2020 has cut out fares, on-site donations and on-day sales and while there have been generous donations from members and others, plus useful income from sales via the online shop, this has not fully compensated.

Richard emphasised his reluctance to "go cap in hand" to members and supporters but added that there is uncertainty ahead and help is appreciated.

Embankment progress

Meanwhile despite the enforced closure members have been continuing with projects, with notably progress again stepping up on building of the embankment needed for the line's planned extension south of Maespoeth. A spell of dry weather in September, following a disappointing August, allowed more construction work on the embankment using more of the infill material made available from Dolgellau.

A welcome development amongst the volunteer force has been the emergence of the 'Sundae Gang', a group of generally young volunteers who have tackled both trackwork and lineside vegetation including opening out views. Working on Sundays they acquired their name from 'refuelling breaks' involving cake consumption.

Donations to specific projects or general funds remain welcome and can be made via the website at www.corris.co.uk, or by sending cheques payable to 'Corris Railway, to the Corris Railway, Station Yard, Corris, Machynlleth, SY20 9SH.

Silver milestone for electric group

Members of the Volk's Electric Railway Association (VERA) marked a milestone date on 16th September, exactly 25 years since a meeting was held in the Pavilion hotel at Brighton launching the supporters group for the pioneer 2ft 8½-inch gauge electric line. Covid restrictions prevented a proper celebration but VERA plans a '25+1' event in 2021.



Tralee carriage project makes progress and changes history

Months after starting its restoration of original Tralee & Dingle Railway third-class carriage 7T of 1890, the Cavan & Leitrim Railway is reporting major progress with the project.

Built by the Bristol Wagon and Carriage Company, 7T was supplied to the TDLR for the opening of the 31-mile line. Its chassis, along with that of sister vehicle 8T have been extricated from where they have been stored for more than 25 years.

The three original bogies on site, two from 8T and one thought to be from carriage 6T have been lined up, according to project coordinator Darragh Connolly the first time all three bogies have been together in many years. "The siding has been christened the 'dingle extension'", he said.

The chassis and bogies are all considered to be in good condition considering their age.

The C&LR is currently contacting external contractors to take on the job of restoring the chassis of 7T along with the three original bogies to create a rolling chassis. The railway will then tackle the bodywork using the intact carriage 10T as a guide.

Darragh has appealed for support for the project from those interested in the Tralee &

Dingle or Irish narrow gauge in general.

"Those that really want to travel in an original authentic Irish narrow gauge train should try and support us where they can, the restoration costs will be significant but every penny helps," he said.

Donations can be made by emailing dromodrailway@gmail.com or through the website at <https://cavanandleitrim.wixsite.com/home/vintage-train>

Early work on the bogies has revealed interesting history. Cleaning down the axles of one bogie showed that the wheels were stamped 1889, suggesting some of the carriages were built in that year and used by the contractor Robert Worthington before the line officially opened in 1890.

One vehicle built by the Bristol Carriage & Wagon Co was used on the Cavan & Leitrim and long thought to be vehicle 5T of 1890. But a plate recovered from a field in Fenagh outside Ballinamore suggests it was carriage 9T, one of two built in 1891 for the Tralee & Dingle and later sent to the C&L.

The carriage bogies lined up for inspection and inset, the recovered plate determined to be from vehicle 9T.

Photos: C&LR

Bala extension petition gains major support

The Bala Lake Railway has seen an "overwhelming response" to its petition launched to convince the Welsh Government to support the line's extension into Bala.

The project, first launched in 2014 aims to add around a mile to the length of the 2ft gauge line, taking it from its present terminus on the opposite side of the Bala Lake into the town of Bala itself, to a terminus site which has already been acquired by the BLR and is close to Bala's town centre.

So far in excess of £1.2 million has been spent on the project, but another £2.5m will be needed to make it a reality, including funding a bridging of the River Dee between the present terminus and the town.

As *NGW* went to press the Bala Lake Railway Trust petition had gained more than 2,200 signatures, which BLR chairman Julian Birley described as an overwhelming response, adding to support from traders in Bala who have been gathering support for the scheme.

The BLR estimates that a terminus in Bala will create up to 55,000 visitors a year and inject some £1.25m annually into the town and surrounding businesses.

"It will make Bala a place of destination where visitors can come and enjoy all that the town and the lake have to offer," the BLR stated.

The Welsh Government has expressed its general support for the project. "We are continuing to have positive discussions with the Bala Lake Railway", a spokesman said. "We see this as being a strategically important project for the area."

The Welsh Highland Heritage Railway at Porthmadog was one of the latter lines to join the operating roster in 2020, reopening on 13th August. In early September the line was running trains on Thursdays and Saturdays. On 5th September the 84hp Hunslet 'Emma' was rostered on trains, the volunteers well used to the 'new normal' of cleaning trains between trips.

Photos: Michael Chapman/WHHR





■ Highlight of the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones Weekend on 9th-11th October was the official naming ceremony for large England 0-4-OST 'Welsh Pony', which since returning to service in August following a full restoration has been carrying 'No.5' on its name plates. Held on Saturday 10th October in weather described as "very damp" by the FF&WHR's Chris Parry, who took the photo, the unveiling of the nameplates was performed by Michael Davies, who took part in the first working party on the railway on 23rd October 1954.

Eight-Simplex cavalcade for Lincolnshire's diamond party

The Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway has continued behind-closed-doors 60th anniversary celebrations for its members by for the first time operating all eight of its historic Motor Rail 'Simplex' diesel locomotives together.

The enforced closure of the line due to Covid-19 restrictions allowed volunteers to complete a 30-year project to restore to working order the 'Skeg Simplex', which once worked at the resort's brickworks.

In 1953 the loco survived inundation by seawater and sand in the catastrophic East Coast floods, which killed 307 people in England, a further 224 at sea and a total of 2,551 across four countries. The 1947-built Simplex was recovered, emptied of sea water and sand, restarted and put to work helping to strengthen sea defences in the Mablethorpe area.

The locomotive was acquired in poor

condition by a member of the LCLR's Historic Vehicles Trust, who donated it to the charity which initiated restoration.

Oldest loco in the September cavalcade was 'Nocton', a bow-frame Simplex built in 1920. It ran on the Nocton Estates Railway in the Lincolnshire Fens, before purchase by the LCLR 50 years ago. Restoration of the loco's original radiator enabled a return to working order in time to take part in the celebration.

Also in the line-up on the LCLR's line at Skegness Water Park was the original loco from the opening day of the line on 27th August 1960. No 1 'Paul' was built as a bow-frame Simplex in 1926.

Below: Centenarian 'Nocton' leads the parade past Old South Loop beside Skegness Airfield, followed by 8622, the 'Skeg Simplex', 'Sark', 'Wilton', 'Major J A Robins RE', 'Paul' and 'T3'.

Photo: Dave Enefer/LCLR



Gunpowder line hunts diesel loco

The 2ft 6in gauge railway at the Royal Gunpowder Mills museum at Waltham Abbey in Essex is on the hunt for a further diesel locomotive.

Currently the line, which has only been officially operating since the summer of 2011, has two locomotives in use – a 40hp Hunslet of 1979 which was built for the RAF and an 80hp Baguley Drewry built in the 1980s for the RNAD.

The Baguley is typically rostered on passenger services while the Hunslet is used on all works trains.

Nick Turner, of the group running the line, tells *NGW* that it had been decided an additional loco was required and a search for a suitable example has been undertaken, so far without success. "I have to say that lockdown probably has not helped," Nick said.

"What we are seeking is a four wheel diesel locomotive of around 80-100hp, preferably of 2ft 6in gauge although something a little broader could be re-gauged if necessary. The one critical issue is the overall width – it is limited to five feet (1500mm) due to infrastructure limits on the line."

Nick adds that condition is not necessarily critical; "we already have a specialist contractor who is willing to undertake restoration."

Anyone who might know of a potential candidate loco can contact Nick on n.turner707@btinternet.com or through the *NGW* editorial office.



■ Signs of more progress on the project to recreate the only one of the Ffestiniog Railway's original England 0-4-0s not to survive, 'Mountaineer' – the larger of these castings at North Bay Engineering is one of the driving wheels for the project. The smaller wheel is for the third Bagnall Sipat 0-4-OST that North Bay is building (*NGW*152).

The Mountaineer project has thanked its various sponsors and contributors who have made casting of the wheels possible, and has now started a fund to cast and machine the cylinders. More details can be found at www.1863mountaineerloco.co.uk

■ The Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones Weekend on 9th-11th October provided plenty of entertainment despite having to be reinvented as a scaled-down event in place of the line's traditional Victorian Weekend due to Covid-19. While there were no costumed attendees or sideshows, special train sets were run and tours of Boston Lodge workshops held.

Star of the event was without doubt the now fully-lined large England 0-4-OST 'Welsh Pony' (right) even before it received its nameplates (facing page). However the other smaller locos certainly played their part, including recently returned to service Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Lilla' (below), England 0-4-OST 'Palmerston' seen here on a slate working as it might have worked 150 years ago (below right), and former Penrhyn Quarries 2-4-OST 'Linda' (bottom).

Photos: Chris Parry/FFWHR and Joey Evans (Linda). See also Gallery pages





Sittingbourne – season saved by Upnor carriages

The Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway has credited its rake of four former Chattenden & Upnor Light Railway carriages with enabling it to reopen and effectively operate under social distancing rules in 2020.

While the Upnor line was only located 20 miles from today's S&KLR in Kent, the carriages were acquired from the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in 1978 – the W&LLR had purchased them as its first preservation-era rolling stock following closure of the Upnor line in 1961.

As purchased by the W&LLR the four carriages, built in 1941 by Cravens, were very basic wooden-bodied toastrack vehicles, with individual compartments and no doors. Volunteers on the mid-Wales line rebuilt the carriages, adding half-doors to two of them and full doors and windows to the other two.

Retention of the separate compartments made it very easy for the S&KLR to make the carriages suitable for socially distanced operation, only needing to add internal wooden partitions filling in the gap between the seat backs and the roof of each compartment. Tickets for each compartment could then be sold to a family group or social bubble, with the

carriages being cleaned after each trip.

"These coaches are vital to the operation of the railway at these times because our original Bowaters coaches cannot support social distancing as they have longitudinal bench seats," a S&KLR spokesman said.

"No one at Cravens, when they built the coaches in 1941, could have imagined that they would still be operating 79 years later or performing such a vital service."

Above: The Upnor carriages in September last year – they could have been designed for social distancing. Photo: Andrew Charman

Below: Inside one of the vehicles with the partition extension clearly visible. Photo: SKLR



■ The Crowle Peatland Railway opened to the public as part of the annual Heritage Open Day events in September and hosted two photo charters each Saturday evening. In glorious light on 19th September *Stuart Chapman* pictured two of the railway's Schoma diesel hydraulic locomotives and the recently acquired Lisbon Tram 711. See also Gallery pages

Insurance case 'not won yet' after court rules for railways

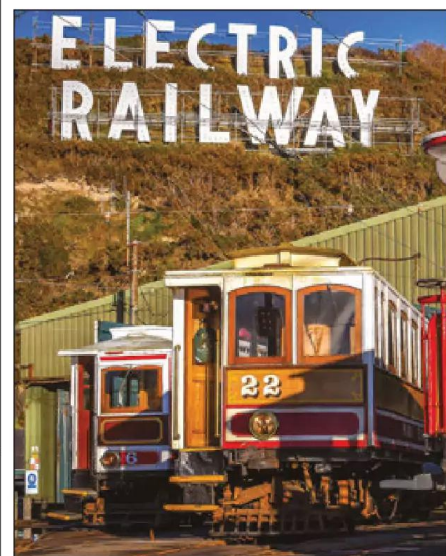
Heritage railways fighting the refusal of insurers to pay out on business interruption cover following the Covid-19 pandemic were given a ray of hope by the High Court on 15th September.

We reported in *NGW147* how the Bure Valley Railway was shocked when its insurance claim following the enforced closure due to the pandemic was rejected, its insurer arguing that while the BVR's cover extended to notifiable diseases, the interruption was not due to the pandemic but the Government's actions in response to it, so no payout was due.

Several other railways, along with businesses across the UK, had their claims rejected by insurers for similar reasons, and as a result the Financial Conduct Authority took a test case against a number of insurance companies to the High Court.

On 15th September the Court ruled in favour of the policy holders and against the insurers, but Bure Valley manager Andrew Barnes, who took a lead role in highlighting the original refusal, insisted the battle was not won yet.

"There is expected to be an expedited appeal directly to the Supreme Court, although this has not yet been confirmed," Andrew told BVR members. "This is a positive step forward, but a long way off popping the champagne corks."



Electric sign to be taken down

The large sign mounted on the hill above the Manx Electric Railway's Derby Castle works is being taken down this month.

According to the Manx Government the sign's supporting frame has corroded, making it a safety concern. Officials insist that a replacement for the sign, which was installed in 1993 for the MER's centenary, will be put in place before the 2021 season.

Photo: David Lloyd-Jones



Restoration of Shay to boost Alishan heritage programme

The Alishan Forest Railway made another major step to increasing its heritage appeal on 15th October when it began a planned restoration programme for 28-tonne Shay locomotive no 21, built for the mountainous line by the Lima Locomotive Works in 1912.

The 2ft 6in gauge loco, which had been displayed in a park in the city of Chiayi for 40 years before being moved into the AFR's depot in 2019, was lifted onto a road trailer to be transported to workshops in Taichung for restoration. This is expected to take around 18 months.

"Due to limited personnel and components, it has been necessary for us to outsource the restoration to professional contractors, but young technicians from the AFR will be sent to the factory over the 18 months to observe the restoration," an AFR spokesman told *NGW*.

The railway intends to maintain the heritage aspects of the locomotive as much as possible – it will remain a coal-fired engine, while the new boiler will be built using traditional riveted methods rather than modern welding. This is being done "to preserve the appearance of this significant cultural heritage."

No 21 will be completely dismantled and new drawings produced of each component to establish a database and ensure future maintenance accuracy. "We are sending technicians to participate in the whole process of the restoration work, to learn the core repair skills and compile maintenance manuals and to inherit the technology and to educate more maintenance professionals for the future," the spokesman added.

The AFR intends to record all future

TAIWAN

restoration projects it undertakes on its loco fleet, while important parts and components will be preserved.

"We will also invite other steam locomotive operators in Taiwan, such as the

Taiwan Railway Bureau, Taiwan Sugar Company, Luodong Forest District Office, and Hualien Forest District Office to participate in the restoration, share technology and exchange experiences with each other, to improve our historic restoration techniques."



Landslide line gets loco back

Efforts to reopen the metre-gauge Chemin de Fer de La Mure in **FRANCE**, closed by a landslide a decade ago, have been boosted by the return of one of the line's electric locomotives from overhaul.

On 24th September the locomotive, 1932-built ANF/SAAS bo-bo no T8, was returned from workshops in Spain where it has undergone a major renovation. The bogies were lifted onto tracks at Villaret, the body then lifted onto the bogies and once all was secured the loco pushed by a diesel to La Mure station, which is under reconstruction.

The landslide on 26th October 2010, shortly before the end of the line's season, not only blocked the track but destroyed a viaduct and a tunnel entrance. A contractor was appointed to repair the line in 2017 with the aim of having it open this year. Two more locomotives were expected to return within the following month.



Loco sale and new works to boost Fowler restoration

Timbertown Wauchope, located on the north coast of New South Wales, AUSTRALIA, has been named as the successful bidder for the 2ft gauge Perry 0-6-2T put up for sale by Pete's Hobby Railway (PHR) in June, NSW, to fund restoration of its 1900-built Fowler 0-6-0TT 'Perth' (*World News*, NGW149)

Pete Neve, builder and owner of PHR, told *NGW* that Timbertown had also taken up the option to acquire the former Hudswell Clarke/Fowler bogie tender as part of the deal. Delivery is proposed for early in the New Year.

Timbertown plans to regauge the Perry loco to 595mm, in order to meet its operational requirements.

Meanwhile PHR has started making limited use of its almost complete five-metre diameter manually operated turntable. Designed, constructed and installed by two members with assistance from local industries, the turntable will

service two tracks leading into a 12 x 14 metre storage shed, complete with a lit inspection pit and three electrically operated roller doors.

A further seven roads, together with the arrival/departure track, will eventually radiate from the turntable.

Further information on the railway's progress is available on the PHR website at www.peteshobbyrailway.club

Photos: PHR



■ Another month and more significant progress at the Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways – a three-day effort on 6th-8th October, conducted in very wet weather, saw track laid on the last 100 metres separating the group's base at Crèvecœur, FRANCE from the limits of the villages of Rotangy and Regnonval. The bridge in the picture above had not seen rail traffic since 1990.

The project enjoyed a pair of successful Heritage Open Days on 19th-20th September which saw 450 visitors carried on its trains. MTSV spokesman Olivier Janneau said that the running season is ending strongly though overall figures for the year will be down due to Covid-19.

Photo: Olivier Janneau/MTSV

What do you t

John Peers and Neil Clayton describe how Light Railway involved figuring out its com

Locomotive no 6 is actually the fourth loco on Neil Clayton's private 2ft gauge Ripon Light Railway in North Yorkshire – the numbering system at Ripon includes locos on all gauges so the running fleet is as follows:

- 1) Lister 50191 of 1957
- 3) Lister 7954 of 1936
- 6) Lister 7280A of 1936
- 7) Greenwood & Batley 2848 of 1957
- 8) 'Wasp' – a small inspection trolley donated by the late Andrew Wilson.

The railway began with Lister No 1 which came from the Yaxham Light Railway and the Ripon line was built around the loco so nothing bigger or heavier will fit. In the beginning a key goal was to move the loco out of the garage to make space for other things but this never happened as the loco fleet expanded to fill the space available. No 1 lives in its custom-built loco shed, no 3 and no 6 in the garage and no 7 in the museum to be near the charger.

Victorian railways often had three locos so that they could have one running, one spare and one under repair. We tried to do this at Ripon, but after no 3 we could not find a third Lister at a good price. We tried hard but were always outbid, missing some very nice locos which have since gone on to good homes elsewhere.

At last Joe Nemeth, near Bristol, offered a part-complete petrol Lister project for sale. When inspected the work done was to a good standard, so the loco was trailered north the same evening with the coupling castings under my feet to reduce the weight in the trailer – not exactly comfortable.

The loco as received was assembled from bits found in a container as part of a clearance after the owner died. The frames were old and rusty with Dorman Long rolling marks and were for a petrol Lister type-R. The clutch and gearbox were for a late -type diesel Lister of the RM type while the horn guides were new castings with old axleboxes and wheel sets. There were quite a lot of other loose bits which came in handy later.

Investigating the provenance

Investigation showed that the chassis had come from Les Anderson who had owned a number of Listers under the Minirail name. Some damaged corner plates showed where the cabs had been welded on for use on the Longleat railway in the 1960s while a broken set of angle-iron horn guides remain a mystery item as none of the Minirail locos seem to have had these.

The Minirail Listers were 'Zebedee'/10180 of 1938 (now at Paradise Park), 'Pooh'/20698 of 1942 (now 'Arthur' at Lappa Valley) and 'Tigger'/7280 of 1936 (officially rebuilt into railcar 'Lenka' at

hink you are?

restoring a Lister for the private Ripon
plex history...

Longleat, now at Oakwood Park in Wales).

The number 10881 was eliminated as it hasn't been recorded as a loco and was stamped into a new bit of channel used for the gearbox mounting. Inspection of Lenka showed that the power bogie is made out of I-section rather than channel as used in Lister frames and the mystery was solved – the railcar has the wheels, axleboxes and horn guides from 7280 but not the frame and the loco is made from the bits left over after they built the railcar.

To avoid argument No 6 has '7280A' stamped on the works plates as a duplicate. As a lightweight it is also stamped 'RTL' as 'Rail Truck Light', but also to confuse any passing bus enthusiasts who will know 'RTL' as a type of London Bus.

Portable loco

The plan for no 6 was always to build a lightweight loco that we could take to outside events on the trailer. Previous visits were made using Neil's various Nissan Cabstars which could carry a Lister if we took the end ballast weights off but once the last Cabstar departed we needed a loco that would fit behind the Suzuki Jimny. The wooden beams used to replace the end ballast weights have been on all the Listers at some point but now belong to no 6 on a permanent basis.

The main items missing from no 6 are the sandboxes and the end and centre ballast weights – these make up about half the weight of the loco making no 6 a real lightweight and within the Suzuki's limits.

Work began on the chassis which needed brake gear adding from a mixture of old bits and new parts made as we went along. A set of wooden centre 'ballast weights' were made and fitted and make



the loco look more complete than it is.

New bearings were fitted to the axle boxes and new engine mountings made professionally and assembled with various Autotruck parts to make up the bonnet.

The saga of the J.A.P. engine then began – we found that the Autotruck engine wouldn't fit as the Railtruck one has a different exhaust. The engine had to be moved back to get it to fit, followed by a cross shaft to adapt the engine output shaft to match the diesel clutch which does not line up with the earlier engine. Various attempts were made to get the loco running with limited success and after considerable effort a rethink was clearly necessary.

Engine the right colour

The Petter A1 was considered as it's about the right size and was even painted the right colour. Bought just before the war as part of a milking machine on a local farm it came to us as part of a job lot of stationary engines from a local garage. It is a reliable runner and has about the right

power output, so we removed the J.A.P. and had a trial fitting of the Petter on timber engine mounts.

Careful wriggling proved that it would fit so a proper frame was made up followed by a longer cross shaft to line up with the output shaft on the engine (the J.A.P. is reverse rotation and the Petter is not so the engine output shaft has to be on the other side of the loco). The result was a loco that runs nicely at a safe speed and starts safely on the starting handle. We have since added a good range of chain guards to keep everyone safe.

We haven't given up on the J.A.P. unit, but for now the Petter works well and lets us play trains – it operates at a sensible speed, has enough power for the weight of the loco and thanks to its governor the loco is very easy to drive, automatically adjusting to gradients along the line.

We now have three working Listers, all different to drive but all fun in their way. No 6 meets the design objective of a Lister we can take to outside events on the trailer. **NGW**

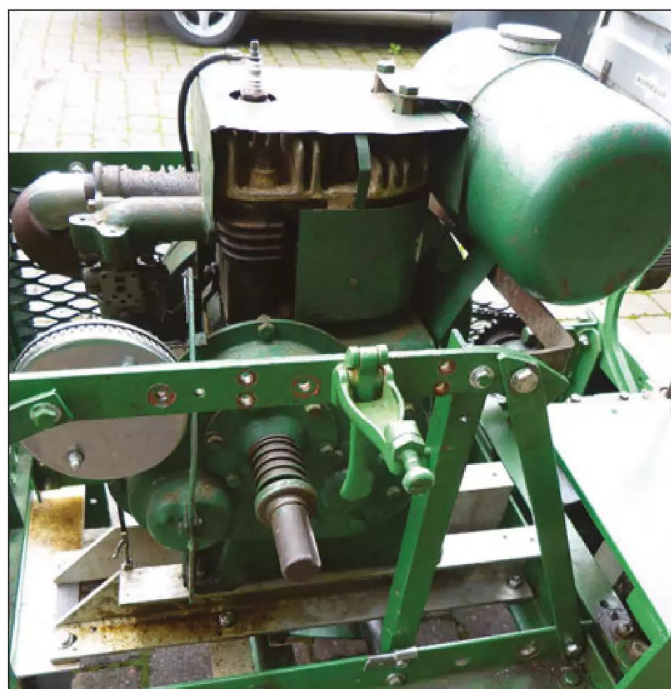


Top: The new Ripon Lister, no 6, its long restoration project finally concluded.

Left: The familiar front view of a Lister Auto Truck.

Right: The Petter engine, once powering a milking machine on a farm.

Photos: John Peers/RLR



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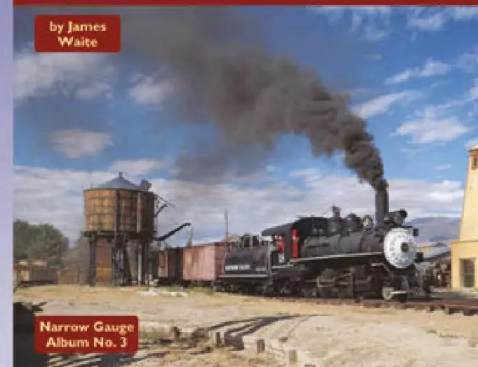
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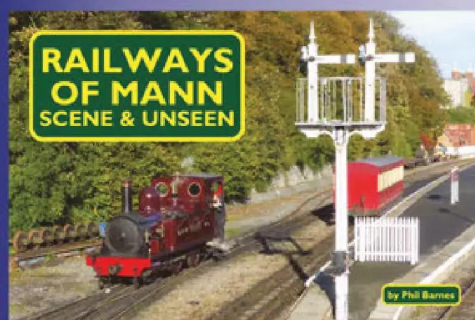


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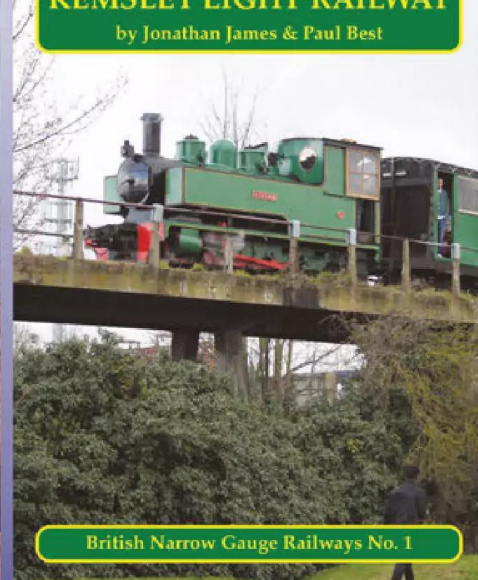
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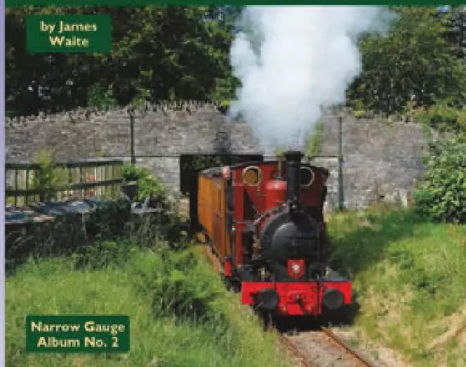
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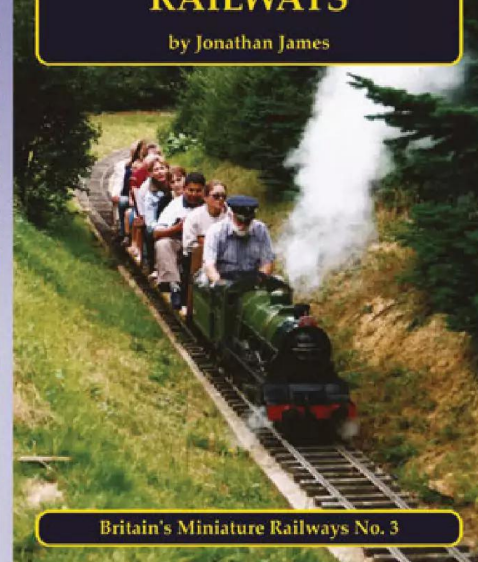
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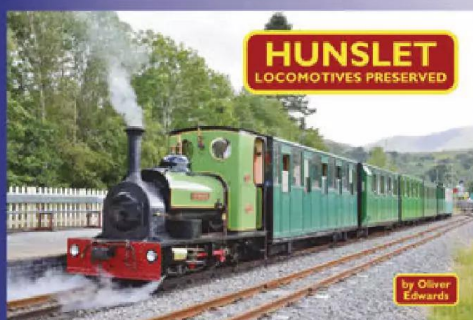
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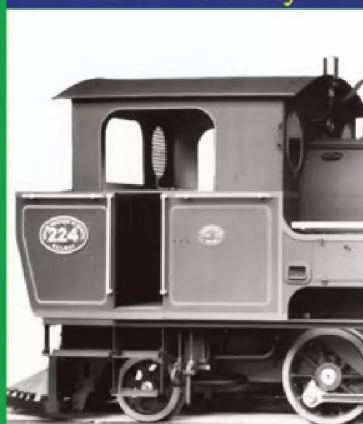
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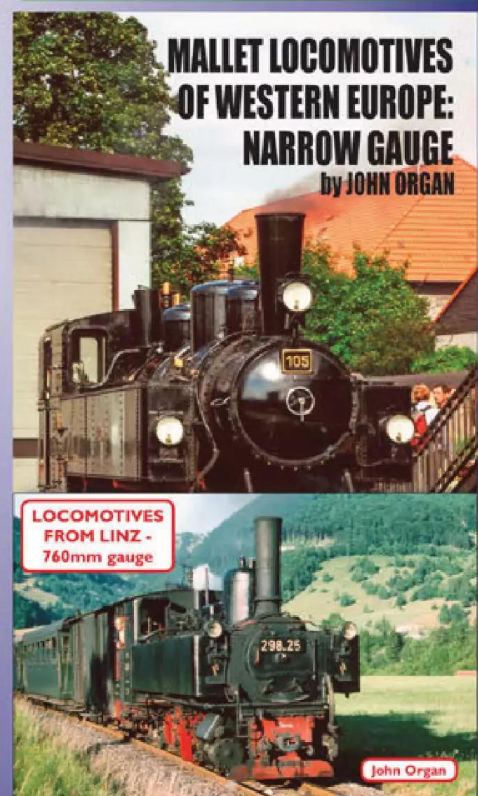
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Problems in Zimbabwe – 1993

David Joy got off to a bad start on a first visit to the African nation.

It began to go wrong even before touchdown on the overnight flight from Gatwick in July 1993. Bleary-eyed and scarcely able to focus on the immigration form, I described my occupation as a publisher. If even half awake I would have known this was a serious mistake when the ruthless President Mugabe was determined to avoid any form of investigative journalism. On landing my passport was duly confiscated and it was made all too clear that I had to leave within 48 hours.

Time-consuming meetings to prove that I was merely a visitor eventually resulted in determination to keep a straight face as the Senior Information Officer in Bulawayo

wrote a letter on a battered manual typewriter to the country's Chief Immigration Officer. A fine example of red tape, probably inherited from the days when Zimbabwe was the British colony of Southern Rhodesia, it asked that I be given 'favourable consideration and every assistance' – and the passport was duly returned.

The ignominy of being put on a quick return flight was avoided and it was possible to reflect on why Zimbabwe was such a dream destination. Like many African countries with a 3ft 6in 'colonial' gauge, it had long favoured articulated Garratt locomotives with Beyer Peacock of Manchester as the main supplier.

Of impressive dimensions and power, the Garratts had elsewhere largely given way to diesel haulage but the opposite applied on the National Railways of Zimbabwe. As a result of political turmoil and sanctions, it adopted a policy geared to non-availability of oil supplies and using its ample reserves of coal. A rebuilding programme was put in hand and NRZ became the world's only railway where every operable steam locomotive was a Garratt.

By the early 1990s the word had spread but it seemed wishful thinking that it could last much longer. Freed from the problems of entering the country, a first step was a visit to soak up the wonderful atmosphere of

Above: Class 15 Garratt no 424 'Isilwana' hauls a steam special through typical bush country on the edge of Hwange game park, July 1993.

Left: The then recently rebuilt Class 14 Garratt no 395 gives little warning as it quietly emerges from the 250-metre Wankie tunnel in July 1993. The inset shows General Motors Class 10A no 1044 leaving the same tunnel in July 2020 with a loaded coal train. It was emitting more smoke than had the Garratt 27 years earlier!

Photos by David Joy (1993) and George Shields (2020)



Bulawayo steam shed. Its shedmaster, Dave Putnam, used a string of expletives to convey his disgust that NRZ had called in Canadian consultants, who no doubt had an interest in favouring diesel haulage. A few weeks earlier the surviving fleet of more than 50 Garratts had been barred from mainline duties and were confined to shunting work and the occasional steam special. This was a huge disappointment and far more than a mere personal problem. Would there be any worthwhile photography to be had?

Solace was sought by heading up country to Hwange and the Baobab Hotel, named after the African tree noted for its bizarre trunk often thinner at the bottom than the top. It was a watering hole already familiar through the writings of A E ('Dusty') Durrant, who for some 20 years used it as the base to make steam forays on the line from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls – the greatest wonder of all Africa. These resulted in a superb locally published book taking its title *The Smoke that Thunders* from the far more appropriate native term for the Falls.

There were enviable reports from those who had spent many an hour relaxing on the hotel terrace high above the line close to Thomson Junction. Serious beer consumption was essential in the pleasant climate, but there was still time to get down to the lineside as one Garratt-hauled train after another pounded out of nearby Wankie Colliery.

The hotel terrace did indeed prove to be thoroughly pleasant apart from just one overriding problem. There were few sounds of steam. In a hired jeep there was at last an opportunity to brave a dirt-track road and chase Class 15 4-6-4+4-6-4 no 424 'Isilwana' as it hauled a steam special through gloriously scenic bush country on the edge of the 5000 square miles of Hwange game park. It made stops for photography, although the crew cautioned against going too far from the locomotive and cheerfully told the tale of how one driver had only escaped the jaws of a lion by scrambling up a signal post!

Patience rewarded

Extreme patience was required in the hope of seeing a Garratt emerge from the only tunnel in Zimbabwe, situated close to the hotel, but at least there was action of a different kind at Wankie Colliery with its fleet of Class 19 4-8-2s built by North British and Henschel. Three were normally steamed daily for shunts and regular runs to the exchange sidings at Thomson Junction, where quietly simmering away was the jewel of the



Above: Wankie Colliery provided plenty of steam action in July 1993. This 4-8-2 was one of its seven similar locos of the Class 19 design.

Below: Officially barred from mainline duties, Class 20 no 740 'Ingwezi' performed superbly when finally allowed to head south from Thomson Junction in July 1993. Tucked into the long freight was the now failed diesel that had been intended to haul the Garratt back to Bulawayo.

trip and a cause of total frustration.

At 220 tons the 4-8-2+2-8-4 no 740 'Ingwezi' in a striking blue livery was a Class 20A, largest of all the Garratts in Zimbabwe and by this time rarely seen in service. It had worked north on a steam special and was effectively impounded as there was no southbound special on which it could return to Bulawayo without breaking the embargo on mainline duties. It was a strange scene as it sat there with a full head of steam for three days alongside an ailing yellow diesel with its engine left running due to fears that it might not start again if turned off.

The decree from Bulawayo was that the Garratt must be towed back by the diesel, but this found no favour at Thomson Junction shed. There were real fears that it might slip away at night unseen by prying eyes, but logic eventually triumphed over dubious decisions and countermanding orders. It was a

wonderful sight when Ingwezi stormed south in daylight at the head of a long freight, the failed diesel cut into the train at a discreet distance.

Previous difficulties were now put in perspective, as this was one of those lasting railway experiences that made the whole trip worthwhile. It was not even surpassed a few days later with the sight of a locomotive and train on Victoria Falls bridge – utterly dwarfed by its surroundings and yet somehow suffering from being posed and weirdly insignificant.

Steam was clearly not at an end in Zimbabwe, but I scarcely suspected that more than two decades later an average of four Garratts would continue to handle shunting duties around Bulawayo on a daily basis. They were based on what was claimed to be the world's last still-functioning shed for 'real steam'. Despite its huge political and economic uncertainty, this troubled country continued to have its devotees. »





Spending lockdown in Zimbabwe – 2020

George Shields was in Zimbabwe early in 2020 and stayed put when Covid-19 brought an African-style lockdown. He recently supplied a rail update saying 'clearly the UK has been hit hard but here in Hwange all seems fine'.

Steam working was still buoyant in February 2020. The annual Valentine's Day special from Bulawayo was in the capable hands of Class 15A no 414 aptly named 'Ubhe Jane' (it translates as 'black rhinoceros'). The Garratt took this popular train the 35km to Figtree and return in fine style over undulating gradients.

Back on Bulawayo steam shed, Class 14A Garratt no 519 was in steam as reserve locomotive. It was a grand sight in the evening light when they were both standing side by side.

Some 435km away at Victoria Falls the international tourist trade was still on a high in late February. There was an almost daily steam working on the evening wine and dine trains to Victoria Falls bridge spanning the

mighty Zambezi River gorge between Zimbabwe and Zambia.

On the Zimbabwe side, Class 10 4-8-2 no 156 worked the train on alternate days and parked it on the bridge for views at sunset. On each following day a train would similarly arrive on the bridge at dusk from the Zambian direction.

In February and early March the train was hauled over the 7km from Livingstone by the newly restored Class 14A Garratt no 523 in the corporate green livery of the operating company Bushtacks.

Late March saw the tourist trade evaporate due to the coronavirus pandemic and brought the abrupt end of working steam locomotives in Zimbabwe. All wine and dine trains were cancelled. No 156 ran light

Above: Newly restored Class 15A Garratt no 523 backs the Bushtacks wine and dine train down to Victoria Falls bridge from Livingstone on 2nd March 2020, shortly before Covid-19 abruptly halted operations.

Below: This elegant ex South African Railways Class 16, active at Wankie Colliery in the 1980s, is now plinthed near Hwange.

engine from Victoria Falls to the Bushtacks headquarters in Livingstone and its fire was drawn as both countries closed their borders.

I opted to remain in Zimbabwe for the African-style lockdown. So far it would seem the right decision. The autumn and winter season lasts from the end of May to the beginning of August with calm warm days and cool nights. The tree foliage senses the temperature change and leaf shedding provides vibrant colours between Bulawayo and Victoria Falls.

Plenty to see

Vintage diesels of co-co wheel arrangement can be found hard at work on the line. General Motors Class DE6 nos 1600 to 1609 were built in 1966; Electric Motive Class DE10 nos 1001 to 1035 in 1981-1982; and General Motors Class 10A nos 1036 to 1061 in 1982. Shunt and trip work is in the hands of General Motors/ Babcock & Wilcox Class DE9A bo-bos nos 1920 to 1963.

All classes work tirelessly to move coal from Macoma Mine, one of Hwange's productive collieries some 20km from Thomson Junction, the rail hub and control centre of coal movements. Hwange coal is high quality and is transported by rail to Zambia and Tanzania and internally for use in Zimbabwe.

Along the line there is a fine pictorial spectacle of autumn colours and raw vintage power. One has withdrawal symptoms from the absence of steam, but getting out and about definitely retains sanity. **NGW**



Irish Narrow Gauge Album



Michael Whitehouse

Irish Narrow Gauge Album

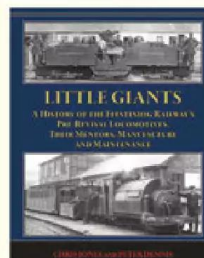
Michael Whitehouse

Mysterious, quirky, obscure, obsolete, quaint, bizarre, fantastic, mad – all adjectives that could and have been applied to the myriad narrow gauge railways to be found in Ireland, both north and south. Indeed, most at one time or another have probably been applied to the Listowel & Ballybunion, an almost unique monorail system on the far west coast in County Kerry. A glance at a map of Ireland shows the areas that these generally lines served – rural, remote and sparsely populated, so whilst such lines could be cheaply built and maintained in comparison to standard gauge railways, it also meant that they quickly became an anachronism as the 20th century progressed and apart from the Guinness Brewery system, closed in 1965, all of them had gone by 1961, some in the 1950s but several much earlier than that. Fortunately a few hardy souls made regular trips over to Ireland to explore some of these lines, having discovered the delights that the country

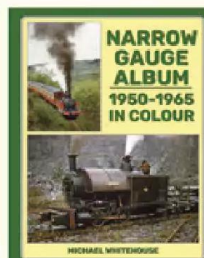
offered in terms of scenic settings and, in later years, a certain laissez faire attitude to access and authority. Many, in the first quarter of the 20th century, also enjoyed the attentions of Ireland's pre-eminent photographer of that time, Walter Lawrence of Dublin whose stunning collection of glass plate images now resides with the National Library of Ireland. So sit back and in the company of Michael Whitehouse, who has once again delved deep into the family archive established by his late father P.B. 'Pat' Whitehouse, which includes the work of many other well known names such as W. 'Cam' Camwell, Henry Casserley, A.W. Croughton and Ron Jarvis, revel in the joys of a visit spanning the fifty year period from circa 1910 to around 1960 and mostly to the remoter parts of the country. We will reach such remote outposts as Kilkee and Kilkenny on the West Clare Railway, Castlegregory and Dingle on the Tralee & Dingle, Schull and Skibbereen, Coachford and Donoughmore on the Cork & Muskerry, and Crosshaven on the Cork, Blackrock & Passage in the Republic of Ireland, along with the aforementioned Listowel & Ballybunion and Guinness Brewery systems. And in Northern Ireland, to Candona and Burton Port (Londonderry & Lough Swilly), Glenties, Killybegs and Ballyshannon (County Donegal), Arigna, Dromed and Belturbet (Cavan & Leitrim) and Maguiesbridge and Tynan (Clogher Valley), as well as the Giant's Causeway Tram. Each pictorial chapter is accompanied by an historic essay from a well known railway historian, in a style that harks back to the original narrow gauge albums compiled by Pat Whitehouse and others in the 1950s and '60s, and replicated in the two colour volumes son Michael has already produced for Lightmoor. This is an Ireland and a way of life for many people that did once exist, fantastical though that may now seem.

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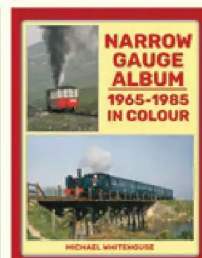
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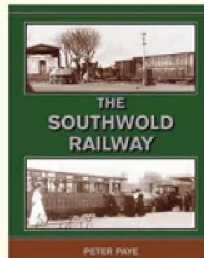
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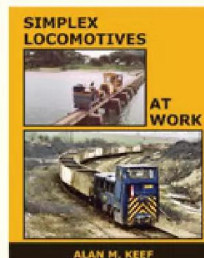
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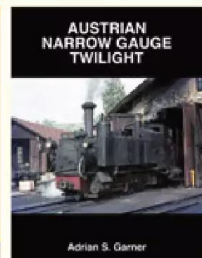
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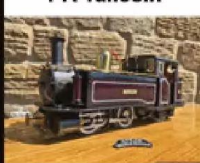
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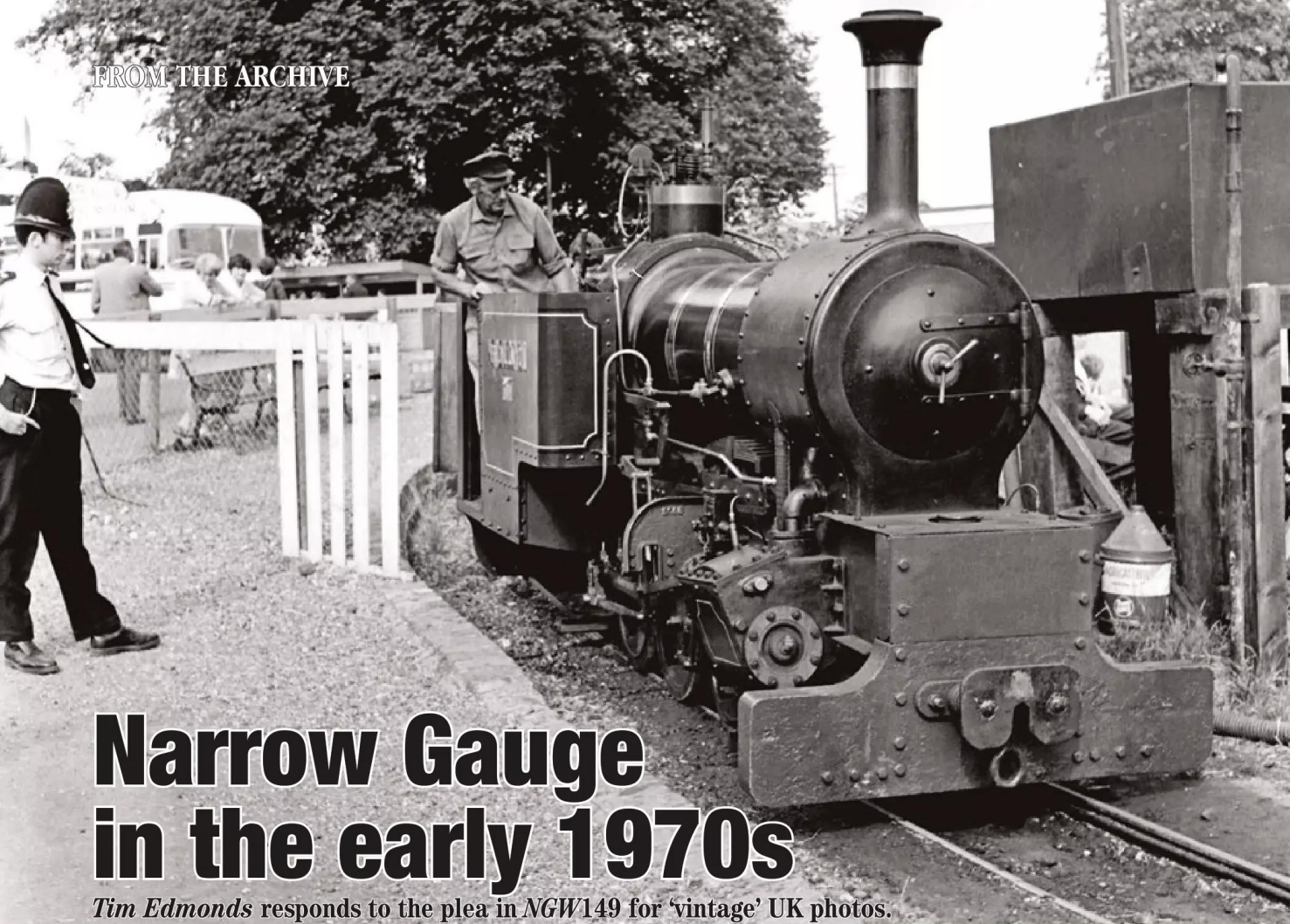
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Narrow Gauge in the early 1970s

Tim Edmonds responds to the plea in NGW149 for 'vintage' UK photos.



'Bronllwyd' was a regular for 40 years, while 'Maid Marian' was there for only a few years...'

Bressingham's Nursery Line

The first 2ft gauge operations at Bressingham Steam Museum in Norfolk were in 1966 and I made my first visit in 1968. I've chosen these photos from June 1970 because they show locos that since have moved elsewhere. 'Bronllwyd' was a regular for 40 years, while 'Maid Marian' was there for only a few years.

A police constable observes 0-6-0WT Bronllwyd (Hudswell Clarke 1643/1930) by the water tank at Bressingham (**Photo 1**). This loco was built for Surrey County Council and used on the construction of the Guildford bypass before being sold to Penrhyn Quarries in 1934. The chassis came to Bressingham from the scrap line at Penrhyn and it was rebuilt and entered service in 1969. Bronllwyd was a regular on the Nursery Line for many years until moving to Statfold Barn in 2010, where restoration to the original identity as Surrey CC GP39 has taken place.

When 0-4-0ST Maid Marian (Hunslet 882/1903) was bought from Dinorwic Quarry in 1967 the loco's first home was Bressingham, where it is seen working a train on the Nursery Line (**Photo 2**). Maid Marian moved to the Llanberis Lake Railway in 1971, where a cab was fitted, and then to the Bala Lake Railway in 1975 and has been there ever since.



Whipsnade & Umfolosi

This 2ft 6in gauge line had opened in 1970 to provide a way for visitors to see the White Rhino paddock at Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire, and I visited it in June 1971. It was equipped with a fleet of steam locomotives from the Bowaters Paper Railway at Sittingbourne, which closed in 1969 but lives on in preservation. Again, I have chosen pictures of three locos that have moved elsewhere, and they also show the original terminal station.

A former Chattenden & Upnor Railway loco that was bought by Bowaters in 1950, 0-6-2T 'Chevallier' (Manning Wardle 1877/1915) waits for passengers at the original terminus with its island platform (Photo 3). The loco was sold in 2006 to Bill Parker of The Flour Mill in the Forest of Dean where it was overhauled and has since made appearances at the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Gala in 2010 and 2016.

Built for Bowaters and working at Whipsnade since 1970, 0-4-2ST 'Excelsior' (Kerr Stuart 1049/1908) arrives at the station (Photo 4). Chevallier waits on the other side of the island platform.

Vale of Rheidol Railway

I first visited this line in 1966, but on my second visit in 1970 I met the Llanbadarn Crossing signalman Bill Biddyr (who looked after both the gated standard gauge and ungated narrow gauge crossings). He saw me taking photos and invited me into the box for a chat and cup of tea. This led to a friendship with him and his wife Gwen, and I returned regularly for short visits in the 1970s, staying with them in Aberystwyth. I've chosen these pictures from August 1971 when the line's future was still in some doubt.

In Photo 5 BR no 7 'Owain Glyndwr' waits to work the first train of the day outside the former standard gauge shed at Aberystwyth.

Photo 6 shows BR no 8 'Llywelyn' being watered outside Aberystwyth shed in preparation to work the second Vale of Rheidol train of the day. The main line signal box provides a backdrop.

Finally in Photo 7 Llanbadarn Crossing signalman Bill Biddyr sees Owain Glyndwr safely across the A4120 as it returns to Aberystwyth from Devil's Bridge in typically wet Welsh weather. **NGW**

Photos by **Tim Edmonds** – if you feel you have some suitable photographic memories for this feature in your archives we'd love to see them – send to the editorial address on page 3.



"He saw me taking photos and invited me into the box for a chat and cup of tea..."



End of the season – what season?

The final events of a compressed 2020 narrow gauge calendar thankfully produced some pictures to remember, and the weather even read the script – mostly...



Left: A photo which in a way sums up 2020 for the UK narrow gauge fan – no doubting that the Ffestiniog Railway's England 0-4-0ST 'Welsh Pony', now wearing its nameplates, has been the star, while we've all got used to the addition to the standard wear of footplate crews...

Photo: Chris Parry/FF&WHR

Below: Reflecting on a challenging year – the Amerton Railway in Staffordshire has quietly returned to doing what it does best and on 27th September new-build Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Jennie' was working goods trains between the passenger services, in glorious early Autumn weather.

Photo: Kenny Felstead

Right: The weather certainly did not play ball for the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones Weekend. *Kenny Felstead* pictured Hunslet 'Lilla' hurrying along the 'Hundred Mile an Hour Straight' with the heritage goods set on 10th October, which he described as "very wet but very enjoyable..."

Below right: As a complete contrast, this modern-image shot was taken at the first photo charter event staged at the Crowe Peatland Railway in Lincolnshire on 19th September. Two of the line's Schoma diesel hydraulic locos are visible with the recently acquired Lisbon Tram number 711 behind.

Photo: Stuart Chapman

Following pages: Narrow gauge country... More from Amerton on 27th September, with Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Isabel' heading into the woodland. *Photo: Kenny Felstead*

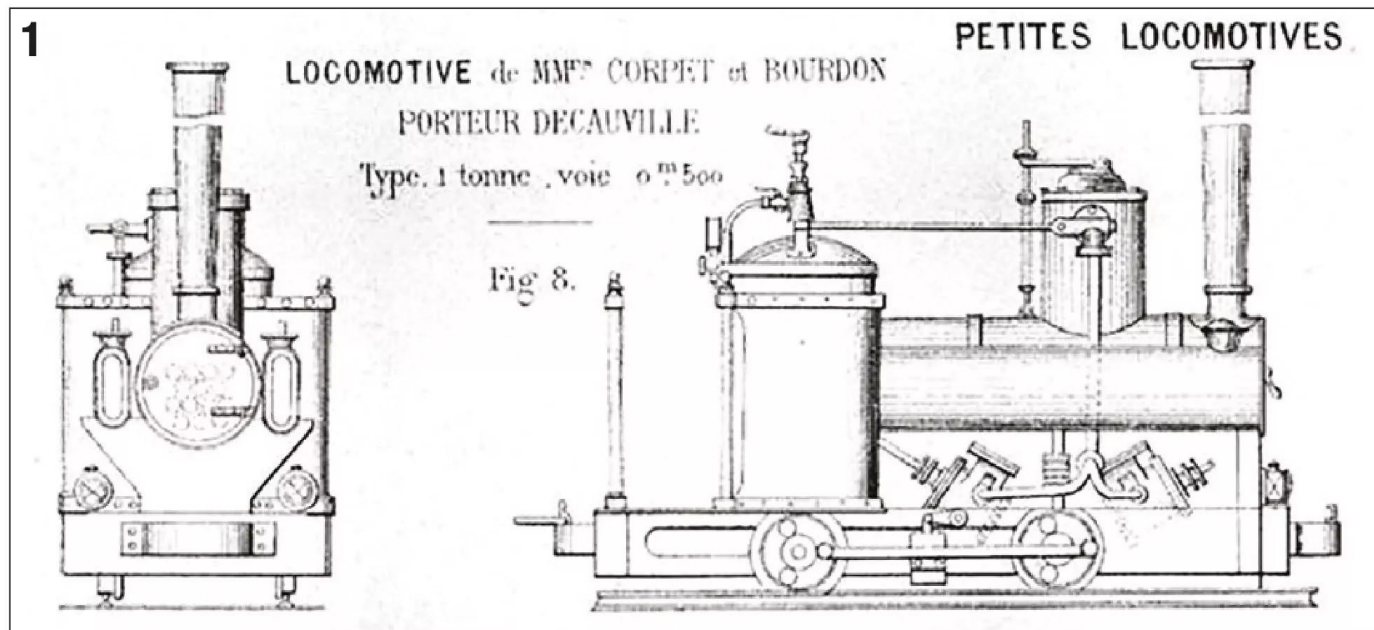






**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**





Lilliput – the First Decauville

Dick Paterson brings a new dimension to a complex saga that continues to intrigue readers.

Editor's note: Some images in this feature were published in the recent piece on Decauville and Couillet by Mark Smithers (*NGW*151) but we have included them again as they are highly pertinent to this latest offering on a highly interesting aspect of narrow gauge history. Dick Paterson has kindly asked that his fee be donated to a narrow gauge railway and we have chosen the Apedale Valley Railway, home of John Sutton's replica Type 1 Decauville 'Edgar.'

The story of locomotive pioneer Paul Decauville has its roots in generations of his family who farmed an extensive estate at Petit-Bourg, south of Paris. They gradually reduced the cost of production by modernisation and adopted steam cultivation in association with John Fowler of Leeds. Amand Decauville (1821-1871) formed the connecting link between farmers and engineers, combining the qualities necessary for the two occupations.

When sugar beet distilleries promised a lucrative business in France, Amand not only grew the roots and distilled the juice, but soon made his own plant which was so efficient that he was asked to build them for his neighbours. This, in 1853, was the starting point of the original Petit-Bourg engineering works, established in converted farm buildings inconveniently situated at the top of a hill.¹ On the death of his father, Paul Decauville inherited the estate. He was 25 years old.

Paul developed the quarries for

building stone which was taken by horse and cart on a circuitous route from high ground on the estate to barges on the River Seine. He soon devised a railway and inclined plane to the river, greatly reducing the cost of transportation.² This railway was originally of 400mm gauge.

In 1875, he again used a 400mm gauge portable railway to salvage a sugar beet crop from a waterlogged field. Man-powered, with small four-wheeled wagons, it allowed the harvest to be gathered in record time. The track comprised all-steel panels weighing about 50kg (1 cwt) which could be moved easily by one man.

Following the success of his field railway, it was soon offered to others. Demand was such that in 1876 Paul founded the Decauville Light Railway Works³ in premises beside the River Seine and the main railway line, the new site offering more floor space and better transport connections.

In 1876 Paul visited the Ffestiniog Railway and this visit was written up over several pages in *La Nature* in 1881.⁴ On his return he increased the gauge of his portable line to 500mm and offered steam power, but this was not taken up immediately. By then he had an extensive engineering works, but no loco design or manufacturing expertise. Like Arthur Koppel who would follow him, at first Paul would buy in his locos from established builders and re-badge them.

On show

Well aware of the importance of publicity, Decauville took his railway

"Like Arthur Koppel who would follow him, at first Paul would buy in his locos from established builders and re-badge them..."

Image 1: Line drawing of 500mm gauge Corpet & Bourdon loco 'Lilliput'. This was found on www.passion-metrique.net, but is 'fig 8' of what? The original source is not stated on the site.

All images in this feature sourced by the author

to the major exhibitions. The first in July 1877 was a competition for fire fighters at Compiègne.⁵ The 1882 Decauville catalogue includes an illustrated list of "Sixteen locomotives sold". Top of the list (but unfortunately not one of the four illustrated) is 'Lilliput', described thus;

"The first locomotive built for the carrier Decauville was Lilliput, a 1 tonne locomotive, which, at the Compiègne Competition in 1877 ran on a 4.5km long track of 500mm gauge, pulling 60 people at a time from one end of the competition grounds to the other. Since it then had to be recognised that such a small locomotive could not do serious service, Lilliput was used for the entertainment of the Dutch, on a circular railway in Rotterdam."⁶

Although not acknowledged in the firm's catalogue, Lilliput was built by Corpet & Bourdon of Paris: the line drawing (**Image 1**)⁷ shows a 500mm gauge locomotive built by Corpet & Bourdon for Decauville and the works photograph (**Image 2**) clearly shows the Lilliput nameplate on the tank and the Corpet & Bourdon builder's plate on the cab side.

A discrepancy in timing arises from Decauville's claim that Lilliput ran at the Compiègne competition in July 1877 – Corpet & Bourdon records show that its works number 242, Lilliput, was 'despatched' to Decauville on 16th November 1877.⁸ There is no doubt that Lilliput worked successfully at Compiègne – it was reported in *Le Figaro* (the French equivalent to *The Times*) – or

in the accuracy of the despatch date from the Corpet & Bourdon records.

One possible explanation is that because Corpet & Bourdon 242 was a novel design it was ordered by Decauville and would be accepted, and paid for, subject to satisfactory performance. The usual arrangement was payment before despatch. Another possibility is that it was built on spec by Corpet & Bourdon and loaned, or leased, to Decauville for testing/evaluation, but this is less likely as the 1882 catalogue claims that Lilliput was 'built' for Decauville. Either way, after the successful trial at Compiègne, Lilliput was purchased in November, when it was clear that it could be used commercially.

When arrangements were being made for the 1878 de l'Exposition Universale (World Fair) in Paris, a 500mm gauge Decauville railway was chosen for delivering goods to the exhibitors. This railway may have been steam or animal powered. A 500mm gauge locomotive exhibited by Corpet & Bourdon at this fair was briefly described in *Revue Industrielle* and stated to have been "made for the carrier Decauville", but with no indication of its intended use.⁹ The report does not say if it was Lilliput or whether it was there to work or as a static exhibit.

An unusual locomotive

Lilliput was a 0-4-0PT (pannier tank) of unusual configuration. It had a V-twin engine, with cylinders fore and aft, between the frames under the boiler. The crankshaft also served as the leading axle. It is bad practice to scale from a drawing, assuming that the 500mm gauge shown is correct suggests that the wheelbase was 750mm, the wheel diameter 230mm and the length over buffer beams about 2000mm. This ties in with the height of the driver in **Image 3**.

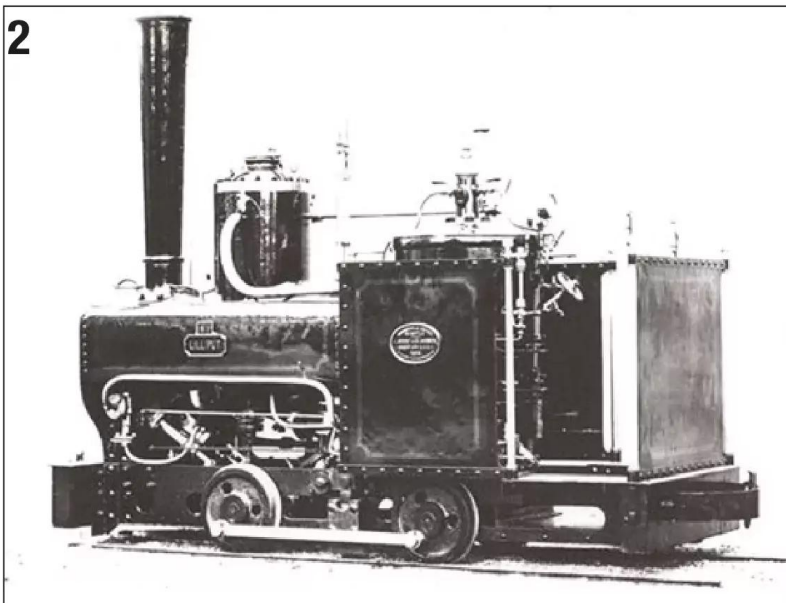
At the same World Fair, Corpet & Bourdon exhibited a similar metre gauge locomotive for work on farms. This larger loco was described and illustrated in a flowery article, presumably based on a press release, in *Revue Industrielle*¹⁰ and later in a less verbose report in *Engineering*.¹¹

This locomotive differs visually from Lilliput in the placing of the steam dome. It was claimed that placing the v-twin engine between the frames eliminated the nosing usually found with outside cylinders on narrow gauge engines.

Valve events were controlled by a single loose eccentric on the crankshaft/leading axle with forward and reverse travel selected by turning a hand-wheel in the open 'cab'. To change direction, the driver stopped the train, freed a latch to allow the

"Intercity and local railways were well established then, but this was possibly the first permanent pleasure train..."

2



shaft carrying the hand-wheel to move down to mesh a bevel pinion at the bottom of the shaft with a wheel fixed to the loose eccentric. The hand-wheel was turned to drive the eccentric to the other stop; it was then pulled up to disengage the bevel drive and the latch re-engaged.

Other features described in *Revue Industrielle* include brake shoes pressed onto the track by a pedal at the driver's feet to avoid "straining the axles"; springing of the leading axle by stacks of Belleville washers and of the rear axle by a transverse leaf spring.

Leading dimensions given on the drawing are 1450mm wheelbase, 560mm diameter wheels, length over beams 4400mm, maximum width 1600mm and height of chimney 3400mm above rail level. The included angle between the cylinders is 100 degrees. The bevel gear ratio was about 5:1. Model locomotives with loose eccentric valve gear need

to be pushed in the required direction by about half the circumference of the wheels to set the eccentrics for running, so maybe three or four turns of the hand-wheel.

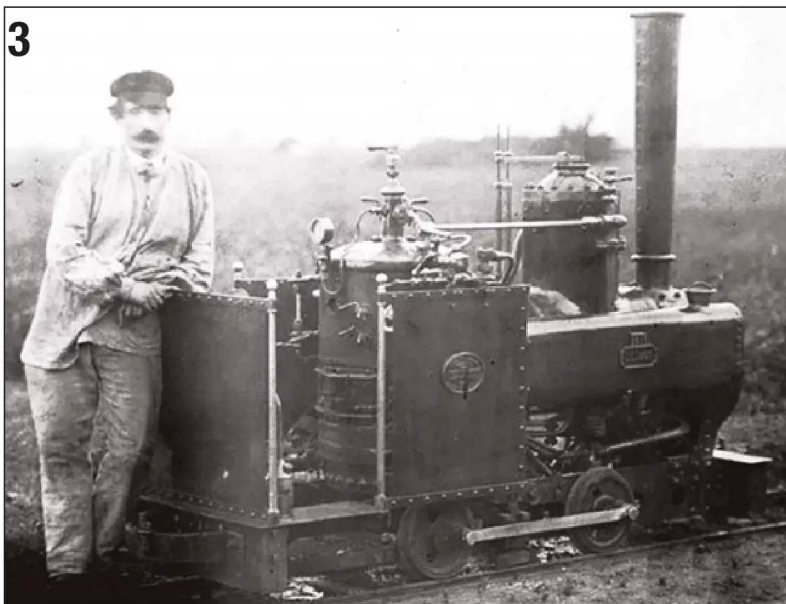
Another drawing (**Image 4**), of unknown origin, found online,¹² shows the loose eccentric being moved by a rack and pinion mechanism. The arrangement of the cylinders and position of the brake shoe under the rear cylinder is very similar to Lilliput and makes me wonder if this is the Lilliput arrangement and that the metre-gauge locomotive required more leverage to move the heavier parts. Until we know the source(s) of images 1 and 4 we will not know if they are related.

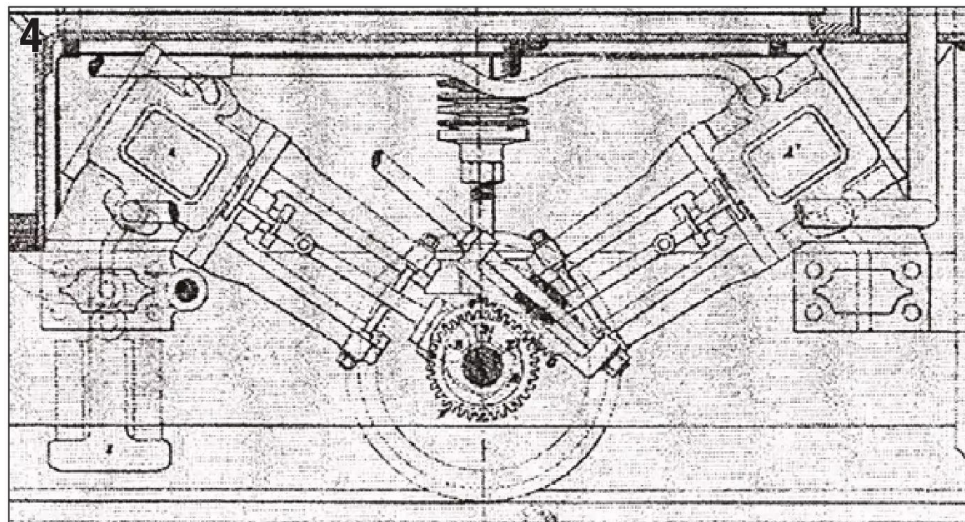
Steam engines with a link motion (such as Stephenson's) usually have one eccentric for forward and another for reverse for each cylinder. These provide the maximum valve travel possible. They are not diametrically opposite each other – both have an

Image 2: Works photo of the locomotive's left-hand side clearly showing the 'Lilliput' nameplate and the handwheel near the top of the right-hand side cab-sheet for forward and reverse. Image from Wiki Commons media

Image 3: A photo with a driver for scale. This image echoes a familiar photo of Arthur Heywood's 15-inch gauge 'Effie' taken at Duffield Bank. Image from the Passion-metrique website

3





'angle of advance' for fast running. The link motion moves the contact point for the valve rod towards the appropriate eccentric for the direction of travel required by a controlled amount, anywhere between maximum travel for full power and less for economy. This is called 'linking up'.

In loose, or slip, eccentric valve gear the single eccentric (per cylinder or V-twin bank) is made loose on the axle and is operated by a stud or pin mounted in a collar which is secured to the axle alongside the eccentric.

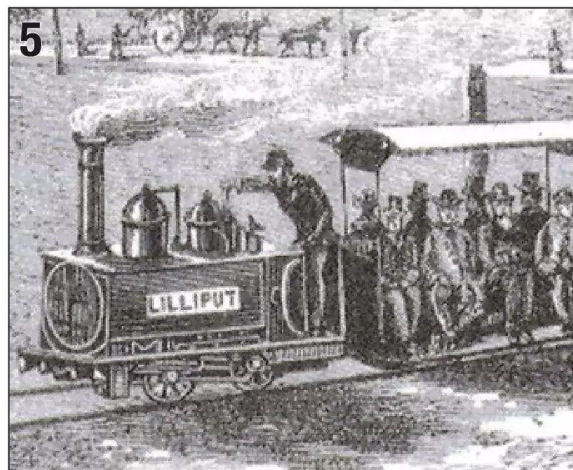
Loose/slip eccentric is the simplest valve gear; it can be made with as much lap and lead as required and gives good steam distribution. Cut-off is fixed and does not allow for linking-up. Conventional wisdom is that in model sizes the gear cannot be reversed from the cab. The rack and pinion arrangement may be an interesting experimental project, but I suspect that the simplified Walschaerts for garden railway locomotives and 'full' Walschaerts or Stephenson link motion for ride-on scales is well-established for good reasons.

First tests

When the 1878 World Fair opened in May of that year, Decauville had a contract to provide a railway for

Image 4: Drawing of the rack and pinion drive for slip-eccentric valve gear. From Passion-metrique.net

Image 5: A detail of the familiar image from the 1882 Decauville catalogue showing a later Lilliput at speed. The full version of this image and how it was altered to suit Decauville's needs was illustrated on page 49 of NGW148.



parcels on the site and offered to install, at his own risk and expense, a small passenger train to bring in visitors, but authorisation was refused. He then approached the Jardin d'Acclimatation, which accepted his offer, and it was there, in 1878, that the first tests in France of a 500mm gauge railway for regular public transport took place.¹³

The Jardin d'Acclimatation at Paris was opened by Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie on 6th October 1860. Inspired by and intended to outdo the English gardens, it was a combination of a botanic garden, a zoological garden and an amusement park.

A contemporary poster shows visitors touring the site in a variety of horse-drawn carriages. The more intrepid could ride on the back of a camel or elephant.¹⁴ Decauville's train, meanwhile, offered visitors a new way to tour the garden. Intercity and local railways were well established then, but this was possibly the first permanent pleasure train.

At first the little train of one or two eight-seat open carriages was pulled by ponies, as shown by a colourised postcard on a French website.¹⁵ The caption for a black and white postcard on the same site mentions the Decauville Type 68 passenger car, which seats eight passengers, back to back, facing outwards. The all-steel track was laid directly in the roadway, with no wooden sleepers.

On 12th July 1881, another Corpet & Bourdon loco, works number 327 'Le Furet' (The Ferret), was despatched to le Jardin, but the customer was not Decauville. This may suggest that Decauville had been undercut by a competitor and lost the concession.¹⁶ The garden still exists as an amusement park – the line survives and uses battery-electric locomotives, following a succession of steam and internal combustion engines.

The 1882 catalogue

After the Corpet & Bourdon-built Lilliput, all of the other 16 locos listed in the catalogue are Couillet-built variations of the firm's 2.5 tonne engines, with or without tender for 500mm or 600mm gauge. An example of these was displayed by Couillet at the 1878 Paris World Fair and it may have inspired Decauville's change to a heavier loco, since the trial at Compiègne had shown "that such a small locomotive (as Lilliput) could not do serious service".

Also listed are:

- 'Passe-Partout'. Decauville's second loco was of 2.5-tonnes for 500mm gauge which won first prize for the railways and agricultural locos in Lille in 1879. A modeller's drawing of Passe-Partout appears in *Voie Libre*, issue 79, October 2014, page 71.
- Two 4-tonne locomotives, with tenders, supplied to the Russian Government for the war in Turkestan in the deserts of Central Asia (Couillet works numbers 489 and 490).¹⁷
- A locomotive with a maximum height of 1.75m for use in mines (Decauville works number 29). One of this type was put to work in the new Decauville works.
- "Another type is 'Panama', a 60cm track locomotive of 4 tonnes empty, and 5 tonnes in running order, thanks to the provisions of water and fuel supplied by tender, even a 15 tonne train for forty kilometres in the time of 2 hours, without stopping."¹⁸
- "A 500mm gauge 9kg/m rail track locomotive (of the Panama type) is currently being used in Petit-Bourg for experiences with a full train of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class carriages and luggage. (Ffestiniog model)".

The experiments with the Panama type were mentioned in a paper on portable railways by Decauville that was presented to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in London in 1884.¹⁹ This paper included a confident prediction that the Decauville wagons then being used in the construction of Colonel Beaumont's 7ft diameter Channel Tunnel would be the first to carry passengers through the tunnel from France to England.

Use of Couillet-built locomotives continued for some years, possibly in parallel with Decauville builds. Decauville certainly bought in when required in later years – the Mallets at the 1889 World Fair in Paris were built by Tubize, of Belgium, but that is another story.

Red herrings

Any exercise of this sort will produce contradictions and red herrings:

A well-known illustration of Lilliput pulling a train of ten Type 68

carriages on the Petit-Bourg track (Image 5), is not (despite what Wikipedia claims) the Lilliput of 1878. The outside cylinders and smokebox wing-plates tell us it is of a later 2.5/3-tonne Couillet loco of the 'Chiquitanta' pattern continuing the Lilliput tradition. One version of this drawing is from the Ffestiniog article in *La Nature*, 1881. Another, which has a gardener with wheelbarrow and some extra foliage added on to the trees, is in the Decauville catalogue of 1882. The 1953 Decauville Centenary catalogue has for a frontispiece a mirror-image copy of the 1882 illustration in green ink.

In this article I have used contemporary sources and modern sources which cite contemporary sources wherever possible. Most were in French and were put into Google Translate, then unscrambled. Any corrections to my interpretation of the French, or further details, especially the original source(s) of images 1 and 4, would be welcome. **NGW**

References

- 1) *The Engineer*, issue of 26th July 1889, page 80.
- 2) Roger Bailly, *Decauville – ce nom qui fit le tour du monde* (The name that went around the world) page 10.
- 3) Decauville Illustrated catalogue no 105, 1905 page 8.
- 4) *La Nature*, 1881, pages 227-230.
- 5) *Concours de Manoeuvre de Pompes a Incendie*.
- 6) Decauville catalogue, 1882, translated from the French.
- 7) Found on www.passion-metrique.net, original source not given.
- 8) www.passion-metrique.net
- 9) *Revue Industrielle*, 20th November 1878, page 475.
- 10) *Revue Industrielle*, 3rd April, 1878, page 131.
- 11) *Engineering*, 5th May 1878 issue, page 351.
- 12) www.passion-metrique.net. The context is a query in a discussion group – What is this? The drawing is accompanied by a photo of a central-jackshaft 0-8-0T and the works photo of the left-hand side of Corpet 242, image 2, bearing the nameplate 'Lilliput'
- 13) Bailly, op cit page 16.
- 14) www.jardindacclimatation.fr A 'trigger warning' may be appropriate.
- 15) www.railsvagabonds.canalblog.com
- 16) *Industrial Railway Record* no 27, October 1969, K. Clingan
- 17) Couillet catalogue of 1923 gives their date as 1870. This must be a typo – 1879 or '80 is more likely.
- 18) Decauville 1882 catalogue, freely translated, again.
- 19) Proceedings of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, 1884, available online.

Lost Cuckmere line revealed

Phil Barnes found evidence of a former tramway uncovered by winter storms.



Taking a recent walk in the Seven Sisters Country Park down to Cuckmere Haven in Sussex, I discovered some long-forgotten remains of the former 1-mile long, 2ft gauge mineral tramway that was used to aid gravel and sand extraction up the Cuckmere Valley between 1933 and 1964.

Storms over the winter of 2019 and 2020 uncovered some lengths of the Jubilee-type rail with its metal sleepers at the beach end of this former line, and these were still visible on the beach when I took my walk in September.

Up to the early 1930s the Cuckmere river mouth was more like a small delta, so an operation was set up by the East Sussex Transport & Trading Company to straighten this part of the river and extract the spoil.

The military may have dismantled the line in World War 2, but this has not been confirmed. After the war a new agreement to restart operations saw the track reinstated by 1950.

Simplex locos

Some reports suggest an Orenstein & Koppel locomotive was initially used

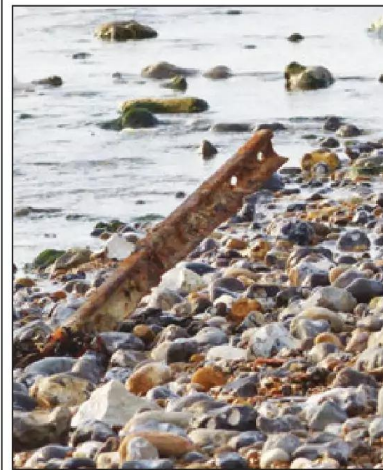
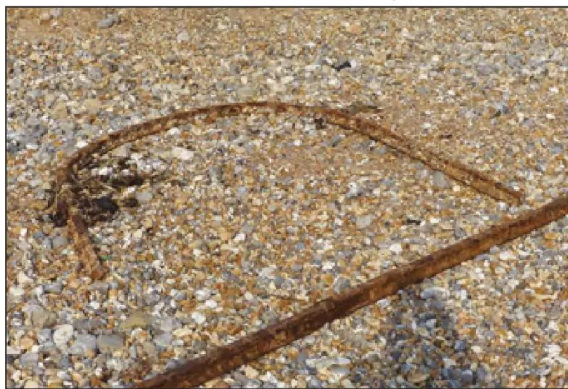
“The initial licence allowed for the extraction of 4,000 cubic yards of shingle per week...”

Photos: Storms in the winter of 2019-20 revealed some sections of track complete with sleepers at the beach end of this former line and these were still visible in September 2020. Photos: Phil Barnes

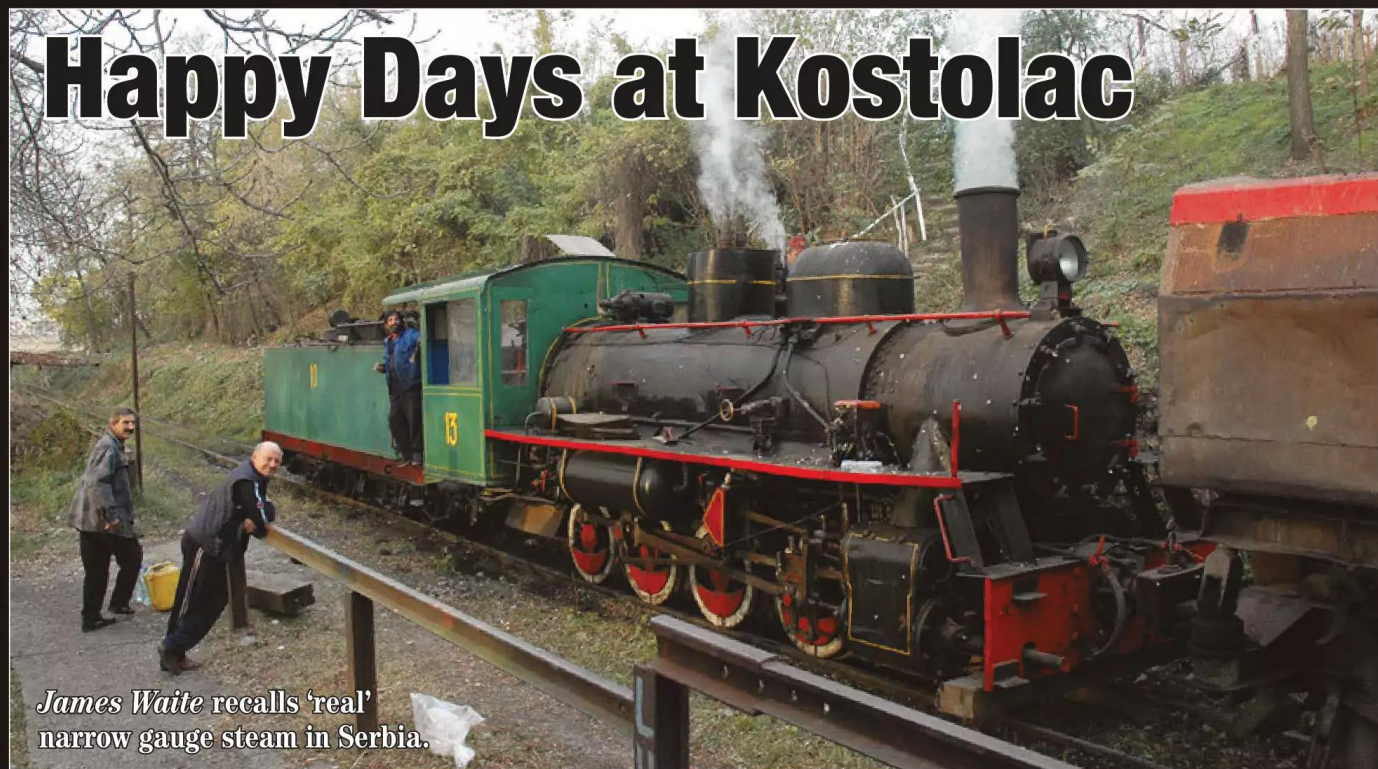
on the line but the line was mostly operated by Ransomes & Rapier 4wDMs 65 and 66, built in 1935 and delivered new to the operation, and Motor Rail Simplex 4wDMs 8610 and 8659, built in 1941 and arriving at Cuckmere in the 1950s. The rolling stock consisted of Hudson-type tipper wagons, trains consisting of around 20 at a time.

The initial licence allowed for the extraction of 4,000 cubic yards of shingle per week. The spoil was brought up to Exceat on the A259 road and discharged at the tipping dock and it was also here that there was a loco shed.

When the operation was terminated by the Marine Agency, most of the track was lifted and re-used by the National Rivers Authority at Pevensey Bay; the Exceat buildings did remain for some years after closure, but the area was eventually cleared and now forms a visitor's car park near the top of the concrete walkway, which was once the bed of the tramway. **NGW**



Happy Days at Kostolac



James Waite recalls 'real' narrow gauge steam in Serbia.

The Kostolac colliery railway was one of several in Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia where steam locomotives still operated in the early 2000s. They included two 900mm gauge lines, among the last survivors of their kind anywhere in the world which did not operate primarily as heritage or tourist attractions.

Kostolac, on the south bank of the River Danube 70km downstream from Belgrade, is a sizeable town of somewhat drab apartment buildings. The collieries, and two associated power stations, are virtually the sole

employers. It lies at the end of a branch line from Požarevac, a larger town on the mainline about 80km south east of Serbia's capital.

After a flight of rather more than two hours to Belgrade, on a chilly, though bright, Sunday morning in November 2005, I picked up a hire car, essential since passenger services on the branch had ended many years earlier – indeed the branch was virtually moribund since freight trains were few and far between. I was planning to spend the afternoon checking out the railway for photo

"A tell-tale plume of steam as I arrived early in the afternoon came from 0-8-0 no 13..."

positions and hadn't expected to find any action until Monday morning, but I was wrong! A tell-tale plume of steam as I arrived early in the afternoon came from 0-8-0 no 13, one of five similar locos all built by Davenport in Iowa in 1945.

The design of these 0-8-0s went back to 1941 when HK Porter built ten 750mm gauge machines for the Soviet Union, followed by another 16 in 1944 and early 1945. Porter built 34 more for JDŽ, the Yugoslav state railway, in 1945 and 1946 and they



were always numbered as plain 1 to 34 throughout their lives. They were generally seen on former forestry railways in Bosnia, especially the long Steinbeisbahn which ran through much of the west of the country.

No 13 was preparing to set off from the enormous roundhouse, close to one of the power stations and by far the most impressive installation on the railway. The line which the loco served climbed steeply away through woods up to the Klenovnik open-cast lignite pit about four kilometres away to the south east.

Operations involved trains of four bogie side-tipping wagons. The loco pushed them for about a kilometre up the hill as far as a staff refuge building. A lengthy pause ensued here while the loco crew and friends enjoyed refreshment, and eventually the journey resumed.

Precision tipping

The huge pit was worked by two large dragline excavators which dwarfed the train. They dug out the lignite and tipped it directly into the waiting wagons, something which must have required skilful handling to avoid spillage. Soon the loaded train was on its way down the hill, making a non-stop run past the refuge building and coming to a stand at an unloading shed at the power station which the steam trains shared with a much busier electrified line from another pit at Ćirikovac.

Once the lignite had been tipped out the loco repaired to the

Left: Kostolac Colliery Railway 0-8-0 no 13 approaches the welfare building at Kostolac.

Upper right: The enormous bucket required precision tipping to ensure that the lignite it contained was safely discharged into no 13's little train at the Klenovnik pit.

Right: At the far end of her journey no 13 draws her train through the unloading shed at Kostolac A power station.

This spread: Fast forward to 2009 – it is night time at the engine shed and nos 9 and 13 prepare for their final outing the following morning – 19th April 2009.

Photos by James Waite, taken November 2005 except where stated





roundhouse for refreshment before setting off on another trip. On that first November afternoon I waited near the refuge building and it was almost sunset by the time the train returned. I stopped for a beer at the Bar Piccadili in the centre of town, which always provided a warm welcome for visiting enthusiasts, and it was soon time to find a place to spend the night.

Overnight in Požarevac

Kostolac appeared not to possess any hotels at all, something still the case today. All roads and signposts led to the Hotel Dunav in the centre of Požarevac, 13km away. Travel and accommodation always invoked a sense of adventure in the old Yugoslavia and this establishment was no exception.

The town is best known as the

birthplace and home of Slobodan Milošević, Serbia's former president, and of his wife, the formidable Mirjana Marković. They were childhood sweethearts and their early lives were both marked by personal tragedy. Slobodan's parents both committed suicide while Mirjana's mother, who fought with Tito's Partisan group during the Second World War, was captured by the Nazis and executed. Supposedly she gave them sensitive information which led to family feuds during the Tito years.

Slobodan was charged at the International Court of Justice in The Hague with offences committed during the 1990s wars in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, and was sent off there after being deposed in 2000. He was the first serving head of state which the Court indicted. A friend who had dealings with him while he

Above: To the fore no 9, the other working loco at Kostolac, had been stopped for partial retubing. But when no 13's air brake pump developed a fault it returned to the shed for attention from the team working on no 9.

Below: No 13 receives attention on shed, flanked by 0-8-0 no 14 to the fore and no 12, providing steam to a machine for softening rubber components in the conveyor belts at the collieries.

was preparing for his trial found him to be a charming and courteous individual, but of course the crimes of which he was accused were hideous in the extreme.

His wife, often portrayed as the power behind his throne, fled to Moscow along with their son Marco, chiefly remembered in Požarevac for liking to drive about the town at high speed in a bright yellow Ferrari which was equipped with ghetto blaster-type loudspeakers, often firing his gun into the air just to make sure that everyone knew he was around.

Marco is believed still to live in Moscow, today keeping a low profile and without his Ferrari, while the remains of his parents are buried in the garden of the family residence in Požarevac, a grotesque and unmistakable establishment just along the road from the hotel. Požarevac is a quieter place today!

The hotel was built during Yugoslavia's Tito years and not much appeared to have changed. A tower block with more than 80 rooms, it was served by an unusual lift which had lost its doors and whose indicator for the floor which it had reached bore no obvious relationship with the truth and seemed to operate entirely at random. I soon discovered that I was sharing my room with a family of cockroaches. The helpful staff willingly found me a new room, though seemed not to understand why I preferred one where I didn't have company! The food, as always in this part of the world, was excellent. The hotel is still there, though anyone contemplating a visit may like to consult some of its more recent online reviews.



Back at Kostolac

The following morning I returned to Kostolac and made the acquaintance of Dragan Milošević, the collieries' transport manager and a truly helpful and kind individual. I never discovered whether he was related to the Požarevac family. He soon issued me with a photo permit, and gave up a considerable amount of his time to explain the history of the mining and power generating operations. He estimated that only about four years' reserves of lignite remained at Klenovnik, after which the 0-8-0s would be out of a job, and he was trying to find ways to secure their long-term future.

I then moved on to Klenovnik, only to find that photography there required a separate permit. To assist my application the helpful pit manager brought out an old Grant's whisky bottled filled with sljivovica, the 'whisky of Serbia' as he described it. It was still quite early in the morning but it would have been impolite to refuse a tippie!

I spent three days at Kostolac. The loco crews, and indeed all the staff, were always immensely friendly. The five locos were survivors of a group of ten which were supplied as UN aid in a hurry in 1945 to make good shortages after the retreating German troops had removed most of their predecessors towards the end of the Second World War.

The winter of 1944 had been bitter, and the lack of coal, both for heating and electricity generation, had caused immense hardship, especially in Belgrade. By 2005 the Klenovnik pit, along with the locos, were worked only in the winter, output from the Ćirikovac pit being enough to meet the power station's needs for the rest for the year.

Final farewell

I returned early in 2007 to find the steam locos tucked up in the roundhouse, well looked after but out of use. The winter had been mild and their services had not been required. Early in 2009 closure of the Klenovnik pit was announced, just as Mr Milošević had predicted four years earlier. Bernd Seiler, who operates the FarRail tour operation in Berlin, arranged a farewell visit and I decided to go to say goodbye to my five old friends.

I arrived early the previous afternoon, and found the two working locos in steam outside the roundhouse. Their boiler certificates had expired a few days earlier, but this did not prevent Mr Milošević allowing them to work one last time.

One of the drivers suggested I should go to visit the depot for the



Above: No 9 stands outside the shed on 18th April 2009 as no 13 brews up on the left. Dragan Milošević is the gentleman in the yellow shirt, and is perhaps sorting arrangements for the enthusiasts' visit with his colleagues.

Below: By April 2009 no 12 had handed over to no 14 the task of providing steam for softening up the conveyor belts, and had been plinthed in the main square in the centre of Kostolac, just outside the Bar Piccadili.

electric locos at Ćirikovac and he helpfully drove me there. At first the place seemed to be completely deserted, but the sound of occasional cheers and clapping led me to a small building where what seemed to be the depot's entire workforce was gathered around a tiny black and white TV set. Novak Đoković, the Serbian tennis player, had only recently become a figure known worldwide, and they were watching him play. There was no disguising which player they were supporting!

The following day was Easter Sunday in the Orthodox world. Mr Milošević had arranged a traditional Serbian Easter breakfast for the visitors before the locos set off for their final runs. The points leading to the Klenovnik line had already been disconnected and so they were confined to the yard, but it was an enjoyable farewell.

One of the three non-working locos had found a home in the town square outside the Bar Piccadili, making this establishment even better! There is a nascent tourist business, thanks to the presence on the town's outskirts of the remains of the ancient Roman city of Viminacium, regarded as one of the most important and extensive

archaeological sites in Europe. Now there is a proposal to rebuild the Klenovnik railway as part of a heritage project to explain the district's mining history. It is believed that three of the 0-8-0s are still kept in the roundhouse and perhaps they will be called upon to operate any new service.

Working narrow gauge steam can still be found in the old Yugoslavia, both at the excellent Mokra Gora tourist railway in Serbia and at Banovići colliery in Bosnia. Over the years I have been fortunate to make several visits to the former Yugoslav countries and to see many fascinating locos and railways. When Iain McCall, of Mainline & Maritime, invited me to produce another photo album to raise funds for a UK heritage railway during the Covid period, they seemed to be an ideal subject. Profits from this book will go to the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway, both as a thank-you for the pleasure many of us have gained from the restoration of its loco 'Russell' and a heritage train, and because the WHHR runs one of the best-stocked overseas railway bookshops anywhere in the UK. I hope the forthcoming book will help to share some of the enjoyment I have experienced from my visits. **NGW**





Swarf and Shunting

Andrew Charman goes to work in unfamiliar surroundings on the Welsh coast.

The first time I became an active narrow gauge railway volunteer, as opposed to just visiting the lines as a 'gricer', was when I was appointed as press officer of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in 1997. But while an important role, getting the line's message 'out there', it didn't feel like real volunteering, especially as it was done from my home in Surrey.

That all changed in 2007 when we upped sticks and moved to mid Wales, in fact to Llanfair Caereinion, home of the W&LLR. Pretty soon I was helping out in the workshop, swiftly followed by joining the footplate department, training and passing out as a locomotive fireman.

As many readers will know things sort of mushroomed – these days while I'm still a fireman and the line's press officer, I'm also the quarterly Journal editor, monthly (ish) newsletter editor, poster maker,

Christmas card sales co-ordinator, and last but by no means least a Trustee – a hugely responsible role especially in current times. And no, I haven't done anything in the workshop for a long time...

So when my daughter's partner Harry Billmore was appointed the new resident engineer at the Fairbourne Railway, it wasn't long before the suggestion was made that I join him for a day in the 12¼-inch gauge coast line's workshop. "There's loads to do, and you'll be a help," he said. While not convinced by the latter, the temptation to 'switch off' for a day on a railway where I was 'just helping', was too good to resist – particularly as I have quite a passion for the minimum gauge...

So having found my overalls (sadly due to Covid-19 having not been used in 2020) on a crisp but sunny September morning I jumped into

"The temptation to 'switch off' for a day on a railway where I was 'just helping', was too good to resist..."

the car with Harry and headed for the coast. He was quite keen to get to work early, with the boiler inspector coming to hopefully sign off the 2-6-4T 'Russell', so a burnt-out lorry trailer delaying our progress was not appreciated. In the event we arrived at Fairbourne just the right side of 9am and the inspector turned up a couple of hours later...

Multi-tasking

This was an operating day and the driver of the operational engine, Lynton & Barnstaple-style 2-6-2T 'Yeo' was already in the shed preparing to light up for the day's activities. My first lesson was that things are rather smaller-scale compared to what I'm used to on the W&LLR. That's blindingly obvious you might say, but I don't mean size, I mean hierarchy – there can't have been more than half a dozen of us working at the line that day, and before long Harry told me my first job would be to get the carriages out for the train services. Eh?

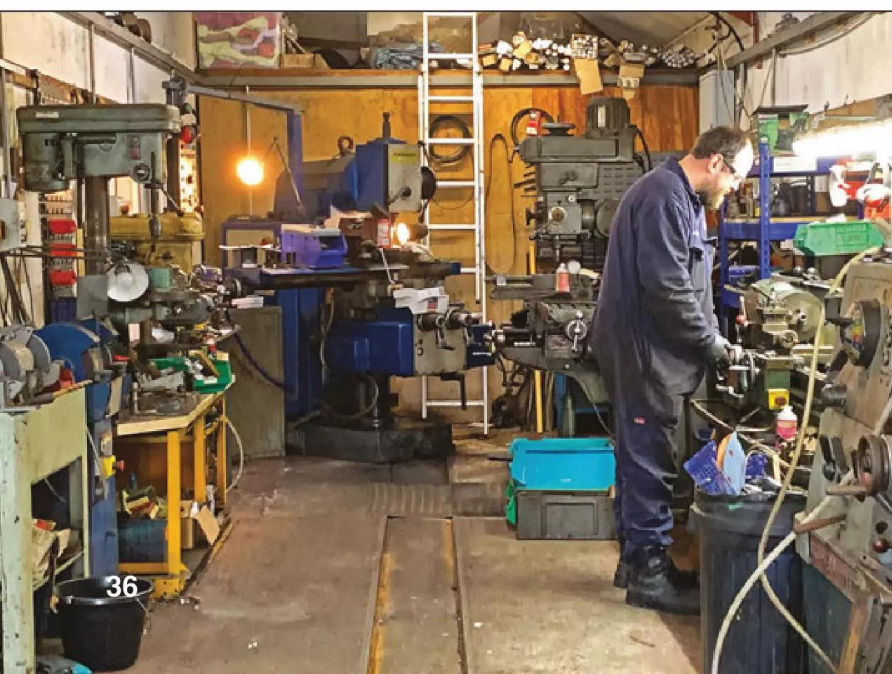
I was taken to the carriage shed, in which the 1987-built four-wheel diesel 'Gwirl' stood at the head of the rakes of carriages, and given a lesson on the various checks needed before starting the engine. Then under supervision I was made to haul out the first four carriages past the end of the sector plate, then reverse the train to pick up the second set, and haul them out to the roadside platform road – then returning for the second rake for hauling into the platform.

Now okay, I've been a qualified W&LLR footplateman for getting on for a decade, so it was clear I know

Above: Opening the door to the Fairbourne's running shed and workshop. 'Yeo' is being prepared to take the day's train services.

Left: Harry Billmore at the big lathe in the line's compact machine shop. Andrew was put on a much smaller version hidden behind the pillar drill.

All photos by Andrew Charman unless stated



my way round a loco, but I never expected to be driving trains within minutes of arriving at Fairbourne – especially reversing around a 90-degree curve and traversing complex pointwork which caused Gwirl to bounce quite noticeably – something which on my most recent visit (spoiler!) Harry was attending to with a set of dampers from a Mini car. Of course my driving was closely supervised, and more was to come...

Meanwhile it was into the cosy workshops and my allotted task. The holes for the pins in Gwirl's couplings are larger than other vehicles on the line, with the result that the standard coupling pins tend to move about in them and get bent. So my job would be to measure up for bushes to be welded in the holes, reducing their diameter, and then to machine up the four items – one for the top and bottom of each coupling. Simple!

Actually, while I took on the editorship of *NGW's* sister magazine *Engineering in Miniature* more than two years ago, I haven't done any serious lathe work for a long time. But with patient instruction from Harry, it all started to come back, and I settled down to creating said swarf on an ancient Myford lathe sitting in a corner of the workshop. Until later in the morning, when I was told, "train's coming in, we need you for shunting – go start Gwirl..."

Well-oiled machine

The Fairbourne was one of the first lines to reopen after the Covid lockdown, having established a preventative measures procedure that runs like a well-oiled machine. Again under supervision, as soon as Yeo came to a halt in the station I took Gwirl out of the loop and onto the tail end of the train set. Once a healthy smattering of visitors had detrained and Yeo was uncoupled, I set off up the line with the train set, only to stop just shy of the first of two level crossings before the line turns to run alongside the sea wall.

I then waited there around 10 minutes or so while Yeo took water and then came out onto the line and back into the road in which sat the ready sanitised second set of carriages. These were hauled up behind me and reversed into the platform road. Once this was done I reversed my set into the stabling road where they could later be sanitised ready for the third train of the day when the whole procedure would be carried out again. Confused yet?

While like anything involving train movements the procedure required total concentration, it was great fun, and I soon got used to it. And I must have done something

"Traversing complex pointwork which caused Gwirl to bounce quite noticeably..."

Above right: Your editor, trying to look as if he knows what he's doing. Photo: Harry Billmore

Above far right: All his own work – part-completed coupling pin, complete with tapered handle.

Right: Harry did insist that the surface finish of the bushes did not need to be too fine...

Below: Harry detaching (and occasionally swearing at) the cab of Sherpa.

Below right: He got there – the rolling chassis of 'Sherpa' ready for overhaul work.



right, because having been allowed to shunt the carriages back into the shed at the end of the day, on my second visit a couple of weeks later (yes, I went back...) I would be told I was rostered diesel shunter...

Meanwhile I got on with making my bushes, trying not to interrupt Harry too often as he dealt with the boiler inspector. With small engines such as at the Fairbourne it's practical to carry out both inspections needed for a boiler ticket on the same day – after the boiler had been checked cold it was a case of putting back the washout plugs, firebars and such then lighting up Russell for its in-steam test, which of course it passed.

Occupying much of Harry's mind in his early days in the Fairbourne role is to reorganise the workshop to run the way he likes it, to the extent that my daughter Megan joined us on my second visit. Megan knows her way round a workshop and can for example weld, which I can't, but the



principal skill she was employing on this occasion was in tidying stuff up!

Harry's other main priority this winter is to carry out the 10-year overhaul of the line's Darjeeling-style 0-4-0 'Sherpa', which includes lifting and retubing the boiler. Between machining operations it was interesting to watch him dismantling the loco. Some of the methods of attaching such elements as the cab had him ranting occasionally, but by the time of my third visit (!) Sherpa was a rolling chassis.

Meanwhile I finished the bushes halfway through my second day. They were immediately welded into place and I was set to making a new set of »





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Left: Volunteering is best as a family activity – Megan Charman in tidy-up mode...

Right: Your task is to use this to get all these out...

Below right: Gwirl waits patiently to reverse its train set into a siding.

Bottom: The driver's-eye view as Russell fetches its train from the roadside siding.



Bottom right: So tempting to keep on going...

"Some of the methods of attaching such elements as the cab occasionally had him ranting..."

coupling pins. These involved slightly more complex machining of such things as tapers, but I was pleased to see my finish was improving and I was less often interrupting Harry's work with questions.

Most of all, it was fun! To the point where I'm thinking how soon I can get the lathe that has sat unused in a corner of my garage for years operating again. And how soon after I send this issue of *NGW* to press I can jump back in the car and head for the Welsh coast again. Sitting in Gwirl by that level crossing, it was so tempting to carry on up the line. Now how do you get to train to drive the steam locos on this railway?... **NGW**

More Information

Like most heritage railways the Fairbourne is always looking for new volunteers, not just in the workshop but across a host of roles on the line – more details can be had at www.fairbournerrailway.com/help.html

And if you are keen to get involved but the Welsh coast is too far to travel, it's a fair bet your local line's website will include details of how you can volunteer. Especially coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, when most lines had to put various projects on hold, extra help will be particularly welcome.





Talyllyn on trial

David Pinniger gets to try out two versions of an iconic narrow gauge loco at last offered as a live-steam 16mm scale model.

Modellers working in the garden scale of 16mm to the foot may not be familiar with the name Bowande – the Chinese manufacturer is more familiar in Gauge 1 circles having developed live-steam models with Livesteam in the UK. These include a Britannia, a Gresley A4, Duchess and most recently a LSWR Southern M7 0-4-4T.

Now Bowande is moving into narrow gauge in collaboration with the Train Department in the USA, the first venture being one of the best-known and oldest operating narrow gauge locomotives in the world, the Talyllyn Railway's original 0-4-2ST 'Talyllyn'.

Built in 1864 as an 0-4-0ST by Fletcher Jennings of Whitehaven, Talyllyn has undergone many rebuilds and alterations in its life. Bowande and the Train Department are offering the loco as running in recent years and with two livery options – the familiar lined mid green and the 'Talyllyn 150' red livery worn a couple of years ago.

I was provided with the first pre-production prototype loco to review, this having already been evaluated and tested by

the Train Department's Jason Kovac before being shipped to the UK. My good friend Steve Edwards ordered a green version from the first production batch to arrive in the UK and he later brought his engine over to my line, so I was also able to try one of the production engines 'straight out of the box'.

My first reaction on removing the pre-production loco from the box was just how lovely a model it is. Talyllyn 150 red is not my favourite colour for this engine, but it certainly looked attractive with the black and white lining and decorated wheels.

Measuring up

First step was to check the dimensions and referring to the drawing in James Boyd's book *Talyllyn Railway* showed that all the key measurements were pretty close to spot on – notably the complex curves of the cab and saddletank are carefully reproduced. This closer look also highlighted the multitude of fine detail on the model.

Of course scale dimensions and excellent looks count for little unless the engine is a good runner, so I was keen to test Talyllyn

on my garden railway, having first carefully read the provided instructions.

One immediate noticeable feature is the fixed roof, a result of the complex shape of Talyllyn's cab but limiting access. The right-hand side of the cab includes a small half-inch pressure gauge, the gas control valve disguised as a brake handle, and the reversing lever in the front. This lever has three notches for reverse, mid gear and forward and operates full Stephenson link motion. Turning the loco over to lubricate the moving bits reveals just how well engineered this motion is.

The left side of the cab houses the water gauge glass and the regulator from the backhead, while inside the front top of the cab is a large cylindrical gas tank. Now this is highly visible from the side and if you do not want this visible intrusion, you can specify your loco with a much smaller gas tank hidden in the left-hand coal bunker in front of the cab. But of course this does come at the expense of a shorter run time.

The lubricator is hidden very neatly inside the right-hand coal bunker with a removable toolbox to access the filler cap, while the water top-up valve is nicely sited under the saddle tank filler cap.

Old-style oil

I mentioned carefully reading the instructions and this is vital as they clearly state that a heavier-grade 460 steam oil should be used in the lubricator. I had to search around in the workshop for this as most 16mm manufacturers have switched to specifying the lighter 220 grade steam oil

Heading picture: Two Talyllyns – the model certainly looks the part.

Left: Inside the cab – the gas tank is a rather obvious feature.

Facing page: Steve's loco in action on his own and David's lines, with appropriate rolling stock.

Photos by David Pinniger



for their recent engines. Fortunately, I had a bottle of heavier oil which I use in my old Archangel meths-fired potboilers.

I applied light oil on the motion, put water in the boiler, gas in the tank and oil in the lubricator and was finally ready to light up. I opened the smokebox door – this is neatly secured by a small magnet but is quite tricky to open unless you have strong fingernails – cracked the gas valve and applied the lighter flame. The lit gas popped back quickly with a gentle moan and then went quiet, although it was still alight.

There is clearly a big difference between this ceramic burner and the gas pokers I'm used to. At my age, my hearing is not 100 per cent and my first run with Tallyllyn would reveal that the gas setting was too high so that the safety valve was lifting very regularly. I soon found that the setting was about right when it was almost inaudible.

The loco raised steam very rapidly, in only around three to five minutes and the safety valve lifted in very positive fashion at around 40psi. I had filled the boiler to about two-thirds level on the gauge glass and condensed water was soon ejected when the loco was gently run backwards and forwards a few times.

I ran the loco light-engine around one circuit of my main line to make sure everything was okay and to get a feel for it, and then coupled it to my five-vehicle Tallyllyn heritage train comprising the three original Brown Marshalls, Lancaster No 4 and the iconic brake van/ticket office – the line's entire passenger stock in pre-preservation days and for its first year as a heritage line. Built some years ago from Triassic laser-cut wood kits, these vehicles are quite heavy for four wheelers.

With my first run having the gas turned up too high I had to top up with water after 10 minutes and the gas ran out after 15, but turning the gas way down produced a much longer second run as I was not wasting gas or water. I was particularly impressed with the slow-speed performance, the loco occasionally stopping at the top of the bank and then gently restarting when the pressure had built up a little.

I then tried the engine on a different train of Glyn Valley granite wagons made from Binnie kits and each carrying a load of real granite. Performance proved similar to previously until I tried to run the loco in reverse when the running was not as smooth. However later investigation proved that the loco was not fault, I was! I had not pulled the reversing lever fully back to engage with the notch.

Pulling power

I was very impressed with the initial performance of the engine and on another day I tried it on a much heavier train of four Festiniog/North Wales Narrow Gauge bogie carriages, a train weight of 8¾lb (4kg). A bit more regulator was necessary but the loco still pulled this train with ease, even self-starting on the bank. I expect it would be equally capable of pulling even



heavier trains, but did not want to load it any more as it was not mine.

Later when Steve brought his engine over I admit that I was totally smitten to see the loco wearing its classic green livery, edged with yellow and black and with a shiny brass dome.

Preparing and firing up proved identical to the pre-production version and we coupled it to a shorter heritage train of three TR vehicles and the former Corris brake van. It ran beautifully and smoothly for about 10 to 12 minutes but then the performance became more lumpy as if the engine was under-lubricated. We stopped to investigate the cause and sure enough, when we let the engine cool and checked the lubricator, all the oil had been used.

Following the next run there was a small amount of oil left in the lubricator and after that consumption settled down to match that of the red loco, so it seems that the new engine needs more oil to coat all the bearing surfaces, but this reduces as the loco is run in.

Being able to test both a pre-production model that had undergone a fair amount of running and a production loco just as a customer will receive it proved very informative. I was very impressed with Tallyllyn – it is a beautiful looking engine with an exemplary performance for such a small loco.

Reservations? Very few. Some people would not like the rather visually obtrusive cylindrical gas tank and it is a pity that a

rectangular tank was not used. Of course there is the option of the smaller bunker-mounted tank.

On my ground-level line, the small cab without a lifting roof did make the controls tricky to operate as. Steve's production loco did have a larger handle on the gas valve which made it easier to adjust than the one on the red engine. The production loco also had the pressure gauge facing the left side which was much easier to see on my line.

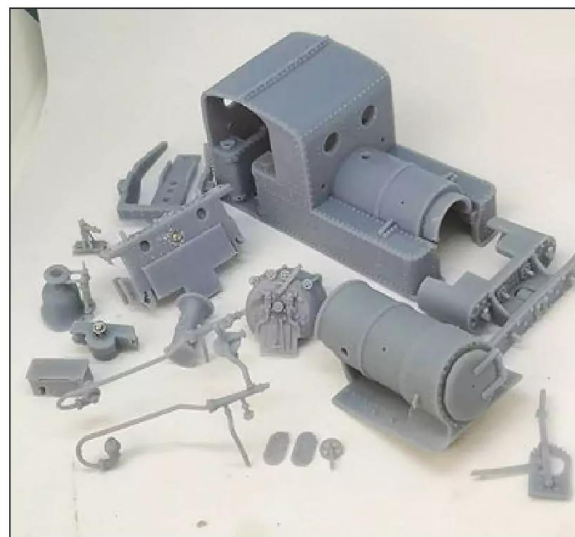
When the regulator was fully open on a heavy train, it was difficult to pull back the handle without burning your finger on the bottom of the sight glass. It is vital to be aware that the ceramic burner is very quiet in operation and must be well turned down to avoid overheating and damage to the paintwork. Just as important is to follow the instructions with regard to the use of 460 lubricating oil and carefully check the oil consumption for the first few runs.

Thanks go to Simon Colbeck for lending me the red engine, Steve for letting me run his green Tallyllyn. Livesteam, The Train Department and Bowande deserve a lot of credit for producing such a delightful and iconic 16mm steam loco. **NGW**

More Information

Bowande Livesteam UK Ltd
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Web: www.bowandelivesteamuk.com
The Train Department
www.thetraindepartment.com
Price: £1,995





7mm Manx tanks from Mannin

We have had 4mm scale diecast models of the Isle of Man Railway locos from Oxford Diecast, now Mannin Models is answering the pleas of those who want to recreate the iconic Manx line in 7mm scale.

Keith Fothergill, creator of Mannin Models tells us that the company has resulted from a lifelong interest in narrow gauge railways and a 30-year love affair with the Isle of Man. Buying a 3D printer to help his son William with his engineering course at sixth form resulted in William eventually working in the 3D printing department of an F1 racing team, and over a period teaching the printing skills back to his father to enable creation of these models.

"Isle of Man volunteers have been really helpful with information and advice, not to mention letting me crawl all over the locos when visiting the island, which is something I'd recommend to all narrow gauge enthusiasts," Keith says.

"Initially it was just a hobby, but after some encouragement from 7mm Narrow Gauge Association members as well as the Isle of Man volunteers, we decided to redesign our initial models to make them available for sale in kit form and in O 16.5 rather than the 21mm gauge originally intended, so we could take advantage of the wide OO gauge chassis availability where possible."

Popular model

Currently available is the Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T – the first batch in O 16.5 produced sold out rapidly so Keith is working on new batches, including the detail differences between various locos. As can be seen from the photos the kits are highly detailed and designed to fit the Hornby 4-4-0 Compound chassis. Price is £65.00 per kit with a £5.00 discount for buying direct from Mannin.

"I'm working on four-wheeled carriages to go with the locos at the moment while William has almost completed his Manx Electric

Railway winter saloon and trailer kit," Keith adds. "I'm hoping to produce O-21 versions as well, although developing a chassis is difficult at the moment owing to the current Covid-19 situation causing problems with getting etched brass parts made."

The winter saloon will be a laser-cut ply kit, with resin 3D-printed detail parts, available with a full interior and

Brill bogies that will accept Spud motoring units, while the electric line's distinctive steeple-cab loco no 23 is also at the design stage.

Keith is finishing a website to display the full and growing range of products, and clearly Mannin is a manufacturer to watch.

Mannin Models: Tel: 07841 420400

Email: keith@manninmodels.co.uk



Narrowest of gauges...

Staying on the subject of 3D printing, this new kit from Newman Miniatures enables the building in N scale (2mm to the foot) of a real talking point, the Listowel & Ballybunion monorail. Supplied as standard for static display but able to be made operational by means of steel strip and magnets, the range includes the unique twin-boilered locomotive, carriages, wagons, track sections to fit with standard nickel-silver rail, even the novel step-over footbridge wagon. As a guide the 3D print for the loco costs £20.02 in smooth print, or £22.74 in the improved finish smoother print. The firm also offers Roland Emmet 'Far Twittering' locos in 009 (4mm) scale.

Web: www.shapeways.com/shops/newman-miniatures



■ Don't these look just lovely? They are the final production versions of the Ffestiniog Railway Bug Box carriages produced in 009 scale by Peco, and wearing the plum original livery. Three versions are available, all with the fine detail here and at around £28.00 each. We reckon we will see a lot of these on layouts... <http://peco-uk.com>



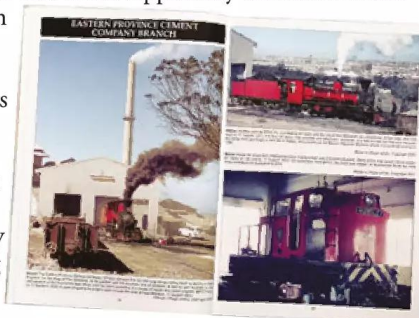
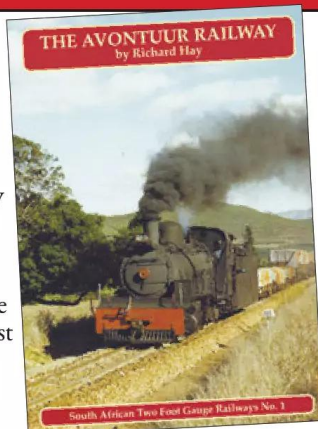
The Avontuur Railway

Richard Hay

■ In contrast to several albums produced recently by Mainline & Maritime to aid heritage railways, this new publication returns to the firm's prime talent for making the most of authors with specialist knowledge and access to photo collections.

This volume focuses on an African line that was once a mecca for enthusiasts, the Avontuur line the longest 2ft gauge route in the world at close to 180 miles. Apparently the first in a new series of African albums, the 64-page A4 softback follows the typical Mainline style, beginning with a couple of pages of history before focusing on photos of typically half a page or larger and with detailed captions. Calling upon the work of most of the top enthusiasts to photograph the Avontuur Railway, the pictures are all well reproduced and overall the book gives an interesting insight into the current dormant but intact line. **AC**

ISBN 978-1-90034-074-8 Published by Mainline & Maritime
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The Ruislip Lido Railway

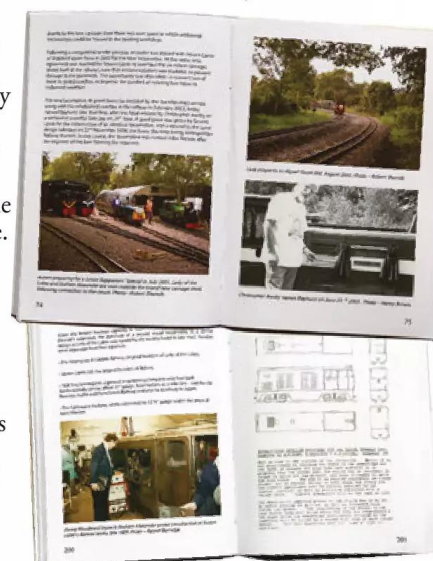
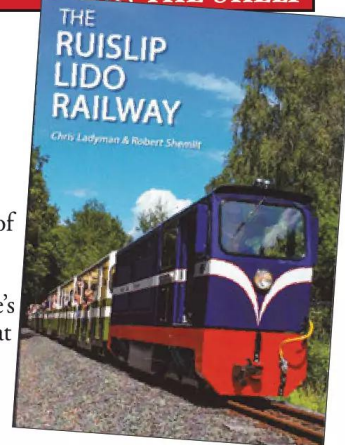
Chris Ladyman and Robert Shemilt

■ Your editor must admit to not knowing that much about the 12-inch gauge Ruislip Lido Railway, this rare example of narrow gauge in Greater London seldom featuring in the pages of *NGW*. But reading this compact but extensive book, published by the Ruislip Lido Railway Society to mark the 75th anniversary of the line's establishment in 1945, opens the eyes somewhat to what is a fascinating railway.

The A5 softback runs to just short of 300 pages and begins with a detailed history of the line, built to run around what was originally built as a reservoir in the early 1800s and developed as a lido in the early 1930s. The railway was run by the local council until closed following an accident in 1978. Under threat of being dismantled, it was saved by formation of the Society that has run it ever since.

Adding greatly to the historical section of the book are personal recollections of many members that were there in the early years, and there then follows a detailed description of the route. Each locomotive gets its own section, complete with a line drawing, and there are also chapters on the rolling stock, operation and infrastructure. Add this to the fact that the authors have unearthed a host of photos, including many period shots, and this book will be essential to all followers of the narrower gauges, but likely enjoyed by many a general narrow gauge fan. Let's hope in 2021 the Society can properly celebrate its special anniversary – the editor certainly intends to make a long overdue visit! **AC**

ISBN: 978-1-8380654-0-9
Published by Ruislip Lido Railway Society Ltd,
available from line's ticket office on running days
Web: www.ruislipidorailway.org Price £14.99



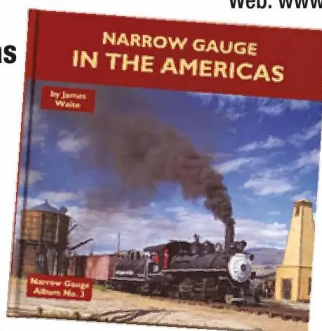
Narrow Gauge in the Americas

By James Waite

■ This is the second Mainline album authored by James Waite to aid the Talyllyn Railway, which receives a donation from each sale. *NGW* readers will be familiar with James's extensive travels across the Americas chasing narrow gauge trains and some of the pictures have appeared in our pages, but there are plenty more unfamiliar views to enjoy.

This hardback volume really is an album of photos, covering a great deal of ground from the familiar routes in North America right down south to the likes of Peru and Brazil, and as such might have benefitted from at least some chapter headings to split up the extensive selection of views. But if you simply enjoy leafing through pages of excellent quality pictures with concise but informative captions, you will certainly enjoy this book. **AC**

ISBN 978-1-90034-072-4 Published by Mainline & Maritime,
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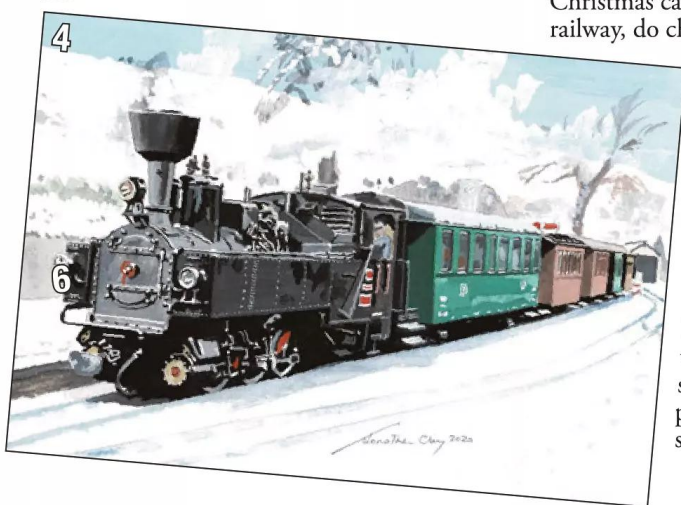
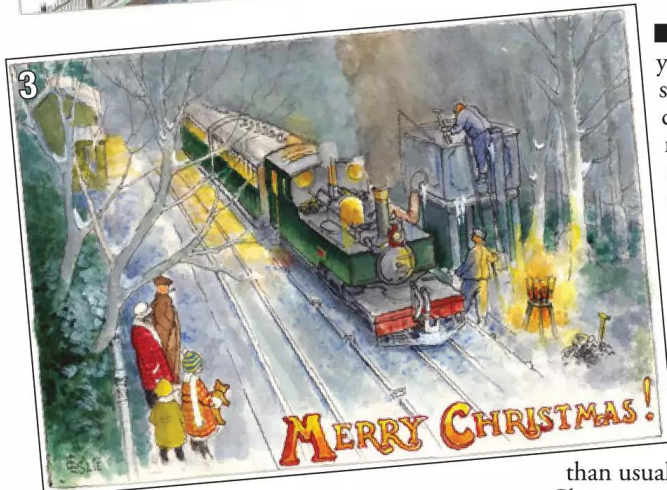
A Year in the Life of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways

■ Without doubt a highlight of the end of each year is the video round-up of activities on the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland railways, and in recent years it has got bigger and bigger as basically, the two lines have done more and more... Not so this year, for obvious reasons, but the FFWRH's guru of the moving image John Wooden has still managed to find plenty to put together an entertaining programme that still runs to four discs.

Naturally the star of the presentation is large England 0-4-0ST 'Welsh Pony' in the year that the loco finally entered service for the first time in preservation. All the important occasions are faithfully documented from the loco's first test runs to its immediate rostered turns when the line returned to action in August, and its naming ceremony at the Bygones weekend in early October. But as in previous years where the disc really scores is in taking viewers behind the scenes, documenting the FR's various teams at work on the hundred and one things required in maintaining an active railway. Always entertaining and not just for FFWRH fans, this programme is as ever recommended. **AC**

Published by Festiniog & Welsh Highland Railways, Tel: 01766 516034.
Web: www.festshop.co.uk Price £25.00 (DVD or BluRay)





Traditionally at this time of year **NGW** presents a wide selection of Christmas cards and calendars offered by the various railways, and providing useful fund-raisers for them. This year despite issuing reminders we haven't received as good a selection as usual to put on these pages, unfortunate as this year of course any extra revenue will be particularly welcome to our railways – perhaps the challenges of Covid-19 have put festive thoughts rather further back

than usual... So if you normally buy your Christmas cards from your favourite railway, do check with them, perhaps on their website, as they may still have them for sale.

We start this year's selection with the usual two cards from the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways (*image 1*). Again these feature original paintings by Richard Marsh, with the especially attractive Welsh Highland version showing a wintry view at Caernarfon station, a Garratt in the platform and the whole snowy scene framed by the castle.

The Ffestiniog version features double-Fairlie 'David Lloyd-George' at Boston Lodge Halt watched by the ubiquitous robin. Cards come in packs of 10, five of each design with bi-lingual greetings inside, at £5.50 a pack plus post. You can order them online from www.festrail.co.uk/shop

The Fairbourne Railway's card for 2020 (*image 2*) features a locomotive that hopefully we will see returning to service before too long – Hunslet 0-6-4ST 'Beddgelert', the current subject of a fundraising appeal for its restoration. The loco is pictured

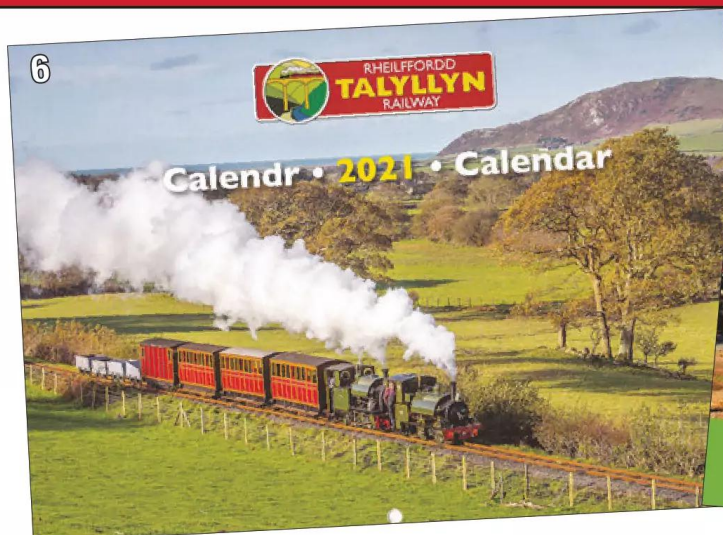
sitting in a snow-flecked Penrhyn Point station – cards are available at three for £2.75 or 10 for £7.75, both including postage, from Fairbourne station when the railway is open or by post to Fairbourne Railway, Beach Road, Fairbourne, Gwynedd LL38 2EX.

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway card (*image 3*) is somewhat poignant this year, as ever showcasing the superb work of artist Eric Leslie and one of his last paintings as Eric sadly passed away in August. The superb image features one of the Devon line's Manning Wardle 2-6-2Ts in original livery taking water at a wintry Chelfham station. The card costs £2.50 plus post for a pack of five from the L&B online shop at www.lynton-rail.co.uk/shop

Jonathan Clay is again the artistic talent behind the 2020 Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway card (*image 5*), which features the line's visiting loco, ZB2 0-6-2T 'Zillertal', arriving at a snowy Llanfair Caereinion. The cards include greetings in both English and Welsh and are available at £4.75 for five, £7.75 for 12, £12.75 for 25, £16.50 for 36 and £21.00 for 50. Cheques should be made payable to W&L Sales, all prices including postage and sent to W&LLR Christmas Cards (NGW), 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys SY21 0BD. Card payments can also be taken through the railway's website at www.wllr.org.uk, on which the previous two years' cards, also Jonathan Clay paintings, are still available.

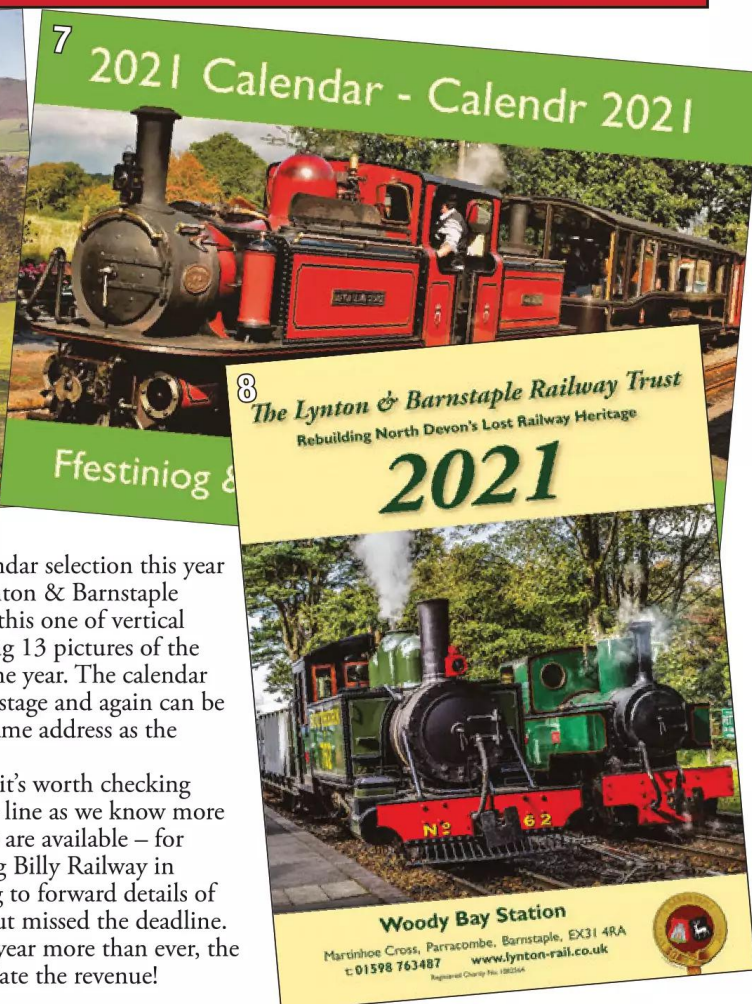
The final Christmas card this year is from the Corris Railway (*image 6*) and departing from the norm by not featuring a train! Instead it's a snowy, almost monochromatic scene of the mid-Wales line's track running through its typical woodland scenery. Cards cost £4 per pack of five plus £1 for post and packing and if you order five or more packs you get them post free and with a free bonus card. Order from John A. Knight, 40 Fladgate Road, Leytonstone, London E11 1LY with cheques payable to Corris Railway.

A trio of calendars reached us in time for press deadline this year. Both the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland (*image 6*) and Talylyn (*image 7*) calendars are to the traditional horizontal folded A3 format,



and as ever feature excellent quality pictures alongside the essential dates – we were particularly impressed by the Talyllyn example this year with its wide selection of beautifully reproduced photographs.

The FF&WHR calendar costs £8.50 plus £3.60 post, and you can order from the same address as for the Christmas card. The Talyllyn calendar is £7.50 plus £3.95 post, and can be ordered from The Railway Shop, Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, Tywyn, Gwynedd LL36 9EY, by phone using a credit card on 01654 711012, and through the TR's online shop that is accessible through the line's website at www.talyllyn.co.uk



New to the calendar selection this year is one from the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway (image 8), this one of vertical format and featuring 13 pictures of the L&B from across the year. The calendar costs £4.99 plus postage and again can be ordered from the same address as the Christmas card.

As stated earlier it's worth checking with your favourite line as we know more cards and calendars are available – for example the Puffing Billy Railway in Australia was trying to forward details of its calendar to us but missed the deadline. And of course this year more than ever, the lines would appreciate the revenue!

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Michael Field Video
NEW PROGRAMME
STATFOLD BARN RAILWAY
August 2020 Enthusiast Day

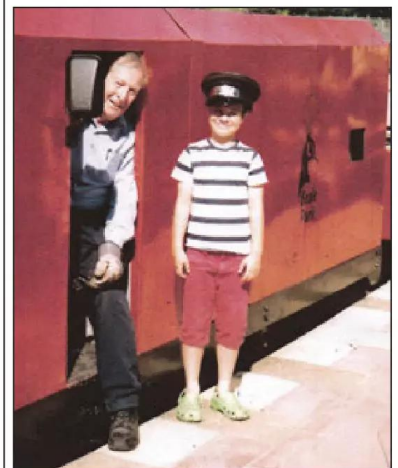
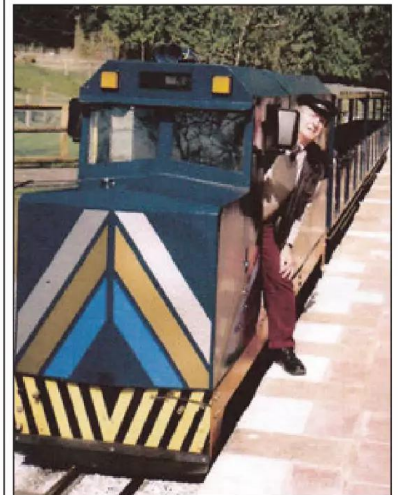
The DVD covers all of the action. If you have not been to STATFOLD this DVD will show you what Statfold is really like. 13 locos were in steam. More locos were on display in the Grain Store roundhouse. R.T. approx. 61 mins. **DVD £14.95**

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Driving Humphry Davy

I was very interested in the article in *NGW* 151 regarding the 10¼-inch gauge loco 'Sir Humphry Davy' ('Rydon Park and Sir Humphry'). In 2013 I started driving this loco at Beale Park, with David Laing, a schoolfriend from Birkenhead who I hadn't seen for many years.

During the winter of 2014 David and I repainted the loco in 'Valeno Red' and we kept it running, with difficulty, until we got our new train from Alan Keef Ltd in February 2018. This is in the colours of the long-gone Donegal Railway which I think David worked on as a student in Ireland many years ago. In recent years he rebuilt the 3ft gauge line between the Giant's Causeway and Bushmills in Northern Ireland.

Bryan Lee

Unexpected steam

Reading the article about the return of Denver & Rio Grande Southern No. 20 in *NGW* 152 reminded me of our visit to the Colorado Railroad Museum on 9th June 2017. We had just been for a ride on the Georgetown Loop Railroad and were on our way back to Denver.

In the depot building we were told that there was an engine in steam, which surprised us as it was a Friday and according to the website trains

only ran on Saturdays. So for \$4 each extra we had two round trips around the museum circuit behind 1881-built Denver & Rio Grande Western 2-8-0 no 346. It was an unexpected bonus to the visit of a very interesting museum.

Dominic Emery

Memories of a Bug

Mention was made in a recent edition of *NGW* about the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch 'odd man out' loco, 'The Bug' and I wondered if any reader could relate to my first memory of it. I was a Narrow Gauge Railway Society member (here in Australia) for quite a few years, and remember seeing an old photo of the Krauss loco, as found at the bottom of a large scrap bin at a Belfast scrap metal dealer's yard.

I was born and grew up in Belfast. Just after the Second World War, when I was six or seven, I remember visiting the Belfast Zoo and Amusement Park at Bellevue Gardens, under the Cave Hill and seeing the miniature railway, out-of-use with the train parked on track just below a steep cliff. The roof of the loco was crushed downwards and I was told that a large rock (or rocks) had been deliberately pushed over the top of the cliff.

"The roof of the loco was crushed downwards and I was told that a large rock (or rocks) had been deliberately pushed over the top of the cliff..."

Above: The new stock supplied by Alan Keef Ltd for the Beale Park Railway, taking over from 'Sir Humphry Davy' which Bryan Lee drove on the line, top right and above right with his grandson after the loco was repainted in Valeno Red. See Bryan's letter on this page.

Left: Denver & Rio Grande Western 2-8-0 no 346, which was found unexpectedly in steam on a Friday – see the letter by Dominic Emery.

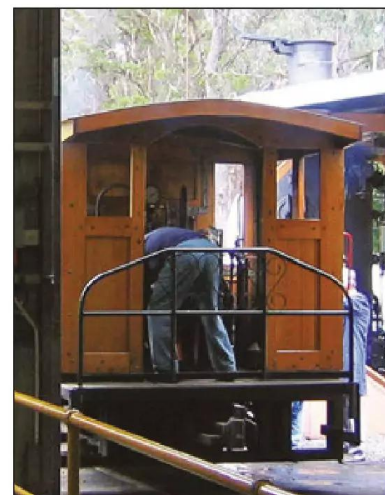


I don't ever remember seeing the train in use after that and obviously it was decided to get rid of it because of the risks to visitors and staff. I thought I recognised the loco when, many years later I read of its rescue and a further 20 years on, I looked it over in the New Romney loco shed. Sadly I didn't get my first camera until the early 1950s and even then it was only a Brownie 127, first used at the Southport Miniature Railway in about 1953-4.

The second *NGW* reference concerns Arbroath's famous Kerr's Miniature Railway ('Scotland's oldest miniature line to close in September', *NGW* 151). My home moved from Belfast in 1951, 'across the water' to Arbroath and I soon discovered the railway, lurking just beneath the East Coast Main Line on the seaward side, on the way to Carnoustie.

I spent much of my school holidays (from boarding school in Northern Ireland) visiting, hanging around, and then being allowed to help with preparation and small tasks; no 'under age' or 'risk assessment' limitations then.

Again, I didn't have a camera until my home moved to Cheshire (Stretton) a bit later but I loved it and it was all guiding me to a lifetime involvement in 'the smaller' and then



narrow gauge. I again helped (?) the gentleman operating a miniature line on Margate or Ramsgate Pier (when my parents, having left the Navy, ran a boarding house in Margate for a few years), did a 'Railway Operating Course' as a school cadet at Longmoor (not much narrow gauge there but a lot learned), then joined the Festiniog Railway Society in about 1955-6 and spent a week 'bush bashing' up the line from Minffordd (I think).

The most recent, and unexpected reference with a connection to me, is about the live steam garden railway model (NGW151) of 'our' Davenport 0-4-0ST at the railway museum I founded (from a public meeting in November 1971 and Foundation Meeting in February 1972) becoming the first honorary Secretary and member No. 001 of The Illawarra Light Railway Museum Society Ltd. I retired as Honorary Operations Manager at the museum in 2004.

When Statfold Barn first got its Davenport, and was looking for information that would help with its rebuild, I sent a lot of detail photos of ours but it soon became clear that Statfold's loco was a much smaller size for the same gauge, and wheel-arrangement than ours. The ILRMS Davenport (which we named 'Kiama' because most of it ran there – it's a composite of three) is about 12 tonnes and like the models, has a long overhang, past the short wheelbase and a tendency to 'waddle'.

The composite locomotive is made up from two purchased by the New South Wales Government for construction work at Cordeaux Dam, in the Illawarra, during World War 1, probably sourced from the USA because of over-commitment by UK builders at the time; B/No. 1596 of 1917 and later amalgamated with sister loco B/No. 1517 of 1915, at Kiama, Quarries Ltd, in 1938. The ILRMS re-boilered the loco in 1993 with a better boiler from a similar loco that had seen use at a sawmill.

Above: Davenport 0-4-0ST 1596 on a steam day at Illawarra Light Railway Museum in New South Wales, Australia. The picture at top right shows the additional and essential safety rails added in preservation and described by Tony Madden in his fascinating letter.

We added a rear platform and handrail behind the cab of the Davenport, for safety reasons. The only access to the cab was from the rear centre doorway, so that if anyone fell out (which did happen at Kiama) they went straight under the following train. The original cab had bottom-hinged coal bunkers under the side windows, leaving no space for a side door.

So, when we rebuilt the timber cab many years ago, for safety we had to extend the floor beyond the door and of course fit a safety rail, which made the rear overhang even more pronounced and required a long drawbar, pivoted on the inner end.

Hope this is all of interest. Congratulations on continuing to produce a great magazine especially under the prevailing conditions.

Tony Madden

Andrew C replies: Fascinating stuff Tony – especially the essential safety modifications to avoid losing crew off the back of the Davenport!

Not a postcard?

I was reading NGW152 this afternoon and a thought struck me re your comment about the photo of the fatal accident on the North Bay Railway, and that it appeared to have been marketed as a postcard (*Viewpoint*, NGW152).

I'm always looking out for old postcards of narrow gauge subjects. In the course of my hunting I've noticed that in days long gone commercial photographers would print personal photographs at the standard 6 x 4-inch (postcard) size and put postcard markings on the back. As an example, there are many photos available for sale of Victorian family portraits printed with these markings. These photographs were not produced to be reproduced in bulk for sale, but to be sent by the owner to friends or families. It was a low-tech way of sharing photos by post; today we call it social media!

"Instead of having to close completely, the company continued making steam locos..."

I would suggest this would explain why the photo of the NBR appears to be a postcard, but is not. It is an interesting and unusual find. In my experience most postcards I've come across of this line either show trains by the boating lake or at the Scalby Mills terminus.

Gerry Balding

Mad cows, wrong coal

The mention of closure of the Exmoor Steam Railway in NGW152 (*That was the Year that Was, from 25 years ago*) fails to mention the actual cause of closure: mad cow disease (or Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) to give it its correct name). Like much of the British countryside, North Devon was closed to tourists to try and eliminate the disease. Internet sources seem confused over the exact dates.

The railway was a sideline to back up The Exmoor loco building business, so instead of having to close completely, the company continued making steam locomotives. When the travel restrictions were lifted, it was decided not to reopen the line.

I was living in Barnstaple at the time, so the loss of the ESR was a great disappointment. This was before the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway started to stir, though a preservation society had been in existence for several years.

"Coal, coal everywhere, and not a lump for us" to adapt a famous poem. "It's the wrong kind of coal" to adapt another more recent saying. In his editorial in issue 152, Andrew mentions coal imported from Russia.

During my many visits to the Baltic States I've seen countless Russian coal wagons on their way from Russia to the Baltic Sea ports for export to the West. I had hoped to send one of my photos of a yard in Latvia full of Russian coal trains, but instead they are all of disgustingly filthy oil tank wagons – sorry! Amazingly, the locomotives are usually immaculate.

Tony Olsson

Unexpected Narrow gauge...



Taking aim on the tracks...

Steve Sedgwick reveals a lesser-known NG weapon of war

The Brennan torpedo dates from the 1880s and was the world's first practical guided weapon. Surprisingly, it had four small flanged wheels on its underside and running on narrow gauge tracks for launching it from land sites into the sea.

The torpedo was a triumph of mechanical ingenuity. Inside its 15ft long casing were two drums of thin wire 2000 yards long, their ends attached to a land-based stationary steam engine. This engine wound the wire inwards turning the drums so driving a pair of contra-rotating propellers that drove the torpedo forwards at speeds up to 27 knots.

The torpedo was steered to its target by varying the winding speeds of the two wires. The top secret and fascinating mechanical drive and guidance devices inside the torpedo can be best appreciated by viewing this YouTube video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeyJbgrE8oc.

The spinning drums may also have provided some gyroscopic stability, especially as its inventor, Louis Brennan, went on to build a gyroscopically stabilised monorail.

The Brennan torpedo was operated by the Royal Engineers until in 1905 a decision was made to decommission it in favour of

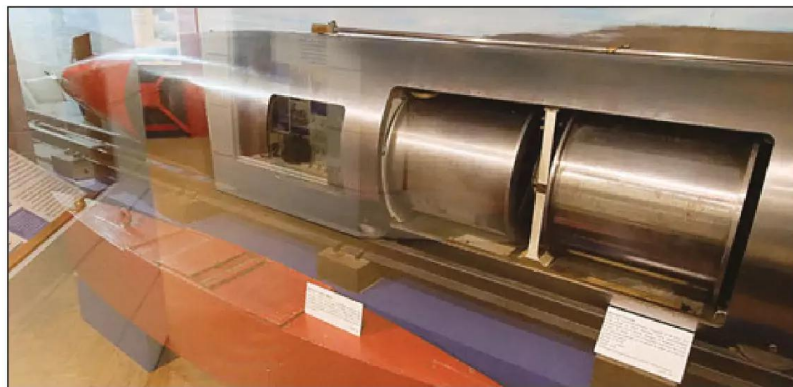
torpedoes with a greater range and ease of use.

Eight Brennan torpedo sites were built out of a projected 15. Four were in Britain, one in Ireland, two in Malta and one in Hong Kong. They were used at harbours and navigational pinch points.

One such base was Cliffe Fort on the Thames estuary a few miles east of Gravesend. Now, more than 100 years after the concept was abandoned, the remains of one of the two launching tracks can still be seen there.

Cliffe Fort itself is privately owned, dangerously derelict and off limits. However, about 60-70ft of incomplete launching track survives outside the perimeter of the fort and is accessible by public footpaths. The gauge is only around seven inches but the heavyweight 15ft long bullhead rails are worthy of standard gauge. After running in concrete over the lip of the sea defence wall, the rails are supported on cast-iron pedestals at 7ft 6in intervals.

It is rather nice that the nearby Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham is home to the only surviving Brennan torpedo. It is displayed there on a short section of track but sadly in conditions which make it difficult to photograph.



That was the year...

Recalling narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy...

From 50 years ago

Synolda arise

Wednesday 3rd September saw the newly restored 'Synolda' rolled out at Ravenglass after a thorough overhaul at the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway shops. The locomotive was latterly used at Belle Vue, Manchester as 'Prince Charles'. It has been restored to Narrow Gauge Railways livery and renamed Synolda after many requests from R&ER staff. (NGN, Nov 1980).

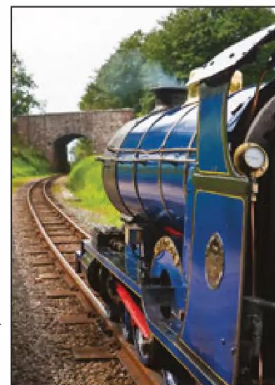


Photo: Steve Town

Built by Bassett-Lowke in 1912, Synolda is a special locomotive for the R&ER, as it is the sister of 'Sans Pareil' the first 15-inch gauge engine to run on the line. Synolda has remained at Ravenglass as part of the line's museum collection and is kept in operational condition to appear at special events, such as above in 2015 – currently it is undergoing another overhaul.

Vale of Teifi Narrow Gauge Railway Society (2ft)

It seems that the way is now clear for the Vale of Teifi Narrow Gauge Railway Society to be granted the Light Railway Order which has been long awaited. It has been a gloomy summer for the Society as a result of the condition laid down by the Department of Transport that the five main bridges along the trackbed had to be repaired structurally.

Dyfed County Council had agreed to undertake repairs and maintenance at a cost of £13,500, with this amount being paid as soon as possible. Not being in possession of this money, the Society had to resort to a bank loan which after hurried negotiation was granted.

A deputation of four members addressed the Highways and Transportation Committee of Dyfed County Council on 18th September in an effort to convince the Council that the project could succeed. As a result the Council agreed to support the Society and inform the Department of Transport that an agreement had been reached over the maintenance and repair of bridges.

This was a tremendous achievement to the hard core of Society workers, but it seems the purchase of additional stock will have to be delayed for a time in order to concentrate on raising the £15,000 needed to settle outstanding commitments. (NGN, Nov 1980).

Not the last difficulty experienced by the Teifi Valley Railway! In fact it did not open for another six years and then ran quietly until a more recent period of troubles, culminating in a logging operation ripping up a long section of track, from which the line is still recovering.

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 38 or go to www.ngrs.org.uk.



From a Different Age...

Dark days on the island...

News that the Isle of Man Railway's loco no 1 'Sutherland' has been restored to the Port Erin Museum reminds *John Pitchford* of a visit to the island in early August 1975.

The year of 1975 did not seem to be a good one for the Isle of Man Railway. Services were only running between Castletown and Port Erin, demolition men were at work on the Ramsey and Peel lines and later in the year several carriages were lost in a shed fire at St Johns. Early morning on my first full day on the island saw me wandering around the grand but deserted station at Douglas. In the distance from the end of the platform one of the County Donegal railcars was shuffling about, but that appeared to be all the activity.

I made my way by bus to join the train at Castletown. No 4 'Loch' was on duty and, despite the short line length, had a very spirited run at a speed I hadn't experienced at that time on preserved lines in England.

Perhaps the one bright spot of that year was that a museum was being prepared at Port Erin and no 15 'Caledonia' was already installed, painted in maroon and lettered up as Manx Northern Railway no 4. All of the other locos were in 'Ailsa green'.

Lucky meeting

Looking around the part-completed museum, I met a fellow enthusiast who said that there was another train bringing more stock from Douglas the next day. Although services weren't running between Castletown and Douglas, locos were exchanged on a regular basis between the overnight stabling point at Port Erin and the main workshop. This was a good opportunity to see some more action at Douglas and even better the enthusiast (after all this time, I can't recall his name!) had a car and said I could join him as he chased the train to Port Erin.

Bright and early next morning, I arrived at Douglas Station. Shunting

was underway and no 13 'Kissack' was making up a train consisting of no 1 'Sutherland', one of the original three locos for the railway, the Royal Saloon (F36) and the Governor's Coach (F75). The train was completed by a brake composite.

We stayed to see the entourage make a brave start past the signal box and then headed for the car. We were surprised to catch the train as it reached the top of the bank at Port Soderick and again at Ballasalla, where it lingered while road chippings that had accumulated in the track at the level crossing since the passage of the last train were cleared.

We caught up with the train again at Castletown and there was just a chance to get to a decent photo location to see it pull out. It halted at Colby, possibly to cross the service train. On then to Ballagawne Crossing where the lady crossing keeper enthusiastically waved a yellow flag that looked suspiciously as though it had once been a tea towel, and finally to Port Erin.

Here there wasn't time to see the action at the station. I had only a limited time and there was more of

Above: Loco no 13 'Kissack' waiting to leave Douglas with no 1 'Sutherland'. The first carriage is the Royal Saloon, the second the Governor's Coach. Behind the train is the south line platform with awnings and the goods sidings, all now gone. 6th August 1975

Above right: No 4 'Loch' departs Castletown with the Port Erin train on 5th August.

Below: Scene of dereliction at St Johns carriage shed. At left is a line of ex-Manx Northern coaches probably not used since 1947.



the island to explore, so I had to jump on a bus and leave my colleague to see the shunting.

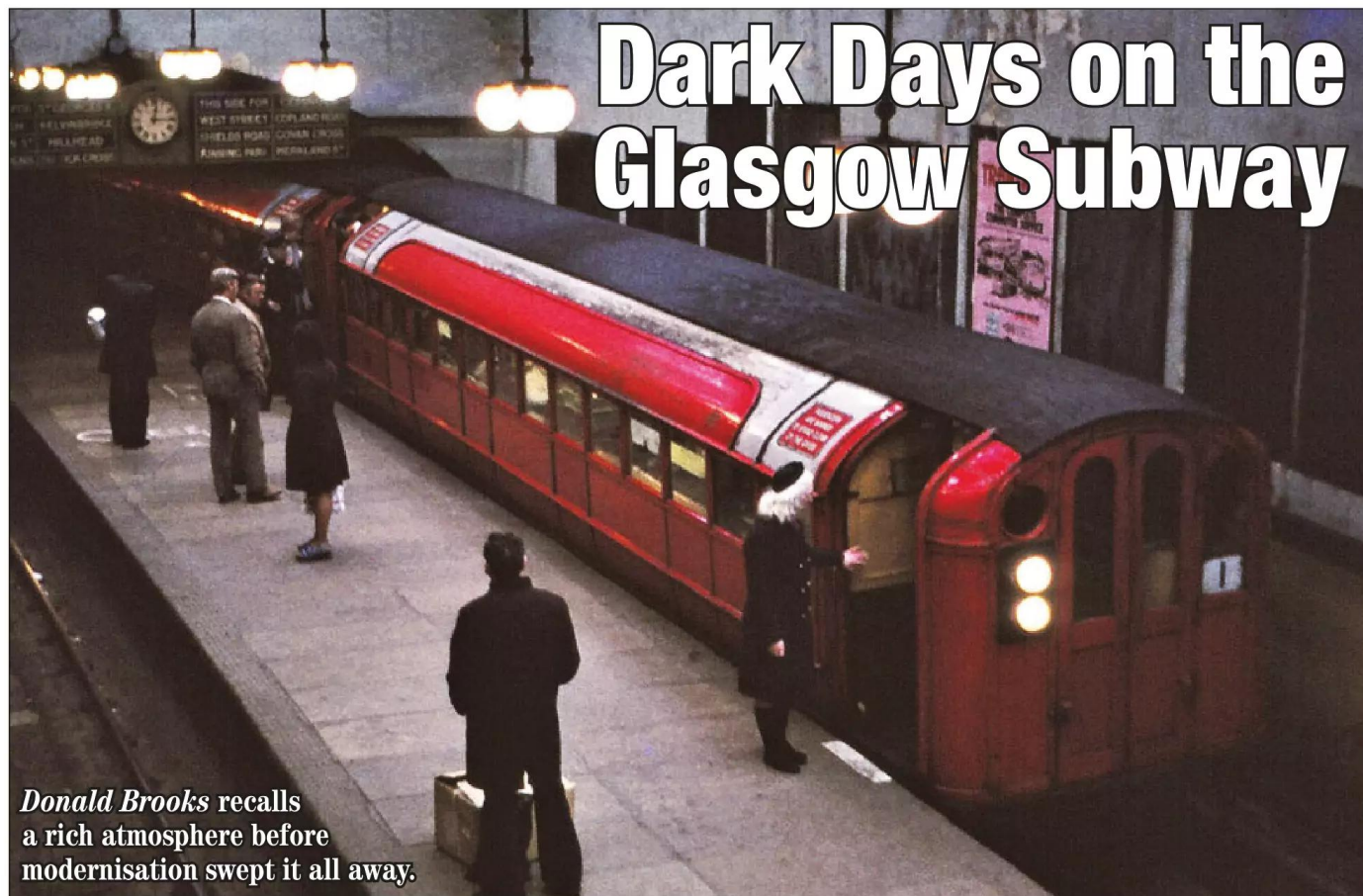
Redundant stock

Leaving the bus at St Johns, the scrapmen were still at work. The carriage shed held all sorts of elderly coaches, presumably not needed by the reduced circumstances of the railway and now isolated from the rest of the system. Later in the year, most of these were either lost in the shed fire or deliberately scrapped.

The following day found me heading along the Manx Electric Railway to see the Ramsey Pier Tramway, and an evocative walk along the overgrown track on the then derelict Groudle Glen Railway to peer over the clifftop at the old polar bear enclosure. And that was it.

My brief trip to the island had covered a lot of the key features of the time and it wasn't until 2017 that I returned to find many things changed, some for the better, some for the worse, but the Port Erin Museum was very worthwhile and now will be enhanced again by the presence of no 1. **NGW**





Dark Days on the Glasgow Subway

Donald Brooks recalls a rich atmosphere before modernisation swept it all away.

On my first visit to London as a child, one thing I most looked forward to was travelling on the Underground. It was quite a disappointment to find that even in the city centre the sub-surface routes often emerged into daylight while the tube lines ran long distances in the open air once out in the suburbs.

I certainly did not feel similarly short-changed by too much light when I visited the Glasgow Subway in the 1970s. I had learnt about it from an early book on British narrow gauge railways and, intrigued to learn that the world's third oldest underground ran to the unusual gauge of four feet, had always wanted to see it.

The line's story is well-known. The 10.5km circular route opened in December 1896 with a fleet of cable-operated gripper cars built by Oldbury Carriage & Wagon, supplemented by some slightly later trailers from Hurst Nelson. Then as now a very frequent service called at 15 closely-spaced stations, the only changes being the replacement of Merkland Street by the new Partick Interchange in 1979 and the renaming of Partick Cross as Kelvinhall to avoid confusion.

The line was converted from cable to electric operation in 1935, with the existing cars extensively rebuilt by Hurst Nelson. The depot remained above the line at Govan, with cars lifted up to it by an overhead travelling crane for maintenance.

This was how things were, when I visited the Subway in 1976, just before it closed for modernisation and changed for

ever. My over-riding first impression was how incredibly small-scale it all was. There are narrower gauge metros than the Subway, but Glasgow actually feels narrow gauge in a way that Valencia and Bilbao do not.

Little had changed in 80 years and the stations were dark and dingy, the walls covered with decades of grime. The platforms, approached by short staircases, appeared remarkably short and narrow while the two-car trains serving them were almost model-like.

Authentic scene lost

At the time the Glasgow Subway provided a much more authentic experience of stepping back in time than any heritage railway, but in May 1977 it all came to an abrupt end as the line closed for modernisation, reopening in 1980 with new Metro Cammell stock. The line also acquired its first ever points when the upgraded depot was connected by rail to the running lines.

A further modernisation is now well underway. Most stations have already been updated and the new fleet of Stadler trains should be in service before long. Ultimately operation will be entirely automatic, with half-height platform screens.

The Subway has come a long way since 1976 and its 13 million annual passenger journeys today, though only a third of the number in 1950, are probably more than all other UK narrow gauge railways combined, even if passenger kilometres might tell a different story. And you can still experience the 1970s atmosphere,

albeit in a sanitised version, by alighting at Partick for the Riverside Transport Museum and its preserved 1890s Subway cars. **NGW**

Above: The gloom of Bridge Street station. Passengers on the narrow island platform indicate the small scale of the Subway.

Below: Train on an outer circle working, the 600V DC live rail just visible. Contact rails on the tunnel wall provided independent lighting by means of skids on the sides of the cars.

Photos by Donald Brooks, April 1976





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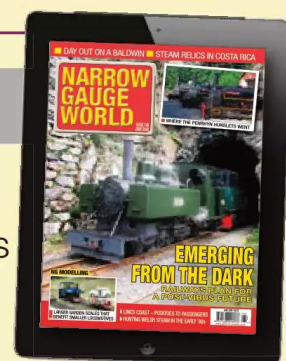
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