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ISSUE 154
JAN-FEB 2021



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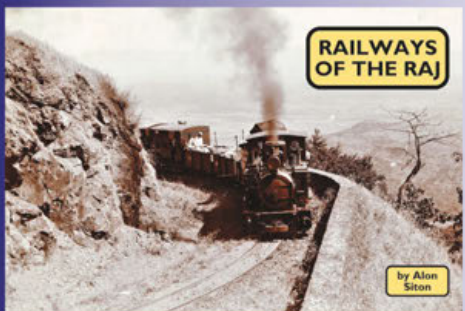


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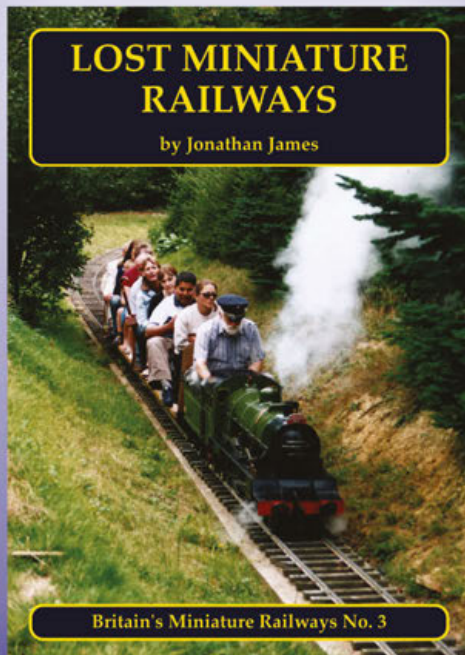


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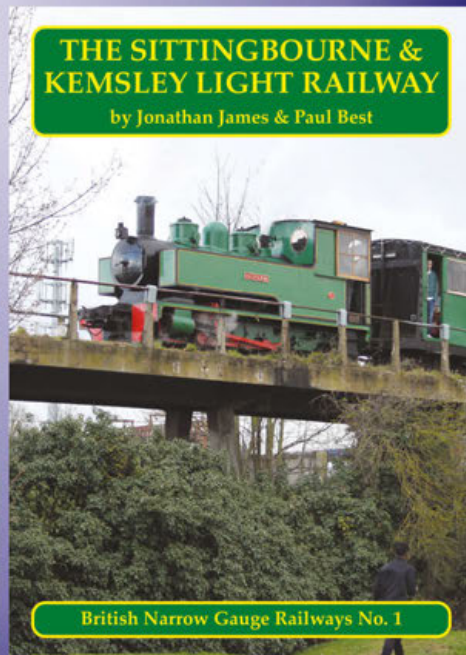
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Cover: Why the extra greenery and the chalked comments on the smokebox of the Puffing Billy Railway's Baldwin 7A? Because the locomotive was hauling the iconic Australian line's very first service on 28th November after a 250-day shutdown due to Covid-19, so they had reason to celebrate...
Photo courtesy of Max Thum/PBR

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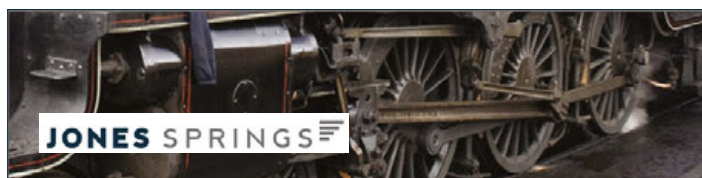
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Time to look firmly forward...



“For many families a trip to meet Santa on the train is a highlight of the year that is much looked forward to...”

Photo: Steam at sunset, captured by David Moseley on the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway, one of few lines that has running Santa Specials this Christmas. Hopefully much brighter days await in 2021...

Welcome to *NGW154*, and it doesn't get any easier does it? As I write this there are a whole host of new, and different Covid lockdown and restriction requirements across the UK, making it virtually impossible for any line that relies on volunteer labour to plan any winter services, festive trains that are generally big money earners.

Take as an example my own line the Welshpool & Llanfair – after a year when so many of our trains fell victim to Covid and those that did run were forced to have far fewer people on them, we were really keen to run our Santa Specials, for a host of reasons.

Firstly and perhaps most obviously, the Santas are superb revenue generators, in fact they bring in more than any other single event we hold in a typical year including our Gala – around £24,000 in 2019.

But equally importantly the Santas are the one event when we most connect with our local community. In the depths of December Llanfair is not exactly swimming with tourists but the Santas sell out to local residents – for many families a trip to meet Santa on the train and enjoy a convivial mulled wine in our heated tea room after is a highlight of the year that is much looked forward to.

We worked hard to plan a Covid-safe Santa experience this

year, and right up until days before we were due to start selling tickets we were confident we could run the trains. But then we found ourselves in a situation where the Welsh Covid regulations were changing weekly and not relating at all to those just 15 miles over the border in England. With virtually all our staff being volunteers, they could not guarantee they'd be able to turn up and man the trains, and we had little option but to cancel and disappoint lots of local people, as well as ourselves.

Wrong side of the border

Thankfully some railways have been able to run their Christmas trains, but many others haven't, notably the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways. FF&WHR manager Paul Lewin was all over the BBC in the days following the Welsh Government's announcement of recovery grants for the lines affected by the pandemic.

The FF&WHR got the maximum £150,000, and while Paul was grateful for it, he was also frustrated, looking across the border to the likes of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, a similar-sized business as the FF&WHR, but one that being in England got financial aid running into seven figures. When the FF&WHR's annual earnings had slumped from £6 million to only one, and 32 redundancies had been made

unavoidable, Paul's frustration was somewhat understandable...

The news is, however, getting better – vaccines are on the way, with strong signs that by the time the proper running seasons begin in the Spring, we will be well on the way back to some form of normal. Don't get me wrong, 2021 will still be challenging – but hopefully we can all start to seriously rebuild what has been so damaged...

I must thank the many readers who took my editorial in *NGW152* to heart and lobbied their MPs over the stupidity of refusing planning permission for new coal mines and importing coal that we still need from abroad, with greater CO2 emissions going into the atmosphere as a result. Readers shared with me the replies received from their Parliamentary representatives, and while some of them were not exactly encouraging, we are at least keeping the issue in the public eye, in the fervent hope that sense will eventually prevail – for heritage railways to survive, especially after the year we've had, sense certainly needs to prevail...

Still, it's definitely time to look ahead. Over the past 12 months we've all suffered from far less narrow gauge enjoyment than we expected this time last year – my best wishes for a Happy New Year, and a 2021 where we are all meeting up beside tracks and on trains...

Andrew Charman

Cash grants to Welsh railways cannot prevent redundancies

Claims that lines would have been offered more generous financial help had they been located in England.

Just before this edition of *NGW* closed for press narrow gauge lines in Wales were told of their grants from the Welsh Government Culture Recovery Fund.

According to the Welsh Government £715,000 had been allocated to help Welsh heritage lines and by our press time the Talylyn Railway had revealed its grant of £150,000, the same figure awarded to the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways.

The Bala Lake Railway applied for and received "almost £150,000", the Fairbourne Railway just over £106,000, while the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway also received its applied-for grant of £138,000.

Lines were only to apply for a maximum of £150,000 from the fund whereas the English equivalent, which made its grants in September, allowed applications for up to £1 million. As reported in *NGW* 153 pay-outs from this scheme included £470,000 to the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway and £435,100 to the Seaton Tramway.

This led the general managers of both the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland and Talylyn railways to suggest that had their lines been sited in England they would have received more generous assistance

Grant funding from the Welsh Government will help the Fairbourne Railway complete winter maintenance projects, including the 10-year overhaul of Darjeeling-style Milner 0-4-0ST 'Sherpa'. The locomotive had been stripped down to its chassis at the end of November.

Photo: Andrew Charman



The FF&WHR announced 32 redundancies in November, general manager Paul Lewin telling the *Cambrian News* that having thought they would need to make the cuts following changes to the furlough scheme in August, a grant had

enabled the line to maintain staff numbers but only until the end of October. The line's commercial operations department had been closed with the priority being to retain employees with specialist skills to ensure essential winter maintenance was not affected.

Paled into insignificance

Speaking to the BBC following the Culture Recovery Fund award, Paul said the £150,000 paled into insignificance compared to the £5m of revenue lost by the FF&WHR in 2020 due to Covid-19, the railway earning £1m compared to the £6m of a typical season. Online appeals raised £550,000 but only partly helped meet the FF&WHR's monthly costs of £200,000.

"If you go over the border to England you see that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have funded the North Yorkshire Railway to the tune of £1.94m and £900,000 to the Severn Valley Railway," Paul said.

"If we were a different-sized business to them I would understand but we are not – we are the longest heritage railway in the country and the North Yorks and Severn Valley are also both £6m-£7m turnover companies. They have been supported and will carry on.

"We've had just a little bit of help, which we are grateful for, but now we have had to make 32 people redundant on top of around 50 seasonal posts – that's 80 people affected and we are trying to survive through winter with a minimal workforce, and eek our cash out long enough to run next year."

■ The Talylyn Railway commemorated one of its milestone events on 9th November, marking the 70th anniversary of the last train operated by the TR's pre-preservation regime. The train, sometime in November 1950, was run for Midlands industrialist John Wilkins, owner of the Fairbourne Railway and a founder member of the Talylyn Railway Preservation Society, to assess the condition of the line and report back to the TRPS committee.

Due to various Covid restrictions the recreation, using original stock, was a quiet affair. Loco 'Dolgoch' was driven by David Jones, son of Dai who drove the 1950 train. David's son Tom was fireman – the Jones family have worked on the TR for five generations, Dai's father and grandfather employed at both the railway and Bryn Eglwys quarry it served. A serious derailment of the 1950 train was not re-enacted...

Photos: TR



Stuart Williams, manager of the Tallyllyn Railway, insisted that the line was “extremely grateful” for the Government grant. “But I feel we would have got more generous Covid financial help if we were in England,” he added.

Stuart estimated that the Tallyllyn had lost around 60 per cent of its year-on-year revenue in 2020, amounting to £670,000. “The year has been a huge challenge – we raised about £130,000 running ‘virtual visits’ while we were closed and without that income we would have been in trouble,” he said.

The Bala Lake Railway described its award as “fantastic news”, adding that the money would enable the line to carry out an extensive programme of winter work including rebuilding a disabled carriage, overhauling another vehicle, adding extra covered waiting facilities at Bala station and a weather canopy over picnic tables at Llanuwchllyn and making much-needed repairs to the workshop building.

Fairbourne Railway manager Murray Dodds also welcomed the grant, particularly after the 12¼-inch gauge line won another £10,000 from the Economic Resilience Fund. This will pay for the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Rowen centre housing a garden railway display at Fairbourne – the panels are expected to supply a quarter of the line’s energy needs and save more than 3000kg of CO₂ emissions each year.

The Culture Recovery Fund grant will, Murray said, enable the Fairbourne to start its 2021 season in a much stronger position, helping to fund major maintenance projects including the 10-year overhaul of Darjeeling-style Milner Engineering 0-4-0ST ‘Sherpa’ and the relaying of 100 metres of the main line.

Santa disappointment

Similarly the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway was very pleased with its £138,000 grant, which came within days of the line being forced to cancel its annual Santa Special services. Called off due to the difficulties of ensuring sufficient staff could be rostered following the tightening of Covid restrictions across the UK, the festive trains are usually the W&LLR’s largest single revenue generator of the year, contributing more than £24,000 in 2019.

The grant will help the W&LLR’s winter costs, enable further Covid-protection investments for operation in 2021, other improvements to build up the line’s sustainability and resilience and also aid liaison with the local community.

“This funding, together with grants and government support already received, our 2020 traffic and sales income and the inspiring support given to our two appeals, means we end 2020 on a solid footing,” said W&LLR general manager Charles Spencer. But he added; “the challenge is now how to navigate the pandemic restrictions and fund our 2021 activity in what promises to be another challenging year.”



■ The project to recreate the former Southwold Railway Sharp Stewart 2-4-0T ‘Blyth’, scrapped in 1941, took a major step forward at the end of November when the boiler was trial-fitted onto the chassis. David Humphreys of North Bay Railway Engineering Services, which is building the loco at its Darlington workshops, told *NGW* that the smokebox and chimney are ready to be installed and Blyth could now effectively run on compressed air. The Southwold Railway Trust is currently raising the around £80,000 required to finish the engine – donations can be made through its website at www.southwoldrailway.co.uk/trust-projects/2-4-0t-no-3-blyth/ *Photo: NBRE*

Covid money to improve security at Sittingbourne

Improvements at Sittingbourne station will be made possible by the £26,500 awarded to the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway by the UK Government’s Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage.

Part of a series of awards made across English heritage lines in the wake of Covid-19, reported in *NGW* 153, the money represents the biggest single grant received by the Kent 2ft 6in gauge line.

The S&KLR intends to focus the improvements at Sittingbourne Viaduct station to make it safer for passengers and staff, including contingency measures in case Covid-19 is still an issue when the line starts its 2021 season in the Spring.

Security will be further addressed – vandalism is a constant problem at the station and the railway has already spent £10,000 on palisade fencing.

The railway also wants to improve access to the station – this is currently by means of a staircase which poses social-distancing issues. There are plans to develop a second entrance through the former rail route to the river wharfside – in the longer term this should also allow the development of wheelchair access to the station.

A new accessible toilet completes the list of improvements – the S&KLR is appealing for extra volunteer help to carry out the work which must be completed by March.



■ The Fairbourne Railway’s Milner 12.25-inch gauge locomotive ‘Russell’, built in 1979, has emerged from the line’s paint shop in a new version of its red livery skillfully lined out in two shades of blue. Unlike its 2ft gauge 2-6-2T inspiration at the Welsh Highland Railway the Fairbourne Russell is a 2-6-4T, due to the loco originally being built as a representation of the Leek & Manifold Railway locos. Various issues, including a tiny cab, led to a rebuild into its present form in the Fairbourne workshops in 1985. *Photo: FR*

'Poor advice' adds to Bure Valley losses of plus £700K

The Bure Valley Railway believes it has missed out on significant Covid resilience funding due to bad advice from the Government's Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS).

Following the announcement of the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage and the Heritage Stimulus Fund in August, the Norfolk 15-inch gauge line contacted the DCMS but according to general manager Andrew Barnes was told that it was not a heritage line and therefore did not qualify for help from the fund.

Andrew was therefore shocked when the recipients of grants were announced in September, reported in *NGW*153. "We were very disappointed when we saw that Seaton Electric Tramway, a narrow gauge line using non historic equipment on a former BR trackbed, was awarded £435,000," Andrew told *NGW*.

"An aerial photographic company which amongst other work takes pictures of historic homes was awarded £15,000, and a walking trail around Apsley Paper Mills received a major award."

Andrew added that the BVR appeared to have been badly advised by the DCMS and suffered a huge loss as a result. "We referred this to our local MP, who has not even acknowledged our letter/e-mail."

As a result the railway has received only a £25,000 leisure and hospitality grant, awarded in March. "As at the end of November our losses for 2020 are £703,000 but this will only increase between now and March."

New twists in insurance fight

The grant disappointment comes on top of the railway's continuing fight with its insurers over a refusal to pay out on a business interruption policy (*NGW*147). In September a test case taken to the High Court by the Financial Conduct Authority on behalf of a wide number of affected businesses across the UK ruled against the insurers.

The insurance companies then formally indicated that they



Bure Valley Railway no 8 'John of Gaunt' passes under a road bridge near Brampton on 28th October, as the line's management struggles to work out how it will survive the winter into 2021. Photo: James Kindred

wished to appeal and on 6th October were permitted to take their appeal direct to the Supreme Court.

The appeal hearing ended on 19th November – a ruling is expected in early January and Andrew added that it is expected to uphold the High Court Ruling.

"Sadly insurers are stating they will deduct everything they can from settlements including any grants and furlough payments, even though the government stated that employers did not benefit from the furlough payments, they were payments to employees with employers acting as payment agents," Andrew added.

"Also where policy holders have delayed or deferred expenditure to survive, this improves the Profit and Loss situation and so reduces any payout.

"The Heritage Lottery Fund reopened on 25th November and this is our last hope for some external grant funding – if this fails it will be a case of what do we cut or mothball to survive the winter."

Andrew said that the local council, the BVR's landlord, is now chasing the line for rent payments. "We are trying to stay positive, but it is a bit soul-destroying with being told no to every other source of funding and so many others succeeding and then even our local council offering no support."

Station secured for Lynton revival at third attempt

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's supporting organisation Exmoor Associates finally took possession of Bratton Fleming station on 3rd November, in readiness for the future extension of the revived Devon 2ft gauge line.

The station, around seven miles from Barnstaple and eight miles from the current centre of L&B operations at Woody Bay, closed in 1935 with the rest of the line.

It had since been turned into a private residence, and when it was put up for sale late in 2019 Exmoor Associates began efforts to try and add it to the various lengths of L&B route already acquired for the railway's revival. A strong response to funding appeals raised the purchase price but the bid appeared twice to have failed before the station was finally secured.

It will be some years before Bratton Fleming can expect to see trains again and initially it is intended to earn revenue for the revival by leasing the building as a house. The new owners are asking

enthusiasts to respect the privacy of future tenants and not to visit the station.

However there are plans to organise open days for members of the Friends of Bratton Station group once Covid restrictions allow.

Some years yet before Bratton Fleming is likely to return to looking anything like this scene from before 1935. Photo: L&BR





Bala welcomes Avonside loco home from Australia

Former Australian sugar cane Avonside 0-4-0T no 1909 arrived at the Bala Lake Railway on 22nd October, where it is to be based following restoration.

The loco, built in 1922 for the Farley mill in Queensland and one of four similar engines sent to the Australian sugar cane lines, had been withdrawn in 1962 and then plinthed for two decades. It was then purchased by local enthusiast Eric Gibson and stored under a shelter on his property for 36 years.

New owner John Moorhouse traced the Avonside while seeking a narrow gauge loco, and was able to conclude an agreement to buy it with Mr Gibson's son Glen, who had inherited the loco following his father's death.

After securing an export licence, a protracted process due to the loco's 'Movable Cultural Asset' status, the Avonside was loaded into a shipping container on 20th August and left Australia on 2nd September.

Swapping between cargo ships in Malaysia, the container was off-loaded at Felixstowe on 16th October and after delays clearing UK

customs finally arrived at the BLR's Llanuwchllyn headquarters on 22nd October.

The loco will initially continue to live in the container and the BLR had prepared a position for it by the station's former Great Western Railway goods store.

One surprise awaited the team when they eagerly opened the container – the Avonside was completely hidden behind an enormous Kangaroo soft toy!

According to John the loco is 90 per cent complete and he would like to see it restored for its 100th birthday in 2022, though he admits this may be a little optimistic.

Above: First time in the UK for 98 years – the Australian Avonside emerges from its container at Llanuwchllyn.

Right: G'day... Opening the container revealed a stowaway...



Poignant addition to Apedale fleet

The passing of one of its long-standing members has led to the Moseley Railway Trust adding a Ruston 48DL locomotive (224337/1944) to its collection at the Apedale Valley Railway in Staffordshire.

The 3ft gauge locomotive worked originally at the London & North Eastern Railway's Lowestoft sleeper depot, before moving in the 1960s to a concrete works near Ramsey. Eventually it was acquired by MRT member Andrew Wilson, who kept it in the garage of his house.

The Trust lost a long standing and much-respected member with Andrew's passing earlier in 2020. His loco was bequeathed to the Trust and was transferred by MRT members, becoming the first former British Railways loco at Apedale.



Apedale's latest loco is released from the tight surroundings of its former garage home.

Photo: MRT

BRIEF LINES



Loco no 9 'Mark Timothy' will be withdrawn in February.

Photo: James Kindred

Loco work at BVR

The Bure Valley Railway expects to receive a new boiler for its ZB locos, being built by North Bay Railway Engineering by Christmas. Some 35 firebox stays on loco no 7 'Spitfire' will be replaced before the hoilday while no 9 'Mark Timothy' will be withdrawn on 21st February for a 10-year heavy overhaul. This must be complete by September when no 1 'Wroxham Broad' is due its 10-year overhaul – both locos are expected to require boiler work costing at least £15,000.

Ruston goes to Old Kiln

The Old Kiln Railway has acquired its most powerful and heaviest diesel locomotive yet in Ruston & Hornsby 48DLG no 497760. Built in 1963 the loco spent its working life at collieries in the northeast before being preserved by a private enthusiast in 1992.

Another Sipat at North Bay

North Bay Railway Engineering is to produce a fourth version of its Bagnall Sipat 0-4-0 for a private customer, apparently constructing the parts for the buyer to assemble.

Lines mourn HMRI's Poyntz

Heritage railways have reacted with sadness to the passing of Major John Poyntz, who between 1989 and 2006 was HM Railway Inspectorate's principal safety regulator for heritage lines. Major Poyntz, who died from cancer on 2nd November aged 82, was widely respected across the sector.

Festive trains at Amberley

The Amberley narrow gauge railway will be running over three special 'Homemade Christmas' weekends of winter opening by the Sussex industrial museum in December. All visitors will need to pre-book tickets and be allocated specific time slots at <https://www.amberleymuseum.co.uk/>



Statfold starts restoration of First World War Baldwin

A fourth First World War Baldwin locomotive could be on its way back to steam in the UK after work began on 4-6-0PT WDLR 779 (44657/1916) at Statfold Barn.

Sold like much war surplus rail equipment to India following its war service, the loco was one of two Baldwins purchased from the Ryam Sugar Company and brought to the UK by Statfold in 2013. While WD 608 (45190/1917) was later sold on to enthusiast Graham Fairhurst and has since been restored to operating condition, 779 has since arrival sat unrestored on a wagon in a corner of Statfold's Grain Store museum collection.

The locomotive has now been stripped down ready for a move for restoration to the 'Workshop X' at Killamarsh near Sheffield. This venue has recently completed work on the Trust's Hunslet 0-4-2PT 'Tamar' (3756/1952).

On removing the Baldwin's side tanks, the plate bearing the loco's original War Department number of 779 was found.

Once restored to steam the Baldwin will join three other examples of the class in the UK. WD608 is currently based at the Ffestiniog Railway. The Greensand Museum Trust's no 778 (44656/1917) was

one of two Baldwins imported from India in 1985 and spent some time at Amberley Museum before restored at the Leighton Buzzard Railway where it is based today.

The other loco, no 794 (44699/1917), intended for a line planned for the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, is being restored at the Vale of Rheidol Railway for the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway. It will adopt the identity of classmate 590, that worked on the WHR until scrapped in 1941.

Meanwhile Statfold Engineering Ltd has begun restoring the Trust's Andrew Barclay 0-4-0T 'Cegin' (1991/1931), which formerly worked at Penrhyn Quarry and was repatriated from South America.

Above: Baldwin 779 ready to go to Killamarsh.

Right: WD plate discovered on stripping the loco.

Below: Statfold Engineering is restoring Barclay 0-4-0 'Cegin'.

Photos: Joey Evans



Track back on Llanfair Line

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway track gangs have reinstated a siding that had been out of use for some years at the mid-Wales line's Cyfrnydd station.

The work has been made possible by a grant from the Tourism Amenity Investment Support (TAIS) scheme administered by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

The £89,000 also funded electric car charging points installed at Llanfair station in 2019, and will also allow the reinstatement of the passing loop at the W&LLR's roadside halt of Sylfaen.

Above: The new siding is slightly longer than its predecessor. Photo: Alan Barnes/W&LLR

Halesworth project looks for trackbed

The Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway Society is seeking a section of trackbed from the former Suffolk 3ft gauge line to 'call its own' and establish its restoration credentials.

The group, based at the inland end of the route while the Southwold Railway Trust develops its 'Steamworks' at Southwold, has recently been working on the former goods shed at Blythburgh station, around five miles from Southwold. As well as restoring the building, eight panels of track have been laid and 20 yards of traditional railway fencing erected.

Writing in the latest edition of the Society's newsletter and hinting at the local opposition the scheme at Southwold has faced, HSNRGS chairman James Hewitt comments; "Once we can produce a 'prized' section of track, we can bring doubters to see it, and to realise that an 11ft-wide strip of narrow gauge railway that carefully avoids lopping down mature trees is not only possible but can enhance the landscape."

"We need to turn 'not in my back yard' into 'well, might be nice...'" James adds.



Unloved 3ft loco Handyman waits for its new owner

As *NGW* went to press news was awaited from the National Railway Museum (NRM) revealing the next owner of 'Handyman' (573/1900), a 3ft gauge Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST that has spent almost six decades awaiting restoration.

The NRM scheduled the loco for disposal in June, after plans to cosmetically restore it were cancelled.

Handyman worked at the Burton Ironstone Co's Burton Latimer pit in Lancashire until 1921 when it moved to the Cranford Quarry. This system was metre gauge so Handyman was stored until transferred to Scaldwell Quarries, Northampton in 1936.

The loco was withdrawn in 1961 and in 1963 saved for preservation by Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway volunteers Bob Harris, David Plant and Gerald Rainbow. It moved in 1964 to the W&LLR's Cyfronnydd station where it was stored under a tarpaulin on a short section of track (pictured above).

Later the loco moved to the first Welsh Highland Railway base at Kinnerley in Shropshire and then the Midland Railway Centre at Butterley. The owners finally decided to dispose of it in hope of it being restored and it was bought by the NRM in 2008.

Industrial display

The museum began a cosmetic restoration in 2012, planning to display the loco with a pair of former Scaldwell wagons to represent industrial railways. These plans were later abandoned and Handyman scheduled for disposal with a bid deadline at the end of October.

One group that failed to win a bid for Handyman was the Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Society, following the example of the Southwold Railway Trust which is restoring Scaldwell quarries Peckett 0-6-0ST 'Scaldwell' at the other end of the Southwold line.

The HSNRGS revealed in its latest newsletter that its bid had been unsuccessful; "(The NRM) did not give reasons, but our short history and lack of trackbed to run it on must have been factors in their decision."

Plenty of narrow gauge on shortlist for the HRA Oscars

The near-30 year restoration of a Simplex loco on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway is among several narrow gauge projects shortlisted in the annual Heritage Railway Association awards, known as the 'heritage railway Oscars'.

The LCLR makes the list with its 'Skeggy Simplex' project, nominated for the Award for Diesel Locomotion and also for the Coiley Award, given to an HRA member organisation completing an outstanding locomotive project. Here it will take on the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's restoration of England 0-4-0ST 'Welsh Pony', steamed for the first time in preservation in 2020.

The Skeggy Simplex has seen the restoration of a 1947-built Motor Rail 20hp diesel, started 25 years ago by Trust members, completed. The loco spent its working life in Lincolnshire and was famously swamped by the sea during floods in 1953.

The LCLR makes the awards shortlist for a third consecutive year, jointly winning an award in 2009 after its reopening.

Other narrow gauge entries on the shortlist include Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway trustee Oliver Edwards, nominated for the Young Volunteer Award and nominations in the external communications category for the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's media

and communications department and the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Society's *It's Still a lot of Fun* book celebrating the last 20 years of the Society (reviewed on page 44).

In the internal communications category the Tallylyn Railway's *Control Centre* public online subscription service and the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's *The Earl* digital newsletter are both nominated.

The Tallylyn's 'Virtual Visit' appeal will also compete for a new award recognising innovative ideas progressed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, where rivals include the Seaton Tramway's 'Virtual Tramathon Live'.

The Small Groups category includes the 9-inch gauge Downs Light Railway for its achievements with youth engagement, while in the Large Groups category the 3ft 9in gauge Lynton & Lynmouth Cliff Railway is listed for its Top Wheel Installation project.

The Lynton cliff line is also in the final five for the outstanding visitor attraction award, where among its rivals are the Seaton Tramway and the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust's Statfold Barn Railway.

The awards will be announced at an event in York on 3rd March, during which the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust at the Tallylyn Railway will also receive the *Heritage Railway* magazine Interpretation Award.

Top: Simplex restoration at the Lincs Coast has been recognised by the HRA. Photos: LCLR

Right: Statfold Barn is up for the outstanding visitor attraction award. Photo: Andrew Charman





Dingle carriage arrives in Cumbria for restoration

Tralee and Dingle Light Railway third class carriage 7T, which is being restored by the Cavan and Leitrim Railway (Dromod), has arrived at John Fowler Engineering at Old Hall Farm, Cumbria for work to begin.

In the week before the carriage's departure for England on 16th November, the team at Dromod prepared the collection of items for loading including the original 1890-built chassis of 7T, original bench seating, bogies from sister vehicles 8T and 6T and several miscellaneous items including chopper couplings – effectively a full kit of parts that will assist in the restoration of the chassis to operating standards.

The C&L is seeking to raise £20,000 to complete the chassis and bogies under phase 1 of the project. Phase 2 will see the body sections fabricated and assembled at Old Hall Farm before the carriage returns to Ireland to become the only operational

rolling stock of the erstwhile Tralee and Dingle Railway and the only authentic Irish narrow gauge carriage capable of being operated on the island.

"This marks a huge milestone in the project," coordinator Darragh Connolly said. "We ask anyone that has an interest in the Irish narrow gauge to donate what they can to get the project completed.

"It is curious that as part of our research we learnt that the original 3ft gauge railway carriage body in the Ravenglass Railway Museum was also built in Bristol – this marks an interesting move in that a Bristol-built 3ft gauge carriage has returned to Cumbria," Darragh added.

Donations can be made via the website <https://cavanandleitrim.wixsite.com/home/vintage-train> or by sending an email to dromodrailway@gmail.com.

Above: Up she goes – the chassis of 7T is prepared for departure at Dromod.

Photo: Philip Bedford/CLR



End of line for electric pioneer

Energy giant BP has dissolved an oil company which in 1902 opened one of the first electric railways in Scotland (*writes Hugh Dougherty*).

The Oakbank Oil Company, founded in 1886, had links back to the 1860s when James Young began shale mining and refining in West Lothian. The company ran Niddry Castle oil works, which closed in 1961, and to supply it with shale rock from its shale mines at Duddingston opened a 2ft 6in gauge line in 1902.

A Baldwin electric loco, built in 1902 for the overhead trolley-powered line and saved from scrap in 1962 by the National Museum of Scotland, is on display in the Almond Valley Heritage Centre in Livingston, while the shale oil industry has been showcased with a local heritage trail.

Almond Valley Heritage Centre director Robin Chesters said that Oakbank was one of the oldest companies in Scotland. It passed into BP ownership in the 1930s and was kept active for administrative purposes after the Oakbank works closed in 1961.

"A link with the earliest days of the industry has been broken, which is why it is doubly important that we have the last surviving locomotive from this innovative company's pioneering electric railway preserved at the centre," Robin added.

Above: The Baldwin loco at the Almond Valley Heritage Centre.

Photo: Hugh Dougherty

Lost halt revealed by video

A drive by the Donegal Railway Heritage Centre to keep the museum in the public eye during lockdown has resulted in the rediscovery of a 'lost' County Donegal Railways railcar halt (*writes Hugh Dougherty*).

Dunnion's Halt, between Barnesmore Halt and Lough Eske Station on the railway's Stranorlar-Donegal main line, had been largely forgotten since the line closed and was lifted in 1960.

The heritage centre came up with the idea of short video clips on YouTube, showcasing the museum and dubbed 'Museum Moments'. Centre chair Mark McDaid was able to access the trackbed to film the short, stone platform.

The platform was built not by the CDR but by local people in Townawilly allowing them to board the line's new railcars that entered service on the West Donegal section in the 1930s. The halt was never listed in public timetables, but was known to crews and local people as a designated railcar stopping place.

"Building the halt at local expense was an early form of crowdfunding," said Mark. "What the railway did was to provide a bridge over the Lowerymore River to allow local people to access



the platform, and the bridge built of sleepers and old rails is still there today."

Mark shows viewers the platform and bridge in the YouTube video – Dunnion's Halt was named because the land around the railway at that point belonged and still belongs to the Dunnion family, some members of which worked on the railway.

The video is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2zfdowxnJY

Above: Still taken from the video of Mark McDaid at Dunnion's Halt.

Photo courtesy Donegal Railway Heritage Centre

Covid delay to plans for steam at Connemara

Organisers of a project to run a 3ft gauge steam train at Maam Cross station on the abandoned Galway-Clifden line (*writes Hugh Dougherty*), have vowed to ensure the plan goes ahead this year after Covid-19 forced cancellation of the trains in 2020.

Almost half a kilometre of track had been laid at the former Irish standard-gauge station in order to operate the trains and make a very visual statement about the Connemara Railway project's determination to bring steam back to the line which closed in 1935.

Now project chairman Jim Deegan is determined to run the trains in 2021 to mark the 125th anniversary of the opening of Maam Cross station. "We are disappointed that we couldn't go ahead with narrow gauge steam in 2020, although we did manage to carry out a considerable amount of work at Maam Cross," Jim said.

"This included the laying of the track, which we sourced from Bord na Mona, confirming arrangements with an Irish narrow gauge railway, details of which we'll



confirm in due course, for the hire of a steam locomotive, erecting a station nameboard and level crossing gates, and generally improving the station site.

"We've had excellent support from volunteers, including, I'm delighted to say, several local people, but, like every railway project, we are in desperate need of funds if we are to take this exciting project forward."

The eventual aim is to restore the standard gauge layout of the station and to

run 5ft 3in gauge trains over a section of track beyond the station limits as a fully-working museum.

The project is fund raising online and can be found at www.gofundme.com/f/connemara-railway-project

Above: A drone shot shows the standard and narrow gauge lines together at Maam Cross station's superb scenic setting.

Photo: Connemara Railway

End of the line as oldest miniature railway closes

Miniature railway history lasting 85 years came to an end on 11th October, when Scotland's oldest miniature line, the 10¼-inch gauge Kerr's Miniature Railway in Arbroath, ran its final trains before closing.

As reported in *NGW* 152 the quarter-mile long line, operated by the same family since its opening in 1935, has fallen victim to consistently declining passenger numbers – from a peak of 60,000 in the 1950s to 14,000 a decade ago and just 3500 in 2019.

Recent developments adversely affecting the railway included a decision five years ago by the local Angus Council to relocate a play area away from the line. According to KMR proprietor John Kerr, grandson of founder Matthew Kerr, this move greatly reduced the appeal of the line for families on days out. "With the numbers we are at now we can't keep it going – it's costing me money but more importantly emotionally it's too much to keep the enthusiasm going," he said.

A 'Grand Finale' weekend over 10th-11th October included all three available steam engines in action, KMR resident 'Firefly' joined by visitor 'The Empress' and former KMR resident 'Silver Jubilee', known locally as 'Big Bertha'. A trio of BR Class 25 outline diesel engines present on the line were also lined up together for what was believed to be the first time.

Angus Council has stated that it is in discussion with the KMR owner about potential future proposals for the line.

Upper right: KMR resident 'Firefly' leads visitor 'The Empress' and former KMR resident 'Silver Jubilee' into Hospitalfield Halt, the end of the line. All three locos were built by Bullock.

Centre right: Three BR Class 25 outline diesel engines lined up together.

Right: The three available steam engines are posed with 1935 steam outline engine 'Auld Reekie' on shed early in the morning.

Photos: Sjors van Dongen



All change for Isaac



Bagnall 0-4-2T 'Isaac' was set to leave its current home of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway at the end of the year, having been put up for sale.

Following expiry of the hire agreement that has seen the engine operating trains on the north Devon line since the end of 2013, Isaac was to be withdrawn after the conclusion of the L&B's Christmas services and some work carried out on it including the refitting of its original couplings, after which it was heading for a temporary home at Statfold Barn.

Isaac (3023/1953) was built for the Rustenberg Platinum mines in South Africa, and repatriated with sister 3050 in 1982 for the Welsh Highland Railway project at Porthmadog.

While 3050 was restored as 'Gelert' and operates on the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway today, 3023 was sold to a private owner. Restoration was undertaken in Wakefield, from where in 2012 the loco was taken to the Ffestiniog

Railway at Boston Lodge works for work to be completed.

Isaac ran trials on the Welsh Highland Railway in 2013, at one point being paired with sister Gelert, and was then transported to the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. It commenced work for the 2014 season and was a mainstay of the L&B fleet until the arrival of L&B Baldwin new-build 2-402 'Lyn'.

The current owner of the engine intends to sell it rather than renew the operating agreement. Isaac underwent an overhaul in 2019 and has a boiler ticket valid for another nine years.

Well-known narrow gauge personality Phil Mason is overseeing the sale and anyone seriously interested in purchasing Isaac can contact him on phil@pfss.co.uk

Above: 'Isaac' at Killington Lane on the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway in May 2015 – new pastures await the loco in 2021.

Photo: Andrew Charman

■ Double-headed trains featured in the final week of running of the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway's highly unusual regular season, 2-8-2 'River Esk' and 2-6-2 'Northern Rock' pictured here near Muncaster Halt on 28th October. While several lines, including the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland, Welspool & Llanfair and Statfold Barn railways, were caused by the latest Covid-19 restrictions to cancel their revenue-enhancing Santa Special trains, the Ratty was able to start its festive services from 5th December. *Photo: David Moseley*



Roy C Link

■ Many in the narrow gauge world will be sad to hear of the passing of Roy Link on 20th November, following a battle with cancer.

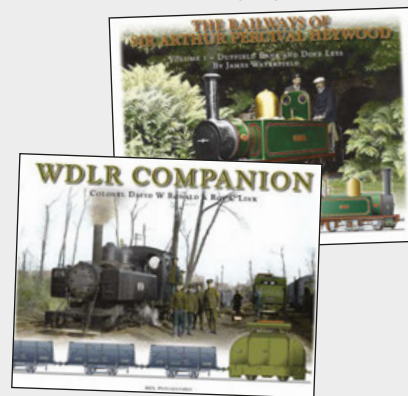
Roy was a pivotal figure particularly in narrow gauge publishing and modelling, and also for many years a working volunteer, notably in the early days of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway.

However it was for his publishing and small-scale exploits that he became best known. He was a pioneer of finescale narrow gauge modelling, creating 014 scale and establishing RCL Kits, offering finely-detailed narrow gauge models and which continues today as KB Scale.

Roy founded the top-quality specialist quarterly modelling magazine *Narrow Gauge & Industrial Review* and edited it until his passing. His RCL Publishing company was renowned for its books on narrow gauge subjects, such as *De Winton of Caernarfon*, the *WDLR Album* and most recently *The Railways of Sir Arthur Percival Heywood*.

Roy had also recently published *The Crowsnest Chronicles*, documenting the many years he spent researching and modelling the little-known Crowsnest Tramway, a Shropshire lead mining line.

John Clutterbuck, director of the *Review*, has told *NGW* that the magazine will continue as Roy would have wanted – the next issue, no 125, will honour the legacy of a man who made a huge contribution to narrow gauge history.





Ida Bay given green light to restore line

Efforts to reopen the Ida Bay Tourist Railway in Tasmania, southern AUSTRALIA have been given a major boost with the awarding of a licence allowing a staged restoration of the line.

We reported in *NGW* 148 how the Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society Inc had been set up to reopen the 4.3-mile long 600mm gauge line, which was built originally as a timber tramway and upgraded to carry limestone in 1919.

Closed in 1975, the line had been leased to various operators and run as a tourist line from 1978, until a derailment in 2018 amid growing safety concerns led to the lease being terminated and the line closed.

The initially 25-strong Society quickly raised enough funds to bring a third of the line up to acceptable safety standards and has now been awarded a licence by the Government to proceed with restoration.

Positive publicity

Announcing the awarding of the licence the Society stated many people had supported its case to reopen the railway – Society membership has grown, some additional volunteers have signed up and some donations made or promised.

While adding that the Society is a not-for-profit, registered charity and well placed to raise funds and have volunteers as the base of renovation, the announcement added that “a heck of a lot needs to be done before the railway runs again – it has been closed for over two years and track and rail assets have further deteriorated.”

The Society is totally committed to safety and accreditation by the National Rail Safety Regulator will be the goal of each renovation stage, which is expected to take time, money and much work. “At least now we will be able to crack on!” the statement concluded.

More volunteers are being sought for the restoration project – details are online at <http://idabaytrain.org>

Photo: Ida Bay RPS



Sibiu project gains seal of approval from Prince

Efforts to re-establish a heritage line at the former Sibiu to Agnita Railway (SAR) have attracted support from an unexpected source – the Prince of Wales.

Prince Charles, who has long had a special interest in the East European nation, wrote a letter of support for the SAR on 8th November.

“I am so full of admiration for the splendid work of the volunteers who, over recent years, have been striving to bring back the historic narrow gauge line from Sibiu to Agnita and Vurpar,” he wrote.

“It is such a tribute to their remarkable dedication that so much has been achieved over the years in attracting so many visitors to the Hârtibaciu valley,” the Prince added.

The Prince of Wales has been long known for his support of heritage railways (*your editor shared a Welshpool & Llanfair train with him back in 2002*) and members of the SAR’s UK-based support group hope to find a way to enable him to visit the project sometime in the future.

Volunteer-led activities have continued on the railway during 2020 despite the Covid-19 pandemic (*writes SAR UK’s Alasdair Stewart*). A successful gala event

ROMANIA

was held in September with a visiting steam loco and carriages being hired in.

For the first time since closure a Resita loco of a similar appearance to the line’s former stock returned to the rails between Cornatel and Hosman. Social-distancing measures were applied and the number of passengers that could be carried was lower than at previous events.

A small diesel was also brought in and this was left on the railway along with two visiting carriages for some weeks, allowing the line’s ‘Association of Friends’ to run a low-key operation over succeeding weekends; a useful source of revenue to help cover the hire and transportation charges incurred as well as providing invaluable railway-operating experience.

The British supporters group SARUK remains in existence although it has been dormant during 2020. Members fervently hope to be able to travel to Transylvania during 2021 and participate in practical voluntary work on the railway.

Two ex-pat members have been busy out in Romania through 2020, both on the line itself and ‘behind the scenes’ in Bucharest where much legal work is currently being undertaken.

Above: Resita 764-431 was hired in to work trains at a Gala event in September.

Right: The rail revival support is gaining support from plenty of local young people.

Photos: Radu Tompa, via SAR UK



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Logging trains return to Alishan line



Logging trains have begun running on the Alishan Forest Railway for this first time in many years due to the Taiwan Forestry Bureau thinning tree plantations along the Shuishan Line in Alishan forest.

The Alishan Forest Railway operated a special train on the long-mothballed line on Monday 16th November and a spokesman for the Forestry Bureau told *NGW* that logging trains were likely to continue until the end of the year.

"The Shuishan line, which is generally used by hikers, has been closed for safety reasons due to the forestry operation," the spokesman added.

TAIWAN

"Taiwan has banned economic timber exploitation since 1991, but we will gain some timber from the forest thinning which should be valued by our citizens – the Forestry Bureau is now trying to promote domestic timber production and the timber removed this time will be made into wooden loudspeaker boxes."

Many rail enthusiasts in the Asian island nation have welcomed the logging trains, describing their operation as "the Alishan Forest Railway going back to its old trade."

Photos courtesy Taiwan Forestry Bureau



Sugar line cleans up and plans a link to main line

The TAIWAN Sugar Corporation, which runs tourist trains at five of its former sugar mills in the Asian island nation, has begun an environmental initiative to improve the appeal of its diesel locomotives.

Diesels built in Germany by the Diema corporation and operating at TSC's major tourist line at Suantou sugar factory in southern Taiwan, are being fitted with smoke filters.

The joint programme with the Chiayi County Environmental Protection Bureau is a precursor to a long-held plan by TSC to rebuild the former line from the sugar factory to Chiayi's main line railway station, which was once used to transport the refined sugar for export.

Rebuilding the line would make it much easier for tourists arriving at Chiayi on Taiwan's high-speed network to visit the sugar factory and its cultural park.

Photo: TSC's diesels are being cleaned up to aid extension hopes. **Photo:** Andrew Charman



Another crossing crash

The latest in a series of level crossing crashes on the narrow gauge saw a 77-year-old motorist drive across an ungated crossing on the 900mm gauge Mollibahn on GERMANY's Baltic coast and fail to see an approaching train.

The locomotive hit the driver's side of the car, but according to local reports the motorist was able to walk away from the scene. Train services resumed an hour after the accident - the second level crossing collision to occur on the railway in less than three weeks.



■ Efforts to reopen the Zig Zag Railway in New South Wales, AUSTRALIA, devastated by bush fires in 2013, has taken a highly visual step forward with the outshooting of its restored locomotive 218A in a fetching new green and red livery.

The AC16 class 2-8-2, built in 1943 and which ran on the 3ft 6in gauge line between 2008 and 2011, is expected to be a principal source of motive power when the Zig Zag is ready to restart services.

The line suffered some further damage in a second bush fire in December 2019, but is increasingly hopeful of being able to reopen in late 2021.

Photo courtesy Zig Zag Railway



■ The Jokioinen Museum Railway in FINLAND has been making good progress with the major overhaul of its 2-8-2 no 5 'Sohvi' in recent weeks. Resident on the 2ft 6in gauge line since 1971, the loco is being returned to its original appearance when it ran on the 45km-long Hyvinkää-Karkkila Railway from 1918 to 1967.

The Jokioinen line is unusual in having two loco no 5s, the other being Tubize 2-6-2 'Orion'. The original Jokioinen Railway's no 5 was returned to Finland in 2006 after being restored to service by the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in Wales.

Photos: JMR



Puffing Billy back in time for summer

As pictured on the cover of this Issue, the Puffing Billy Railway in Melbourne, AUSTRALIA, reopened on 28th November after 250 days of closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Running for the first time since 23rd March and just in time for the Australian summer, the 2ft 6in gauge line scheduled three trains between Belgrave and Lakeside on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Preparation for a resumption of services involved much work by the line's staff, particularly clearing vegetation growth on the line and checking its trestle bridges.

"We are truly excited to welcome back all guests to Puffing Billy and have been truly humbled by the outpouring of support received during our temporary closure," said the line's CEO Steve O'Brien.

"We have been working carefully behind-the-scenes to minimise the number of contact points between customers, staff and volunteers and preparing our CovidSafe Plan," Steve added. "This time of temporary closure has also given us the opportunity to introduce new CovidSafe experiences which we look forward to sharing with the community."

■ Police investigated a suspected arson attack on the Puffing Billy line's iconic 120-year-old Monbulk Creek trestle bridge on 19th October. Emergency services were called to the bridge at 2am after reports of flames on the track.

On arrival they found a small fire burning in leaf litter had self-extinguished without damaging the 15-span bridge.



■ The Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways (MTVS) took an opportunity to pose its former Tramways of Sarthe Blanc-Misseron tram loco, dating from 1898, on a bridge at Rotangy on 18th October, just one week after the group's running line was extended over the bridge and before the metre-gauge track was ballasted.

"This was the first steam engine to be here since 1968 or 1973, we don't know exactly!", MTVS spokesman Olivier Janneau, who took the photo, told NGW.

The MTVS has started an appeal to raise money for urgently-needed sleepers on its running line. Around 200 sleepers, with the correct fixings for 30kg rail, have been sourced but 5000 Euros need to be raised by February to secure them – apparently the cost is 20 Euros per sleeper but 600 Euros to pay for the transport...



■ Also in FRANCE, the weekend of 18th October saw the Musée des Transports de Pithiviers testing its 1870-built Schneider 0-4-0T as the locomotive marks its 150th anniversary.

Photo: MdTdP

The Talyllyn – August 2020

With overseas travel off the agenda, *James Waite* took a week's break in Wales and observed first-hand how railways have adapted with the new measures required to run services.



Above: The Talyllyn Railway ran a two-day midweek event to celebrate the 65th birthday of the Reverend Awdry's 'Peter Sam'. Here he is, aka Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Edward Thomas', crossing Dolgoch viaduct. He doesn't look as though he's greatly enjoying his birthday!

Left: Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch' on the approach to Hendy bridge with a down train. The RAF plane in the background is heading for the 'Mach Loop' low-flying training zone beyond Talyllyn Lake.

Photos by James Waite, taken between 24th and 28th August 2020

Holiday accommodation throughout the UK during the summer of 2020, for staycations as they have been called in the media, was in great demand thanks to the problems associated with overseas travel during the Covid period. Well before the holiday industry reopened after lockdown during the spring my family booked a self-catering cottage for a week at Hendy Farm on the outskirts of Tywyn in mid Wales.

This turned out to be a fortunate decision as we were able to enjoy a week's break in August and were well placed to watch the Talylyn Railway's trains running past the garden. It was interesting to see at first hand how the railway was coping with the difficult circumstances forced upon it by the pandemic.

The railway restarted public operations on 1st August. Two train sets were in use, plus a third for specials, fitted out with perspex screens between each seating bay and with every alternate bay out of use in order to ensure a generous measure of social distancing. Advance booking was required and it was heartening to find that many trains were sold out well in advance.

It was also a pleasant surprise to find that the late-afternoon trains were also well subscribed, a contrast with more normal years when passenger numbers have often been low (*the response to changed timetables forced upon them by the pandemic has given more than one railway food for thought in terms of train scheduling – Ed*).

Members' travel privileges were mostly suspended, understandable when the capacity of each train was restricted, but by way of compensation members-only specials were running on two evenings each week, providing an unusual opportunity to ride the railway's trains at dusk. The members' train on which we rode was great fun!

No walking

One priority was to ensure that each seating bay, or compartment as the railway was styling them, was occupied by no more than one group of passengers during each round trip, after which the compartment would be thoroughly cleaned for the next service's passengers. An unfortunate consequence was that all journeys had to be round trips on the same train. The opportunity to alight and enjoy some of the many walks available at all the Talylyn's stations and to return on a later train has always been one of the joys of any



Above: Edward Thomas runs round its train at Nant Gwernol.

Below: It's dusk as a returning members' special sets off from Hendy Halt en route to Tywyn.

visit to the railway, but this year it hasn't been possible.

Another limitation was that journeys had to begin at Tywyn Wharf station and the trains would not stop for passengers to alight or to join at the small stations and halts – though this rule was relaxed for the evening specials. I suspect that in the case of Hendy Halt this was welcomed by the footplate crews, since it is located on one of the steepest sections of the line!

We enjoyed several rides during the week. There was a distinct atmosphere of camaraderie among the passengers despite the amount of distancing – especially when there were sheep on the line which for us was a daily occurrence. They seemed

to be the same sheep each day!

The railway's eateries were doing a roaring trade, both at Wharf and at Abergynolwyn, probably helped by participation in the government's 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme. At Wharf plenty of outdoor seating had been provided on the station platform and under a gazebo in the yard. I had the impression that the customers weren't just railway passengers, perhaps because there aren't many other outdoor eating places in Tywyn.

On the last morning of our holiday we took our two grandchildren to Pendre station to watch the locos coming off shed and being prepared for their day's work. No sooner had we arrived than we »





"There was a distinct atmosphere of camaraderie among the passengers despite the amount of distancing – especially when there were sheep on the line..."

Left: Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Edward Thomas' is prepared for its day's work at Pendre shed.

Below: 'Dolgoch' awaits some attention in the works at Pendre.

were asked if the children would like to be shown around the shed and the works – a real treat for them. Pendre shed is a narrow, confined space, but social distancing was being respected by the simple expedient of a one-way system – going in along one side of the locos and back out along the other. Over in the works 'Dolgoch' had come in for attention. We were perhaps fortunate that our visit was before 9am and no-one was working there at that time.

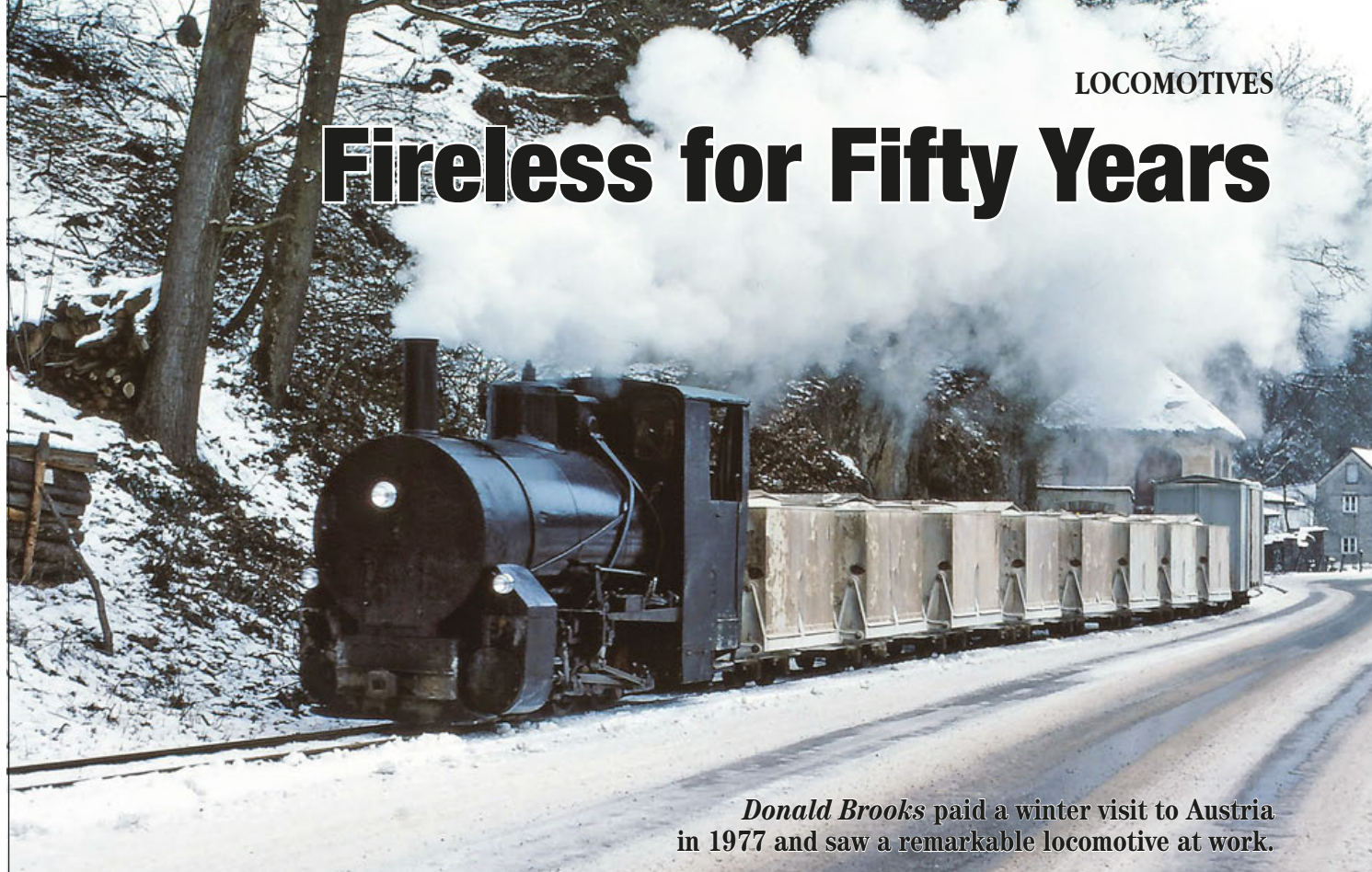
Welcoming the young

The Tallylyn has always been good at encouraging children and perhaps it's no surprise that so many of its volunteers are young people. It provides an object lesson for many other heritage railways and its family volunteer groups for those with children and its training programmes for older children and adolescents are first class.

Earlier in the month my elderly mobile phone had died. I took the opportunity to learn how to work its replacement during this holiday and all the accompanying photos come from its camera. I was amazed at how the technology they represent has improved over the past few years. Conventional digital cameras are much more versatile and probably still produce better quality images but I wonder how much longer this will be the case! **NGW**



Fireless for Fifty Years



Donald Brooks paid a winter visit to Austria in 1977 and saw a remarkable locomotive at work.

Think of a fireless steam locomotive and the image that will almost certainly come to mind is of a standard-gauge engine shunting an industrial yard, with a ready supply of steam to hand. Narrow gauge fireless locomotives did exist, including two 2ft 6in gauge examples on Bowater's Sittingbourne system in Kent – 2-4-0F 'Unique', Bagnall 2216 of 1924, which still survives as a static exhibit on the preserved line, and 0-4-0F 'Victor', Bagnall 2366 of 1929, a second fireless which made a misnomer of the first and was scrapped in 1967.

Yet the narrower the gauge, the more unusual it was to find a fireless locomotive on it. Equally rare was to find a railway where a fireless loco was allowed away from its steam supply to handle the line work. But one such route was the industrial railway operated by KAMIG AG at the village of Schwertberg in Oberösterreich, Upper Austria – here a 600mm gauge fireless loco hauled all the traffic for more than 50 years.

From St Valentin junction on the Westbahn a secondary railway follows the north bank of the Donau towards Wien, with Schwertberg the third stop. Kaolin or china clay had been mined from hillside deposits at Kriechbaum, 4.5km north east of the village, since the 19th century, when operations were small scale and the raw product was transported to Linz or Steyr by horse and cart. In the economic uncertainty after the First World War more commercial

Above: Industrial delight – 3012 hauls a load of kaolin alongside the road through the frozen Aisttal.

Below: With narrow gauge lines on both sides of the road, 3012 and train stand at the Josefstal plant in 1975. The panel in the front of the loco for charging it with steam is clearly visible.

Photo: Alfred Moser

exploitation was initiated to reduce Austria's reliance on imports, with the company KAMIG (Österreichische Kaolin und Montan Industrie Gesellschaft) founded in 1922.

Over the years kaolin production near Schwertberg has been by a mix of open-cast workings and mining, with cable inclines into the drifts. By 1923 a 3.7km aerial ropeway had opened to transport the kaolin from Kriechbaum to a processing plant down at Josefstal in the valley of the River Aist.

At the same time a 3.8km long 600mm gauge railway was built to connect Josefstal with a main-line siding at Schwertberg station, where

transhipment into standard-gauge wagons took place.

It was initially intended that the railway would also serve two other industrial concerns at Josefstal but this did not materialise and it was always solely KAMIG's own private line. It is not clear how traffic was worked in the very early days as the first locomotive known to have been used on the line was a 1926 bogie internal combustion machine from the GEBUS company. GEBUS, founded in Salzburg in 1923, took its name from the initial letters of the surnames of its three founders, Moriz Gelinek, Adolf Buchleitner and Franz Strizek, and was formed to build on »





Gelinek's pioneering work in developing electric transmission for petrol and diesel engines.

Gelinek's first locomotives appeared in 1920/21 on local peat railways and although the company did construct some machines itself, it also licensed the concept and design to other builders. This was probably the case for the engine acquired by KAMIG, number 52/1926 of type F26040C, which appears from a photograph at Josefstal to have been built by Maschinen-und Waggonbau-Fabriks-Aktiengesellschaft in Simmering. A second GEBUS bogie loco of a different type was in use on

the line for a short period in 1929, probably 91/1928 of type F46030.

From diesel to steam

The GEBUS locomotive was always intended to be only a temporary solution to KAMIG's motive power needs and in 1930, in a reversal of the usual order of things, the line switched to steam. Economical operation was the key factor in the purchase of a new locomotive and the ready availability of a steam supply at Josefstal resulted in the choice of a fireless design, known as a Dampfspeicherlokomotive (steam storage locomotive) in German.

Above: 3012 and the Jenbacher diesel below the kaolin hoppers at Josefstal in May 1979.

Below: 3012 drifts past Schloss Schwertberg in May 1979 with a train of empties for Josefstal. The castle was built in the 14th Century and rebuilt in 1608.

Both photos: Alfred Moser

The 0-6-0F was ordered from Wiener Neustadt but part way through the build the manufacturer closed down and the engine was completed at Floridsdorf, which delivered it as the company's works no 3012 of 1930. It was the last locomotive ever to be ordered from Wiener Neustadt – the end of a line stretching back to 1842.

The 13.5-tonne locomotive had a maximum speed of 15kph and, with its cylinders at the front and an exhaust resembling a conventional chimney, was of a very attractive appearance for a fireless machine, apparently at KAMIG's insistence.



What is a fireless locomotive?

The apparent paradox of a fireless loco is just as it sounds – it has no firebox and does not generate its own steam, but instead is filled at intervals from an external source, such as at an industrial premises.

Fireless locos are simpler and therefore less expensive, and safer in industrial environments – there is little chance of a boiler explosion while the exhaust does not generate sparks, useful for example in paper mills. But they have a limited range before needing refilling, unable to generate more steam themselves.



2ft 6in fireless loco 'Unique' survives today at the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway. Photo: Andrew Charman

Steam was fed into the loco's reservoir from a pipe in its Josefstal shed, with a connection through an opening panel in the engine's 'smokebox'. A charge of steam was sufficient for a return journey from Josefstal to Schwertberg as long as the engine did not linger too long at the interchange.

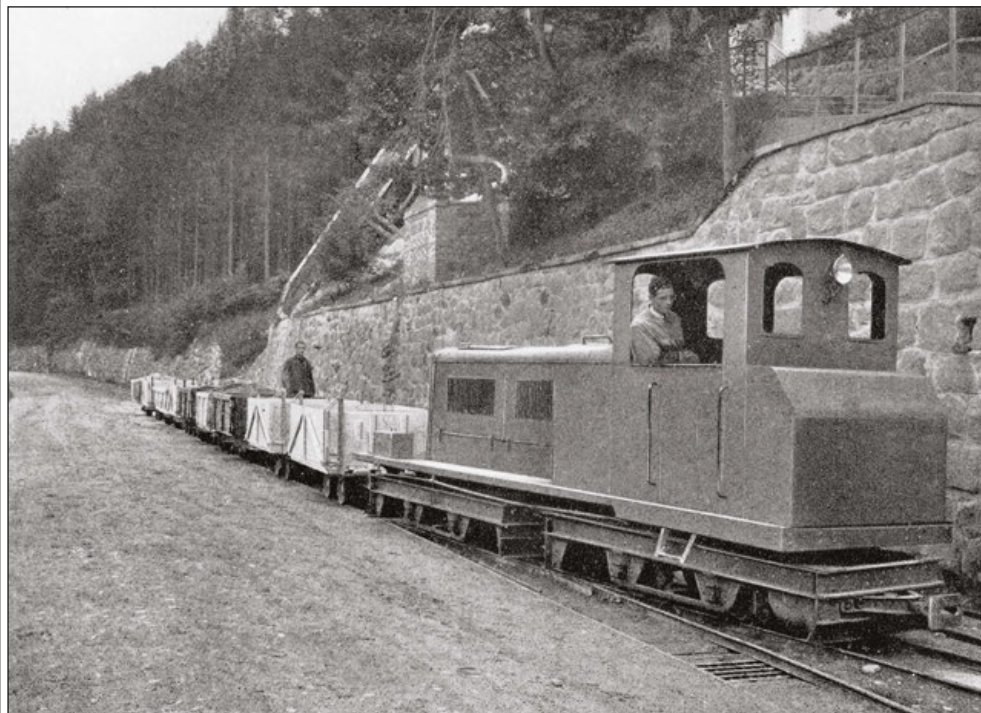
A sister locomotive was originally planned, along with a halfway passing loop for two-train operation, but 3012 proved so reliable that a second order was decided to be unnecessary.

No 3012 was never given a name or running number and on its arrival the GEBUS became the reserve engine. It seems to have been little used in this role and its fate is not confirmed, though it was probably scrapped soon after the Second World War.

Early photographs show that kaolin was transported in a miscellany of open wagons, probably wooden-bodied. In later years there was a fleet of 24 three-tonne four-wheeled wagons, each with an open containerised body. The kaolin was loaded at Josefstal by chute and on arrival at Schwertberg a surprisingly large overhead crane lifted the bodies off the wagons for transshipment to ÖBB trains. Four bogie vans were provided to carry bagged kaolin.

There was quite a complex layout of 600mm gauge tracks on both sides of the road through the Josefstal plant. Once away from the loading point the single-track line ran along the roadside through the narrow and scenic Aisttal, following the river all the way. On the approach to Schwertberg it climbed slightly past the castle, crossing the road as it dropped down into the village streets to reach the main-line railway.

Once 3012 was in service, little changed in more than 50 years with the fireless engine remarkably handling all the traffic single-handed and proving popular with its crews. Although a 50hp four-wheeled diesel was obtained new from Jenbacher, JW 162-56 of 1958, its use was



Above: In what appears to be a posed publicity photograph, the 1926 GEBUS loco, looking very new, waits alongside the road at Josefstal. Photo: Alfred Moser collection

Below: The KAMIG crane at Schwertberg was designed for serious lifting. The four-wheeled narrow gauge wagons had demountable bodies while the bogie vans conveyed bagged kaolin.

Photos by Donald Brooks, January 1977, unless stated

restricted to shunting at Josefstal and presumably also as emergency cover for 3012.

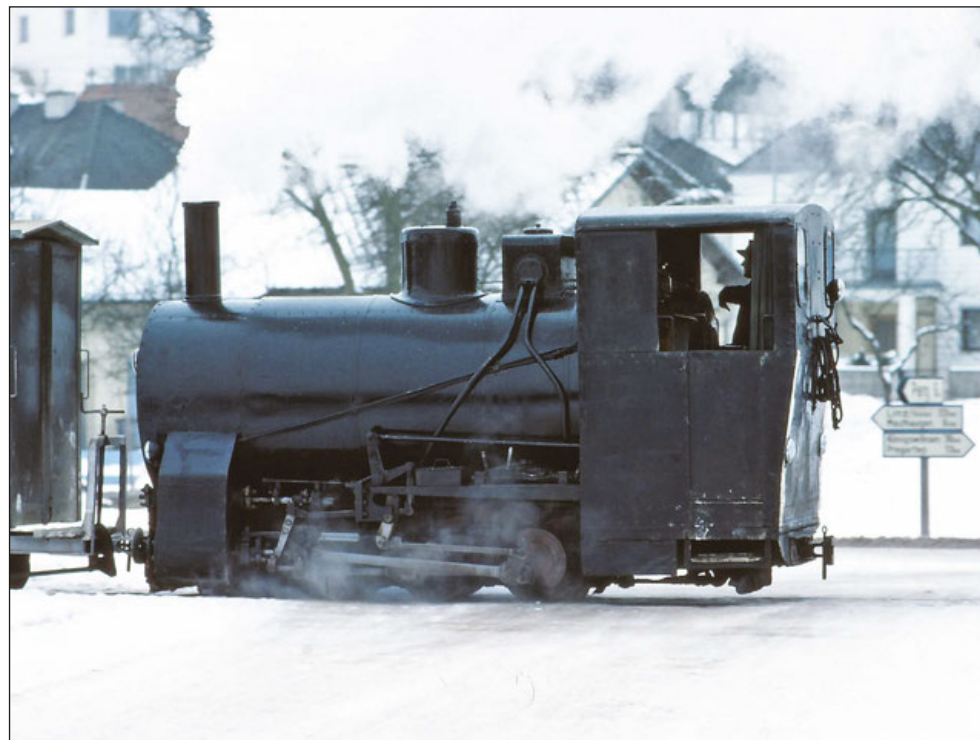
Steam in the snow

I visited the line in January 1977, arriving in Schwertberg on a wintry morning. The snow-free narrow gauge tracks indicated that the first of the three or four daily trips had already operated but as no stock was in evidence I started walking along the line towards Josefstal. I was in the

Aist Valley, beyond the castle, when the welcome sight of steam in the distance indicated another train of kaolin heading for Schwertberg.

There was plenty of time to take a photograph before turning round to chase the train on foot. In normal circumstances it would have been easily possible to overtake it, but the snow and slush along the road meant that I never quite got in front of it »





again and had to content myself with pictures from the side or rear as the train made its way through the streets of the village. After taking a few more photographs around the ÖBB siding it was time to leave and head for the Steyrtalbahn.

The line did not last very long

following my visit. KAMIG constructed a pipeline to transport kaolin slurry from Kriechbaum to a new processing plant and ÖBB interchange near Aisthofen, the next station after Schwertberg. The Josefstal plant and the railway immediately became redundant and

Above: Exuding a purposeful impression, 3012 shunts in the streets of Schwertberg.

Below: 3012 and its railway were a familiar scene at Schwertberg from the mid-1920s to the early 1980s. An era is drawing towards its end as another load of kaolin heads for the yard.

by November 1981 the narrow gauge had closed.

Over the years 3012 had proved itself quite probably the best investment KAMIG ever made. Although it was not scrapped, its subsequent career has been less than happy. It moved to Safaripark Gänssendorf, about 20km north east of Wien, where two million schillings were spent in 1984 on building a 2km long narrow gauge railway circuit as an extra attraction. Two enthusiast groups were involved in the plans and although the railway did open towards the end of the season, internal and external disagreements meant that it closed not long after. The Schwertberg Jenbacher diesel worked the trains, while the long-term ambition to operate 3012 never came to fruition. Had this happened, it would perhaps have been like Whipsnade Zoo using 'Unique' rather than the conventional Bowater's locomotives.

No 3012 is now stored with the Jenbacher at Eisenbahnmuseum Schwechat, not far from Wien's airport. The fireless is currently the subject of a legal dispute and as a result is gathering dust in a shed, a sad fate for a loco which was so much part of the everyday scene in the Aistal for half of the 20th century. Perhaps one day things will be resolved and 3012 will again receive the attention it deserves. **NGW**

■ The author is very grateful to Alfred and Herbert Moser, Roland Beier and Keith Chester for their generous assistance with photographs and information for this feature.



In the depths of winter...

The continuing difficult conditions for travel and socialising have resulted in very few of the usual photo charters held at this time of year going ahead, but thankfully we still managed to find some gems...



The Amerton Railway dominates our *Gallery* pages for the second issue in succession but we make no apologies for that, as Joey Evans came back with a clutch of superb images from one of the very few Photo Charters to go ahead. This was held at the Staffordshire 2ft gauge line on 30th October and focused on Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-OST 'Lorna Doone' (4250/1922), which returned to steam at the line two years ago.

The loco is shown above giving an impressive sense of speed with a typically correct industrial load, and below sharing shed space with her sibling 'Jennie' – except that Jennie is more of a step sister, being a new-build under the Hunslet badge at Statfold Barn in 2008. Bagnall 0-4-OST 'Isabel' and Kerr Stuart 0-4-0 'Diana' are just peeking into the picture behind the Wrens.

Lorna Doone certainly needed to warm up in the shed, having been out for some after-dark photography, see over the page.

All photos: Joey Evans



**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**







One of the latest 'trends' amongst the 16mm scale modelling fraternity that share their efforts on Facebook is 'Front-end Friday', which basically does just what it says on the tin – pictures of their favourite models, shot head-on! So, here we present a full-size version...

At left, *David Moseley* was on hand to picture Davey-Paxman 2-8-2 'River Esk' heading one of the last trains of the convoluted regular 2020 season on the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway on 28th October. The locos did not have much of a rest, however, the Ratty one of the few UK lines this year running Santa Special services, starting from 5th December.

At right, a stretch of track that certainly would not impress the officers of Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate. But this represents the growing Sibiu-Agnita Railway revival in Romania, a project that has faced many challenges but as we report on page 15 one that now enjoys support from the British Royal Family...

Photo: Radu Tompa via SAR UK

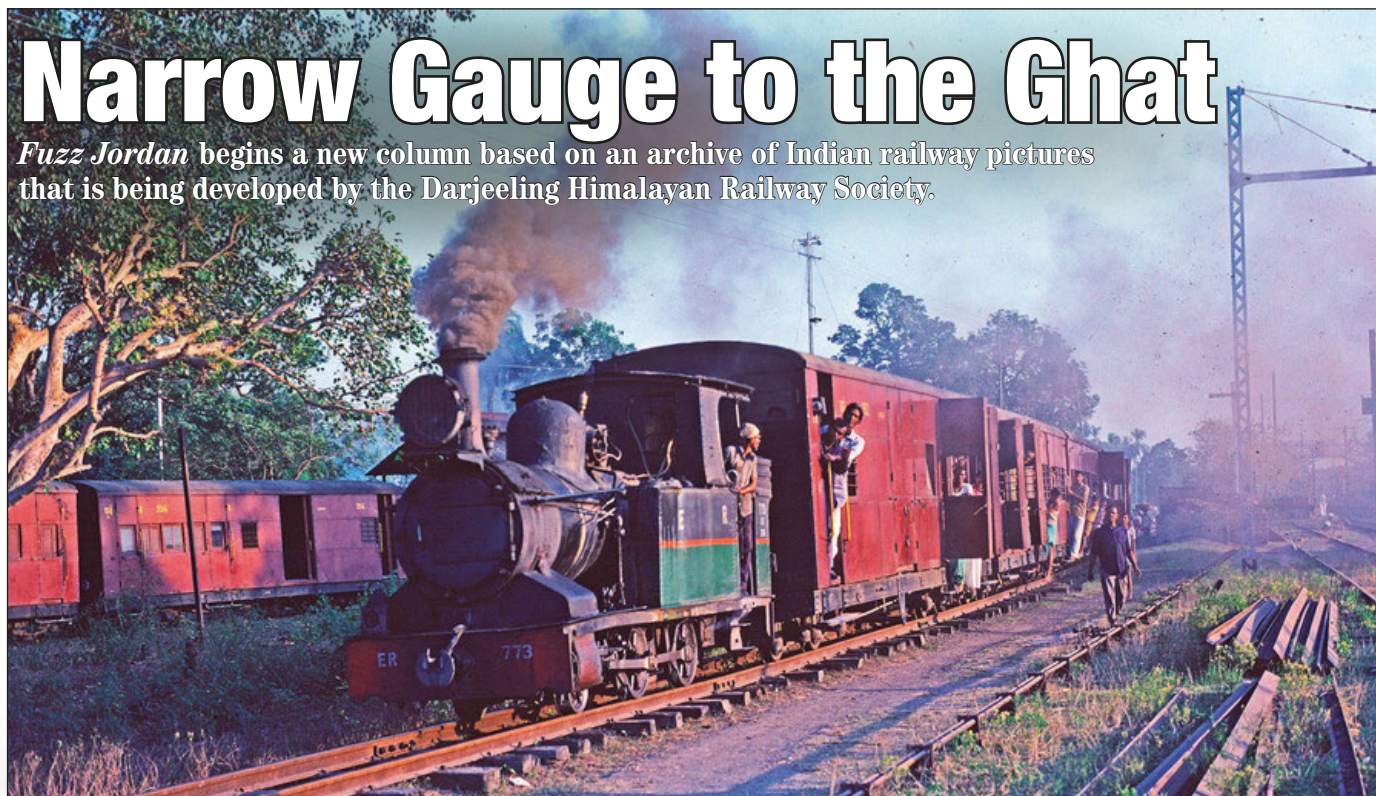
Below is a timeless Talylllyn Railway scene, watering the locomotive at Dolgoch station, in this case 1921-built Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Edward Thomas'. But this picture represented a small victory for the TR, operating its 'Turkey & Tinsel' seasonal train service on 2nd December in a year when so many of the line's services have fallen victim to the dreaded Covid.

Photo: Phil Tugwell/TR



Narrow Gauge to the Ghat

Fuzz Jordan begins a new column based on an archive of Indian railway pictures that is being developed by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society.



About 70 miles north of Kolkata in India, the small settlement of Nabadwip Ghat lies along the Hooghly River, one of the mouths of the Ganges. There was once a ferry service across the river to the town of Nabadwip proper.

The history of the line which

(eventually) served Nabadwip Ghat is interesting. We go back to 1899, when the first narrow-gauge line in the area was built, and this ran from Aistala Ghat, at Kalinarayanpur just outside Ranaghat via Shantipur to Krishnanagar. One might conclude that this line, just over 20 miles long,

Above: CS class 2-4-0T 776, built by Bagnall, heads a down train on the line heading for Nabadwip Ghat.

Photo: Laurie Marshall

Below: On 22nd November 1976, CS class 773 (the other Bagnall example built for the line) is dwarfed by its train while waiting at the Shantipur terminus.

Photo: R Griffiths/DHRS



was built to serve the local communities, as a more direct broad gauge line of 16 miles in length already existed.

Narrow to broad

At some stage after 1921, the 2ft 6in gauge line was extended from Krishnanagar to Nabadwip Ghat. From here there ran a ferry across to the town of Nabadwip Dham on the western bank of the Hooghly, which is one of the mouths of the mighty and sacred River Ganges. In addition, the section from Aistala Ghat to Shantipur was converted to the Indian broad gauge of 5ft 6in and, now electrified, forms part of the Kolkata outer suburban system, with around 20 EMU trains a day taking about 2½ hours to reach Kolkata's Sealdah station.

From the narrow-gauge line's 1899 opening, diminutive 2-4-0 tank locomotives ran the trains, initially utilising a pair of Sharp Stewart 0-4-2Ts. By the late 1920s there was a need for more motive power, and Bagnall produced an updated superheated design, known as the CS. In 1932, Yorkshire Engine Co built three more, two of which came to the Shantipur line, and in 1935, Bagnall produced a further two, with one for the Shantipur line.

These four CS class locomotives worked the line until the early 1980s, when they were replaced by railbuses and trailers. The railbuses, class EZZSR, were single-ended, so they continued to use the turntables located at each end of the line.

Two of the CS locomotives survive: one at Delhi Railway Museum while the other is plinthed in front of the Eastern Railway's Fairlie Place offices in Kolkata.

The line closed in January 2010 for conversion to broad gauge. In the event only the Shantipur to Krishnanagar section was converted, while the section down to the Ghat was unfortunately used for road widening. However, there remain claims that the Krishnanagar to Nabadwip Ghat section will in due course be rebuilt, presumably on a new formation, but it will have lost its charm as a roadside tramway.

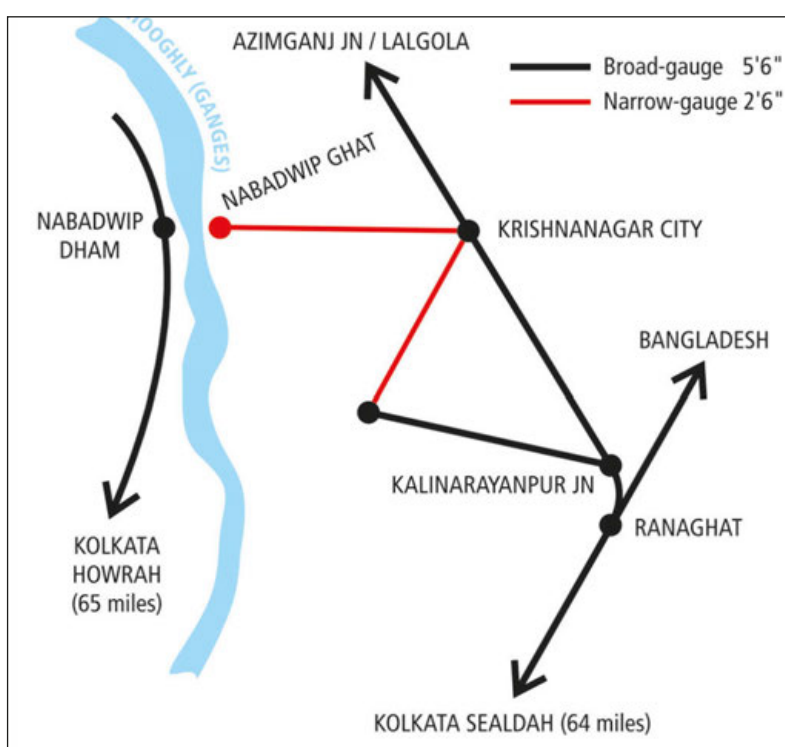
Photo appeal

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society has been lucky that several top photographers have allowed us to scan their slides and keep them in the archive. If you have any slides of Indian Railways dating from before 1985, and particularly pre-1975 and you would be willing to allow the DHRS to borrow and scan them, please contact Pete Jordan at treasurer@dhers.org **NGW**



Above: Interchange across the platform with electric suburban trains from Kolkata to Lalgol was offered at Krishnanagar City.

Below: Between Nabadwip Ghat and Krishnanagar City the line is essentially a roadside tramway. EZZSR railbus 7041 passes through Amghata veg market with a train for Shantipur on 8th January 2010, a few days before closure. Both photos: Fuzz Jordan



Overhead electric at Dongpang



Greg Howell discovers a rarely visited colliery line not far from Beijing in China.

In January 2020 and before the disruption caused by the Coronavirus, I visited China in order to photograph the last genuine revenue-earning steam operation in the world. This is in Sandaoling where standard gauge steam is worked to the limit of adhesion at an open-cast coal mine. But after an overload of spectacular steam photography, I wanted to visit a narrow gauge railway before my flight back to the UK.

Enthusiast Kii Keiichi has an excellent website (www.kii762mm.com) that shows current narrow gauge lines running in China. Although the website is entirely in Japanese, the index is easy to navigate

and Google Translate enabled me to understand the short description about each line. Moreover, the sketches are useful and latitude and longitude co-ordinates assist location using online maps.

There are some highly interesting lines to be explored – railways that serve salt pans and others that collect reed to supply pulp factories. Unfortunately, none of these railways would have been operating during the cold Chinese winter.

My visit was close to the Chinese New Year when industrial operations slow down, or stop entirely, and trains become extremely full. Hence, I opted for a coal mine in Hebei Province because power station demand would provide a high

"The staff appeared to have never seen Westerners before and had only been visited by a handful of Japanese enthusiasts..."

probability that the line would be operating. Also, Hebei Province surrounds Beijing and so my visit could be made by a short train journey from the capital.

Xingtai is two hours by high-speed trains from Beijing but, despite travelling a week before Chinese New Year, I was forced to buy a standing ticket on a traditional train – almost five uncomfortable hours in a carriage packed with lots of other standing passengers. Luckily, the high-speed option was available on the return journey, resulting in a much more relaxed experience!

Dongpang Coal Mine is owned by Jizhong Energy Group Company Ltd. It is located 13 miles north of Xingtai City and is connected to the mainline by a standard-gauge branch. Extracted coal is consumed in the power station located on the same site and is also transported away by rail.

The spoil that is mined as a by-product is separated on site and transported by a 600mm gauge railway that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Access was not possible inside the factory walls but satellite imagery suggests that the line runs for approximately half a mile from the coal separation plant to the factory gate and then for a further three-quarters of a mile to conical tips, where the spoil is taken by inclines up to the top.

Catenary with a difference

The locomotives for the Dongpang Coal Mine railway were ordered in 1983 and so it is likely that the line started operation circa 1984. They are powered by crude overhead



electric catenary and the long arcs indicate that it is a DC supply. Loaded trains run at up to 4mph and speed control in the yard appears to be achieved by repeatedly dropping the pantograph manually.

Trains leave the factory and immediately cross a dirt road on the level. Here the catenary is hung from a very basic mechanism that is normally raised to increase clearances for road traffic and only lowered when a train approaches.

There are two types of loco working on the line. The overburden trains are hauled by nos 07 and 08 with their distinctive gusseted frame, and comprise a short rake of some eight wagons, again with an angular frame. Locos nos 30 to 34 work the coal waste trains and these have flush sides and a slightly more yellow livery. Within this group, no 33 is a little different – it has a tubular structure leading from the front compartment over the top to the cab. The coal waste wagons are smaller than the overburden wagons with a U-shaped body and are typically formed into rakes of 40 to 50.

The single track from the factory heads due west with housing to the south for the first 400 metres and, across a field on the north side, the standard gauge headshunt runs parallel. The railway then continues in a straight line for a further 500 metres with fields on both sides as it heads towards the tippler area and its two pairs of spoil tips. At the end of the straight there is a point where the track splits before both lines turn through 90 degrees to enter the tippler area.

Here there is a fan of sidings where trains are marshalled prior to being unloaded. The overburden wagons are propelled one-at-a-time into a small shed where an operator attaches a wire cable to the coupling pin and winches up the wagon end. The overburden falls into an incline skip below.

Safety at work

When the 1220mm gauge skip is full, it is hauled up the incline to the top by cable and then the body tips sideways. The winding house performs the winding for all four tip inclines with the horizontal cables running at shoulder height between buildings – it is certainly a Health & Safety nightmare!

The coal waste wagons are shunted into a separate shed linked to the other spoil tip. Here they pass through a rotary tippler and are inverted automatically. They remain coupled using a loop of wire cable with sufficient flexibility to allow the relative rotational movements

Left: Loco no 07, showing its gusseted frame, heads a rake of loaded overburden wagons. On the front of the loco is the wire cable loop that enables wagons to remain coupled whilst being inverted in the auto-tippler.

Below left: A very basic mechanism lowers the catenary for loco no 31 to traverse the level crossing outside the factory entrance.

Above: No 31 hauls a rake of 40 loaded coal wagons to the tips. This flush-framed loco was the only one seen with a tubular arrangement running over the superstructure into the cab.

Right: Coal waste is conveyed up a spoil tip incline with the haulage cable running alongside the track on rollers. The cable goes round the pulley above the operator's head and runs horizontally to the winding house out of shot on the left.

Photos by Greg Howell, 20th January 2020



between each wagon.

The staff were friendly and allowed unfettered access in the tippler area. They appeared to have never seen Westerners before and had only been visited by a handful of Japanese enthusiasts. A diesel locomotive was heard working the standard-gauge shunt at Dongpang Coal Mine and staff reported that this had been a steam operation until about 30 years ago.

What a great little railway! I travelled to Dongpang Coal Mine by taxi from my hotel in central Xingtai and arranged to call the driver when I needed picking up later in the day.

Unlike the typical environs of coal mines around the world, this line is relatively clean and in pleasant open countryside. Its short length means that it is possible to walk from end-to-end and so there is no need to hire a taxi all day.

After the mega-action at Sandaoling, witnessing this intensive operation was a relaxing experience enabling me to unwind, ready for the flight back home. When Covid-19 has been 'sent packing', a visit is highly recommended. **NGW**



The Post Office Railway – on foot...

Steve Sedgwick seized the opportunity in October 2020 to take a closer look at the line beneath the streets of London.

The Post Office Railway was built to by-pass the problems of moving large quantities of mail through London's congested streets. It ran underground on 2ft gauge tracks for 6½ miles between Whitechapel and Paddington.

The line's eight stations were either at sorting offices or at main line stations. Its trains were remotely controlled and clocked up more than a million train miles annually. They routinely carried four million letters a day plus parcels – it was never intended for passenger use.

Construction of the line started in 1915. The contractors, John Mowlem and Company, used Greathead shields to burrow through the London clay some 70ft or so beneath the surface. However, World War 1, the General Strike and technical difficulties delayed partial opening until 1927 and full opening to 1928.

The line served the Post Office, later Royal Mail, for about 75 years. Ultimately Mail Rail, as it had become, proved uneconomic while some of the sorting offices it once served had been sold off for property

development. Finally, in 2003 the Royal Mail switched to road transport and closed its railway. But importantly, Mail Rail was mothballed rather than scrapped. Thus, when the new Postal Museum at Mount Pleasant opened in 2017 there was an intact complex of railway and postal infrastructure on its doorstep ripe for showing to lovers of railway and postal heritage.

The Postal Museum normally presents the railway to the public using an audio-visual rail tour through the tunnels at Mount Pleasant in two new battery-powered passenger trains. This new venture was described in *NGW*125 in October 2017 shortly after opening and since then, the museum's Mail Rail operation has proved very popular. Its trains have covered more than 20,000 miles carrying 370,000 visitors. The ride is very enjoyable but it only lasts 20 minutes and can leave one wanting to see more of the most complex station on the Post Office Railway.

Hard hat territory

This need seemed to be answered in 2019 when the museum advertised walking tours of its railway. After delays caused by Covid 19, the tours were again taking place in the autumn of 2020, and I joined one.

The experience starts in the exhibition hall which was once the system's maintenance workshop and car depot. This area is underneath

the sorting office and is connected to the main railway even further below by a steep and curved double-track tunnel. This was the access route for the walking tour but not before everyone was fitted out with hard hats and Hi-Vis vests.

The first stopping point was the fork where the double-access tracks diverge into single tunnels to join the east- and west-bound sides of the station. This junction gives the visitor the first chance to appreciate the raw engineering of tunnels lined with cast-iron tunnel rings and cat's cradles of wiring.

The single-track sections pass through seven-foot diameter bores. Elsewhere, double-track lines are normally in nine-foot diameter tunnels while the working spaces of the east and west loading platforms are inside 25ft diameter tunnels. Looking closely at the rings one can see the casting marks of the maker, the ring size and the GPO.

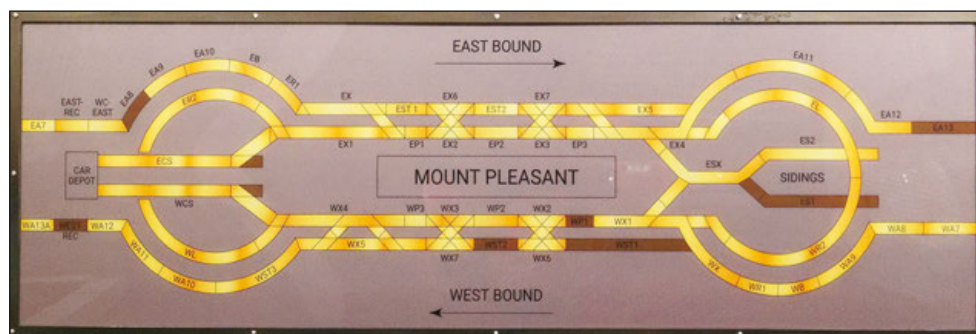
As the walking tour progressed the complexity of Mount Pleasant's tracks and tunnels became much clearer than experienced on the rail journey. The general layout looks like a squeezed doughnut. The straight sides of the doughnut are the large, parallel tunnels of the east- and west-bound platforms. These are circled by an inner track which passes through turn-back tunnels to connect east and west sides of the station in a continuous loop. The main lines from neighbouring stations pass through the station outside of this inner loop line and the two are connected by double and single crossovers.

The result is an extremely flexible arrangement: trains might pass through without stopping, they might turn around via the turn-back loops, they might switch to multiple loading sites on the platform face, or might simply be parked without blocking through flow. Add to this a few extra sidings, escape tracks and the workshop-access lines and you have a track enthusiast's dream.

Contrasting light

The brightly-lit east loading platform in its spacious tunnel contrasted strongly with the dim, half-light of the narrower connecting tunnels. A 1980s unit was parked on the entry track while further down the platform was a yellow engineers' wagon which was formerly used to carry tools, equipment and sometimes the engineers themselves. The museum has a conservation policy to disturb the scene as little as possible. On the platforms the conveyors and chutes connecting to the surface are still in place.

There are reminders of the people



Heading photo:
The walking party views stalactites in the eastbound exit tunnel.

Facing page, left:
Looking into the eastbound loading platform of Mount Pleasant station.

Top: Unit 30 is one of the 1980 batch ordered from Greenbat but built by Hunslet.

Above: Track diagram at Mount Pleasant. This was part of the station control panel.

Right: The heavy-duty pointwork includes double crossovers, which allowed flexible marshalling of units from the main, outer line onto the platform face.

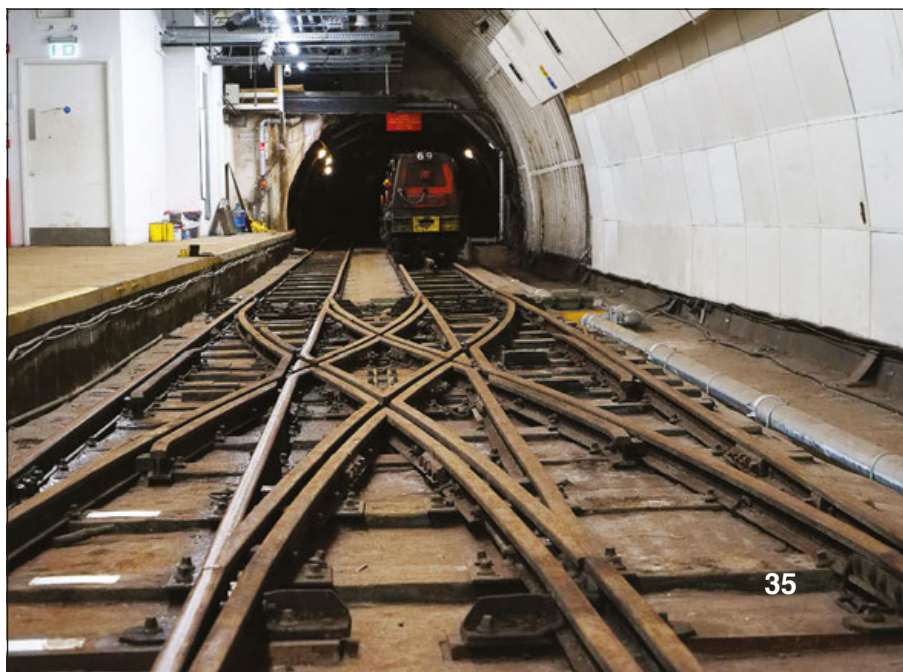
Photos by
Steve Sedgwick,
5th October 2020

who worked here too. One is a dartboard where the busy staff had stood close to the live rail to get a few shots in between trains. Elsewhere, staff had picked up loose stamps that had fallen off the mail and stuck them to a wall on the west platform. Also, there are luminous murals produced for the workers' children who were treated to a Christmas party and ride through some of the tunnels in a car fitted with seats.

Until modern computers took over in 1993, there was a control panel between the east and west platforms for directing driverless trains through the maze of tracks and tunnels. Train control was complex and needed

skilled operators. Between stations trains ran on 440v DC current provided by a centre third rail. On approaching a station, they entered a 'dead' section of track and came to a halt, the controller then taking over.

He selected one of the system's preset options covering all possible train movements and brought the train into the station at a more manageable 150v DC. This control system relied on track circuitry, electronic relays and electro-mechanical rotary switching. It also prevented conflicting movements by other trains. As an aside, much of the signalling on the older lines of London Underground still relies on »





similar relays, showing just what dependable items they are.

Flooding is always a worry for any underground railway. During construction there was only one major scare when water broke into the workings at Mount Pleasant. Luckily it was only wet ground rather than the nearby Fleet River.

More seriously, the station was flooded after bombing in the Second World War – soon afterwards heavy watertight doors were fitted across the entry points of the main lines and they remain in place today. They were kept open by ceiling catches rigged by cables and pulleys to levers that could be easily reached from the loading platforms in emergencies. Also in these areas there are thin, spindly stalactites of deposits from water seepages between the cast iron tunnel rings.

As we continued our walk into the eastern turn-back loop, there were two striking features. One was the

tightness of the curves – these were the undoing of the first generation of electric units made by Kilmarnock Engineering. With a rigid wheelbase of 7ft 3in they were simply too long: they inflicted excessive track and wheel wear, the resulting metal dust interfered with the electrical control equipment, and, in multiple units, their long overhangs made them prone to derailment. One of these cars survives in the museum's collection but most were dismantled for their traction equipment which was reused in the first batch of 1929 articulated bogie units.

Beyond the gap

The second feature here was a tantalising glimpse of something worthy of an Indiana Jones film. Halfway round the curve the tunnel passes over a lower tunnel and there is a small gap between the two.

By kneeling down and peering into the dusty darkness one could just

Above: Serious engineering in the construction of the tunnels, as seen at the junction where the main line disappears on the left towards Whitechapel. The museum's tracks, without the centre conduction rail, curve off into the southern turnaround loop.

Below: Mail Rail runs a pair of battery-powered passenger sets built by Severn Lamb. One is here in the maintenance and storage siding inside the southern turnaround loop.

make out a train graveyard of two rows of electric units. This is not part of the museum and is as close as one gets to seeing the secret world of the rest of the Mail Rail system.

Leaving the turn-back loop the tour moved into the well-lit westbound platform. The museum's 'green' passenger train was parked here headed by one of the original English Electric battery locos – a second battery loco is on show in the exhibition area. Royal Mail still owns the third machine in this batch – it is kept elsewhere and, with some work, could be made operational for travel over the rest of the mothballed Mail Rail system.

The final leg of the tour returned to the half-light of the western exit tunnels. This is a complicated area. On the right is the single track up the slope to the maintenance depot and our exit, but we first followed the twin tracks of the western turn-back loop and the westbound main line. This is now a brightly lit maintenance area for the new battery trains – the red train was parked here on the loop line track which has been raised up for easier access.

Finally after returning to the surface the party was given a guided tour of the Mail Rail exhibition. Then, after about 90 fascinating minutes the tour was over. **NGW**

■ I am very grateful to Andy Richmond of the Postal Museum for both leading this tour and for his generous help in preparing this article. Subject to government guidelines, the walking tours will resume in January on Wednesday afternoons and evenings. For details see: www.postalmuseum.org/mail-rail



Koppel load of that...

Amberley Museum's recent Industrial Railways day was much appreciated in a bleak 2020 for events..



Events of any kind have been thin on the ground in 2020 so the Industrial Railways Day staged at Amberley Museum in Sussex on Sunday 18th October was all the more welcome.

The day was all about internal combustion, the museum demonstrating all four of its Orenstein & Koppel single-cylinder diesel locomotives, including a rare outing for the 1936-built 'Monty'.

This is the only working example of a 3ft 2¼in gauge locomotive in the country, the gauge dating from its days in the service of the Dorking Greystone & Lime Company at

Betchworth in Surrey – operating on tracks previously worked by Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0STs 'Townsend Hook' and 'William Finlay'.

Both Monty and Townsend Hook were initially preserved at Brockham museum, yards from their former workplace, before transferring to Amberley in 1982.

The three 2ft gauge O&Ks 'The Major', 'Sonia', and 'Redland' were also in action while passenger services were hauled by a Baguley Drewry. A couple of locos formerly employed at Thakeham Tiles were also in action, as was the museum's unique industrial monorail system. **NGW**

Above: A busy line-up of 2ft gauge internal combustion locos in Amberley museum's highly appropriate industrial surroundings. At left 'Sonia', a 1930-built Orenstein & Koppel that formerly worked at Diamond Tread Ltd in Ashford, Kent, is hauling a train of tipplers with a battery-electric loco on the rear.

At centre is 'Redland', another O&K product from 1937 and so named because it formerly worked for Redland Pipes in Ripley, with behind it Baguley Drewry 3751, formerly employed with the Royal Navy at Dean Hill in Wiltshire. At right is one of the museum's trio of Hudson-Hunslet locos.

Below left: O&K 'Monty' had a rare run out on the museum's length of 3ft 2.25-inch running line.

Below: Sonia and its train is about to pass under Ranger Bridge, the BEV still hanging on behind.

Photos: Phil Barnes



Eric Leslie – a friend and colleague...

Our tribute to rail artist Eric Leslie in *NGW152* prompted former Lynton & Barnstaple Railway chairman *David Hudson* to pen this personal recollection.

It was a great sadness to learn of the passing of Eric Leslie. All the members of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, and the wider railway preservation and heritage field, have lost a great friend and colleague.

My wife Zoe and I first met Eric and his wife Ann when they came to live in North Devon in the 1990s, having moved from their home city of Sheffield. We spent many hours with them socially and spent many great holidays in their company.

Eric gave freely a lot of his time and talents, not only to the L&B, but to many other preserved and heritage lines. He produced hundreds of pictures, drawings, Christmas cards, display posters for dozens of railways across the country, and a great deal for his beloved Leek & Manifold Railway including a book of his drawings.

His range of drawings and paintings included trams – he lived near one of the tram depots in Sheffield, ships and even canal scenes for a book of canal guides published by a friend.

Many years ago, Eric and I visited The Battlefield Line at Shakerstone, the Ashby Canal runs alongside the station. We leaned over the fence and Eric said to me, "I've painted this scene a number of times, from photographs. This is the first time I've seen it for real!"

Cards for all

I remember visiting the small railway on the Island of Mull in Scotland. In their shop I spotted a tea towel for sale; the design was unmistakably 'Eric Leslie', his unique style and type of drawing. One Christmas time I was able to send to my friends three different Eric Leslie cards from three preserved railways!

Before they moved to Devon, Eric and Ann and their family were involved with the Ffestiniog Railway and spent many weekends and holidays volunteering on the railway.

I shall always remember Eric and thank him greatly for helping me with pictures and drawings when I became the Editor of the L&BR Magazine in the early days of the Railway, also for his collaboration and help in providing me with many new pictures for the Oakwood Press book, *Lynton & Barnstaple – An*

Anthology. I would ring him up and say, "Eric, I've got half a page to fill" and within half an hour or so he would produce the ideal picture to fill the space and to suit the accompanying article.

My wife Zoe suggested to Eric that he should produce a map of the railway for the back cover of the *Anthology* (most Oakwood Press railway books had a map on the back cover). He gave the original painting to her and it now hangs proudly on the wall in my hallway, along with a painting of Derby Midland railway station, which Eric gave to me as a present for one of my birthdays. He once sent me a 'get-well' card showing me working in a signal box at the end of my garden!

Eric had a fund of stories about his time working as a carpenter for British Railways on the electrified Woodhead line out of Sheffield. Each morning he would hitch a ride on one of the locomotives and get dropped off at the particular station where he was working. In the evening he would hitch a ride back to Sheffield on another loco.

On one holiday the four of us stayed in Cheshire. Zoe and Ann spent one day at a large garden centre in Nantwich, Eric and I visited the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology. On display in the museum, as some of you may know, there is an ex-Woodhead electric loco. (It was sold to Holland after the closure of the line and then repatriated to Manchester) As we climbed up the side of the loco Eric pointed through the cab window and said, "You see that seat there? I sat on that seat many times!"

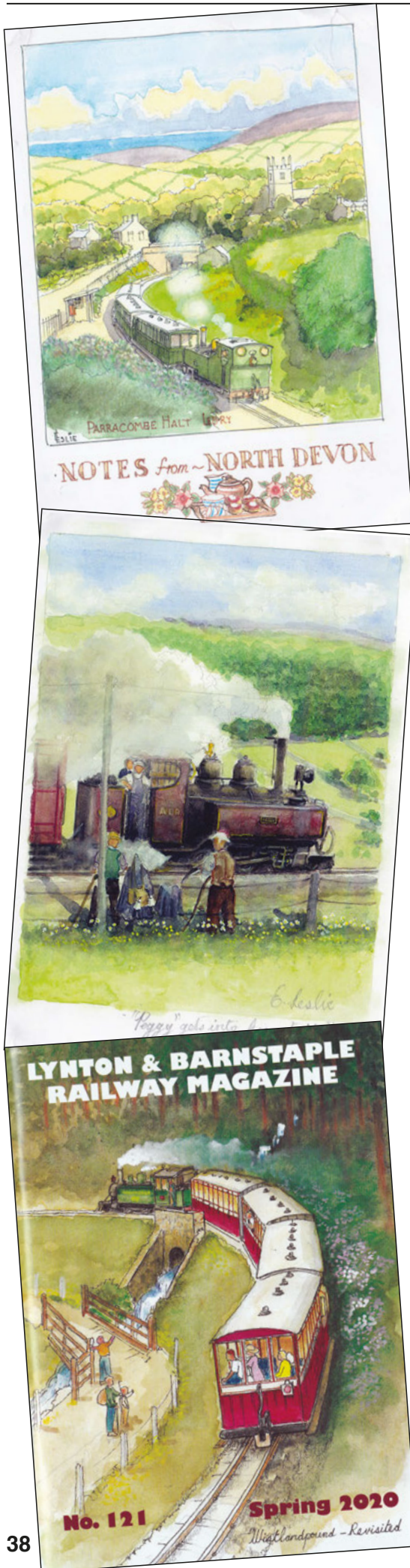
I shall always remember Eric for his help and support, his kindness, his good humour, but more importantly, as a great Friend. **NGW**

Images, from top:

There was no doubt that the Lynton & Barnstaple was a favourite line for Eric...

...but his work was prolific, across the narrow gauge – this was the cover of a delightful hand-written note received by our editor.

Eric's work has dominated Lynton & Barnstaple publications and still features on the cover of every magazine.



Something for all...

Narrow gauge railway modelling is a very broad church...

The pictures on this page clearly demonstrate the very wide breadth of narrow gauge modelling, and while history shows us that the railway modelling hobby started with larger scales and as time went on steadily miniaturised, in this case the reverse is true.

Phil Parker's two photos heading the page are of a truly historic layout, dating back to the 1940s. John Ahern built the Madder Valley Railway to represent a narrow gauge prototype, and used OO-gauge, 16.5mm track as the base, effectively creating the 7mm scale narrow gauge we know today.

The layout is also widely acknowledged as the first model railway to be 'set in a landscape', running trains through a scene rather than the previous more train-set approach. John contributed a host of articles to model railway magazines over many years, describing how he created his layouts both in technical terms and the finely detailed buildings and scenery, setting the stage for what has become the norm since.

Measuring some 24ft by 17ft, the Madder Valley Railway is today preserved complete at Pendon Museum in Oxfordshire (<http://pendonmuseum.com>). The layout features in an eight-page feature in the January 2021 edition of our sister magazine *British Railway Modelling*, where John's techniques are examined in detail aided by superb photos by our studio photographer Andy York.

The other two photos, by regular *NGW* contributor David Pinniger, show just what can be achieved when one reaches into the garden. David's friend and fellow 16mm scale modeller Steve Edwards is a fan of the Lynton & Barnstaple and has recreated Chelfham viaduct in his own garden – seriously impressive modelling in the broad church that is the narrow gauge model railway hobby... **NGW**



Further narrow gauge adventures



Tony Harwood builds a train for hauling by the bespoke Shay locomotive he described recently in our pages.

Readers will remember that in *NGW* 152 I designed and built a Shay-type locomotive in 1:27.7 scale – a scale I came up with because it represented 18-inch gauge on the 16.5mm gauge Peco track used by 7mm scale narrow gauge modellers. Once I had my first scratch-built locomotive, I thought it was time to start planning some wagons, but first I should start by explaining how this narrow gauge modelling adventure came about....

Earlier in 2018 – 2019 I had built a 1:27.7 scale layout (11mm = 1 foot) utilising a Hornby 'Smokey-Joe' HO-OO scale loco and similarly sourced wagons to build an 18-inch gauge model railway engine and shelf or diorama layout. I believe the correct notation would be 27n18. This occasional series of articles is detailing how I later went about building a simple 'tail-chaser' layout built to the same scale to entertain my two grandsons during the lockdown period. For more information on the earlier layout see my Blog at; [http://](http://dampfpanzerwagon.blogspot.com/search/label/Narrow%20Gauge)

dampfpanzerwagon.blogspot.com/search/label/Narrow%20Gauge

I started by searching the Internet for images of suitable wagons and have to admit that I was finding it difficult to choose something I wanted to model. I eventually found a couple of photographs of a re-homed Disney theme-park railway engine and wagons which were in a very bad state of repair, but the wooden-bodied wagons looked perfect for what I wanted – however they were painted yellow! Not my first choice of colour for ore wagons. For more information of this railway and the wagons concerned search online for Nature's Wonderland Railway.

Construction

I started by sketching up a simple pencil plan (Photo 1) and then using three secondhand HO-OO wagons that I had purchased from Tennents Trains in Halesowen (photo 2/3). I set to work building a short rake of three ore wagons.

The metal chassis/subframe of each wagon was made from various thicknesses of plastic card. I cut the coupling slot to match the openings on the original wagons and stored the couplings and mounting screws in a secure zip-lock bag – I would need them later (Photo 4/5).

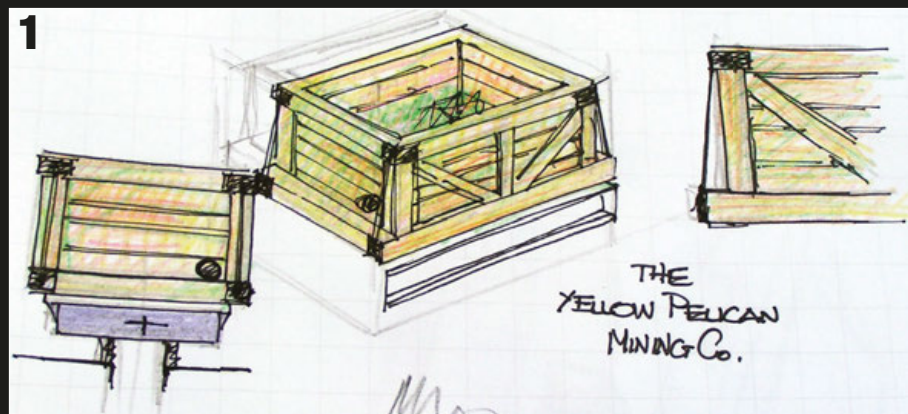
The wooden tub was built from some 3mm thick plastic card (the sort used for mounting signs or in this case ex-advertising material I had scrounged for free). I used a scalpel, the teeth of a razor saw and some rough sandpaper to texture the surface before cutting the pieces to size and gluing the boxes with Super-glue (Photo 6).

The three ore wagons were test fitted onto the wagon chassis to check for fit. Note how the interiors have been textured in the same way as the outside surfaces (Photo 7).

The wooden supports on the outside surfaces of the wagons were modelled from 40thou plastic card which had also been textured in the same manner as the tubs. Any gaps or mistakes were filled and smoothed out with Milliput epoxy putty (Photo 8).

Throughout the construction process, I used a 1:27.7th scale figure to check the scale and size of the ore tubs (Photo 9). The figure is one of my highly modified 1:24th scale plastic figures that I bought on Ebay and then moulded and cast in resin.

The Disney theme-park wagons had a distinct metal underframe support and this was built up from more plastic card (Photo 10) leaving a 3mm gap between the chassis and wooden tub. The metal strapping was modelled from more plastic card.



Painting

After undercoating the tubs with light grey primer (Tamiya spray paint), I scrubbed on a number of layers of Ochre and yellow acrylic paints (Photo 11). I was purposely trying for an uneven and mottled finish as the yellow wooden tubs I had seen on the internet were not one uniform colour. I used a section of broken sponge to add some early weathering and painted the metal areas in rust colours. The metal supports were modelled from florist's wire.

The underframe or chassis was painted in various dark greys and browns before being 'aged' by sponging-on more rust colours (Photo 12). My rust recipe is to use Vallejo acrylic paints – Charred Brown and Hot Orange in various mixes to show old and new rust effects.

The three wagons were painted at the same time, but as you can see from the heading photo I kept varying the tonal values of the yellow and used washes and thinned down paint to vary the colours of each individual plank. I have not added any weathering powders yet, but am planning on using them later, when I have more of an idea as to what colour I will be painting the rocks on my model railway layout.

Couplings

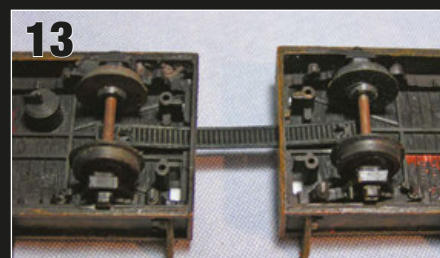
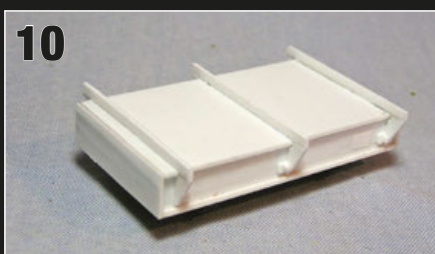
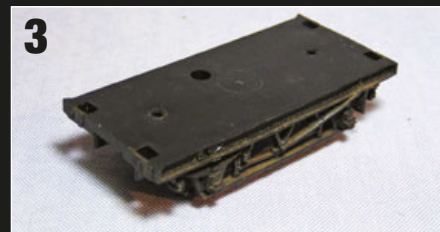
I had always intended having the three ore wagons as a fixed rake with couplers to the ends only. I then had to think about how I was going to join the three wagons together. I decided on using sections of cable ties, a tough nylon or plastic that would allow flexibility and be secure. The image (Photo 13) shows the short sections of black cable ties and the modified ties in place prior to adding the mounting screws.

The three chassis were fitted with the cable tie couplings in the centre and the standard Bachmann couplings to each end. The length of the cable ties was continually checked by running the wagons around my newly laid track. My layout has a track radius of just 12 inches and I wanted to check that they ran freely and did not catch or interfere with one another.

The wooden ore tubs were glued in place and posed on a short section of test track (Photo 14). The sections of cable ties worked perfectly, allowing some flexibility around corners but also proving strong enough for me to pick up all three wagons by just lifting one of the end vehicles.

Each wagon is 72mm long x 50mm wide and 50mm tall (excluding the couplings). The rake of three ore wagons is 260mm long (including the couplings).

The wagons were simple to make – and building all three together certainly made life easier while the challenge of painting the wooden tubs yellow was a real adventure. The painting involved lots of different techniques; basecoating, scrubbing the paint onto the textured surfaces with a stiff brush, drybrushing in layers, washes and even some oil paint pin-washes. In the end I have to admit to liking the weather-beaten yellow colour. **NGW**



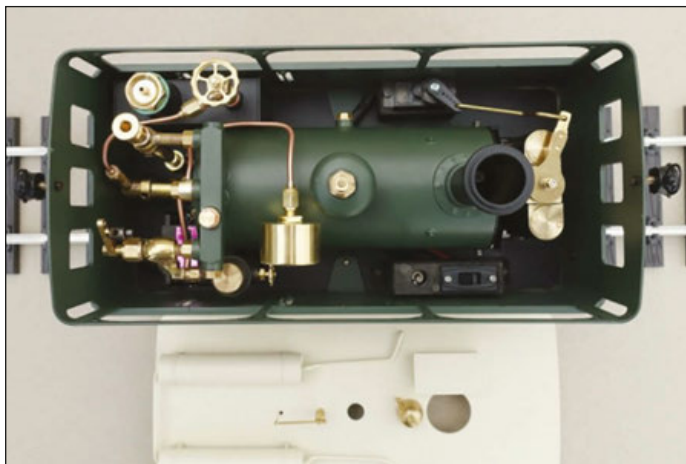


■ Something a little different for the larger-scale modeller is this new release in G-Scale from German manufacturer Regner, a live-steam version of the Henschel & Sohn no 102 'Paul'.

The tram is re-gaugeable for 45mm or 32mm with electrically insulated wheels. It uses Regner's twin oscillating cylinder self-starting power unit – this is geared down as on most Regner Easyline locomotives to produce a slow powerful drive that is said to smooth out gradients and not run away down the grade.

The model will be available from UK distributor Garden Railways Ltd as an easy-build kit with all the parts pre-painted and shaped – the only bending required by the builder being some of the pipework. English-language instructions will also be supplied.

Alternatively Garden Railways Ltd will offer the model ready built and steam-tested with the option for radio control. Price was still to be announced at the time of going to press – for latest details check the website, www.gardenrailways.co.uk, email graham@gardenrailways.co.uk or call 01279 831641.



■ Details matter among narrow gauge railway modellers, details such as this upgrade from Tramfabriek for the classic Liliput H0e/009 model of the ÖBB 2095 diesel. The detailed snow plough moulding is supplied as a pair with foldable couplings. After assembling and painting the coupling, it can simply be swapped with the original coupling and according to Tramfabriek 'will give the model the tough look it was missing'. Details of this and other upgrades for the model including an improved motor can be had at <https://tramfabriek.nl/2095.html>



■ In NGW153 we reviewed a new 16mm scale live-steam model of the Talyllyn Railway's Fletcher Jennings 0-4-2ST no 1 'Talylllyn' from Bowande Livesteam Ltd, now we have the Accucraft UK version. As you can see the model, to usual Accucraft standards, is available in a range of correct liveries and will form an excellent companion to the company's earlier-released models of the Talylllyn's other original loco, 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch'. So that just leaves 'Sir Haydn' and 'Edward Thomas' to come now then Accucraft, hint hint...

Meanwhile as if the Covid-19 epidemic wasn't enough to cope with, Accucraft UK has had to vacate its current industrial unit to allow the landlord to make much-needed and long-overdue repairs to the roof of the building – a reason why there has sometimes been discounted water-damaged stock for sale... A move into new offices and putting stock in temporary storage has meant that Accucraft cannot currently accept personal visitors. The company phone number remains the same, as does the email address, while the postal address is now Accucraft UK Ltd, PO Box 394, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 9QN.

Members-only Kerr Stuart Joffre

■ We have said before that if you model in 7mm scale you need to be a member of the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association and a glance at the Trade section of the latest *Narrow News*, supplied with the Association's bi-monthly full colour *Narrow Lines* magazine proves the point.

You editor's eye was taken by a new and detailed whitmetal body kit for the Kerr Stuart Joffre 0-6-0, which is being produced specifically for Association members by Keith Millard. Designed to fit over a Bachmann Porter saddle or side tank chassis it's a highly complete body kit, with all the screws, nuts, wire and such like required and even both the standard Kerr Stuart and French military spark arrestor chimneys included. The instructions are so comprehensive they are supplied as a CD/DVD!

More details of the Association and how to join it and take advantage of a whole range of benefits, are at www.7mmnga.org.uk

Visit our forum: <http://www.narrow-gauge-forum.co.uk>

The Railway to Adventure

Charlie Lewis and David Payling

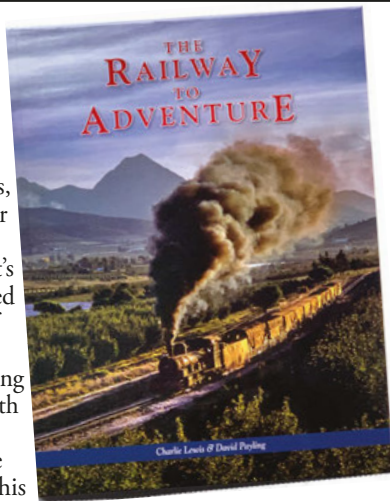
■ Just in time for Christmas, this is a very good month for top quality new books, and this is a definite highlight. It's an in-depth history published by the Ffestiniog Railway of one of South Africa's most famed 2ft gauge lines, running 177 miles from Port Elizabeth to Avontuur. Why the Ffestiniog Railway? Because NGG16 Garratts once on this South African line now work the FR's Welsh Highland Railway, as will in time at least one of the former SAR 'Kalahari' NG15 2-8-2s.

Running to almost 270 pages, this superb-quality hardback describes the railway in great detail, both in terms of its well-researched text but particularly the photos – there are so many of them, covering the entire life of the railway and beyond and all of very good quality, which allows them to be used to excellent size. The authors begin with a history of the line, but the vast majority of the narrative is taken up by a journey along the routes, the photos dominating but the text adding a host of personal insights and interesting stories from those who worked the line.

This book forms a major

and important addition to South African Railway history – for fans of the SAR or Garratt locos it is a just about essential addition to their bookshelves. **AC**

ISBN 978-0-901848-25-3
Published by Ffestiniog Railway,
Tel: 01766 516034.
Web: www.festshop.co.uk
Price £37.50 plus post



Up the Line to Darjeeling

David Charlesworth

■ When you hear that a new book is on its way from the UK-based Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society you know it will be something worth reading but this latest offering from DHRS veteran David Charlesworth is another step above the norm. Basically it does what the title describes, describing in detail a journey up the entire 55 miles of the famed Indian line from Siliguri to Darjeeling.

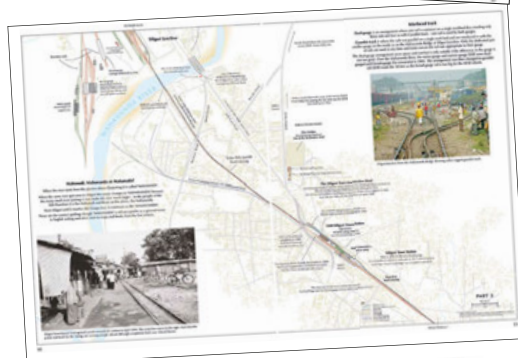
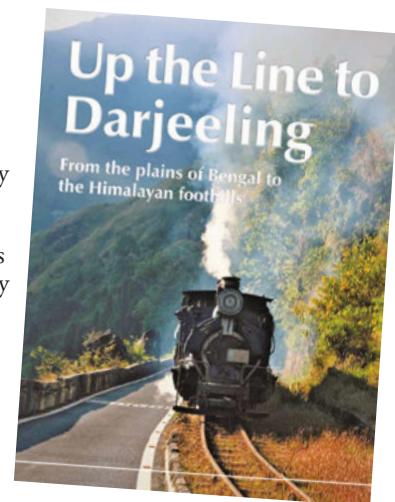
The book achieves this by means of informative text, excellent photos and in particular incredibly detailed maps that show stations and important areas of trackwork such as the various reverses. These illustrate both the line and the way it fits into its surroundings. They also show not only how each scene exists today but how they have changed over the years. Such changes are all documented in detail in the very readable text, while the narrative also stretches beyond the DHR's much-encroached borders to describe the communities around it and to paint a very effective picture of the environment this line exists in.

This book forms an excellent companion to the superb driver's-eye DVD filmed from Tindharia to Darjeeling, reviewed in

NGW153 and soon to be joined by a part 2 covering the lower half of the line. The book provides the implicit detail of the railway and its operation, in the process answering all the questions the DVD may raise.

For the many fans of the DHR this book will be yet another must-buy – but general narrow gauge enthusiasts will also find a whole lot of fascinating material contained within the almost 130 pages. **AC**

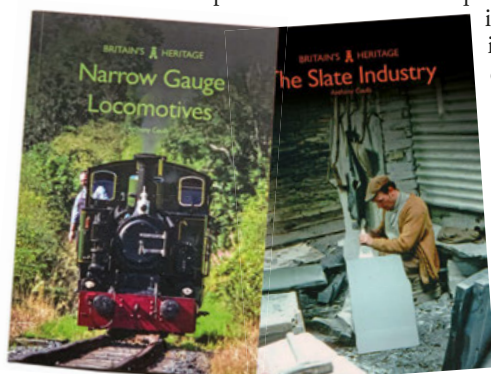
ISBN 978-0-9541602-9-6
Published by Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society.
Available from DHRS online shop at www.dhrs.org.uk
Price £24.95 plus post



Narrow Gauge Locomotives/The Slate Industry – Anthony Coulls

■ These two titles are part of a series produced by the author, well known for his work with the National Railway Museum, under the title of *Britain's Heritage*. While for most readers of **NGW** the information presented within will be quite basic and probably already known, the inexpensive titles do provide an excellent introduction to the subject perhaps for new enthusiasts or younger members wanting to get involved with the lines. The presentation is bright and I particularly liked the 'Did You Know?' boxes offering some interesting and not always that obvious facts. **AC**

ISBN 978-1-4456-7556-5 (NG locomotives)
978-1-4456-9105-3 (Slate Industry)
Published by Amberley Books
Web: www.amberley-books.com
Price £8.99 each



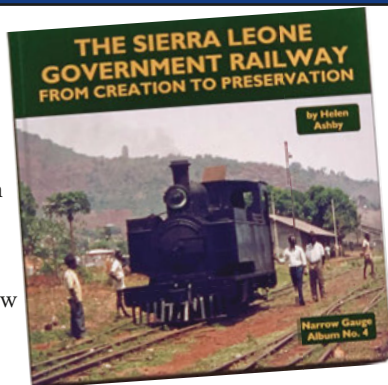
The Sierra Leone Government Railway

Helen Ashby

■ Publisher Iain McCall's fundraising efforts in 2020 on behalf of Covid-affected heritage rail organisations has both added to the published material available to the narrow gauge enthusiast and filled some gaps. A case in point is this hardback album focusing on the Sierra Leone Government Railway, a once extensive 2ft 6in gauge system from which of course the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway obtained Hunslet 2-6-2T no 85 and two of its current carriages. Author Helen Ashby is chairman of the UK-based Friends of the Sierra Leone Railway Museum, set up in the system's former main depot and having overcome many challenges in the West African nation, including civil war and the Ebola pandemic.

Helen makes full use of archives gathered by the Friends to present a fascinating selection of images. Period shots through the railway's life lead onto the post-closure years and formation and development of the museum – £4 from each album sold will go to aid the work of the Friends, which as shown in the album has achieved a great deal.

The captions are highly informative, revealing much about this fascinating system – one day the Sierra Leone Government Railway will surely be given the definitive history it deserves, but until then this album provides a real insight into this British-built system. **AC**



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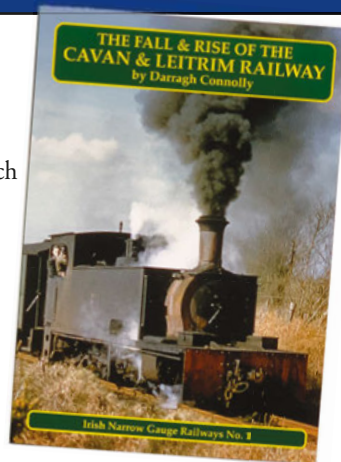
The Fall & Rise of the Cavan & Leitrim Railway

Darragh Connolly

■ Like the Sierra Leone system much of the Irish narrow gauge is an area where many know too little, your editor included. This album opens up the final years of one of the most-missed lines, the Cavan & Leitrim Railway, a 48-mile long 3ft gauge line that closed in 1959 after struggling on for several years in basically decrepit condition.

The period shots in this A4 format softback are used large and reproduced to high quality, really bringing home the parlous state of the railway in its final years. Author Darragh Connolly is a leading light in the C&L preservation project at Dromod, featuring readily in our news pages, and after describing the dereliction of post-closure years Darragh brings the story up to date with the rise of the revival project and the restoration and successful steaming of the Barclay locomotive 'Nancy.'

The coverage of current progress adds an extra aspect to the album but the wide selection of quality period photos are worth the cover price alone, especially as £4 from each sale will be donated to the C&L revival. **AC**



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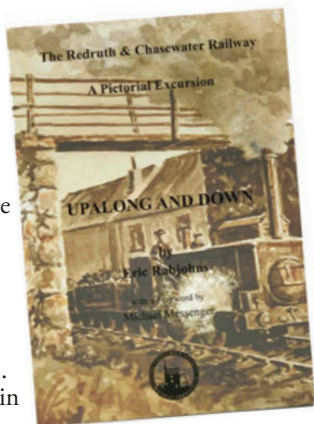
The Redruth & Chasewater Railway, a Pictorial Excursion

Eric Rabjohns

■ At *NGW* we particularly like books focusing on little-known narrow gauge lines, and this certainly fits the bill! The Redruth & Chasewater Railway is regarded as Cornwall's first true railway, a 4ft gauge line built in 1825 for transporting copper ore and originally horse-drawn. Steam arrived in 1852 and the line lasted until 1915.

The author documents his subject in novel fashion, by walking the entire route of the 9.5-mile line and describing it by means of recollections, the few period photos that have been uncovered, diagrams, maps and interestingly the equivalent scenes today. In the process he provides a perfect excuse for a holiday in Cornwall (when we are allowed to again), taking along a copy of the book and rediscovering this long-lost narrow gauge line for oneself.

This inexpensive title offers a great deal within its pages to interest the enthusiast. **AC**



ISBN 978-0-9935-0219-4

Published by the
Trevithick Society.
Web: <http://www.trevithicksociety.info>
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It's Still a Lot of Fun!

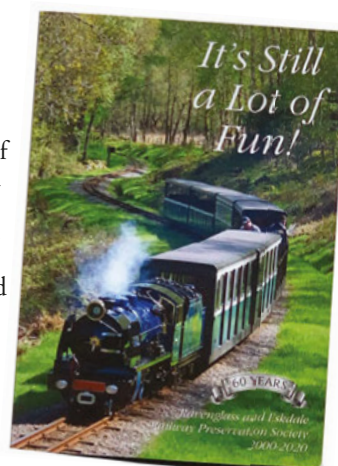
Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Preservation Society

■ The Ravenglass & Eskdale was one of several heritage lines that missed out on properly celebrating a significant anniversary in 2020, in its case 60 years since the formation of the preservation society that ensured the R&ER survived to become a significant line today.

One good thing that came out of this trying year, however, is this thick A5 softback celebrating the Society's last 20 years – a sequel to *It's Been a Lot of Fun*, published in 2000. Rather like the Ruislip Railway book reviewed in our last issue, this book scores by drawing out the memories of so many people involved, members and staff, which makes it a very personal publication and all the more enjoyable for that. All aspects across the line are featured making this a very full history.

The book was published primarily for R&ER members but you may be able to snap up a copy if you are quick through the Society website.

Published by the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Preservation Society, available from <http://rerps.co.uk/sales/>
Price £15.00 inc UK post



Statfold Barn Railway Enthusiast Day 2020 (DVD)

■ In a normal year Michael Field of MFVP would be travelling all over the UK and beyond to produce the latest in his prolific selection of videos, but the Covid pandemic vastly restricted his activities in 2020, as it did all of us. But one highlight (as it was for the *NGW* editor!) was the delayed Statfold Barn Enthusiast Day that went ahead in August, and featured the much-awaited debut of Tasmanian Garratt K1 following overhaul at the Staffordshire venue.

We've said it many times before but any reader who hasn't yet made it to Statfold really needs to, and this video certainly brings that home. As usual Michael films every aspect of the event, right from preparation on the day before and including the amazing collection in the Grain Store museum, plenty to see in it despite the fact that a vast variety of locos are in action on the trains!

As ever the video features just enough commentary to keep viewers informed as to what they are seeing, while mostly letting the locos themselves do the talking. If Statfold was one of your very few outings in 2020, this is a very worthwhile hour-long souvenir of your day. **AC**

Produced by MFVP, The Rowans, Bishop Kinkell, Conon Bridge, Ross-shire IV7 8AW Tel: 01349 861129 E-mail: m.fieldvideo@googlemail.com
Price £14.95 plus 1.55 post and packing



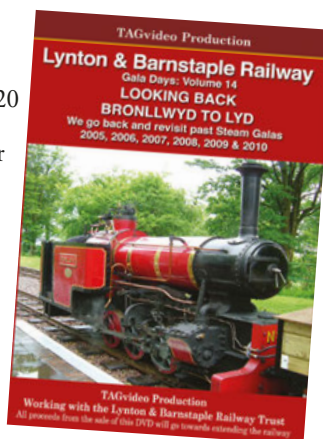
Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Looking Back (DVD)

■ Another who found much of their 2020 activity ruined by Covid was Lynton & Barnstaple Railway resident videographer Trevor Garnham; normally Trevor films the Spring and Autumn Galas on the North Devon line and produces a video of all the goings on – over the years he's built up quite a collection.

Sadly both L&B events fell victim to the virus this year but not to be outdone, Trevor has gone back into his archives for this new disc, looking back at the earlier days of the revived railway and featuring the six Galas between 2005 and 2010.

Now obviously with these earlier films you are not going to get the technical quality of Trevor's more recent releases, but the amateur film has an appeal of its own and any shortcomings are more than made up for by the fascination of watching how a small-scale operation rapidly expanded towards what we are familiar with today.

The bargain price of £10 includes a couple of worthwhile extras – a short film of the Lynbarn Railway, built by L&B volunteers at the Milky Way Adventure Park and which raised vital funds over several years, and eight minutes of original L&B footage in the 1930s. And of course every video sold raises funds for the ambitious extension plans of today's L&B. **AC**



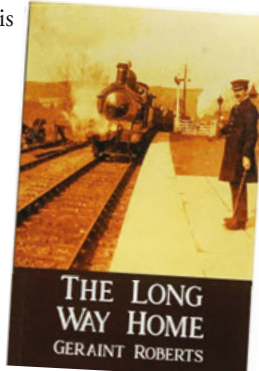
Produced by TAG Video Productions for Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust, available from the railway or online at www.lynton-rail.co.uk/shop/browse
Price £10.00 plus post

The Long Way Home – Geraint Roberts

■ Regular readers may recall our review back in *NGW* 134 of *By The Banks of the Rheidol*, a novel written by Geraint Roberts and set amongst the navvies building first the Plynlimon & Hafan and then the Vale of Rheidol railways. Well now he has penned this sequel which takes the story forward to 1915 and the First World War.

In contrast to its predecessor the theme is mainly standard gauge, the lead character now a fireman on the Cambrian Railway, but the text does feature a brief visit to Devil's Bridge and time on the First World War trench railways, the author again demonstrating both his knowledge of the subject and his ability to craft a highly readable story.

ISBN 978-1-8381-3580-5
Published by Geraint Roberts.
Web: www.geraintroberts.com Price £8.99



Twenty-Twenty One Calendar – Joey Evans

■ A highlight of last year's calendar offerings was the debut limited edition version from Joey Evans, a name who will be familiar to *NGW* readers as over the past couple of years Joey's superb photos have increasingly graced our pages. Anyway he has produced a new calendar, choosing this time to go for the traditional A4 landscape folding out to A3 format.

Despite the Covid restrictions Joey managed to get out and about to various UK narrow gauge locations in 2020 and once again the pictures are excellent, and this calendar will certainly grace the *NGW* office wall over the coming year. Cost is £9.99 from Joey's website, www.joeyevansphotography.co.uk



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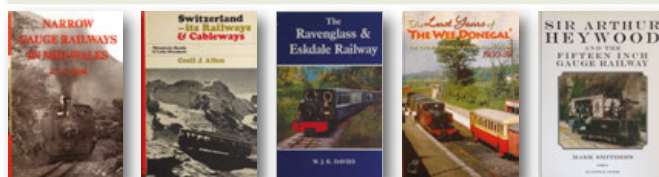


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Manx sign memories

The item on page 12 of *NGW*153 regarding the removal of the sign at the Manx Electric Railway's Derby Castle depot, so that it could be replaced, caught my eye.

The present sign certainly predates the date of 1993 that was stated. It was there when I first visited the railway in 1960. An earlier sign in the same location read MER FOR SCENERY and part of this is visible in John Slater's picture taken on 18th May 1951 (*reproduced at right - Ed*).

John said that one of the directors of the MER asked; "What does it mean?" and it was changed to ELECTRIC RAILWAY. My guess is the same structure was used and just the letters changed. I have not found when it was first erected – maybe a reader will know?

David Mitchell

The coal debate

Since your editorials (*NGW*153) concerning coal supplies for heritage railways (other magazines have also expressed alarm) I've been thinking about the black stuff.

Back in the 1980s, the closure of the South Wales coal mines caused concern in the steam railway industry. At that time, steam trains on British Rail had long stopped running, but I can remember the concern that the lack of Welsh steam coal would cause the heritage railways.

Highthorn surface mine is in Northumberland, nowhere near South Wales, which makes me wonder if its version of coal (which the industry considers is essential for the continuation of steam trains), is the same or similar to that formerly mined in South Wales? Or is it merely the best alternative?

A visit to Wikipedia shows that like flowers, coal comes in different varieties: Bituminous coal is a dense sedimentary rock, usually black, but sometimes dark brown, often with well-defined bands of bright and dull material. It is used primarily as fuel in steam-electric power generation and to make coke.

It was known as steam coal in the UK, and historically used to raise steam in steam locomotives and ships. A grade between bituminous coal and anthracite was once known as 'steam coal' as it was widely used as a fuel for steam locomotives.

It's sad that the 'green' debate is affecting steam loco operation in Britain. I live on a 1980s estate built on what was the huge locomotive depot and marshalling yard handling the output of Kirkby Colliery (also known as Summit Colliery) which was one of many collieries in this part of the Nottinghamshire coalfield. The



Above: The Manx Electric Railway sign replaced in 1960, apparently because a director of the electric line did not understand its meaning! See the letter from David Mitchell.

Below: Not a Fairlie but a Pechot-Bourdon, formerly employed at Kostolac in Serbia, now preserved in the country's narrow gauge museum at Pozega – see Phil Horton's letter.

Facing page: The remains at Brean Down in Somerset recall yet more experiments by the military involving narrow gauge rails – see the letter from Tim Edmonds.

trees, grass and pleasantness is a far cry from what was here before the mine was closed.

Obviously, like many others, I am conflicted in my views how the heritage railway industry should approach this problem. Rather than risk complete closure, I believe we need to emphasise to Government and the environmentalists that the days of thousands of neglected steam locomotives belching polluting smoke and other contaminants is long gone. Hopefully leading organisations in the heritage railway industry are already working on 'the science' to convince the sceptics.

Not all MPs are anti. My local MP (a former miner) recently wrote "importing coal makes no sense when we have millions of tonnes of it underground in the UK". So I echo the Editor's plea that we lobby our MPs to make the case for allowing the Highthorne mine to provide coal for British industries and heritage railways, rather than buy 'dirty' coal from abroad.

Tony Olsson

Andrew C replies: There is no getting

away from the fact that steam railways are not clean. But the fact is the entire heritage rail industry is a virtually insignificant contributor to the carbon emissions issue.

The point of the argument we need to emphasise is that at a time when industry will continue to need coal for some time to come, it makes absolutely no sense to end domestic production and import the that coal, because that will actually produce significantly more harmful carbon emissions than mining and using UK coal. Thanks to the readers who have contacted me after lobbying their MPs, we need to keep up the awareness campaign.

Happy days at Kostolac

James Waite's article on the engines at Kostolac colliery, Serbia in *NGW*153 brought back memories of my own visit there while on a tour organised by the LCGB and Warwickshire Railway Society in September 2001.

Here we found two of the post-war ex-UNRRA 0-8-0s, nos 10 and 13, at work while no 14 looked rather



derelict in the large roundhouse. My account of the narrow gauge engines seen during the tour of Serbia appeared in *NGW*25 (April 2003). It was good to learn from James' article that no 12 is now displayed in the main square at Kostolac.

A much earlier engine that worked at Kostolac's collieries, one of two surviving Péchot-Bourdon 0-4-4-0 tanks, was also seen during the tour. Some 280 of these engines, basically copies of the Fairlie design but less successful, were ordered for the French Army from Baldwin in the USA and delivered from April 1915.

Several French-built examples had been working for the French military since the 1880s. During World War I many were captured by the Germans. Two of these somehow ended up at Kostolac and worked on its then 60cm gauge system until the 1950s. One of the machines is now preserved at the Serbian Narrow Gauge Museum at Pozega.

A further captured locomotive has been displayed in the Verkehrsmuseum in Dresden for many years. It is reported to have worked on the 'Magdeburger Trümmerbahn' ('rubble-railway' at Magdeburg) at the end of World War II and is currently on loan to the Army Railway Museum at Frankfurt. My article about the Péchot-Bourdon engines, *A Very Peculiar Locomotive* was in *NGW*38 (Mar/Apr 2005).

I enclose a photo of the ex-Kostolac engine at Pozega on 21st September 2001. Note the chimney extensions above the smoke arrestors, these were needed in order to get the engines to steam. **Phil Horton**

More on Humphry Davy

Many thanks for publishing my letter regarding the 10¼-inch gauge loco 'Sir Humphry Davy' in *NGW*153 – I can confirm that the colour was actually 'Volcano Red'.

We are hoping if latest restrictions allow to reopen Beale Park (www.bealepark.org.uk) for a couple of weekends in December.

Bryan Lee

Torpedoes on track

I had never heard of the Brennan Torpedo until I read Steve Sedgwick's most interesting article *Taking Aim on the Tracks* in *NGW*153. However, it was his photograph of the narrow gauge track at Cliffe Fort in Kent that caught my eye because it resembles a similar installation in Somerset.

At the end of Brean Down, just south of Weston-super-Mare, is a complex of military installations of various ages. Below the Palmerston Fort, completed in 1871, is a short

length of narrow gauge track which dates from World War II and was used for test-launching a naval 'bouncing bomb'.

This was intended as a seaborne weapon based on the airborne bouncing bomb invented by Barnes Wallis. It was a project of the Admiralty's wonderfully-named Directorate of Miscellaneous Experimental Weapons, which had a wartime establishment on Birnbeck Pier at Weston-super-Mare.

Tim Edmonds

Andrew C replies: Thanks to Tim for another interesting letter. Coincidentally I have recently read *Chastise*, the new history of the Dambusters raid written by renowned historian Max Hastings, and this reveals that the naval version of the bouncing bomb was a very serious project and at an early stage of development was thought by some in the military hierarchy to have better chances of success than the aerial variant...

More on postcards...

Regarding the correspondence in *NGW*152 and 153 on the apparent postcard showing a serious accident at the North Bay Railway in Scarborough.

In the 1950s I was involved in photography and took *Amateur Photographer* magazine. The back of each issue was full of advertisements for ex-War Department surplus materials, such as Spitfire gun cameras, infra-red film, waterproof photographic paper. I bought and used Kodak's first positive photocopy paper, unfortunately it eventually ceased to work.

I also bought a 100-sheet pack of postcard-sized printing paper, with the postcard information ready printed on the back. This was readily available for amateur use at the time.

I think this is the explanation for the North Bay accident photograph, and probably many other such pseudo postcards. I only threw my pack away last year, when clearing out my darkroom.

Dr Roy Williams

Andrew C replies: Many thanks Roy for a most interesting letter. Is the mystery solved?



Assistance needed...

Corsican information sought

Marius d'Oriano, an enthusiast of the Corsican Railway, is in the process of producing a book on the line with Michel Braun of Editions du Cabri. He aims to show the evolution of the network and equipment from steam days to today, and is looking for photos taken of all periods, locations and equipment on the line up to 2010.

Readers with material can contact Marius by email at mdcorse@hotmail.fr – he does not speak English, but tells *NGW* that he will be able to translate any letters sent to him. He is also trying to make contact with whoever acquired the Corsican photos taken by the late D Trevor Rowe – "there are some very interesting pictures there," he says.

■ Need assistance with a research or book project? Send details to *NGW* and we can ask for help from our highly knowledgeable readers...

That was the year...

Recalling narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy, this month featuring traumas on the 15-inch...

From 40 years ago

Romney decision deferred

After a change of heart by the Shepway District Council discussions are now taking place between the council and the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway with regard to assistance being provided to finance the progress of renewals required.

As a result the decision on singling the line between New Romney & Hythe and the closure of the Dungeness section reported in NGN126 has been deferred. Services will operate through to Dungeness during the 1981 season.

Although the 1981 operating season will see full services operating the renewals problem is still present and services after the 1981 season remain dependent on the success of the present negotiations. (NGN, Jan 1981).

Reading this story (which showed the NGRS correspondent confusing his 15-inch gauge lines, entitling it 'R&ER decision deferred...') is hard to believe. When one looks at today's highly successful gem that is the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch line, renowned for its double-track miniature main line and the unique atmosphere of the Dungeness section, it seems remarkable that both could so easily have fallen victim to the drastic cuts outlined above.

The railway was, however, in a very different state in the early 1980s – in fact in John Timpson's popular coffee table book Little Trains of Britain, first published in 1992, RH&DR manager John Snell was still putting forward the seemingly revolutionary concept that the line's hierarchy had been considering for the whole of the previous decade, of lifting the entire operation and relocating it to a more prosperous part of the UK...

Fairbourne update

Recent reports on the happenings on the Fairbourne Railway have left some doubt as to the status of the railway for the coming season. The sale reported in NG News no 126 (to the Isle of Wight based Medina Railway project – Ed) proved to be somewhat precipitate and clarification of the situation is now to hand.

The 1981 season will see trains operating on the Fairbourne Railway though to a reduced frequency. With regards to the sale this in fact turns out to be an option to purchase only – the Medina Railway has issued a press release confirming it has an option to purchase.

Times were tough on the UK 15-inch in 1981! As reported in the September 2020 edition of this feature, the Medina Railway project never really got off the ground, despite obtaining a Light Railway Order and the Fairbourne struggled on until very soon after John Ellerton arrived on the scene and completely rebuilt the line to 12¼-inch gauge...



By early 1981 a brand-new station was steadily emerging from a field at Raven Square in Welshpool.

Photo:
W&LLR Archive

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

Perhaps the most notable event of the latter part of 1981 was the first through train working between Llanfair and Welshpool for many a year. The working was a ballast train during the October 'track week' and after a very eventful 5½-hour passage, average speed 1½mph, Raven Square was reached.

The last few months have seen much work done on the Welshpool extension, the first points of the new Raven Square layout are in place, the Christmas and New Year period also saw works completed. A preliminary inspection of the new works was carried out by Major Olver on 10th November, mainly to clarify outstanding points on working procedures.

The last sections of 45lb rail were lifted from the town section on Sunday November 9th, this being a short section in what used to be the alleyway approaching Church Street crossing. This completes work on the town section since the mixed-gauge track in Welshpool goods yard is of no use to the W&LLR.

Some 18 years after it reopened as a heritage line, the Welshpool & Llanfair was at last on the point of returning to its 'home town', services officially restarting in July 1981. The 2020 season has been the first since then when the vast majority of trains did not run to Welshpool, due to Covid restrictions.

Interestingly a length of the unwanted dual-gauge track in Welshpool goods yard remains today, now at the side of a roundabout and slowly being restored.

Extracts from **Narrow Gauge News**, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join, see the advert on page 4 or go to www.ngrs.org.uk.



YouTube Watch: online NG films

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

This month we again offer something for all those readers currently lacking in narrow gauge train rides. Sent in by **Ted Millward**, it takes us on a cab ride at the 10.4km long 760mm gauge overhead electric industrial line between Mixnitz and Sankt Erhard in the Austrian state of Styria. The line carries the mineral magnesite – passenger services ended in 1966 but today a friends organisation operates passenger services on summer weekends. The video takes us from transshipment sidings at Mixnitz to the processing plant. <https://youtu.be/SkKPDbHrWc>



From a Different Age...

1990s France, 1950s style...

Alf Cutts was another to visit the metre-gauge Blanc-Argent line in rural France in the 1990s, and he found a very relaxed atmosphere surviving from decades earlier...

What an interesting read the article by Philip Horton on the Blanc-Argent line in *NGW*152 makes. I visited the line several times in the 1990s when still it retained a 1950s feel about it – lines of unused freight wagons, manual level crossing gates, lots of shunting to make up different train combinations...

Old practices still ruled – for example at Valençay there was a tiny train crew dormitory at the back of the loco shed for the driver of the last train of the day, who would then take out the early departure of the following morning.

My mother and I travelled in trailer car X701, which Philip Horton records as being still in use, and it was an incredible experience – certainly not recommended in any way. The speed, pitching, tossing and bucking of the unit dictated a ride sitting frozen in the seat and gripping the back of the seat in front for dear life. There was no question of standing up to take a photo!

The service pattern was amazingly complex. The May-September 1992 timetable showed trains terminating/starting at Luçay le Mâle, Valençay, Gièvres, Salbris and Romorantin. There were no less than 17 train variations, for example;

- Runs 6th 13th 20th, 27th June, 4th July, 12th, 19th, 26th September.
- Mondays plus June 9th and 15th July but no service on 8th June and 13th July.

Access to the tracks, the loco depot and sidings of the system was unimpeded and the staff were always friendly and helpful. **NGW**



Railcar XBD205 (shown stored out of use in Philip Horton's list) sits outside the loco shed at Romorantin on 22nd June 1994. Officially in reserve, Alf saw it in use on an enthusiast special at Gièvres on 15th June 1996.

Verney X212, one of the last two railcars still in chocolate and cream livery from the 1980s, parked beside the overnight loco shed at Valençay in June 1992. By 2002 the others had all been repainted in the new blue and grey regime, except X224 which remained in the original red and cream livery which it bears today on the preserved line – page 32 of *NGW*152.



Railcars X242 and attached to it X214 await departure from Romorantin on 26th June 1994 with the 11.52 W. & S. (school term time only). It runs only to the next station – Faubourg d'Orleans, picking up students from the nearby Lycee and returning almost immediately to Romorantin at 12.09. It then departs again at 12.10 to Valençay.



This train illustrates the complexity of the B-A timetable. It runs every day as far as Gièvres but in term time it runs on to Valençay on a Wednesday. On Saturdays in term time it runs to Chabris. Outside term time it continues to Chabris on a Wednesday. Phew...

Photos by Alf Cutts

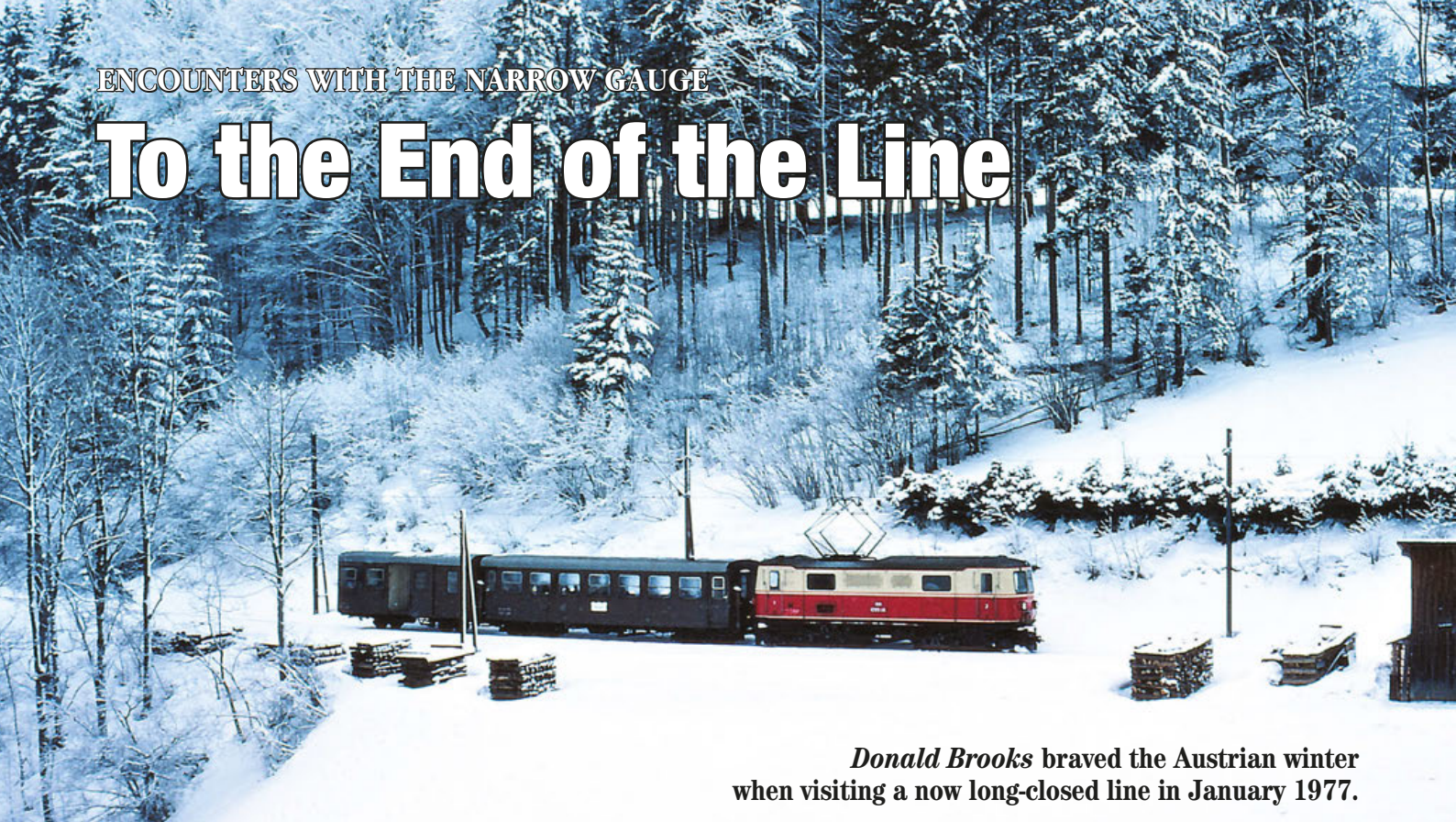


On 6th June 1992 railcar X213 is about to depart with the 5.30 (Sundays and Bank Holidays only) to Luçay le Mâle. At left are trailer cars XR701 and XR703 in the headshunt. At right in the loco depot can be glimpsed railcars X224 (red and cream livery), X241 (chocolate and cream) and X211 (blue and grey).



Locotracteur BA13 on the sidings at Salbris on 22 June 1994. Its twin BA14 was also seen in the loco depot. The two were used on freight and latterly for works trains. They were built on the chassis of two 1901 Blanc Misseron steam locomotives in 1953.

To the End of the Line



Donald Brooks braved the Austrian winter when visiting a now long-closed line in January 1977.

The Mariazellerbahn, Austria's celebrated 760mm gauge railway from St. Pölten into the Styrian Alps, was built to serve the pilgrimage town from which it takes its name, though it once ran beyond it.

Opening in stages from 1898 the railway reached Mariazell for freight by the end of 1906, with passenger trains operating from May the following year. Two months later a 7km extension was opened to the village of Gusswerk, primarily for timber traffic.

The railway climbs gradually along the Pielach valley from St Pölten to Laubenbachmühle, followed by a spectacular climb to the 2368m long summit tunnel at Gösing, after which it charts an undulating course across the uplands to Mariazell. The Gusswerk extension closely follows

the Salza valley, sometimes on a ledge above the river, dropping down from 849m at Mariazell to 739m at the terminus on gradients of 1 in 37.

Long-standing plans for a further southern extension to join up with the Kapfenberg to Au-Seewiesen line never came to fruition. This would have created a long and scenic, if slow, narrow gauge connection between the main lines from Wien to the west and the south.

Trains were initially worked by U-class 0-6-2Ts and Komarek steam railcars with Mh and Mv class 0-8+4s developed for the mountain section and built by Krauss, Linz from 1906. But the line proved so successful that electrification quickly followed, with electric trains operating throughout from 1911, hauled by 16 Krauss, Linz E class C-C locomotives.

The main passenger traffic flow was to Mariazell, with lengthy trains that included named expresses

Above: Locomotive 1099.14 climbs towards Mariazell with train 6834, the 13.08 from Gusswerk. Trains were allowed 16 minutes for the short journey, making two stops on route.

Below: Looking as though they have come directly from the coffee house, two ladies trudge through the snow as 1099.14 leaves Mariazell with the 10.33 service for Gusswerk, train 6837.

Photos by Donald Brooks, 4th January 1977

covering the 85km in two hours 50 minutes when I first visited the line in the 1970s. The original electric locos still handled all the traffic, though by then designated class 1099 by ÖBB and looking completely different following a rebodging programme that started in 1960.

Sunshine and snow

On all my visits I only ever reached the end of the line at Gusswerk once. A 1099 worked four connecting shuttle returns a day from Mariazell, the usual single carriage and van proving more than adequate for the traffic on this Cinderella service.

I usually visited Austria in winter, when the snow-covered Alps looked at their best. Sunshine on the snow was a not necessarily frequent bonus while the short days limited photography in the times before digital cameras. Trudging through snow and ice and waiting in the cold could be an effort, but when freshly-fallen snow blanketing the trees compensated for the grey skies, the sight of the model-like train climbing the white hillside made it worthwhile.

Sadly it didn't last. When the timber traffic ceased there was no justification for continuing the passenger service and the line closed to all traffic beyond Mariazell from 29th May 1988. Gusswerk station building still survives, though trackless since 2003, while the first section of the trackbed out of Mariazell has been used by the standard gauge Mariazell Museum Tramway for its extension towards the town centre since 2015. **NGW**





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