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ISSUE 162
NOV-DEC 2021



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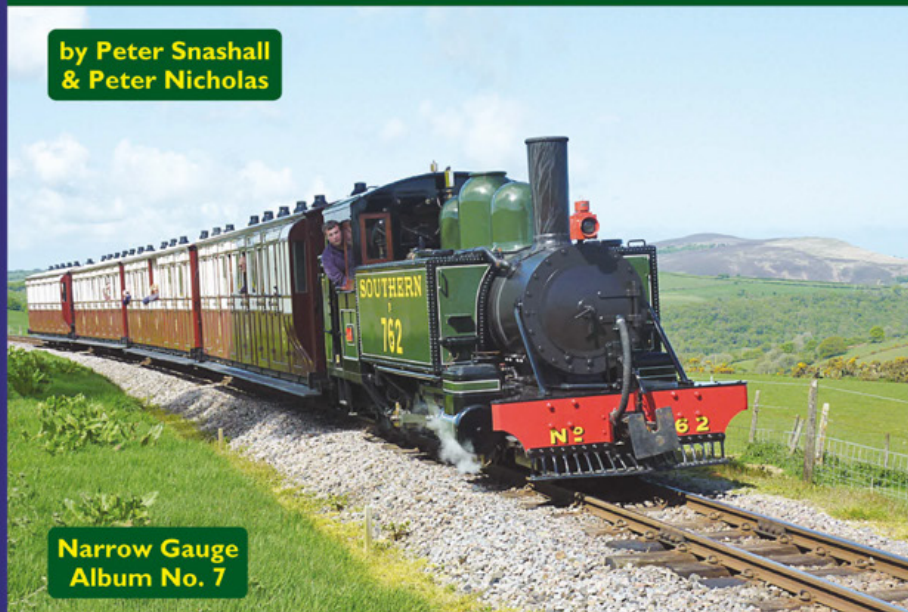
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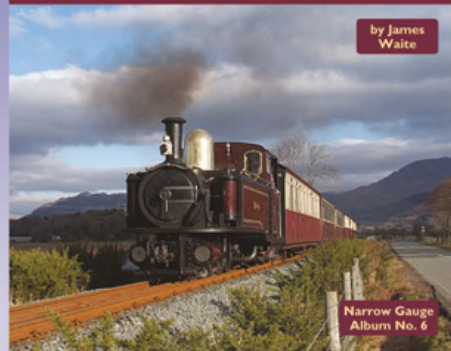


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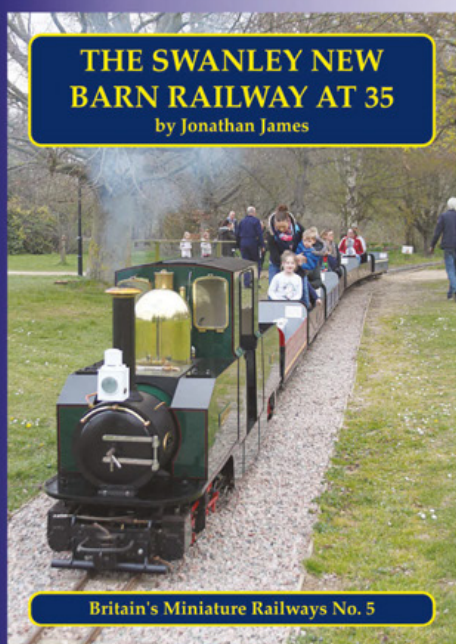
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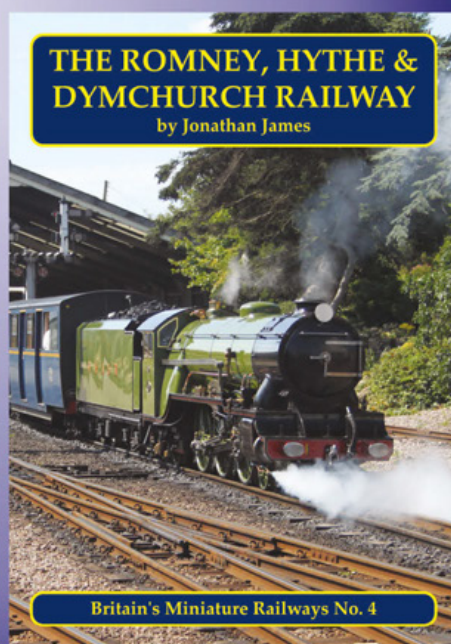


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Cover: The Ffestiniog Railway's Bygoness Weekend in early October again sowed the line off at its best, just before the announcement of a £3.1 million lottery grant to make further improvements and boost visitor numbers. Meanwhile Editor Charman has been learning to drive steam locos, described in this issue.

Photos: Karl Heath and Harry Billmore

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CONTENTS

05 **First Lines**
End of season draws near...

06 **Headline News**
Ratty's response to landslip

07 **UK News**
Llanberis track to be lifted?

14 **World News**
Fatal crossing crash in Germany



17 **Lesser-known Lines**
2ft gauge across the paddock

18 **The Big Events**
Galas in Devon and Norfolk

20 **Waite's World**
Concluding a Portuguese adventure

24 **News Gallery**
Summer shots from big events

28 **On the Narrow Gauge**
Learning to drive at Fairbourne

31 **European Lines**
Austrian snow and sunshine

34 **Behind the Scenes**
Making narrow gauge tickets



36 **From a Different Age**
Memories of Singapore

38 **US Lines**
Round-up in Colorado

40 **NG Modelling**
16mm Hunslet reviewed

42 **Modelling news**
Lynton locos in 7mm scale

43 **Christmas On the Shelf**
Festive cards and calendars

46 **Viewpoint**
more Llanberis memories

48 **NG Extra**
A very unusual funicular

50 **Encounters**
Ffestiniog to the Lake



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Situation normal?



"The sun going down as a combination of a quarry Hunslet, miniature road steam and a fully-lit Fairground gallopers simmered in the background..."

Photo: The 60th birthday Gala at Bressingham was enjoyed by many visitors though the museum was much quieter when Joey Evans found a suitably elevated position to capture this early morning view of the visiting and resident participants...

Welcome to **NGW162** as we enter our winter schedule – yup, I'm afraid for the next three issues we will be bi-monthly, with the next, **NGW163**, due to publish just before Christmas.

That edition will include two features that were scheduled to appear in this issue. Apologies to readers who were expecting to find the final episode of our three-part 'Hunslet Homes' series, focusing on the early history of the Bala Lake Railway, in our pages this month – it's been a particularly busy and complicated few weeks, which meant I did not have sufficient time to do the subject justice, especially as more useful information had recently become available.

Time on the subject wasn't helped by the family insisting I take something called a holiday – mind you we did go to north Devon, which meant I was able to finally attend a Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Gala...

Family angle

The other feature held over is the story of the 009 layout built many years ago by the Reverend Wilbert Awdry, famed of course as the author of the *Thomas the Tank Engine* books. We are getting a unique inside view on the layout and its role in the Reverend's narrow-gauge stories, based upon his experiences on the Tallylyn Railway, from his grandson Philip,

which will certainly add an extra element to the feature.

I mentioned that I attended the Lynton & Barnstaple Gala and this came just a week after I was on the opposite side of the country for the 60th anniversary of Bressingham Steam Museum (told you it had been a busy month...). Both were excellent events, and ones that dare I say felt a lot more normal than in recent times.

Sitting at the evening hog roast at Bressingham, with the sun going down as a combination of a quarry Hunslet, miniature road steam and a fully-lit Fairground gallopers simmered in the background was certainly memorable.

A week later at Woody Bay it was a case of comparing imposing locomotives in the form of the Baldwin 'Lyn' and Hunslet 1215, also marvelling at the samples of the new 7mm scale ready-to-run L&B locos that are on the way (news of those in our modelling pages...). People around seemed genuinely happy, friends meeting up after far too long and the talk mostly about railways and certainly not about Covid – good to see.

On the plate

You will also see from this issue that your editor's footplate education has moved up a gear as I underwent my first day of training to be a steam locomotive driver – not as many might assume on the Welshpool

& Llanfair Light Railway but something a little more manageable, the Fairbourne.

My day being taught the whys and wherefores of the 'other side' of the footplate, or in the case of the Fairbourne the whole plate, by my daughter's partner Harry (and no, being 'family' doesn't make him any less scathing when I get it wrong!) required great concentration but was also thoroughly enjoyable. I've said it many times before but there really is no substitute for getting involved with the narrow gauge.

This is especially true this year – all lines are experiencing a shortage of volunteers as a result of the pandemic, which for some is causing quite serious problems. So if you've ever thought of not just reading about it but doing it, now is certainly the time. And of course it doesn't have to be the footplate – running any narrow gauge line requires a wide-ranging availability of those with particular skills from loco crew to gardeners. It's certainly not just about trains. Have a go – I virtually guarantee you will thoroughly enjoy yourself.

Meanwhile, enjoy this issue, make sure you choose your Christmas cards from the correctly themed selection in our pages (the lines will greatly appreciate your contribution) and we'll see you in two months (well, a month and a half), in **NGW163**...

Andrew Charman



'Achievement to be proud of' as Ratty landslip rebuilt in 13 days

The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway lost two weeks of services in early October following a major landslip, but staff and volunteers have been praised for their remarkable rebuilding effort that prevented the Cumbrian 15-inch gauge line being closed for much longer.

The slip, at Horsefalls Wood, 3¼ miles from Ravenglass, was discovered by an early-morning inspection train on Sunday 3rd October, following torrential rain on the previous day. Some 100 tonnes of rock, slurry and silt had fallen onto the track which had been moved ten feet towards the River Mite by an uprooted oak tree.

"Bad as that was, it could have been much worse had an old fence straining post and a stone wall not arrested the movement – track had moved over a total distance of 150 yards," R&ER permanent way manager David Moseley told *NGW*.

All train services were cancelled as immediate plans were put in place to rebuild the affected section. Dismantling the damaged track was difficult as it was under great tension and there were fears it would move further, thankfully not realised.

With the track removed the debris and the oak tree were removed using a digger. At the same time replacement materials were being sought – while most of the sleepers were reusable, new rail, fittings and ballast were required and suppliers rose to the challenge of the rapid timescale. "We sincerely thank Messrs Adam Cowley & Co and Holdtrade/GB Rail as well as Aggregate Industries for their support in our time of need," David said.

Over two days a forestry contractor removed trees above the work site that were now threatening the track, followed by the installation of drainage and earthworks. By

the Thursday, 7th October, the trackbed was being levelled followed by laying out of sleepers and rails, which then had to be cut to length back at Ravenglass.

The following week was taken up with ballasting, packing and removal of waste material and the first passenger train ran over the site on Friday 15th October, full services resuming on the following day.

"A quick totting up of numbers shows ten staff and 25 volunteers contributed 121 days to this project," David said.

"This excludes contractors and also the vital but largely unseen work by staff at Ravenglass involved in cancelling passenger bookings and dealing with enquiries.

"By anyone's reckoning to rebuild 150 yards of formation and track in 13 days is an achievement to be proud of, but as usual it couldn't have happened without a long list of people contributing."

Top: The sight that greeted Ratty staff on 3rd October. Only a fence post and stone wall stopped the track being moved further.

Below: Reinstatement underway with the track being levelled.

Right: Job done – first train through the slip on 16th October.

Photos: David Moseley



Cable update set to see lifting of Llanberis track

Track on the Llanberis Lake Railway appears likely to need to be lifted to allow the replacement of cables linking the Dinorwig hydro-electric power station to an electricity sub-station.

The cables date from the start of the innovative 'Electric Mountain' project in the 1970s, when the power station was built inside the former quarry.

The Lake line, open only four years when work on the power station began in 1975, played a central role in the project, with the cables taking electricity away from the station laid in a trench alongside the 2ft gauge line's track along the edge of the lake.

With no road access to the lake, all transport was provided by rail on the LLR, which gained extra diesel locomotives and many extra wagons as a result. As described in our feature on the early years of the LLR in *NGW* 161, work went on over three winters until early 1978, and maintenance of the infrastructure has resulted in the line running occasional revenue-earning freight trains ever since.

Now the cables are in need of replacement and according to a report in the *North Wales Daily Post* the work could take several years. The newspaper says residents in the tourist-dependent area will suffer from roads being dug up, while LLR tracks will need to be lifted for the work to take place.

What is not clear at this stage is to what extent the railway will be affected and whether any track work will be restricted to the winter off-season, as it was when the power station was built. *NGW* contacted the LLR which declined to comment.

Rails revealed on Welsh beach spark mystery

Shifting sands are thought to have revealed what appear to be narrow gauge rails running into the sea on the beach at the northern end of Barmouth.

The appearance in early October of the rails at the mid-Wales resort, on the opposite side of the Mawddach estuary to the Fairbourne Railway, sparked many theories as to what they had been used for.

Suggestions included that they were remnants of the former fishing industry and used to bring boats ashore for repair. A prominent local historian rejected a theory that they dated from the construction of the sea wall, saying they were much older and perhaps connected to the installation of a Victorian sewerage system.

£3.1m lottery win boosts FR Boston Lodge project



The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways has secured £3.1 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to help boost its visitor numbers and fund a major restoration and conservation project at the line's historic Boston Lodge Works.

Reacting to the announcement the railway said the £3,144,000 investment will help its development of a high-quality tourism experience, providing work, training and volunteering opportunities for the community of Porthmadog.

The railway will provide £900,000 of matched funding for the three-and-a-half-year project, which aims to boost annual passenger numbers by 50,000 to 250,000.

The conservation project at Boston Lodge Works, listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the 'oldest railway workshop in continuous operation', will secure the remaining 19th century buildings, focusing on the top yard which dates back to the early 1800s.

Announcing the award, Andrew White, director of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales described the FF&WHR as a truly world-class, high quality attraction.

"As well as the many economic and employment benefits of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways, this project

which centres on the Boston Lodge works is a great example of how heritage can help us understand who we are and where we come from and how the communities we are part of have been shaped by the past by bringing history to life," he said.

Commenting on the Boston Lodge Works project, FF&WHR director and general manager Paul Lewin said that the lines' history has been intertwined for 200 years with the local community.

"We want to build on those existing links so that the local community can have pride in and be involved in the heritage of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways and Boston Lodge," he added.

"Our railway has survived by adapting and embracing technology and thanks to this investment from The National Lottery Heritage Fund we will do that again now to make sure that we offer a high quality tourism experience that brings real benefit to the North Wales economy."

Above: FF&WHR project manager Edwina Bell and NLHF committee member for Wales Dr David Robinson celebrate the lottery award.

Photo: Chris Parry/FF&WHR

Below: The lottery grant will help fund the conservation project in Boston Lodge Top Yard, towards the left of this picture. *Photo: FF&WHR*





Pace increases at Glyn Valley Chirk project

The project to revive the Glyn Valley Tramway has increased in pace in recent weeks with the course of the former 2ft 4½in gauge line emerging from the undergrowth at Chirk station.

"The Glyn Valley Tramway is the last Welsh narrow gauge adventure in waiting that now has a real chance of re-opening – this sleeping beauty is starting to stir at Chirk after an 86-year snooze," GVTT spokesman Andy Christie told *NGW*.

The Glyn Valley Tramway Trust has been working on the station site at Chirk since 2007 and in recent years has successfully removed many large trees from the track bed and station area. Now an influx of new working members has catapulted the project forward.

Volunteers have uncovered the foundations of the old station building and these have been approved for re-use by a local building Inspector. The Trust also has several approved planning permissions in

place for rebuilding the route towards the roadside halt of Ponfaen.

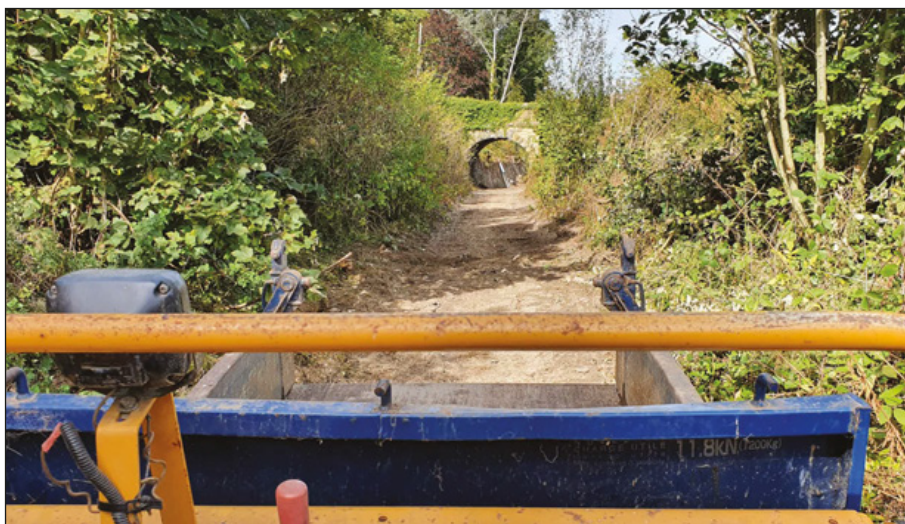
Groups of volunteers have recently been working at clearing the thick vegetation from the track bed, constructing a new access ramp to the station and clearing decades of rubble from around the station site. An appeal for funds to rebuild the station building will be launched in the coming months.

The Trust hopes to attract more members to provide additional help in the rebuilding of the tramway. Details can be obtained by email from: contact@glynvalleytramwaytrust.co.uk

Above: The foundations of the former GVT station building at Chirk are visible to the left as the new sleepers signify the intentions of the Trust.

Below: On the other side of the road bridge trackbed clearance is well underway.

Photos: GVT Trust



VB loco 'steams' on Ashover line

Star turn at the AGM of the Ashover Light Railway at the end of September was the first movement of the vertical-boilered loco built for the Jaywick Sands miniature railway in Essex.

The loco, built in 1938 by the Essex 18-inch gauge line's operator in its workshops, was based on a set of scaled-down Sentinel drawings.

It was relocated to New Brighton on closure of the Jaywick line in 1939, withdrawn by 1959 and then circulated on the preservation scene for many years virtually as a kit of parts.

Much work remains to be done on the loco and the propulsion was provided by compressed air. "Progress towards steam operation continues," the ALR's David Willmott told *NGW*.

Photo: ALR



■ The rapid restoration of 2ft gauge Ruston diesel 'Brunel', which spent 42 years in the garden of the former Lynton & Barnstaple Railway station at Lynton (*NGW*160), continues apace. Paul Stileman of Exmoor Associates, which is carrying out the restoration, told *NGW* that the mechanicals are pretty well reinstalled and a new fuel tank is being fabricated. "With the weights back on and its wheelsets refitted it is looking more like a locomotive again," he added.

Photo: EA

Lines report strong seasons



Two of the UK's narrow-gauge lines have ended their 2021 operating seasons reporting excellent numbers of visitors, despite timetables affected by Covid restrictions.

The Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway ran its final main-season trains of 2021 on Sunday 26th September. The line had prepared two timetables for the season, a 'normal' one and one with Covid restrictions.

Reopening was delayed by a month and the Covid timetable was initially in force, with just three trains on each operating day and tickets sold online. "The first train of each day was either sold out or close to it," a S&KLR spokesperson said.

The normal timetable resumed on 25th July with turn-up-and-go ticketing, though visitors concerned over Covid were still able to reserve compartments for themselves.

The 2ft 6in gauge line was also able to hold its family-pitched Edward Bears Teddy Bear's Picnic weekend on August bank holiday Monday, as well as several private hire and footplate experience events.

An end-of-season Gala over the final operating weekend proved a success despite late notice and unavailability of some exhibits.

Encouraged by the success of the season the railway is now planning for 2022, which marks 50 years since the setting up of the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway Ltd as a private company by the Locomotive Club of Great Britain, which had been running the line since acquiring it from Bowaters in 1970.

The season should also see the return to

service of Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Premier', just before sister loco 'Leader' is withdrawn for overhaul. With a third loco 'Melior' the line is hoping to have three of its Brazil class locos in operation together for a very short period.

The Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway also reported a record season in 2021, put down to a number of factors keeping the 2ft gauge line at Skegness Water Park in the public eye.

Despite the season starting later than usual the line carried 2,700 passengers, 30 per cent up on the last season of 2019, despite the major Skegness Classic Wheels event at the park again being cancelled in 2021. Passenger figures on the line were five times more than recorded in 2014.

Special family-orientated events and plentiful media coverage, including the line's runners-up accolade in the national Heritage Railway Awards for the restoration of the 'Skegness Simplex', helped boost passenger numbers, which were up despite the £1 return fare, in force since 2009, being increased to £2 return alongside a £5 family ticket.

Above: Sisters in residence: Kerr Stuarts 'Melior', 'Leader' and the partly re-assembled 'Premier' were lined up outside Kemsley shed during a photo charter on the S&KLR on 10th October.

Photo: Steve Sedgwick

Below: Pilots of incoming aircraft on the adjacent Skegness Airfield are entitled to free travel on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway and ticket records show several took up the offer during the line's record season.

Photo: LCLR



BRIEF LINES



Photo: Andrew Charman

W&L Hunslet on way back

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's former Sierra Leone Government Railways Hunslet 2-6-2T No. 85 is to be returned to service, following a condition assessment at the Vale of Rheidol Railway. The UK-based Friends of the Sierra Leone National Railway Museum will raise funds for the restoration with the aim of the loco appearing at 200th anniversary celebrations of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025.

Car flipped onto track

A car left the road at Dhoon Glen on the Isle of Man on 13th September and ended up upside down on the tracks of the Manx Electric Railway. The occupants of the car suffered minor injuries in the accident, at around 10pm when no services were running.

Mechanical engineer hunt

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway has begun the process to recruit a new Engineering Manager. Current incumbent Richard Featherstone, in post since 2016, is moving to Blist's Hill Industrial Museum near Telford in Shropshire.

Sipat steams in Darlington

The latest 2ft gauge Bagnall Sipat 0-4-0ST built by Darlington-based North Bay Railway Engineering was steamed for the first time on 4th October. Built for the West of Fife Munitions Railway that has been established at the Lathalmond Railway Museum in Fife, the loco will carry the name 'Big Dave'.

Five-year-old loco for sale

The diminutive 2ft gauge 0-4-2T 'Faith', built over a 17-year period by engineer John Uphill and completed in 2016, remained up for sale as this issue went to press. The loco is currently resident at the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and anyone seriously interested in acquiring it should direct their enquiries to the railway.





No Leadhill trains until Easter

No public trains will run on the 2ft gauge Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway until Easter 2022 at the earliest (writes **Hugh Dougherty**).

The Scottish railway, the highest adhesion-worked line in the UK, was unable to open in 2020 due to Covid-19 and will join the Launceston Steam Railway in Cornwall in missing two full seasons – the longest closure in the Leadhills line's 35-year history since opening in 1986.

Leadhills track manager Alan Mackie told **NGW** that the various restrictions had allowed no work at the line until recently, "except for a weekly visit by our site manager who organised a clean-up of Leadhills station site".

Alan added that work on the extension to Wanlockhead has also stalled because of the pandemic. "Given our exposed location, subject to extreme weather, and remedial work on the mainline not completed until February 2022, it will leave little time for train crew re-familiarisation and rolling stock maintenance to allow us to re-open at Easter – we're going to be very busy."

Track panel refurbishment is underway after excessively hot weather in July and August brought defects to light – a section laid by YTS workers in the late 1980s had been built without effective drainage and

laid on bare soil, leading to sleeper wet rot.

Volunteers have been removing one panel at a time, scraping the topsoil off the solum with the line's Komatsu excavator, and laying new, clean 20/40mm stone to a minimum depth of 50mm. Sleepers, rails and fishplates are renewed as necessary, before the panel is re-laid, the works train then moving forward to lay new ballast which is tamped using the line's tamper.

"All of this means that we may be running works trains at any time, and we're reminding visitors and local people to stay well clear of the tracks," said Alan.

"We had a recent incident at Leadhills station in which vandals caused one of our hopper wagons to run away and derail, which could have resulted in serious injury. We reported that incident to the police, for, sadly, despite being so remote, we are not immune to the problems faced by other heritage railways in more populous areas."

Alan added that the railway is very much ready to welcome further volunteers to help get the line back on track for 2022. Full details are at www.leadhillsrailway.co.uk

Above: Work in progress as the roadbed is excavated and a track panel is pulled back on top of another, with the works train ready with new ballast. Photo: L&WR



Dig unearths rail fittings from 1815 Scottish tramway

Rail fittings dating from 1815 have been discovered by archaeologists excavating the Tranent and Cockenzie Waggonway in East Lothian, Scotland (writes **Hugh Dougherty**).

The fittings, unearthed by the Waggonway 1722 project in September, date from the conversion of the original, 1722-built, 4ft 7in gauge wooden railway to a narrower 3ft 3in gauge in 1815.

The conversion replaced timbers with iron, fish-bellied rails, allowing coal from the Tranent pits to reach the harbour at Cockenzie more efficiently.

Waggonway 1722 chairman, Ed Bethune, said that excavations started in 2019 on what is believed to be the United Kingdom's oldest waggonway, had unearthed three levels of the line.

"When the wooden rails and sleepers wore out, they were replaced with new ones, simply laid on top of the originals, with the 1815 iron rails placed on top, still on the narrower gauge," Ed added.

"Thanks to the excavation we now have a very good picture of early railway building techniques – we plan to continue our dig on the waggonway in 2022, so who knows what else may come to light?"

Above: Work underway on the waggonway showing where the rails ran and some of the sleepers on the waggonway.

Below: Very old narrow gauge – the 1815 fittings excavated during the waggonway dig. Photos: Waggonway 1722 Project



■ The launch of Martyn Ashworth's newly restored Avonside 0-4-OT 'Ogwen' (2066/1933), in original form as the Durham County Water Board's 'Durham', led to a line-up shot of all four locos so far restored at 'Workshop X' in Killamarsh, Cumbria on 10th October. From left to right the four are quarry Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Edward Sholto' (996/1909), Hudswell-Clarke 1238 (built in 1916), Hunslet 4-6-OT 1215 also built in 1916, and Durham. Photo: Joey Evans – see also Gallery pages



Award a fitting tribute to Eileen

Long-time Ffestiniog Railway volunteer Eileen Clayton was remembered at a ceremony on 27th September when the Ffestiniog Railway Society unveiled two plaques on its Minffordd volunteers hostel.

The plaques signify the Society receiving the Hendy & Pendle Trust Volunteers Award for its restoration of the building, which is known as 'Gweithdy' at the line.

The two plaques were unveiled by Network Rail chairman Sir Peter Hendy and his wife Sue Pendle on behalf of the Trust which among its various activities makes grants to transport heritage projects.

Eileen, a hugely influential figure at the FR, was heavily involved with many projects across the railway, including the original setting up of the hostel after the building's purchase by the railway and its restoration.

She initiated the fundraising appeal to allow the restoration to go ahead and played a leading role in the project until she passed away in 2019.

"Its completion along with the subsequent recognition through this award is in many ways a fitting tribute to Eileen and her extensive contributions to our railway," an FF&WHR spokesman said.

■ While events during the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways' Bygones Weekend on 8th-10th October were mostly centred on Porthmadog, a small ceremony further up the FR marked the final end of the Moelwyn Tunnel project. Built as part of the deviation around a reservoir in 1977, the tunnel has recently been provided with its portals and a plaque was unveiled recording the leading figures in the project.

Photo: Chris Parry/FF&WHR



Diana goes home to Kerry

Kerr Stuart 0-4-0T 'Diana' (1158/1909) returned briefly to its former workplace in mid-Wales on 13th September and proved a big hit with local schoolchildren.

The transporter carrying Diana and Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Stanhope' back to their home line of the Amerton Light Railway, following their guest appearance at the Tallyllyn Railway's Edward Thomas Centenary Gala (*NGW* 162) was diverted to Kerry, a small Powys village around 14 miles south of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway.

Diana was built to 2ft 5½-inch gauge for a line in Mauritius but never delivered. After eight years in store in 1917 the loco was regauged to 2ft for use on the Kerry Tramway, a timber line.

The loco worked on the mid-Wales line, initially crewed by German prisoners of war,

until sold to the Oakley Quarry at Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1925.

Diana's owner, Phil Mason, realised a long-held ambition to return the loco to Kerry. The tramway's loco shed survives, but is not accessible, so the two locos were parked at the closest practical roadside location. Around 50 local residents visited them including pupils from the local primary school.

Phil told local media he was very proud to return his loco to its former workplace. "I didn't think this many people would come down to see a steam engine to be honest," he said, "but it's something I wanted to do and there's been a lot of interest."

Above: 'Diana' proved a big hit with Kerry residents, especially the local schoolchildren.

Photo: Phil Mason





Corris winter project will see traverser installed at station

The Corris Railway will carry out its long-planned redesign of Corris station over the winter, which will include the installation of a traverser.

The unit, currently being built by Statfold Engineering, will allow a run-round loop to be laid in the station, the site too cramped to install a traditional point.

The modified layout will require the building of a new platform as part of a larger-scale and longer term intention to construct a new station building with an overall roof – a feature of the original station in the village.

Work on the new track layout will begin after the two days of Santa Trains operation on 11th-12th December.

Fine weather in September aided work on the embankment being built for the

railway's extension south of Maespoeth Junction. This included connecting the drainage layer below the embankment base with a drain to the river, clearing the flood plain of debris from earlier work and levelling of the topsoil in front of the stone filled gabions at the base of the bank.

Meanwhile at Alan Keef Ltd the building of replica Hughes Falcon 0-4-2ST no 11 has made major visual progress with the boiler placed on the frames and the cab plates trial fitted. Funding is still being sought to complete the loco – details are on the Corris website at www.corris.co.uk with individual components available to sponsor.

Photo: Looking like a loco – at Alan Keef Ltd the cab plates are tried for size on Hughes Falcon no 11. *Photo: CR*



CDR Drumboe returns home to Donegal

County Donegal Railways Nasmyth Wilson 2-6-4T 'Drumboe', which hauled the last passenger train on the system in 1959, returned to Donegal in triumph on Saturday 9th October, (*writes Hugh Dougherty*).

Crowds lined the route from Whitehead to Donegal Town, as the 1907-built loco, fresh from an overhaul by Heritage Engineering Ireland, made its way home by low loader.

A stop at the site of Strabane Station attracted around 200 people, and there were similar scenes at Castlefin and at the former CDR headquarters at Stranorlar.

After traversing the rugged Barnesmore Gap, Drumboe arrived under Garda escort at Donegal Town Diamond where Donegal Railway Heritage Centre staff greeted a large crowd and ran a pop-up museum.

The loco then moved to the Heritage centre and was craned into position on specially laid track alongside a new platform. Here it will be displayed with lighting and interactive display boards after a canopy is erected.

The centre does have long-term plans to run the loco and it has been restored to operational condition with the exception of the boiler, which it is considered should only be restored when operation is imminent as it will need to be certified.

Niall McCaughan, Railway Heritage Centre manager said that centre staff were astonished by the level of public interest Drumboe's homecoming generated. "It was a wonderful day and support for the centre and for our aim of operating Drumboe again is very evident," he added.

Photo: After its homecoming 'Drumboe' is craned into position at Donegal Railway Heritage Centre. *Photo: DRHC*

Concert hits right note at Dromod

The Cavan & Leitrim Railway welcomed its first visitors since 2019 on 19th September when the platform of its Dromod station was chartered for a private concert of Irish music.

C&LR members carried out some TLC to the station before the two-night event and the musicians were accommodated on a Bord na Mona flat wagon. The CDR's Avonside 0-6-0T 'Nancy' was steamed for the occasion and set off the music with a blast on its whistle.

Meanwhile early in September a small party of C&LR members visited John Fowler Engineering in Cumbria to see latest progress on the twin restoration projects of Tralee & Dingle bogies (*NGW153*) and Kerr Stuart 0-4-2T 'Dromad'.

The party was able to inspect a completed T&D bogie destined for the CLR's restoration of carriage 7T, while the boiler of Dromad was also on show, 50 per cent complete with its new inner firebox, the next job being the fitting of stays.

Below: Ready for the carriage body – a restored Tralee & Dingle bogie. *Photo: CLR*



■ Hunslet 0-4-2T 'The Green Dragon' passes the impressive signal box while running round its train at Slaggyford on the South Tynedale Railway on 10th October. The line is continuing to operate weekend trains until the end of November at the end of a season which at one time looked in serious doubt following the collapse of the STR operating company in 2020.

The Cumbrian 2ft gauge line continues to struggle for sufficient volunteers, however. It recently announced on its Facebook page that the popular Santa Special trains would not run this year. "They require a large number of volunteers and staff that we just don't have at the moment," the site stated.

The line hopes to run Mince Pie Specials which are less labour-intensive, while the shortage of volunteers (an issue evident across the heritage railway movement post-Covid) has also delayed the ongoing overhaul of Polish 0-6-0 'Naklo'.

Photo: Dave Wilson



■ As the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway dealt with its landslip (page 6), better news for members were these photos of progress on the Cumbrian line's new carriage, 'Ruth'. Built by the Ffestiniog Railway's famed Boston Lodge Carriage Works and currently undergoing its finishing touches, the vehicle looks set to provide levels of luxury train travel seldom seen on the 15-inch gauge.

Photos: FF&WHR



■ The project to reinstate the passing loop at Sylfaen Halt on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway commenced in September and has made rapid progress. The work, which has to be completed before the end of the year to qualify for funding from a Welsh Government grant, includes realigning the track to create an island platform. The new track will for the first time on the W&LLR employ recycled plastic sleepers.

Photos: Richard Wiltshire/W&LLR



■ Received just after our review of this year's railway Christmas cards went to press (page 44) were two cards from the Maid Marian Locomotive Fund. Both designs, painted by fund subscriber Lesley Kahney, feature a bilingual Christmas message inside. The A6 cards are available in packs of six, three of each design, with envelopes at a cost of £4.50 including postage. Orders can be sent to The Honorary Secretary, Maid Marian Locomotive Fund, 139 Stoops Lane, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 7RG with a cheque made out to the Maid Marian Locomotive Fund (the Fund requests that this is written out in full).

Meanwhile delays at the printer prevented the annual calendar of regular *NGW* photographic contributor Joey Evans reaching us in time for this issue. We will review it next time but readers who are familiar with Joey's work, in this issue and many others, and who may wish to order now can do so from his website at www.joeyevansphotography.co.uk, for £9.99 including postage.





■ Steam-hauled services ran for the first time on the metre-gauge Koszalin Railway in north-west POLAND on 25th September when Px48 0-8-0 no 3901, built in 1951, took its first trains over the 30-mile route to Manowo.

Built in 1898 originally to 750mm gauge and then changed to metre-gauge following the Second World War, the line was closed in 2001 but a section reopened by a preservation organisation just seven years later.

The locomotive was gifted to the line by the National museum in Szczecin and its restoration to working order was financed by the city of Koszalin.

Mobile-home driver killed in Mollibahn crossing collision

The driver of a mobile home was killed and his wife critically injured when their vehicle collided with a steam-hauled service on the Mecklenburgische Bäderbahn, known as the Mollibahn, on 26th September.

According to local media reports the accident happened at around 10.30am on a level crossing of the 15km long 900mm gauge line at Klein Bolhagen, between

GERMANY

Kühlungsborn and Heiligendamm.

The crossing did not have barriers and the road vehicle drove onto it despite the approaching train, hauled by 2-8-2T 99-2324, built by the Meiningen Steam Locomotive Works in 2009.

Following the collision, which dragged the mobile home along the track for

some 50 metres, the 72-year old driver was declared dead at the scene and his 71-year-old wife taken to hospital. No injuries were reported among the 30 occupants of the train.

The line was closed while emergency services attended the collision, a rail replacement bus service set up. An investigation into the incident by transport authority DEKRA has begun.



■ Security concerns led the Sandstone Heritage Trust to move four giant 3ft 6in gauge locomotives from storage in Bloemfontein to the Trust's base in Ficksburg, SOUTH AFRICA in August. The four included three North British locos built in Glasgow – 4-8-2+2-8-4 GMAM class Garratt no 4114 of 1957, a 2-8-4 class 24 (3688/1949) and a class 11 2-8-2 (929/1904), plus 4-8-2 Krupp 19D class no 2654 of 1939.

All four had spent more than two decades in the former Bloemfontein shed as part of the South African Railways reserve museum collection, but increasing incidents of vandalism and theft at the site sparked plans for the move by road. All four, along with two watertanker wagons, were transported 140 miles to the Sandstone estate in Orange Free State, the Garratt requiring the use of a 152-wheel multi-axle trailer. Sandstone plans to cosmetically restore the quartet, with the Garratt going on display at the entrance to the famed heritage centre.

Photo: Sandstone Heritage Trust

■ A strange sight to behold after dark at a station in SPAIN... In mid September two metre-gauge steam locomotives were transported by rail from a tunnel near the Plaza España station in Madrid, where they had been stored for several years, to Mora La Nova museum in Tarragona, a journey of around 300 miles.

The two locomotives, CGFC 2-6-0T no 209 'Monistrol' and ferrocarril d'Olot a Gironano 2-6-2T no 22, are to be cosmetically restored for display in a new museum that is under construction adjacent to the central station in Martorell.



Finnish Jung loco tractor arrives at MTVS museum

The Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways (MTVS) finally took delivery of its new locomotive on 14th October, despite last-minute customs delays.

The GM4/4 loco tractor was built in 1966, originally for a line in Finland and then sold to the Gotthard Bahn in Switzerland, ending up at the Dampfbahn Furka-Bergreke (DFB).

The loco ran on the metre-gauge line until it was replaced by three Moyse loco tractors, and rather than scrap it, the DFB donated it to the MTVS.

The museum raised just under 15,000 Euros to transport the loco to its museum at Crèvecoeur-le-Grand, which included customs charges equating to some £1600.

The GM4/4 is in operating condition and was immediately tested on its arrival at the MTVS museum. It was also supplied complete with a spare diesel engine.

FRANCE

Meanwhile the restoration of the museum's 1897-built

Corpet-Louvet 0-4-0T 'Venus' has seen the boiler sent for remedial work that is expected to take around a year. Built originally for work at a sand pits, the loco is regarded as a 'Monument Historique' in France.

Photos: Olivier Janneau, MTVS



BRIEF LINES

Fire hits Cumbres station

Extensive damage was caused after fire broke at the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad's Osier station in Colorado, **USA** on 23rd September. Thankfully the blaze, thought to have been started by a faulty light fixture, was contained within the kitchen area of the building. The station was empty at the time and there were no injuries.

From rail to restaurant 1...

A 100-year-old station building formerly serving the 2ft 6in gauge Kilani Valley Railway in **SRI LANKA** is set to be turned into a restaurant. Conversion of the former 100ft x 40ft passenger hall at Kurivita Ruruvita has attracted criticism from the Department of Archaeology, which argued that it should have been conserved.

...and rail to restarant 2

Stock from the Ballyhooley Steam Railway in Port Douglas, Queensland, **AUSTRALIA**, is being controversially converted into a dining experience after the line's owner was unable to find anyone to take over running of the 2.5-mile long 2ft gauge line. 93-year-old John Morris, who purchased the stock from Mossman Mill in 2002, has been trying in vain for two years to find a group to take on the line. The two steam locomotives and rolling stock will now be displayed at a new restaurant set up at the former Marina station.

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



Harz marks 30 years of steam up the Brocken

A small celebration took place on the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB) on 15th September, marking 30 years since steam trains were restored to the metre-gauge route running to the top of the Brocken mountain, a development that led directly to the establishment of the HSB two months later.

The move in 1991 put the Harzquer, Selketal and Brocken railway on a solid footing. Commenting on the anniversary, the HSB said; "With the steadfast support of the states of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia as well as the nine municipal shareholders, the company has developed into a modern and tradition-conscious transport and tourism company, which among other things, the new steam locomotive workshop currently under

GERMANY

construction, and further milestones planned for the future of narrow-gauge railways in the Harz Mountains."

The loco hauling the service up the Brocken on 15th November wore a special commemorative headboard, while among the passengers were several people who had been present for the first trains 30 years earlier.

In a less celebratory development, a lack of available steam locomotives forced the HSB to substitute diesels on Brocken services in late September, while trains between Nordhausen and Eisfelder Talmühle and on the Selketalbahn were replaced by buses.

Above: Guests on the celebration train pose with a headboard. Photo: Dirk Bahnsen/HSB

New Vistadome vehicles promise scenic journey

A new metre-gauge tourist train is to run in INDIA, using two specially-built Vistadome observation carriages.

The vehicles have been manufactured at the Mahi Workshop of India's Western Railway, for service on a new train that will operate through the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary and Dudhwa National Park, two tiger reserves in the Terai belt of Uttar Pradesh in the northeast of the country.

According to North Eastern Railway officials the view for passengers through the panoramic roofs of the two new vehicles on the 100km journey will be "beyond description." Each has a capacity of 60 people and other features include reclining seats.

Following a successful trial of the train, the new services was expected to start running from the end of September. Tourists will be able to reserve entire carriages for their family and friends.

Darj plans spark fears

Meanwhile plans to privatise the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, reported in last month's *NGW*, have reputedly been met with much concern by those working and living around the famed 2ft gauge line.

According to a feature in UK newspaper *The Guardian*, residents living close to the DHR fear that as a result of the move they will be forcefully evicted, with their small businesses alongside the line replaced by shopping malls and hotels.

Workers on the railway, meanwhile are in fear of their jobs, with claims that a downsizing operation is already underway and retiring staff not being replaced.

Protests against the privatisation have taken place at eight DHR stations, with activists not ruling out further action. World heritage body UNESCO is also said to be concerned by the plans.

Vivarais calls time on Corsican railcars

The Vivarais line in FRANCE has decided to dispose of three railcars it has owned for the last five years (*reports Simon Cannon*).

In 2016 the revived metre-gauge line purchased three single-car railcars from the CFC in Corsica. However the three, X2001, X2002 and X2005 have never been

used as it was concluded that restoration of them would have been highly expensive.

Now at Lamastre works the three have been dismantled. The motor bogies and other components will be passed to the CFP (Provence) to enable this line to keep its railcars SY301, SY303 and SY305 in operational condition. What remains of the Corsican railcars is expected to be scrapped.



Left: Dismantling of the railcars has been underway at Lamastre. Photos: Michel Pin

A Poplar little line

Stuart Chapman photographed a novel example of a private 2ft gauge line with an estate railway theme.



While most narrow-gauge lines throughout the UK are well known, there are also dotted about the country a host of smaller, private lines, usually owing their existence to the enthusiasm of their owners.

A typical example is the Silverleaf Poplar Railway in Lincolnshire, which is owned and was created by enthusiast Colin Copcutt.

The first track on the 2ft gauge line was laid in November 2016, and in the almost five years since it has stretched out to its current length of just under a quarter of a mile, running from the engine sheds and workshops out across a small paddock.

The line is home to a fleet of

Above: Owner Colin Copcutt sets off across the paddock, the Motor Rail hauling a train of the ubiquitous skips.

Centre right: The 1985-built Alan Keef loco heads through the gate.

Below right: The line is home to seven locos.

Below: Colin on the Motor Rail, which dates from 1940.

seven internal-combustion locos, two of which, Motor Rail 8565 'Jane' built in 1940 and Alan Keef 19 built in 1985, were in action on Saturday 18th September for a visit from members of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society.

Visitors rode in a novel and individual rake of small four-wheeled wagons, which can be seen on a short video of the line that has been uploaded by Stuart Chapman to Youtube – this can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/qhdSL9cp3-k> **NGW**



From East to West

Galas at opposite ends of the UK offered much entertainment for the narrow gauge enthusiast in September.



Above: Visiting Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Sybil Mary' looked the part at Bressingham alongside one of the Norfolk museum's several road engines.
Photo: Joey Evans



Above left: Back home but in disgrace – a derailment meant that Hudswell-Clarke 0-6-0WT GP39 did not leave the yard all weekend.
Photo: Andrew Charman

Left: There was even a visitor on the museum's narrowest gauge, the Exmoor Steam Railway-built 2-4-2 'Pendragon'.
Photo: Andrew Charman

Our editor was lucky enough to attend two Galas in successive weeks in September, at opposite ends of the UK.

Over the weekend of 17th-19th September Bressingham Steam Museum celebrated its 60th anniversary and as part of the Gala event the Norfolk museum, featured in *NGW*160, welcomed back the favourite 2ft gauge engine of the museum's founder, horticulturalist Alan Bloom. Hudswell-Clarke 0-6-0WT 'Bronwlyd' (1643/1930), had been sold to the Statfold Barn Railway in the years following Alan's death in 2005.

Unfortunately the loco, since restored by Statfold to its original Surrey County Council livery with the number GP39, disgraced itself during a first test run following arrival on the Thursday before the Gala. It derailed on the museum's Fen Line, and came to rest at a 45-degree angle to the track.

NGW understands that on witnessing the derailment veteran Bressingham staff commented, "Oh yes, it quite often used to do that..."

Confined to Barracks

The Hudswell-Clarke was therefore in steam over the weekend but only as a static exhibit on the shed road, but the second visitor also from Statfold provided able back-up. Quarry Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Sybil Mary' (921/1909) joined the museum's resident locos, Hunslet 'Gwynedd' (316/1883), 0-4-OT



'Bevan' completed at the museum in 2010, and vertical-boilered loco 'Fernilee' privately built and based at the museum since 2017.

Further steam on the standard gauge and 15-inch gauge lines plus a host of road engines ensured there was plenty for visitors to the Gala to see, while even the museum's 10¼-inch gauge line welcomed its first visitor in living memory, Exmoor Steam Railway built and privately owned 2-4-2T 'Pendragon'.

Super power

A week later the visiting loco to the traditional Autumn Gala of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway was somewhat larger, the War Office Locomotive Society's Hunslet 4-6-0T no 1215, built in 1916 and normally based at the Apedale Valley Light Railway in Staffordshire.

No 1215 provided an interesting counterpoint to the L&B's resident Baldwin recreation 2-4-2 'Lyn', completed in 2017, as the two locomotives shared a busy weekend of passenger-hauling duties.

The revived L&B's first steam locomotive, Kerr Stuart Joffre class 0-6-0T 'Axe' (2451/1915) was also busy and not being outdone by its larger counterparts, while further steam was provided by the diminutive 2ft gauge 0-4-2T 'Faith' on brake-van ride duties. This loco, built over a 17-year period by engineer John Uphill, is currently for sale.

With even a 7¼-inch gauge version of 'Lyn' entertaining visitors on the miniature line at Woody Bay station, this was another excellent event as the 2021 season draws to its close. **NGW**

Above: Popular for photography is Bressingham's 15in/2ft gauge crossing, Sybil Mary meeting 'St Christopher'.
Photo: James Kindred

Right and below: At the Lynton & Barnstaple Gala Kerr Stuart 'Axe' was kept busy while Hunslet 1215 and Baldwin 'Lyn' squared up to each other.
Photos: Andrew Charman



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Tua and Sabor

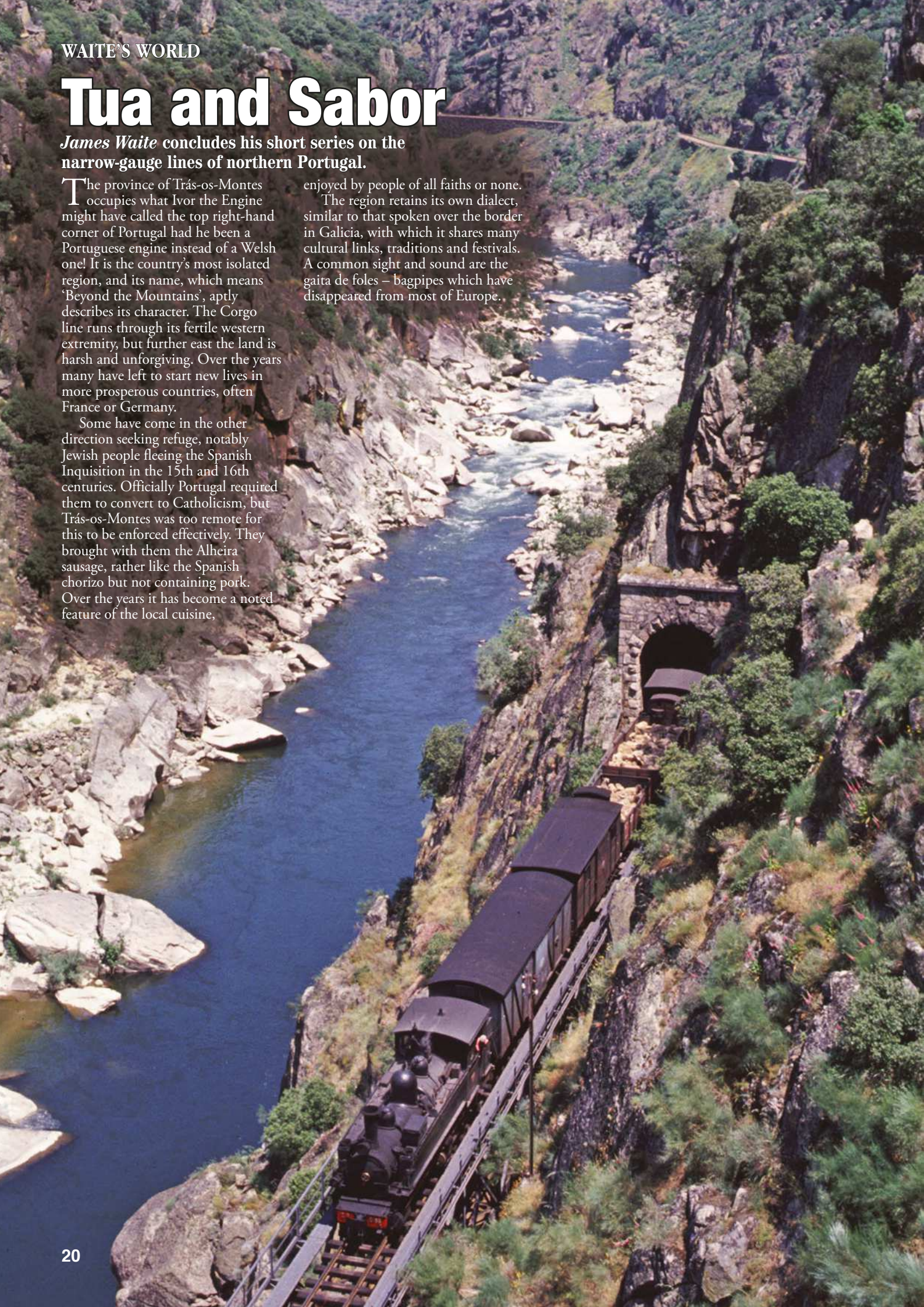
James Waite concludes his short series on the narrow-gauge lines of northern Portugal.

The province of Trás-os-Montes occupies what Ivor the Engine might have called the top right-hand corner of Portugal had he been a Portuguese engine instead of a Welsh one! It is the country's most isolated region, and its name, which means 'Beyond the Mountains', aptly describes its character. The Corgo line runs through its fertile western extremity, but further east the land is harsh and unforgiving. Over the years many have left to start new lives in more prosperous countries, often France or Germany.

Some have come in the other direction seeking refuge, notably Jewish people fleeing the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th and 16th centuries. Officially Portugal required them to convert to Catholicism, but Trás-os-Montes was too remote for this to be enforced effectively. They brought with them the Alheira sausage, rather like the Spanish chorizo but not containing pork. Over the years it has become a noted feature of the local cuisine,

enjoyed by people of all faiths or none.

The region retains its own dialect, similar to that spoken over the border in Galicia, with which it shares many cultural links, traditions and festivals. A common sight and sound are the gaita de foles – bagpipes which have disappeared from most of Europe.



Tua line

The route towards Tua was the first of the four metre gauge lines to the north of the Douro valley, and was the only one built by a private company, the Companhia Nacional (CN) – a surprise, perhaps, in view of the limited traffic on offer in Trás-os-Montes. At 134km it was also the longest. The narrow and steep-sided Tua gorge, through which it climbed away from the Douro railway, was truly spectacular.

The railway opened as far as Mirandela, an important regional centre, in 1887, and in 1906 was extended to the historic city of Bragança, with the Spanish border just a few kilometres away to its north and east.

It was the northern part of a much larger scheme – the southern part, connecting Viseu with Santa Comba Dão on the Beira Alta main line to Spain, was also built, opening in 1890, but work never began on the difficult section which would have run across the grain of the hilly country between Viseu and Tua.

CN bought six 2-6-0T locomotives in 1887 from Kessler for the opening to Mirandela. Two more arrived in 1904 and a final two in 1907. Under CP they became nos E81-6 and E211-214. Kessler also supplied six 0-6-0Ts for the Dão line in 1890, CP nos E51-6.

These 16 locos were long-lived machines, all but one 0-6-0T remaining in service until the 1970s, though the earlier 2-6-0Ts were substantially altered over the years. After CP took over in 1947 several of the 2-6-0Ts went to Porto where reliable locos were urgently required. Railcars took over some services, though the rest of the 2-6-0Ts continued to hold sway until the arrival in 1976 of some of the E161 class 0-6-6-0 Mallet tanks, displaced by dieselisation at Porto.

The Mallots saw out the last few years of steam, but never completely replaced the 2-6-0Ts. Indeed no E114, which had spent many years at Porto, was reclaimed after the diesels arrived there and went on to become the line's last serviceable steam loco in the mid-1980s.

The Dão line became largely integrated into the Vouga system and the 0-6-0Ts moved away. It closed in 1988. The Mirandela-Bragança section of the Tua line followed in 1991, though a part was later included in the conversion of the railway through Mirandela into a metro-type operation.

The Tua-Mirandela section became home to some of the 1976 Alstom diesels and modernised Napoli carriages for its final years. In



Left: 0-4-4-0 Mallet tank no E165 (Henschel 8912/1908) has just left the short Pressas tunnel with the daily mixed train bound for Tua, and crosses Pressas viaduct. The viaduct is still there but today the upper half of this view is now filled by the huge Foz Tua dam.

Above: E165 waits at Abreiro station with the Tua train. The loco, restored as 'MD405', has been in store at Guifões works in Porto for several years.

Right: Before starting its journey to the north, E165 is prepared at Tua station. Sister loco E170 is on the left, overlooked by the Quinta da Chousa – one of the oldest and most prized vineyards anywhere in the Douro valley.

Photos by James Waite, all taken in June 1978 except where shown.

1994 my family and I enjoyed a ride in one of these trains through the gorge from Tua as far as Brunheda, 21km away. Alas, the line was abruptly closed in 2008 following a fatal derailment.

Probably it would have closed anyway, as the part below Brunheda has been flooded by the Foz Tua hydro-electric scheme, the dam being located just before the river's confluence with the Douro. The scheme was completed in 2017 but remains hugely controversial, not just for the destruction of one of the country's most beautiful valleys but because of fears that changes in its micro-climate might damage the Port wine vineyards nearby, some of the most cherished in the district which for several years had been a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Curiously the government failed to notify UNESCO of the scheme until work was well under way, and the opportunity to explore ways to minimize the damage was lost. The economic justification was that reduced energy imports would

ameliorate Portugal's overburdened foreign exchange problem, but the construction cost was funded by selling part of the state energy company to a Chinese state entity which now wants to take it over completely. It remains to be seen how cost-saving will work out in practice.

A turntable was installed at Brunheda station to enable the rest of the line to reopen, possibly as a heritage railway, but so far there has been no sign of this coming to pass. The Mirandela metro ceased operations in 2018.

Sabor line

Further east the Sabor line ran through still wilder country. Construction by the Estado organisation began at Pocinho in 1904, and the initial section to Carviçais opened in 1911. From there the line headed northeast, arriving in 1930 at Mogadouro, the largest town in the district.

On the way it passed a large quarry at Carvalhal, the only significant source of mineral traffic »





anywhere on the Portuguese narrow gauge. Eventually it reached the village of Duas Igrejas in 1938, just a few kilometres short of the small city of Miranda do Douro, right on the Spanish border.

A decision was awaited whether to carry on to Miranda or instead to head north to the smaller town of Vimioso, but in the end Duas Igrejas remained the terminus. Railcars took over most passenger workings under CP, but the ever-faithful 2-4-6-0 Mallet tanks remained in charge of mixed and freight operations almost until the line closed in 1989.

This may have been a remote

route but it provided a lifeline for the communities along it – since the line closed the populations of Mogadouro and Miranda have both shrunk by about one quarter.

Elsewhere a roadside tramway once branched off from the Douro valley line at Penafiel. It opened in 1913 and probably closed in the 1920s. The northern terminus at Lixa was close to Amarante on the Tâmega line. Today there is little left to see.

Industrial lines

Further south the CF Mineiro do Lena began its life in 1923 as a 600mm gauge railway serving coal

“Turning up unannounced at the gate of the base clutching a camera had an obvious downside...”

Top left: This O&K 0-6-0WT ‘Pedorido’ (10551/1923) was stood in the council yard at Pedorido with a distant view of the Douro in March 2010.

Top: Pictured at Tancos barracks in January 2010, 500mm gauge 0-4-0T ‘Tancos’ (Decauville 103/1889) – it served the Batalha de Sapadores de Caminhos de Ferro military training line.

Above left: The 920mm gauge 2-6-0T no 12 (O&K 13104/1938) at Aljustrel in December 2009.

Left: 2-4-6-0 Mallet tank no E206 (Henschel 12281/1913) west of Mogadouro with a train bound for Pocinho on the Sabor line.

deposits at Batalha, best known today for the exotic architecture of its abbey which is a must-see sight for anyone visiting central Portugal. The line’s promoters had visions of grandeur and in 1928 it was converted to metre gauge.

The plan was for the line to become a public railway and to build through the hills to Entroncamento, always a major railway junction and today the home of Portugal’s excellent national railway museum. It never got that far and became a casualty of the world economic depression of the early 1930s.

By then the line had amassed an impressive collection of stock including some fine bogie carriages and wagons which ended up on other railways. Three huge 2-8-2Ts were built by Skoda in 1928 but they were too heavy for the track. In 1941 they went to the FC de La Robla in northern Spain which liked them so much that it bought a fourth one brand-new. I encountered two of them in store at Cistierna on the La Robla in 1970 along with many other interesting locomotives, and I hope to write about operations there in a future article.

Pedorido, on the left bank of the Douro about 30km upstream from Porto, was the river port for the 600mm gauge Pejao colliery railway. There is remarkably little published information about the history of this or any other of Portugal’s few industrial railways, but it closed in about 1972.

At that time the line had six steam locos and remarkably all have survived. One is Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0WT 1375/1919 ‘Pejao’ which is now displayed at the Entroncamento museum. It is the only survivor of the many Ganges class locos ordered for the War Department Light Railways during the First World War.

The other five are Orenstein & Koppel 0-6-0WTs – 7059/1914 ‘Choupelo’, 9239/1921 ‘Fojo’,

10551/1923 'Pedorido', 10808/1924 'Pedemoura' and 11784/1928 'São Domingos'. Choupelo is stored at Entroncamento. Fojo went to the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway and later to a private buyer at Leominster. Pedemoura now runs at the Leighton Buzzard Railway and São Domingos at the Great Bush Railway in Sussex.

Pedorido was one of three identical machines built for the Lena railway in its 600mm gauge days and is its only surviving loco. It was probably sold to the Pejao mining company in the late 1930s and now lives next to the local council's office at Pedorido overlooking the river. Track can still be seen on the old quay nearby.

At the other end of the country the ancient gold, silver and copper deposits at São Domingos had been worked since ancient Roman times. Mason & Barry, a British concern, took over in 1859 and built a 3ft 6in gauge railway leading to a quay at Pomarão on the Rio Guadiana. New locos came from Peckett & Co as late as 1952, but it closed in 1966. For a while its first loco, 0-4-0WT 'Setubal', originally named 'Estiphania' and built by Hawthorns of Leith in 1864, lived on a plinth at Pomarão, but when I visited in 2009 all I found was a derelict crane wagon on the quay.

Mounted on the wall of the quayside bar was a page from the Industrial Railway Society's *Spain & Portugal* booklet. It was published in 1968 and, more than 50 years later, still provides probably the best account of the line and its locos.

Longer lived was the 3ft gauge



Above: No E206 has just crossed over the Douro and enters Pocinho station on the Sabor line at the end of its long journey from Duas Igrejas. Since 1992 the loco has been preserved by the La Traction group at Pré Petitjean in Switzerland and is generally kept in working order.

Below: No E165 crosses the viaduct at Jerusalem de Romeu with a Tua line mixed train bound for Bragança.

Aljustrel railway, serving another copper mine which tapped into the same seam as São Domingos. It probably operated until the 1990s. Some of its track was still in situ when I visited in 2008 and the two most modern of its 12 steam locos, a 0-6-0T and a 2-6-0T, both built by O&K, are preserved in the town.

Between 1923 and 1965 Matas Nacionais, the state forestry service, operated a network of 600mm gauge railways at Marinha Grande, near the coast midway between Porto and Lisbon, popularly known as the Comboio de Lata, or Tin Train. One of the lines ran to the coast and offered a popular Ascension Day passenger service.

All three of its 0-6-0WTs have survived, no 1 (O&K 9998/1922) at the Old Kiln Railway in Surrey, no 2 (O&K 11495/1927) at Vila Franca de Xira in Ribatejo and no 3 (Jung 3871/1929) at Marinha Grande.

The Tancos military base near Entroncamento was once home to O Batalhão de Sapadores de Caminhos de Ferro, the army's railway battalion. Its 500mm gauge training railway closed many years ago, but I knew that one of its Decauville 0-4-0STs was preserved there.

Advance contact wasn't possible and turning up unannounced at their gate clutching a camera had an obvious downside, but I need not have worried. I was soon introduced to the curator of a fascinating museum there with many photos and relics of the old railway, while the Decauville stood nearby. It's one of Portugal's smallest, but most fascinating, locomotives. **NGW**

■ An article by Phil Horton on the diesel railcars that took over services on several lines in northern Portugal will appear in a forthcoming edition of **NGW** – Ed.



Charting the season's end...

September and October traditionally see the last Galas of the year and a clutch of photo charters, which our photographers have been taking full advantage of...



Left: Night-time atmosphere by the bucket load, captured by *Karl Heath* at Minffordd station during the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways' Bygones Gala on 8th-10th October.

Below: *Karl Heath* also ventured to Boston Lodge loco shed during the Bygones Gala and captured a shot of the FR's three England locos that with the black-and-white treatment very much gives the picture a pre-preservation feel.

Right: The new northern bypass at Sittingbourne has provided an interesting new viewpoint for pictures of the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway. *James Waite* captured Kerr Stuart Brazil class 0-4-0ST 'Melior' with a David Williams charter on 10th October, with the Kemsley paper factory to the left and the Isle of Sheppey to the right in the distance.

Below right: Andrew Barclay 0-4-0WT 'Glyder' looks very much at home in the industrial environment of Beamish Museum in this shot taken by *Joey Evans* on 15th October.





Overleaf: Martyn Ashworth looks suitably pleased on the footplate of newly-restored Avonside 0-4-0 'Durham', rather better known as former Pernhyn Quarry resident 'Ogwen' and photographed at Apedale on 1st October by *Joey Evans*.

**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**







Fairbourne footplate

Andrew Charman continues his steam locomotive education with a first outing on a smaller engine than what he's been used to....

Regular readers of *NGW* will be aware that your editor undertakes several roles on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway including on the footplate, as described in two previous features *First-time Fireman* (*NGW*147) and *Adventures on the Austrian* in *NGW*143.

For a while, however, I've been a frustrated fireman, having not seen a W&LLR footplate since 2019. While the line started running post-Covid trains from the middle of 2020, it was justifiably mandatory to wear face masks on the footplate.

Trouble is, I'm an asthmatic – thankfully it's much milder these days than when I was younger. But with big engines and a constantly changing stiff gradient profile, the W&LLR is one of the most demanding UK narrow-gauge lines for a footplate

Above: Editor Charman, at the controls of 'Sherpa' and demonstrating his innate ability to get grimy anytime he goes anywhere near a steam loco.

Below: As Sherpa comes to life on shed, Fairbourne general manager Murray Dods wonders if letting our man on his engines is really a good idea...

All photos by Andrew Charman and Harry Billmore



crew both mentally and particularly physically, and restricting my breathing on a hot, stuffy footplate was not a good idea for my sake or the railway's (not much good if the fireman stops working halfway through a trip...). So I've forced myself to stay off the roster.

Meantime I've been spending a few days each month helping my daughter Megan's partner Harry Billmore in the workshop of the Fairbourne Railway (as described in *NGW*153). Harry was appointed engineer of the 12¼-inch gauge line in September 2020.

On the regulator

It was not long before I started thinking about the possibilities of having a go on Fairbourne engines – there were several potential plus points, not least the opportunity to drive. I've always wanted to drive steam engines but I've never quite been right for what is an intensive training regime at the W&LLR. And I admit, after a year of lockdowns and working days mostly sat at a computer and putting on a few pounds, the Fairbourne locos looked a little more manageable. Not that they'd prove any less mentally demanding, as I'd soon find out...

It soon transpired that Fairbourne general manager Murray Dods had similar ideas. Like most railway management Murray has been facing the Covid-resultant issue of reduced volunteer availability, especially loco crew, and quite liked the idea of having another person who with experience shouldn't take too long to train. Time on a loco with Harry was pencilled in for a future date...

I kept thinking about it, without doing anything – eventually Murray decided he had to move things along and I got a phone call; "I'm short next week, I'm going to pull Harry out of the workshop to drive on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, which days are you joining him?" So on Thursday 16th September I found myself signing on at Fairbourne shed for my first day of driver training.

First plus over W&LLR footplate life – an 8.30am start is rather more agreeable than 6am, even considering Fairbourne is an hour's car drive from home and Llanfair shed a 20-minute walk... And this was for a cold engine, Harry deciding that with good weather promised we would be on the line's open-cabbed Darjeeling-style 0-4-0 'Sherpa', built in 1978 by Milner Engineering.

It goes without saying that matters 12¼-inch gauge are smaller-scale than 2ft 6in. While initial duties on both sizes of loco are the same, such as checking water gauges and that the fusible plugs are dry, a W&LLR day starts with a work-out as you remove the ashes of the previous working's fire from the firebox, mainly by bashing it through the firebars into the ashpan. Doing this I've always got very dirty, with resultant micky-taking from family and friends.

On the Fairbourne the most physical job is sweeping the boiler tubes with a brush on a pole as long as the boiler, which you poke through each tube in turn. Most are done from the smokebox end but a couple have to be done from the firebox end due to such bits as the blastpipe being in the way up front. Moving from front to back you need to remember



which ones you still need to sweep.

Then you remove the resultant char from the smokebox and the remains of the previous fire from the firebox. No bashing though, this is a one-handed job, lifting it out through the firehole door with a shovel no bigger than one might find in the fireplace of a traditional house.

In fact one of my first difficulties was dealing with the very small size of Sherpa's firehole – you can't simply chuck coal in like on a W&L Beyer – much more precision is called for. Weirdly though, doing all the cleaning out I still got just as dirty...

Then it was time to light the fire – connect the air line to a valve on the front end, chuck in some wood, coal and some lit rags soaked in diesel, shut the door and leave it to cook. Simple, time for another cuppa...

Plenty to do

Of course the major difference of Fairbourne footplate life compared to Welshpool is that on a normal day, the driver and fireman are the same person, so there is a lot to do as the loco comes round. Various bits of the motion need to be greased through a series of points around the loco, while the axlebox horns need oiling – these points must all be memorised as the tasks will be repeated at various times during the day.

The mechanical and steam brake lubricators need filling with steam oil, the axlebox one with lube oil. And when that's all done there is of course the cleaning. As is typical of heritage railways the Fairbourne likes to present its locos in as pristine a condition as possible so there are rods, brass and platework to tend with various forms of polish – more so on Sherpa which has a tender.

At this point it's prudent to say a word about the Fairbourne's Covid precautions, which have been as safe and as carefully thought-out as other railways. Single manning helps, no driver and fireman in extended close proximity to each other. You can see why – with Harry and myself occupying Sherpa's driving seat for training purposes it's certainly cosy, but seeing as Harry and Megan lived for a while at Charman Towers after he first got the Fairbourne job, he's



Above left: No matter what the size of locomotive, cleaning remains all-important...

Above: Driver's office on Sherpa – familiar controls in basically similar places, just all a bit smaller.

Above right: New considerations include keeping one's foot away from a constantly changing gap between loco and tender...

Below: Coupled up to a (very long) train and ready for our first trip...

effectively in my 'bubble' anyway.

As part of its Covid measures the Fairbourne spent much of last winter making changes at Fairbourne station, enabling the line to run longer trains and effectively socially-distance visitors without having to swap carriage sets after each trip, as I described in *NGW* 153. These longer sets produce their own challenges, however, as I will learn a bit later...

Gently does it

Sherpa comes to life in around 60 to 90 minutes – one needs to be off-shed at least half an hour before the first of four return trips along the two-mile line to Penrhyn Point at 11.10. Harry decides now is the time for my first experience on a Fairbourne regulator, which is unnerving because to access the station throat one exits the shed onto a sector plate, with at the other end a large lump of RSJ to hit. It does have a sprung buffer mounted on it, a relic from 15-inch gauge loco 'Sylvia'.

Gently and gingerly working the

regulator I stop in the right place and after a quick turn I move Sherpa into the station for watering, including the application of water treatment, and then onto the front of our carriage set, which on this day has been collected from the shed by staff member Kevin with the diesel 'Gwrlil'.

Harry will drive the first trip, so he can describe the line to me, and I will fire. This is certainly a very different experience to the W&L, where you are lumping coal on for much of the trip – Harry admits that one could get away with loading the box before departure and then concentrating on driving, but it's better to add the black stuff when necessary while on the move.

I first travelled on a Fairbourne footplate in 2011, producing a feature for *NGW* 75 and driven by then general manager Chris Price, long before he became a TV celebrity as manager of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. I remember Chris saying "it's just a beach railway..." »





“Hiding the irritation in her voice as yet again she radios us to ask ‘Are you there yet?’”

He was basically referring to the grand and not-realised ambitions of previous owner John Ellerton when he converted the line from 15 to 12¼-inch gauge, but it is easy to get the idea that the line is basically flat and thus easy to drive. As I discover when firing and then for the remainder of our day driving under Harry's instruction, it's anything but.

Okay, this line does not offer the rollercoaster gradient profile of a W&L, but there are ups, downs and curves, which become all the more significant when combined with small locos and the heavy nine-carriage trains that can now be rostered.

As Harry instructs and I soon experience, it's all about knowing the

road and when one needs to use momentum to keep the train on the move, but equally to avoid the weight of said train overwhelming the loco – especially with a four-coupled loco such as Sherpa, a lack of smoothness under deceleration can lead to the wheels sliding under the weight of the train. This briefly happens to me later in the day though I need Harry to point it out to me.

There is lots of slowing and speeding up to do – for the three level crossings, where one has to keep a good look-out in all directions, and for the halfway passing loop. But as I get plenty of driving through the day I soon become used to the feel of the loco and such new experiences as



Above left: On the regulator and heading back to Fairbourne, our man appears to be enjoying himself...

Left: At the Point, with the Barmouth viaduct, under repair at the time, in the background – we're not sure exactly what Harry is contemplating...

Below: When the sun is out Penrhyn Point is a nice place to be but Charman is not letting his concentration slip as he runs around.

sitting on a tender – having only crewed tank locos before, the controls moving about and the need to keep one's foot away from a gap constantly changing in size is novel...

Science of speed

My biggest challenge is accurately judging speed. Line speed is 8mph, slower over points, crossings and the like – the locos don't have speedometers (the correct 'feel' for one's rate of progress is more efficient than trying to make an accurately-reading dial at such speeds) and it takes experience to get it right. When Harry comments "I wouldn't have gone over that point any faster than that," his unspoken words indicate I have work to do on this aspect...

With more experience of the loco comes more confidence. For example having insisted Harry couple Sherpa up to the carriages at the start of our turn, later in the day I'm happily doing this job – not always getting it right first time, but feeling in control.

There are so many parts to the job to take in, however, and so much to remember, such as contacting Control by radio each time we reach the Point. I keep forgetting that one, and Sam in the office tries to hide the irritation in her voice as yet again she radios us to ask "Are you there yet?"

On our final trip to the Point we take coal – a novelty of the Fairbourne is that water is routinely taken at one end, coal at the other. As we arrive back in Fairbourne with our last train and dispose Sherpa (another set of defined tasks such as blowing down the boiler and then using remaining steam pressure through the injectors – very similar to an end-of-turn on the W&L in fact) I feel I've had an informative, but crucially fun, day.

Driving home to Llanfair, Harry concludes that I should not take too long to pass out as a Fairbourne driver, though I realise I need a lot more seat time and I still have much to learn, not least the whys and wherefores of the other two regular locos, Welsh Highland-style 2-6-4T 'Russell' and Lynton & Barnstaple 2-6-2T 'Yeo'.

While not as physical as on a W&L loco, my initial Fairbourne turn has certainly been a mentally exhausting day – but I'm looking forward to the next one as well as a hoped-for return to the W&L footplate early next season. Well they say variety is the spice of life... **NGW**

More Information

The Fairbourne Railway's 2021 season ends on 31st October – details of the 2022 season will be on the website at www.fairbournerrailway.com

www.narrow-gauge-world.co.uk

Austrian Snow and Sunshine



Donald Brooks found that the Bregenzerwaldbahn in January 1977 could be spectacular, but offered more than just winter weather.

The Austrian state of Vorarlberg lies on the shores of Lake Constance (Bodensee) at the western tip of the country. The area has much in common with the neighbouring lakeside regions of Germany and Switzerland, so much so that in the aftermath of the First World War a referendum produced an overwhelming majority in favour of leaving Austria to become a Swiss Canton. With no official enthusiasm for such a move from either country the status quo was retained and today Vorarlberg remains a small and prosperous Austrian state a very long way from Vienna.

In the 1960s and 1970s, when Austria's narrow gauge railways were becoming popular with British enthusiasts, this remoteness from the rest of the country may have been

Above: On a perfect Alpine winter morning 2095.05, Floridsdorf 18130 of 1961, stands at Bezen on arrival with the 10.29 from Bregenz.

Below: 2095.07 approaching Andelsbuch with the 12.10 from Bregenz to Bezen. Driving trains in an Austrian winter required complete concentration on the track ahead.

Photos by Donald Brooks, January 1977 except where stated.

one of the factors that led to relatively few reaching Vorarlberg's only public 760mm gauge line, the Bregenzerwaldbahn. Another, and perhaps more significant factor, was that the line was dieselised relatively early. In 1959 Peter Allen and P B Whitehouse's book *Narrow Gauge Railways of Europe* recorded it as already diesel-worked, with just two steam locomotives in reserve.

A concession for building the 760mm gauge Bregenzerwaldbahn was granted in August 1899, to connect Bregenz, the state capital, with Bezen, a village in the wooded upland region known as the Bregenzerwald or Bregenz Forest. At just over 35km long the railway climbed from a height of 398m on the lake shore to 642m at its mountain terminus. It opened

throughout on 15th September 1902, worked by the k.k. österreichische Staatsbahnen (kkStB) on behalf of the Bregenzerwaldbahn AG.

The railway was intended to open up an area with relatively poor communications. Transport had previously been by mule or cart, with logs from the extensive forestry industry floated down the mountain river, the Bregenzer Ach. The hope was that improved transport would lead to an upturn in both industry and tourism, bringing greater prosperity to the upland villages.

The route of the new railway closely followed the course of the Bregenzer Ach. Bregenz station is alongside the lake and for the first five kilometres the railway had a relatively flat and straightforward route through the outlying areas »





of the town as far as Kennelbach.

From here it entered the narrow and winding gorge of the river, following its twists and turns as far as Egg, 19 kilometres away. The scenery on this section was superb, but the series of halts along it were all some distance from the communities they purported to serve – an optimistic ten kilometres in the most extreme case.

At Egg the railway emerged from the gorge and for the last 12 kilometres climbed gradually across the more open upland landscape to the terminus. Before the First World War there were plans to extend another 15 kilometres or so to the village of Schopperrau, but the war and changed circumstances afterwards resulted in work never being started.

Steam and diesel

To work the Bregenzerwaldbahn the kkStB invested in four of the standard U class 0-6-2T locomotives, later becoming ÖBB class 298. U.24 came from Krauss-Linz in 1902, with U.25 and U.26 arriving in the same year from Staatseisenbahngesellschaft, which then also added U.27 to the

line's roster in the following year.

The First World War led to multiple loco transfers and afterwards other types also appeared in Bregenz, including the Uh (ÖBB 498), the superheated version of the U, built to replace locomotives lost during and after the war. The war also led to the dissolution of the kkStB, though operation continued to be by the relevant state railway, which from the 1920s was the BBÖ (Austrian Federal Railways). The Bregenzerwaldbahn was fully nationalised in 1932, operation after the Second World War overseen by the ÖBB.

Like many narrow gauge lines, the Bregenzerwaldbahn was never a money-spinner, with closure first proposed as early as 1936, only a year after the demise of the Lynton & Barnstaple in the UK. Fortunately it was decided to implement cost reductions instead, one measure being the introduction of 1'Bo1' diesel locomotives designated class 2041, later ÖBB 2091, in 1937. Further dieselisation took place from the early 1960s, resulting in four of the newly-introduced Floridsdorf-

Above: 2095.07 stands in Bregenz on arrival with the 14.36 from Bezau, the Christmas tree marking the end of the line. Passengers can change here on to standard gauge services including the Arlberg main line to Innsbruck and Vienna.

Below: 0-8-T+T 699.01, Franco Belge 2818 of 1944, heads a winter EUROVAPOR special out of Bregenz station in January 1979. Double heading with it is a Gmeinder-built diesel loco dating from the same year, ex-German military HF 130 C 2092.01. Photo: Roland Beier



built B'B' locos of class 2095 being stationed at Bregenz.

It was these locos that I found working the line when I visited on a very snowy but bright 8th January in 1977. In the late 1970s the weekday service consisted of five return workings, one fewer on Sundays, with trains allowed between 80 and 90 minutes for the journey. Two passenger sets were needed for this timetable, the winter trains consisting of three bogie carriages. The red diesels looked superb in the sunshine and snow, though by the time I boarded the afternoon train back to Bregenz the weather had already started to cloud over.

Snow can clearly cause disruption on an Alpine route, but the Bregenzerwaldbahn had more than its fair share of other operating problems as well, with its trains sometimes seeming to spend almost as much time off the tracks as on them. The gorge section, bedevilled by rockfalls, landslides and floods, was the site of most incidents and flooding here even caused the bankruptcy of the contractor building the line.

Possibly the most spectacular accident occurred on 11th January 1965, when 2095.05 hit a rockfall and plunged 30 metres off a viaduct near Egg into the river below. Fortunately the driver survived his serious injuries and even more fortunately none of the passenger stock followed the loco into the gorge.

In the end it was repeated landslide damage to the Kennelbach – Egg section in July and August 1980 that brought about the closure of the line. Initially services continued between Bregenz and Kennelbach and also on the isolated section from Egg to Bezau, though trains stopped running here in October 1980, with stock removed from Bezau by road a month later. The short section to Kennelbach continued until January 1983 and the whole railway was finally formally closed in January 1985.

Partial preservation

It is intriguing to speculate what the fate of the Bregenzerwaldbahn might have been had Vorarlberg become part of Switzerland in the 1920s. Electrification and a regular interval service may well have been a real possibility, while there might have been more enthusiasm for rebuilding the line instead of abandoning it after the 1980 landslides. But whatever the Swiss might or might not have done, happily at least part of the line was ultimately saved.

From 1974 the Swiss-based EUROVAPOR organisation had operated a very successful programme

of steam-hauled services on the Bregenzerwaldbahn, initially using a German military 0-10-0T+T, Borsig 14806 of 1939, a locomotive with a very complex history but which was then the Zillertalbahn's number 4.

It was later supplemented by 0-8-T+T 699.01, Franco Belge 2818 of 1944, another German military machine and not to be confused with the loco of the same number on the Welshpool & Llanfair line in Wales. These steam workings continued until July 1980, and were sometimes double-headed.

The operation of steam had shown that there was a market for heritage railways in Vorarlberg. In 1985 the Verein Bregenzerwaldbahn-Museumsbahn was formed with the objective of operating trains on at least part of the closed line.

The track had not been lifted after closure so in 1987 the society could begin running services between the former terminus at Bezau and Schwarzenberg, five kilometres and two stops away.

At first diesel motive power was used, but steam ultimately returned and today services can be worked by two classes historically correct for the line. These are 0-6-2T U.25, StEG 2998 of 1902, an original Bregenzerwald machine, and 0-6-2T Uh.102, Floridsdorf 3038 of 1931.

The latter, the last narrow gauge steam locomotive constructed in Austria for a public railway, was restored to service in 2002 for the centenary of the railway, incorporating parts from Uh.03, Krauss-Linz 1511 of 1929, which was once preserved on Bezau station platform under its ÖBB number,



Above: It isn't always winter on this line – There is not a cloud in the autumn sky in September 2018 as U.25 and train wait in Schwarzenberg for their next trip back to Bezau.

Photo: Urs Diener

Below: In perfect autumn light U.25 crosses the Sporeneggbrücke with a well-loaded train in September 2018. Destroyed by catastrophic flooding in May 1999, the bridge was rebuilt in less than a year.

Photo: Urs Diener

498.03. Amongst the diesel locomotives available for the line are representatives of both classes 2091 and 2095.

In 1989 the heritage line was extended just over a kilometre to Bersbuch and plans were being made to almost double the operating length by returning services to Egg.

Unfortunately the reverse happened. Road improvements meant that the railway had to be cut back to a new terminus at Schwarzenberg, while at Bezau the station was remodelled to accommodate a supermarket on part of the site. Subsequent setbacks have included the need to rebuild a major bridge, following its destruction by floods in 1999.

While much of the abandoned trackbed from Bregenz has been converted for use as a cycleway and footpath, the Bezau – Schwarzenberg section is now a flourishing heritage

railway, marketed as Wälderbähnle (Little Forest Railway). In high summer 2021 three steam returns ran from Bezau on Saturdays and Sundays with four on Wednesdays and more limited services in May, early June, late September and October. Santa Specials operate annually in late November and early December, when the society always hopes it will snow – just as it did for me in 1977. **NGW**

More Information

More details of the heritage line can be found at <https://waelderbaehnle.at/bregenzerwald-museumsbahn-waelderbaehnle> – unfortunately there does not appear to be an English-language version of the site.

The author would like to thank Urs Diener, Roland Beier and Keith Chester for help with photographs and information.



Ticket to Ride...

Michael Farr expands on his letter in NGW158, with examples of more than 100,000 Edmondson-style tickets he has printed for UK railways.

Railway tickets have always fascinated me and I began my collection on 1st June 1948 when offered one numbered 000 (the first of the series) for my daily journey to school in Bristol from Sea Mills station to Clifton Down. It was the day Western Region re-introduced cheap day-return tickets after the war, during which only singles and monthly returns had been on offer.

Printing followed soon afterwards when I joined members of the Bearpit Press at Clifton College. We used an Adana no 3 H/S (high-speed) machine, the speed depending on how quickly you pushed the handle up and down! The printing type was set by hand and carefully spaced so it could be locked in a frame held vertically in the press.

The two hobbies came together after I joined the Talylllyn Railway Preservation Society in 1953; at first I volunteered as a 13-year old booking clerk and guard. On the TR, one of the guard's duties was to sell tickets from intermediate stations from a tiny window in the look-out ducket.

The Talylllyn had always used traditional Edmondson-style card tickets, initially printed by Edmondson and Waterlow and later by Harlands (of Hull) and Williamson (of Ashton-under-Lyne) and the quantity required was quite substantial. The firms' power-operated machines (originally built by Edmondsons but increasingly by Waterlow) printed up to 12,000 tickets per hour.

When I left school I invested £4 17s 6d (equivalent to around £400 today – Ed) in an Adana no 1 machine, which was quite capable of



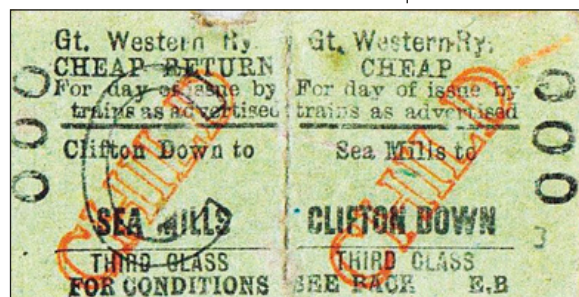
Above: The author printing tickets in 1996 on an Adana 8-5 machine. The smaller 5-3 machine that he now uses is to the right of the ticket rack. Photo: Eleanor Bental

Below: The ticket that started it all – Michael's GWR cheap day-return issued in 1948.

Numbered tickets: Examples of many tickets printed by Michael.

1) One of the first special train batch printed for the Talylllyn Railway in 1980.

2) Royal Train ticket for visit of Prince Charles and Princess Diana to the TR in 1982.



printing Edmondson tickets. The traditional ticket material was pasteboard, pre-cut to the size pioneered by Thomas Edmondson in the 1830s-40s, 2¼ x 1½ inches or about 57 x 30mm.

I progressed to the 5-3 model, which ran much more smoothly (and quietly) but there were several advantages of producing even tiny tickets on a larger machine, such as the 8-5. This needs less effort to obtain a good impression and it is possible to print more than one ticket at a time. I have printed fronts and backs at the same time, though this needs very careful organisation to prevent having some tickets with two fronts and others with two backs!

Special runs

In addition to the huge quantities of Talylllyn tickets for regular journeys, I could see a need for printing short runs for use for special trains and events. My suggestion to David Woodhouse, then the TR's general manager, that I could provide these as homeworking support for the railway was readily accepted.

The normal capacity of a Talylllyn Railway train was about 200 to 240, a workable quantity for printing by hand. That said, every ticket needs one (or possibly two) serial numbers and there is likely to be a coloured overprint letter, symbol or stripe. Wording may be required on the back as well as the front of the card. Thus 240 tickets may need feeding and printing 1200 times.

Although I began by producing

runs of 240 for the Talylllyn, as my name spread I was asked to produce longer runs and for many other lines (including standard gauge ones) at home and abroad. Some weekends would find me pushing the machine hand down 20,000 or more times!

The various other narrow gauge and miniature lines I have supplied have included the Leighton Buzzard, the Hampshire NG Society at Durley, South Tynedale, Corris, Gartell Light Railway and Peco's Beer Heights system. In 1982 David Woodhouse asked me to produce a short run for a very special train, carrying Prince Charles and Princess Diana; I used a small supply of 'royal purple' cards for these tickets.

Soon afterwards David was asked to advise the nascent Teifi Valley Railway and sought my help with the line's tickets. The anticipated passenger numbers were much larger than I could print by hand and so I enlisted the aid of the British Railways Ticket Printing Department at Crewe. I then designed some partly blank ones which could be overprinted by hand for tickets required only in small quantities.

The first independent line for which BR had printed tickets was the Whipsnade and Umfolozi, under a then-new arrangement that BR workshops could compete for engineering contracts with organisations outside the rail industry. The Whipsnade order was arranged at the request of 'Mr Bill' McAlpine (as we then knew him) when he had visited the Crewe works.

I later printed some tickets for Mr Bill's Fawley Steam Railway.

At the same time, I continued to produce tickets for the Talyllyn, including my largest job, the 1990 Midsummer's Night's Steam, which called for a dozen or so varieties – and much time-consuming typesetting and resetting.

When a party of TRPS supporters visited Australia's Puffing Billy (with which the TR is twinned) I produced through tickets from Nant Gwernol to Gembrook! I also began to print Edmondson tickets for the annual Steampipes film show in London organised by the Ffestiniog, Talyllyn and Welshpool & Llanfair.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my ticket printing. So far as the Talyllyn was concerned I felt I was able to help the railway even though I lived 200 or more miles away and was

unable to visit it regularly. I have also struck up many friendships with people who give so much time to preserving the past.

I would not recommend ticket printing as a lucrative pastime. One has to compete with the people who have power-operated machines and with each card needing more than one run the work is time-consuming.

As I became older and perhaps wiser, I often struck barter deals which mean I can now enjoy a free ride on some lines, in return for printing their tickets cheaply (or more often free). I hope I have helped an impecunious line or two in their early days. **NGW**

■ The author is happy to advise any other preservationists who might wish to print tickets for their own lines. Email: pandmfarr@talktalk.net

3) One of many ticket designs for the Talyllyn's 1990 Midsummer Night's Dream – trains ran through the night to the play at Dolgoch.

4) Printed for the special train from Nant Gwernol to Tywyn, the start of a TRPS members' trip to Gembrook on Australia's Puffing Billy line.

5) Excess ticket for the South Tynedale Railway.

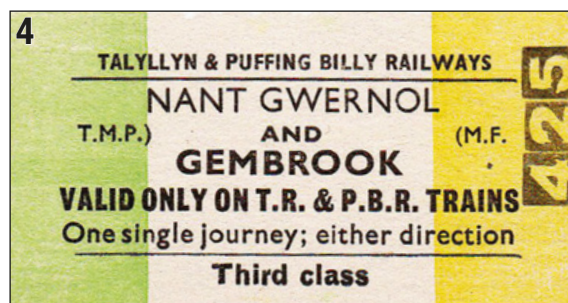
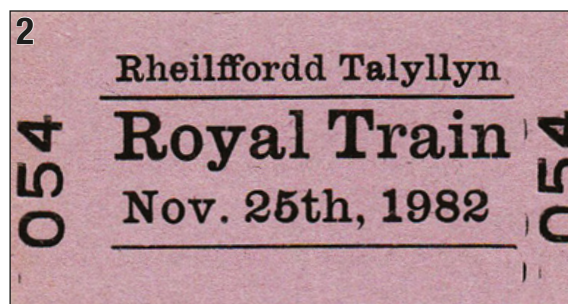
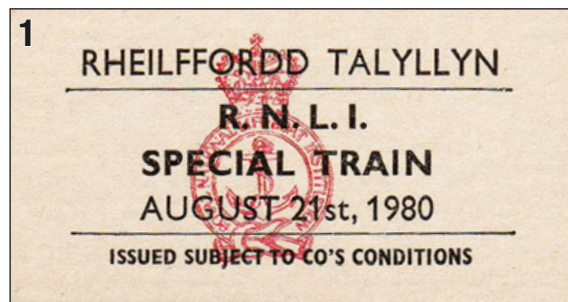
6) Printed for the official opening weekend of the Corris Railway in June 2003.

7) Teifi Valley Railway bi-lingual dog ticket.

8) Santa Special ticket for the Launceston Steam Railway – the author's local line – the date and train time needed re-setting for each trip.

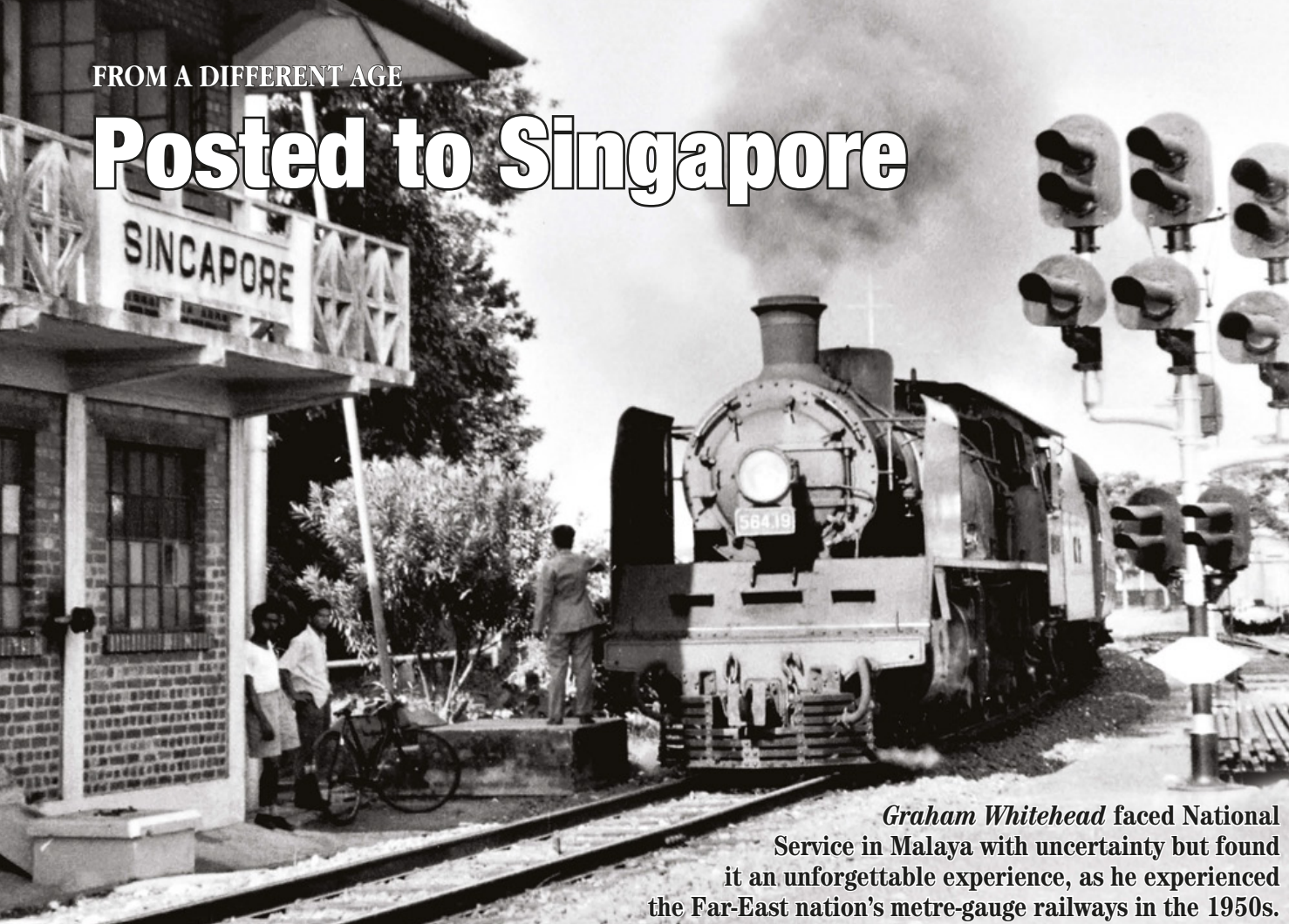
9) For several years an annual task – tickets for the Steampipes shows organised by the Ffestiniog, Talyllyn and Welshpool lines.

10) Even the 'big railway' has had tickets printed by the author...



FROM A DIFFERENT AGE

Posted to Singapore



Graham Whitehead faced National Service in Malaya with uncertainty but found it an unforgettable experience, as he experienced the Far-East nation's metre-gauge railways in the 1950s.

The wanderlust was always there, even though there seemed to be little prospect of doing much wandering. Cleveleys and Rhyl were about as far as we got during the 1930s, although we spent a memorable fortnight on the Isle of Man in the months before the war broke out, with journeys on the IoM Railway. When we were at the Grammar School, we never even got a fourth-year trip to France, because the Germans were there. But besides all this, a constant factor throughout was my interest in railways.

Expecting my National Service to be in the UK, I was thrilled and delighted to be posted to Singapore – I could hardly believe it! So on 11th June 1957, I flew out in an RAF Comet IV, and 24 hours later, waited, jet-lagged and bewildered, in a straw hut for a few days until they sent me to Singapore District Signals Regiment.

I soon found my way to Singapore station, and the engine shed, where the engineers wanted to ask me all about railways in Britain and the 'Flying Scotsman'. The railway system in what was then Malaya is metre gauge, and the principal trains ran north from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur and Penang, and thence to the Thai border, almost 600 miles away. The line ran for considerable distances through jungle country, for which the metre gauge seemed eminently suitable.

I had never been much interested in 'foreign' railways, or their strange locomotives, with numerous domes, and pipework all over the outside. There seemed to be nothing comparable to our own elegant engines, but here in Singapore they

Above: No doubt as to the location – O class 4-6-2 no 564.19 (North British 25774 of 1946), passes Singapore signal box and what were then the only colour-light signals in Malaya.

Below: Robert Stephenson K class 4-6-2 No. 542.01 (4013 of 1929) at Prai.

Photos by Graham Whitehead, 1958.

were unquestionably quite handsome.

Until just prior to my posting, Malaya had a 100 per cent steam railway for line working, with diesels used only for shunting. In 1955 there were 165 steam locomotives and five steam railcars in stock, apart from three classes built by Baldwin, a number of WD 2-8-2s supplied by various USA builders during World War II and locos imported by the Japanese during the war, they were exclusively British-built. The more recent types were predominantly Pacifics, the most numerous class being the O, with 66 built by North



British between 1938 and 1948.

They were all oil-fired. The Pacifics had three cylinders and Caprotti valve gear and were ideal for the territory with good weight distribution. There was almost a 'family look' about them too; they all had big smoke deflectors and a large lamp on the smokebox door.

North to Penang

In February 1958, I took a couple of weeks' leave in Penang, almost 500 miles north of Singapore. At the head of our train was a shiny new diesel. Continuing the British tradition, English Electric of Newton-le-Willows had delivered the first of the class 20 1,500hp Co-Co diesel electric locomotives.

In 1957 and 1958 a total of 26 arrived and immediately took over main-line passenger workings. By 1959 they were doing more than half of the line work. They were all named after flowers – 'Bunga' in Malay. The nameplates appear to have been in Latin script on one side of the loco and Malay on the other.

On the train, all military personnel had to travel in uniform, and carry a rifle and five rounds. In the late '40s and early '50s, after the Japanese left, there had been some unrest and sabotage by some who wanted the British out as well. Curious little armoured trolleys, built in England by Wickham in 1952, were dispatched to precede a train and make sure the way was clear. I suppose that in the event of trouble there would have been enough of us to protect the train.

The journey took 24 hours, and if we needed to nod off, we had to sleep on our rifles which couldn't be left unattended. We had a break at Kuala Lumpur's marvellous oriental station, and at Prai we boarded a ferry to thread a way through the ocean-going shipping to Georgetown, the capital of Penang island. A long bridge has been built in recent years, but for road traffic only. There is an imposing station at Georgetown, but no trains.

The leave centre, in the north of the island, overlooked a beautiful white beach, surrounded by leaning palm trees. There was so much oriental flavour, with junks, rickshaws and a snake temple. The harbour fronts were busy with people carrying goods from the lighters,

Above: Beyer Peacock S class 4-6-2 no 553.05 (6723/1931) at Singapore shed.

Below: Wickham armoured trolley AW56, one of 42 sent to Malaya in 1952 to help prevent sabotage – several are now preserved.

Bottom: C class 4-6-4T No 403.02, North British 24566 of 1939, at Prai – terminus for trains from Kuala Lumpur.

and the views of the ships and the distant hills were stunning.

I took the ferry back to Prai just for the ride. At the station was a large North British 4-6-4 tank locomotive similar in appearance to the Pacifics. Some of these engines were sent by the Japanese to the Burma railway, and a few never came back. A further delivery in 1941 was diverted to Egypt and ended up in Jordan. As I went back to the ferry, there was a splendid Pacific waiting to take the once a week train to Thailand, via Padang Besar.

Returning south, I was pleased to see that my train was headed by a Pacific. During the break at Kuala Lumpur, I took the chance to visit the shed, a half roundhouse, and saw

a steam railcar, similar to those used in Britain before the war. Sentinel had supplied 12 railcars of different types to Malaya but it was now very much towards the end of their lives. There was also a 1920 Baldwin and, as expected, plenty of Pacifics.

I went to Singapore shed again on the day before embarking on the 'Empire Fowey' on 26th July 1958 for the 28-day voyage home. My National Service had certainly been an unforgettable experience! **NGW**

■ *A scarcely known Manning Wardle locomotive discovered by Graham Whitehead languishing in the premises of Penang Harbour Board will shortly feature in our regular Encounters column – Ed.*



Colorado Crazy

Bill Jolitz experienced a photo-charter overload on the American 3ft gauge Railroads over the summer.



From the depths of Covid with nothing at all to great gatherings of unexpected locomotives. From only K-class 2-8-2s to three 4-6-0s. On top of everything, K-27 no 461 painted to represent Rio Grande Southern Railroad no 455, a historic and sentimental favourite. It's an embarrassment of riches in Colorado.

It started with the Victorian Iron Horse Roundup presented by the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad on 21st-29th August. Then came two trips on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad sponsored by *Trains* magazine. Two following trips on the C&TS recalled the Rio Grande Southern Railroad.

This report focuses on the Roundup, a marathon of activity – nine days, two locomotives brought from afar and one from near, a home engine just restored, four historically significant recently-restored passenger cars and freight cars relettered for the 19th century. There were passenger trains headed by double-headed locos, freight trains and even a mixed train.

Locomotives

The three visitors, all Baldwin products, included 'Eureka', a 4-4-0 built in 1875 for the Eureka & Palisade Railroad. It was later sold to several other railroads, appeared in films and finally bought by a private individual. Listed on the United States National Register Of Historic Places, the loco travelled to the C&TS from Las Vegas, Nevada.

Eureka was joined by 'Glenbrook', a 2-6-0 also built in 1875 for the Carson & Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company. It served the owners on two railroad ventures before being sold to the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad. The original owners bought the loco back and eventually donated it to the Nevada State Railroad Museum – it travelled from Carson City, Nevada.

The third visitor was Denver & Rio Grande Western no 315, a 2-8-0 built in 1895 for the Florence & Cripple Creek Railroad. After the F&CC was destroyed by a flood in 1915, the loco sat for two years

before being bought by the Denver & Rio Grande in 1917. On retirement in 1949 it was plinthed in the city of Durango, Colorado.

The Durango Railroad Historical Society restored 315 to operation in 2007 and it came to the event from Durango, Colorado – renumbered 425 in the correct font, size, spacing and colour for the pre-1900 period.

Also in action was the new 'home' loco, Denver & Rio Grande Western no 168, a 4-6-0 built in 1883. This engine's claim to fame comes from pulling a train that took US President William Howard Taft to the opening of the Gunnison Tunnel, then the longest irrigation tunnel in the world.

No 168 was retired in 1938 after 55 years of service and plinthed in the city of Colorado Springs, Colorado. The city entered into an agreement with the Cumbres and

Toltec Scenic Railroad for restoration to working

Above: Baldwin 4-6-0 no 168 and 2-8-0 315, the latter locomotive masquerading as 425, on one of the passenger workings during the Roundup event.

Main photo: The two 1875-vintage Baldwins 'Eureka' and 'Glenbrook' brought a real spirit of the old West to the event.

All photos by Bill Jolitz, 21st-29th August 2021



order, the first formal run on the C&TS's opening day in 2021.

Busy days

Each day saw one photo charter and two regular passenger trains on the line. Eureka and Glenbrook double-headed two passenger and one freight train, nos 168 and 425 double-headed another two trains. On the busiest day, 168 and 425 hauled a passenger train followed by Eureka and Glenbrook on the freight train.

At every stop, we had multiple run-bys of two trains. On the 'easy' day, Pile Driver OB was set up for a demonstration, the heavy driving hammer smashing watermelons to the delight of the crowd!

The C&TS runs through two types of scenery. The first 16 miles or so from Antonito are desert scrub covered with sagebrush. After a wet year, yellow flowers were ablaze.

After the Whiplash curves where the line doubles back on itself twice, pine trees take over and the mountains steepen until Cumbres Pass. There the line dives down a 1:25 bank until it reaches Chama. The altitude varies between 7,900 and 10,022 feet. Breathe deeply!

On days I did not ride, I captured it in several places for the first few miles from Antonito. A web of dirt roads enables photographers to run ahead of the train to catch it in different places. Alas, I knew them not! So my photos represent nine days of 6am to midnight work. It was glorious! **NGW**



Above: Visitors and residents line-up alongside each other for a patriotic picture.

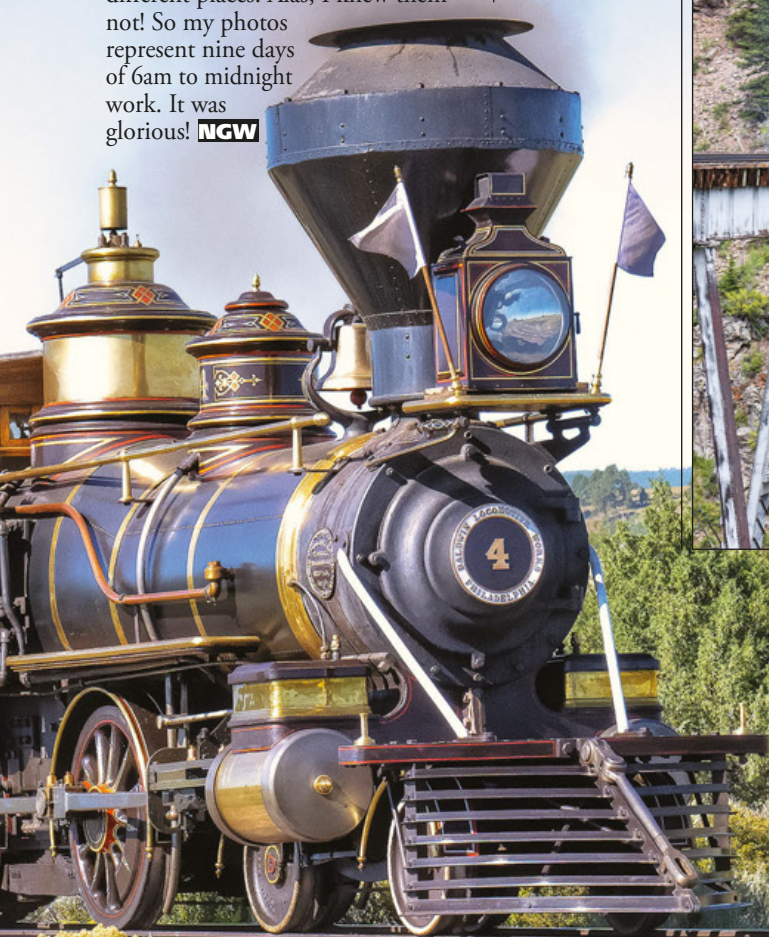
Right: Freight workings over signature trestle bridges proved popular with the photographers.

Acknowledgements/More Information

This article would have been impossible without monumental assistance from several people. John Bush, recently retired President of the C&TS took me on forest roads to hidden places. Interim President Scott Gibbs gave me full access to everything. Abigail Martinez, Marketing Coordinator for the

C&TS, was my liaison and performed yeoman's service to place me in the middle of things. Stathi Pappas, Chief Mechanical Officer, was a great source of information while he made certain all of the locos were road-worthy and ready.

Details of the line are at <https://cumbrestoltec.com>



A trio of Hunslets

After last month's delightful Quarry Hunslets in 009 gauge, this month's are rather larger – live-steam 16mm scale versions from GRS and Bowande, reviewed by *David Pinniger*.



The classic Quarry Hunslet locomotives are the small 'Alice' class built for the Dinorwic Quarries and the similar Penrhyn 'Small Quarry' class and this type has been chosen by GRS, Garden Railway Specialists, for its live-steam model in 16mm scale. It may not please the purists, but I think the firm has made a very sound commercial decision to make a generic loco rather than one specific prototype, allowing them to offer both cabless and cabbed locos in a wide range of colour schemes.

I tested three different locos from the first production test batch. Two were 32mm gauge, a lined black cabless Penrhyn

'Nesta' and a lined blue 'Britomart' with a cab together with a 45mm gauge maroon cabless loco. The engines for review were supplied initially without name and works plates as these had not yet arrived from Bowande, the manufacturer, in China.

The first impressions are of well-proportioned, accurately dimensioned locos with nice paintwork and neat lining. The cylinders do stick out a little more than on the prototype because the frames are set wider to accommodate 45mm gauge wheelsets, but this is not really noticeable, particularly when the engine is running.

The locos have full Stephenson valve

gear and a T-shaped gas tank mounted between the frames to give a longer running time. Unusually, the gas filler valve is not on the footplate floor but is on the left-hand side of the gas tank under the footplate.

There is a substantial water-gauge glass with a water top-up valve under the tank-top water filler lid, which is a big bonus for achieving longer runs with such a small boiler. The instructions supplied are comprehensive and well-illustrated and rightly stress the importance of keeping the water level topped up during the run.

Although the engines had been tested at GRS, I decided that the first couple of runs should be light engine to get both Nesta and Britomart loosened up and to allow myself to become more familiar with the loco and its controls.

Fine slow progress

I soon got the hang of turning the gas right down to balance heat and water consumption and so hooked up Nesta to a train of Glyn Valley Tramway granite wagons. The train did not affect the loco's fine slow running and Nesta achieved a run of just over 20 minutes. A run with Britomart on the same train was similar and maybe slightly longer. With each run the performance got better as the engines became bedded in.

Before I handed the locos back, I had a

Top: 'Nesta' on a train of slate wagons on the Barle Valley Railway.

Left: Close-up of Nesta on the author's Ambledown Valley Railway with a Glyn Valley Tramway granite train.



All photos by David Pinniger



Above and above right: Two views of 'Dorothea' on the Misbourne Valley Railway, with resident Accurcraft Baldwin 'Lyn'.

Right and below right: The third option 'Britomart, on David's line and visiting the Barle Valley Railway.

final run with Britomart on two bogie carriages and we recorded the following performance on my Ambledown Valley Railway. The run lasted 30 minutes with three short water top-ups and the loco and train travelled 820 yards or nearly half a mile! This is equivalent to nine scale miles at an average speed of about 20 mph – an astounding performance from such a small engine and a testament to the excellent design and engineering of the loco.

There are a few minor niggles, but these quarry Hunslets will satisfy anyone who wants a small attractive, reliable, steady running steam loco for 32mm or 45mm gauge. There is a range of styles and colour schemes, although I am told that one or two varieties are already in short supply and there will only be the one batch of locomotives made. **NGW**

More Information

Price: Cableless £1499, with cab £1699

Suppliers

Garden Railway Specialists. Tel: 01844 345158

Web: www.grsuk.com

Amazing Little Trains

Web: www.amazinglittletrains.com

Anything Narrow Gauge

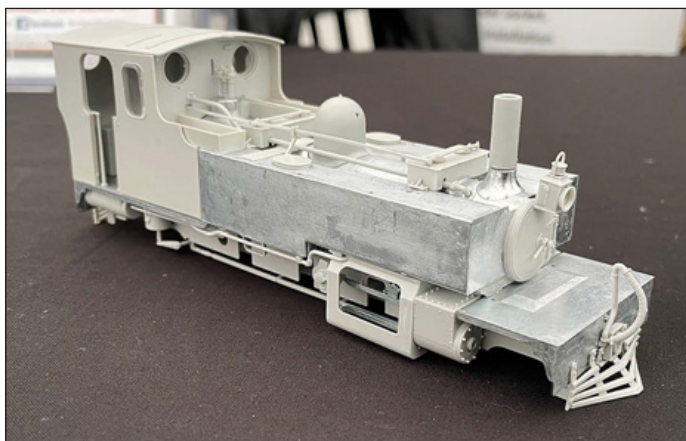
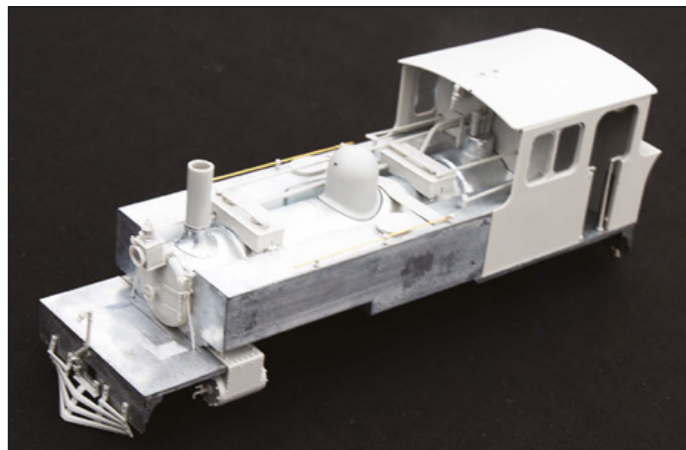
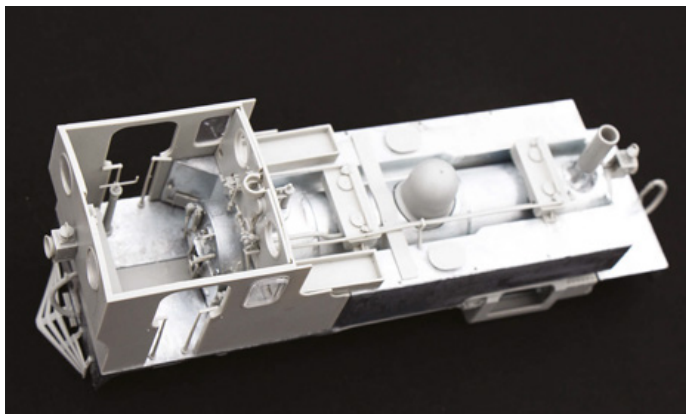
Web: <http://anythingnarrowgauge.co.uk>



■ In *NGW* 161 we told you that this month we would be featuring a famed and historic 009 layout, the Mid Sodor Railway, built by the Reverend Wilbert Awdry, author of the original *Thomas the Tank Engine* books. This layout was based on the narrow gauge characters created by the Reverend, themselves inspired by the Talyllyn Railway where he was a member.

Well, we've held this feature a month, partly because it is now being written by someone who has intimate knowledge of the layout, Wilbert Awdry's grandson Philip. The fascinating story will be in our next issue.





Lionheart to boost 7mm with new ready-to-run Lynton locos and stock

A major and welcome surprise awaited 7mm scale modellers attending the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Autumn Gala on 25th-26th September, when Lionheart Trains displayed the development samples of its new range of L&B locos and stock.

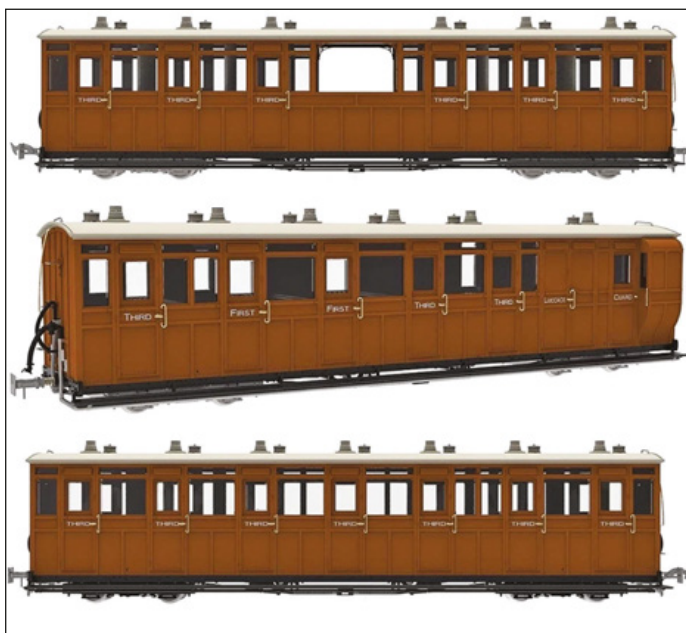
Lionheart was founded by model railway industry veteran Richard Webster in 2007. With Richard's previous experience with such major industry names as Bachmann and Lionel, the maker soon became renowned for its fine quality products. In 2013 Richard joined Dapol Ltd as a consultant and since 2016 Lionheart has been part of Dapol.

Lionheart intends to produce all the different versions of the L&B's three original Manning Wardle 2-6-2Ts, with correct detail variations and liveries. The locos will run on 16.5mm gauge OO-scale track, but be adjustable to correct 14mm gauge. A compensated chassis will be included for smooth running and will be powered by a five-pole skew-wound motor. They will be of diecast construction, include such features as prototypical working Joy motion and neat details including firebox glow.

A pull-out printed-circuit board will be fitted with a Next-18 decoder socket for DCC, with easy sound installation – factory-fitted sound versions will also be available.

Release date is planned for Autumn 2022, at retail prices of £350 DCC ready, £385 DCC fitted and £500 fitted with DCC sound.

Alongside the locos a range of L&B bogie carriages will be available, in 10 different versions. These will be of injection-moulded construction with plentiful additional detail added. These will also be DCC controllable, at prices of £110 each DCC ready and £140 DCC fitted.



Produced by Lionheart Trains Ltd
Web: www.lionhearttrains.com

■ While there have been a whole lot of new entrants to the UK narrow gauge modelling scene in 4mm scale 009 gauge in recent years some of the pioneer names are still going strong, retailers and manufacturers that your Editor frequented when he first modelled in the scale 40-plus years ago. Typical of these is Parkside Dundas, long an essential resource for the 009 modeller both for its extensive range of kits and the stock the firm carries from more than 40 other suppliers. Now Dundas has been in touch to bring us up to date with the latest development, its purchase of the Rodney Stenning range of 009 Talyllyn and Corris Railway rolling stock kits. These are manufactured in high quality injection moulded polystyrene; "They are very similar to our own kits as the tooling was in fact produced for Rodney by Parkside Dundas," Andrew at Dundas tells *NGW*.

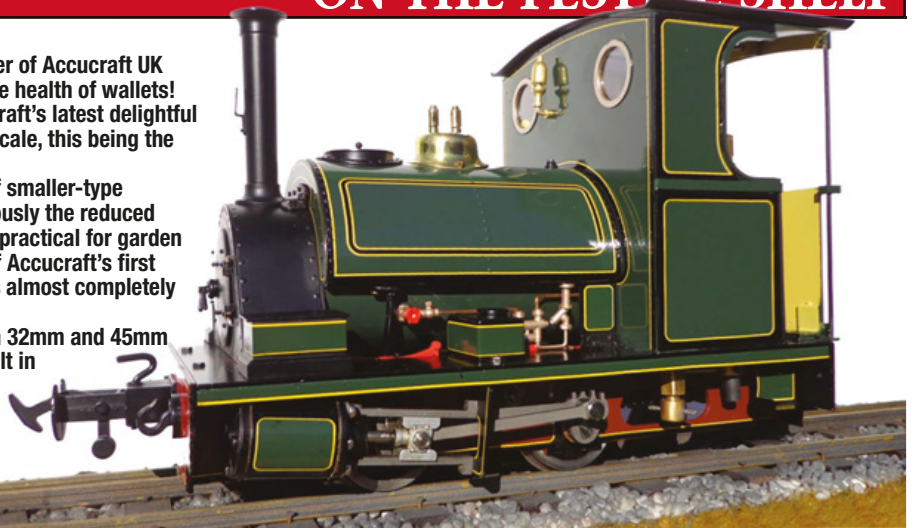
The Stenning range also includes two Corris rolling stock kits in whitemetal and also a whitemetal body kit for the Lynton & Barnstaple Manning Wardle 2-6-2 locos. Typical of the plastic range, which include metal wheels, is the pack below, a selection of five different Talyllyn Railway wagons. The Dundas catalogue and price list is available free on request – details are at www.dundasmodels.co.uk, e-mail sales@dundasmodels.co.uk



■ Your editor sometimes thinks that Graham Langer of Accucraft UK should be prosecuted for his constant threats to the health of wallets! Graham has sent through a picture showing Accucraft's latest delightful live-steam model locomotive in 16mm to the foot scale, this being the 'Cranmore'-type Peckett 0-4-0ST.

Improved technology has made the production of smaller-type locomotives more practical in 16mm scale – previously the reduced boiler capacities and other issues made them less practical for garden railway use. The Peckett follows the big success of Accucraft's first 'small' loco, the quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST, which has almost completely sold out – expect similar demand for this engine.

The production model will be adjustable between 32mm and 45mm gauge and to the usual Accucraft specification, built in stainless steel and etched brass with a copper gas-fired boiler. Price is to be announced – the Hunslets sold for around £1595. Accucraft UK: www.accucraft.uk.com

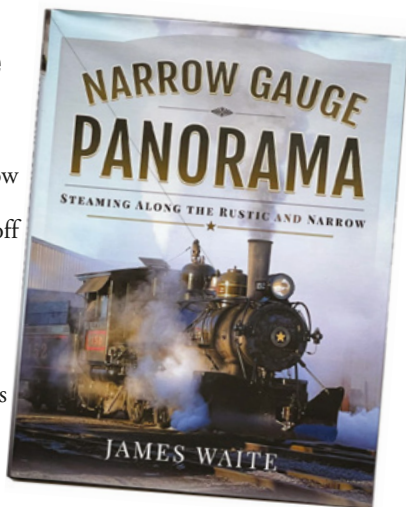


Narrow Gauge Panorama – steaming along the rustic and narrow James Waite

■ Well it's clear just how *NGW*'s globe-trotting correspondent fought off his frustrations while stuck at home during the lockdowns of the last 18 months – by putting together material for books! This is the second new volume from James to be published by Pen & Sword, and is as sumptuous as his previous work *21st Century Narrow Gauge*. As in that book the premise is simple, an imaginary journey right across the globe, taking in the huge variety of narrow-gauge subject matter that has fallen within range of James's camera. And it's certainly varied, from tiny quarry Hunslets in Cornwall to massive Pacifics in Thailand.

Regular *NGW* readers will recognise some of the images in the book, but there is much that is less familiar. A constant is the way in which the pictures are used, across half a page or more, on quality glossy paper and with informative captions included. This is one of those coffee-table books that is enjoyable to simply peruse, whiling away the long and cold winter nights... *AC*

Published by Pen & Sword Books Ltd
E-mail enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk
Web: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk
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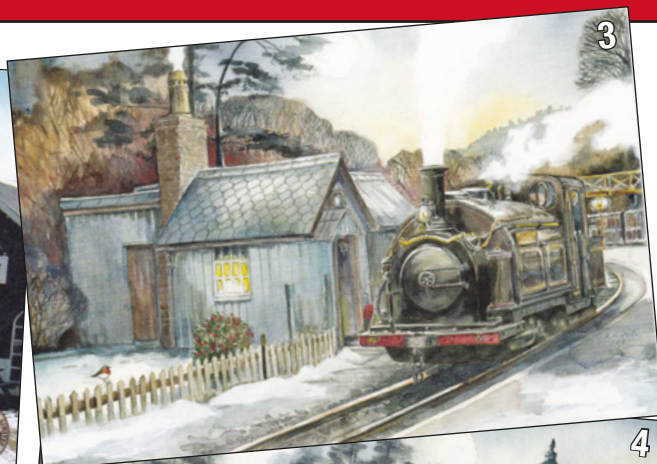
■ As is traditional at this time of year the *NGW* Towers post box has been bulging with a selection of sample Christmas cards and calendars from heritage railways – always a good way of fulfilling the seasonal family and friends traditions, this year the revenue help produced by such items is even more relevant to railways still recovering from the massive effects of the Covid pandemic.

To begin with the calendars and the 'usual suspects', the Talyllyn and Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways. This year's examples follow the traditional format of landscape A4 opening out to A3 when hung up, with date information in Welsh and English.

The TR calendar always features 12 very high quality pictures donated by various members and this year's (picture 1) maintains the standard – highly pictorial and with good variety. Alongside each month's dates are useful information panels. The calendar costs £7.50 plus £3.95 post from the railway, by phone at 01654 711012 or online at the shop page of www.talyllyn.co.uk.

The FFWHR calendar (pic 2) takes a simpler form with plenty of room to write information on the larger date section due to no panel alongside. Again the photos are well chosen »





with some more unusual views such as the Funkey diesel on a WHR train and 'Princess' at rest in Boston Lodge loco shed. The calendar costs £8.95 plus post either from the railway's shops, by phone from 01766 516034 or online at www.festshop.co.uk.



The FF&WHR Christmas cards are again attractive. Based on watercolours by Rebecca Kitchin, the FR one (pic 3) depicts 'Welsh Pony' at Tan-y-Blwch, its WHR equivalent (pic 4) showing Garratt 130 at Rhyd Ddu, both including a seasonal message in Welsh and English. Cost is £5.50 per pack of 10, five of each card, plus postage from the same addresses as for the calendars.

The Fairbourne Railway's Christmas card, in a more unusual slim landscape format (pic 5), features a pertinent image this year, showing North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway-style 0-6-4T 'Beddgelert' at a snowy Penrhyn Point. The railway is currently restoring this loco and has a fundraising campaign underway. The card is available from the railway's shop in Fairbourne in packs of five at £2.99 each, or online at www.fairbournerrailway.com in packs of 10 at £6.99 per pack including post.

Two offerings from the Corris Railway this year with a landscape photo of Kerr-Stuart replica no 7 battling through the snow with a Santa Special train (pic 8) and a similar scene but this time as a portrait-format illustration by artist Michael Huber (pic 9). Cost is £5.00 per pack of five cards plus £1 post, post free for five or more packs with a bonus pack from a previous year included. They can be ordered from John A Knight, 40 Fladgate Road, Leytonstone, London E11 1LY – cheques payable to Corris Railway.



As is usual renowned rail artist Jonathan Clay provides the images for the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's 2021 Christmas card, which this year features Beyer Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl' in its newly restored

GWR green livery, with a train at a snowy Cyfronydd station (pic 6). The cards contain greetings in both English and Welsh and are available from the railway's website at www.wllr.org.uk in packs of five at £2.50 plus a £2.95 postage charge on the total order. Alternatively they can be ordered by post, with a cheque made payable to W&L Sales, from a new address this year, W&LLR Cards (NGW), 7 Sutherland Grove, Perton, South Staffs WV6 7PA. Some stocks of cards from the previous three years are also available.

This year's Tallyllyn card features a seasonal photo of former Corris Railway Hughes 0-4-2ST 'Sir Haydn' at a snowy Tywyn Wharf station (pic 7). Cards cost £3.95 per pack of five from the same contacts as the TR calendar, with a single £3.95 postage charge to be added for any number of cards and calendars.

To complete the round-up the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway card is always a favourite as it features the superb work of the late Eric Leslie. This year's (pic 10) is described as 'Deep Midwinter at Hannacott Bank'. The card retails at £2.50 for a pack of five plus P&P from Woody Bay Station, Martinhoe Cross, Parracombe, North Devon EX31 4RA or online at www.lynton-rail.co.uk/shop.

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Portuguese memories

I can't read enough regarding the Douro narrow-gauge lines, so James Waite's series in recent editions (*NGW* 160-62) is most welcome.

I visited the Tâmega line on seven occasions between 1981 and 1985, enjoying the São Gonçalo festival several times when we chased the steam-hauled trains, which were attempting to keep to the railcars' timetable. Not for nothing did I term the long weekend's event as 'The São Gonçalo Rally'.

Once the festival had ended, the last train to Livração was formed of every available passenger coach (some of them downright filthy) and goods vans containing benches.

After the railcar service was introduced, there remained a 10.10 Wednesdays-only steam-hauled mixed train from Livração to Arco de Baulhe, returning from there at 15.30. I once travelled on it in an otherwise empty coach.

The loco crews were very friendly, especially when they recognised me. I was once invited with a colleague onto the footplate of E165 for a ballast train ride from Amarante to Chapa, returning to Livração with a long train of empty vans pushing us down the hill!

My final journey from Amarante to Livração was by railcar in 2003, for old time's sake. Such happy days (and merry nights)!

David Bott

I have been enjoying the recent articles in *NGW* on the Portuguese narrow gauge before it was dieselised or closed. I only managed a very brief visit to Porto Trindade in January 1973 where I saw just a couple of Henschel 0-4-4-0 Mallets. I visited the area again in 1998 and 2005 when at least some of the lines were still in operation albeit with diesel motive power.

As mentioned at the end of the James's feature in *NGW* 61 my article on those railcars operating the Porto Valley lines is due to appear in a forthcoming issue. In the interim I thought the photos reproduced on this page, which are outside the scope of my article, might be of interest.

The first shows CP 0-4-4-0 Mallet tank no E169 (Henschel 1908) arriving at Porto Trindade with a train from Póvoa de Vazim on 11th January 1973.

The second was taken 25 years later, on 17th May 1998, by which time steam had long gone from Trindade station. The entrance to the long tunnel out of the terminus and signal cabin are visible along a diesel multiple unit to Póvoa de Vazim. Class 9600 and 9630 DMUs, built in

"One of the members had to use his trouser belt to put the NWRC headboard on Dolbadarn..."



1976 and 1991 respectively, await their next duty in the carriage sidings. The station later closed to be reopened as a Metro station on the same site in 2002.

The third, from 18th May 1998 gives a similar view of Regua's dual-gauge turntable, as seen in 1970 in James Waite's *NGW* article. Eight of CP's Henschel built 0-4-6-0 Mallets still stand derelict around it. From left to right are nos E205, E204, E212 and E208. The two sidings in the background contain E202 & E201 and E209 with E215 and E210 behind.

All these engines still survive and, as mentioned by James, some are preserved. Others remain derelict

at the CP workshops at Guifões.

Phil Horton

Standard survivor

I enjoyed your piece on the Llanberis Lake Railway in *NGW* 161. As you state it is one of the rather overlooked railways – I have great memories of chasing the train by boat.

You imply the standard-gauge line lost its passenger service many years before the Lake line was created. It is quite true that the normal service was withdrawn in the 1930s, but in the '50s and '60s there was a summer service. The 'Snowdonian' started from Rhyl if I remember correctly. I caught it at Caernarfon in 1962.

David Mitchell

This page: One of several *NGW* readers enjoying our recent Portuguese coverage has been Phil Horton – he describes these three photos, which were taken 25 years apart, in his letter.



Early adopters

With regard to your feature on the Llanberis Lake Railway in *NGW161*, one of the most amazing special trains ever run on the Welsh narrow gauge took place on Saturday 29th May 1971.

A group of members from the North Wales Railway Circle intended to travel on the Llanberis Lake Railway after its official opening the day before. Rather than disappoint the visitors, as no public passenger trains were running at that point (*due to a derailment on the opening morning – Ed*), the LLR general manager Vic Bradley put on a ‘special’ train for the members of the NWRC.

This train consisted of a flat wagon and van hauled by ‘Dolbadarn.’ Vic kindly put some old sleepers in the middle of the flat wagon onto which the members clung for a steam-hauled narrow gauge ride of a lifetime.

This was the first ‘passenger train’ on the LLR. One of the members had to use his trouser belt to put the NWRC headboard on Dolbadarn.

Chris Magner

Andrew C replies: One of my favourite aspects of running features on the early preservation days of narrow-gauge lines is the stories that such features generate from people ‘who were there’ and this tale from Chris is certainly up there with the best! Don’t forget if you have any tales to tell from the preservation pioneer times we want to hear them, and if you have photos to go with them, so much the better!



Above and right: A gem ‘from the cupboard’ – what turned out to be the first passenger train to run on the Llanberis Lake Railway in 1971, described in his letter by *Chris Magner*.



■ News in *NGW160* that quarry Hunslet 0-4-OST ‘Sybil’ had been acquired by the Richmond Light Railway and left its long-time home of the Brecon Mountain Railway in south Wales sent regular contributor *Peter Johnson* diving into his archives to come up with some fascinating pictures. Thought to date from 1980 and the first year of operations at Brecon, they show Sybil as the only steam motive power in operation on the line, providing passenger services with a single carriage.

The shot below is particularly remarkable as it is of the terminus at Pant – then just a gravel platform with a small hut as the only building. Today the tunnel ventilator in the background, a survivor from the line’s standard-gauge days, sits in the shadow (inset) of the BMR’s large station, cafe and workshop building.



That was the year that...

Narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy...

From 50 years ago

Festiniog Railway (Gauge 1ft 11½in)

There have been quite a few notable workings during the summer... On the evening of 1st July there was a double event – 'Linda' crossed Rhoslyn Bridge for the first time on a trial run... 'Blanche' also had a trial run as far as the approach to Barn cutting, the permanent way 'railhead' on the deviation on 18th July.

On 24th August a special was run at the unusual hour of 8.45 from Portmadoc for the Cambrian Archaeological Association; the train was hauled by 'Earl of Merioneth' and its formation included representatives of most varieties of FR stock, pride of place going to the open bug-box no 7, restored to its original condition and regrettably quite unsuited to the safety requirements of present-day passenger travel.

On six occasions during the summer Linda has taken ten-coach trains, all within schedule, proving clearly the advantages of oil firing plus superheating. One drawback, however, is the increase in smokebox heat and its detrimental effect on black paint. Linda has therefore had her smokebox painted with aluminium paint which is reported to last much longer, to quote one enthusiast, however – "it looks terrible."

Finally on 23/9 Rod Weaver noticed this apt inscription on 'Earl of Merioneth' (*withdrawn for overhaul and conversion to oil firing - Ed*). "Farewell to the coal engines, likewise firemen, machines and men like these you'll never see again..." (NGN, Dec 1971)

Well of course we did see them again – once oil prices started rocketing, a return to coal took place and the FR engines are all coal-fired today. It's difficult these days to imagine aluminium-coloured smokeboxes being sanctioned...

Reading this it's also interesting to consider that said open bug-box, now numbered 11, nicknamed the 'Flying Bench' and fitted with a replica canopy and aprons, is a hugely popular vehicle at any FR Gala in which it is rostered....



Hunslet Engine Co Ltd, Jack Lane, Leeds

A new steam loco has been built to the order of the State Forestry Commission of Indonesia. Actually ordered in 1970 this 750mm gauge machine has been on the 'secret' list until recently, and is an 84hp, wood-burning 0-4-2ST of Kerr Stuart's 'Brazil' class. It weighs around 13 tons and is works no LS.3902. The new machine was steam-tested before invited guests on 26/11/71.

(NGN, Dec 1971)

This was a historic engine, the last steam loco to come out of the famed Jack Lane works. Named 'Trangkil no.4' it spent 30 years in Indonesia before becoming the first loco in the Statfold Barn collection amassed by Graham Lee, who of course now also owns the rights to build Hunslet steam locos. Regauged to 2ft, the loco is a regular performer at Statfold open days.



Extracts from Narrow Gauge News, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join up, go to www.ngrs.org.uk or see the advert elsewhere in this issue.



YouTube Watch: online NG films

The online video site YouTube 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?



■ <https://youtu.be/vYY-pqja7rk>

After last month's issue went to press with its feature on the closure of the Dinorwic Quarry at Llanberis and the setting up of the Llanberis Lake Railway, we became aware of this film, part of Anthony Dawson's *Rail Story* series.

Ostensibly it's a study of 'Fire Queen', the 4ft gauge Padarn Railway's Horlock locomotive, then bricked up in its shed at Gilfach Ddu. But the visuals of this film clearly date from the short period between the closure of the quarry in 1969 and the auction of its assets later that year.

Included are fascinatingly evocative scenes of the yards that were later to become the National Slate Museum but at this point had various bits of locos and wagons laying around. There are also views within the workshops, with Dinorwic Hunslet locos in various stages of disassembly awaiting what was then an uncertain future. The film is just six minutes long but packs in a load of interest.

From the Cupboard



■ When you've spent a lifetime photographing the narrow gauge, as has **David Mitchell**, then every search through your archive is a voyage of rediscovery!

"Looking for something else I came across the attached," David tells us, "taken on 9th October 1968 whilst on the RCTS railtour of South Africa. The shot was taken at the Sezela Sugar Estate, south of Durban and shows 'Sezela No.1' built by Avonside in 1915. The estate had put wooden seating on some of the cane cars for the party to travel round the system."

Today the loco is plinthed on display at the mill.

Diary on its winter hols

As is traditional the *NGW* diary of railway operating dates and events takes a break during the two winter issues as most lines are on their 'off-season'.

In contrast to 2020 several lines are running some services in November and December this year, the majority being pre-booked Santa Special services for children, and family-themed 'Mince Pie' specials between Christmas and New Year – it's worth checking your local line's website...

Unexpected Narrow Gauge...

Dreckly Express is unmasked...

Phil Barnes finds an unusual line at a tourist hot-spot...

During a visit to the National Trust's St Michael's Mount in Cornwall on 16th August, I came across a piece of railway track which terminated at a wooden buffer stop on the quay side and opposite disappeared under the Barge House where two doors prevented me seeing more. I walked round the corner to investigate and looked down into a compound which forms the 'lower station' – there sat the 2ft 5in gauge 'Dreckly Express', poised to take its next load of goods up to the iconic castle on the top of the mount.

On the rails was what looked like a trunk case on wheels. There was a moveable metal buffer stop (to prevent a runaway crashing through the Barge House doors) and a lever and frame system used to hold the wagon when being loaded.

The tunnel mouth complete with doors could be seen to the castle side of the compound and on the 'floor' lay the steel rope which is used to haul the wagon to the top of the tunnel-enclosed incline.

Precarious operation

At the top of the 201-metre incline, the line passes through a stone built 'corridor' before levelling out into a former scullery inside the castle where the wagon can be safely unloaded. Apparently originally the top station was known as the 'coal station' and was situated next to the boiler house. At this point the wagon was held on a 1 in 1.9 slope for unloading – a pretty precarious operation and thus change happened!

"The wagon was held on a 1 in 1.9 slope for unloading – a pretty precarious operation..."

Above right: The lower station of the 'Dreckly Express' – the wagon sits on the rails with the tunnel entrance and the old winding house behind it.

Below: Looking the other way at the lower station, crash buffers and truck-holding frame visible.

Below right: The very end of the line on the quayside, a set of rudimentary buffers mounted on the wall.

Photos by Phil Barnes, 16th August 2021



The line was devised in 1901 by the castle's then owner Lord St Levan to easily bring goods of all types up without the need to physically manhandle everything.

It was built by Cornish miners who for most of the distance used a cut-and-cover method with the rails being spiked to the 'floor' in true mine tramway style. The tunnel is 5ft wide and 7ft high except for the section which was cut through the granite – this was 6ft high.

Some sources say the rise of the line between the two stations is 150ft, others 173ft. The gradient profile changes from 1 in 14 at the base to the 1 in 1.9 at the top – the concave profile could cause the wire rope to thrash about due to it not being supported by rollers along its length.

Power changes

Through the years several wagons have carried freight but never officially people. The means of haulage has also evolved, from gas and petrol engines to both DC and AC electric motors, all located in the winding house near the lower tunnel entrance until 1988. Then the electric winch system was relocated to a new top station as part of a line upgrade carried out due to the previously

described 'operational safety issues'.

These 'engines' all drove a system of gears which turned the winding drum, the wire rope going to the top of the incline and round a roller to work the wagon up and down.

Some control was affected by white markers on the gears, but stopping in the right spot was difficult especially as the train was known to reach 40mph in the old days, hence the metal buffer at the bottom. Today's winching system works at a far more sedate pace and is all worked from the upper station.

One of the original uses for the lines was to bring coal up to the castle for fuel – this was subsequently changed to oil, the oil pipe was routed through the tunnel.

There is plenty of uncertainty about key facts regarding this unusual line. The National Trust does not display it to visitors though the lower yard is clear for all to see.

And finally where does the term Dreckly come from? Research shows that it's Cornish dialect for 'directly', but in reality and stated tongue-in-cheek, it means 'not urgent' and that things will happen in the near future "when I'm good and ready". So essentially it's the Cornish version of the Spanish mañana... **NGW**



The Shock of the New

Donald Brooks visited the Ffestiniog Railway eight days after the opening of its Llyn Ystradau extension.



Above: 'Linda', Hunslet 590 of 1893, negotiating the new embankment departing from Llyn Ystradau with a train for Porthmadog. The reservoir appears to be virtually empty, adding to the barrenness of the scene.

Below: Linda approaching the new Moelwyn tunnel with a Porthmadog - Llyn Ystradau train. There is rubble everywhere and the cutting certainly has a 'just excavated' look.

Photos by Donald Brooks, July 1977

By the late 1970s Britain's main-line railway network was nearing the end of a decades-long process of decline with abandoned stations and lifted trackbeds depressingly familiar nationwide. By contrast encountering the raw scars and earthworks of a completely new railway was an exceptionally unusual but very welcome experience, though in the case of the Ffestiniog Railway's deviation scarcely an unexpected one.

The Ffestiniog's rebuilding is one of the most familiar heritage railway stories. Reopening from Porthmadog in stages along the old alignment, to Boston Lodge in 1955 and eventually to Dduallt in 1968, was a relatively straightforward process if a laborious and time-consuming one. Each extension further from the coast took the line on to another station or halt from the days of the 'old' railway before its closure in 1946.

In 1977, though, for the first time the temporary terminus for services from Porthmadog was at a point where there had never been a station or a railway before. Over the previous decade progress had slowly been made in building a totally new route from Dduallt to bypass Llyn Ystradau, the lower reservoir of the Ffestiniog pumped storage power station, that had flooded the original line.

Much of the deviation work was carried out by volunteers, though the new Moelwyn tunnel was bored by professional mining engineers. As the line progressed towards the tunnel a push-pull shuttle service with a diesel locomotive and a single carriage ran over the new route from Dduallt between May 1975 and Easter 1977, connecting with Porthmadog trains.

By summer 1977 the tunnel was complete and the railway opened through it to a temporary terminus on the shores of Llyn Ystradau on 8th July. The new station, named after the lake, consisted of a simple platform and run-round loop, but marked a major step in the restoration of the railway, with the route to Blaenau Ffestiniog now clear.

Alien intrusion

I first visited the extension on 16th July, when services were worked by the ex-Penrhyn 'main-line' 2-4-0 Hunslets, 'Linda' and 'Blanche'. The overwhelming impression was how alien the new railway seemed, as though imposed on the landscape rather than part of it. Embankments were bare stone, as were the cuttings leading to the tunnel, while the breach in Archer's Dam, a remnant from slate-quarrying days, to make way for the new route and the traces of construction everywhere served only to increase the sense of how unfinished everything appeared.

Back at Dduallt, though, the line was already settling into the landscape with vegetation growing on the sides of the spiral. And if you visit Llyn Ystradau today it's as though the railway has always been there, so integrated is it into its lakeside setting.

Llyn Ystradau station lasted just under a year, closing when the line was extended to Tan-y-grisiau on 24th June 1978. Blaenau Ffestiniog was reached four years later and the railway passenger travelling along the shores of the lake today would never know the temporary terminus had ever existed.



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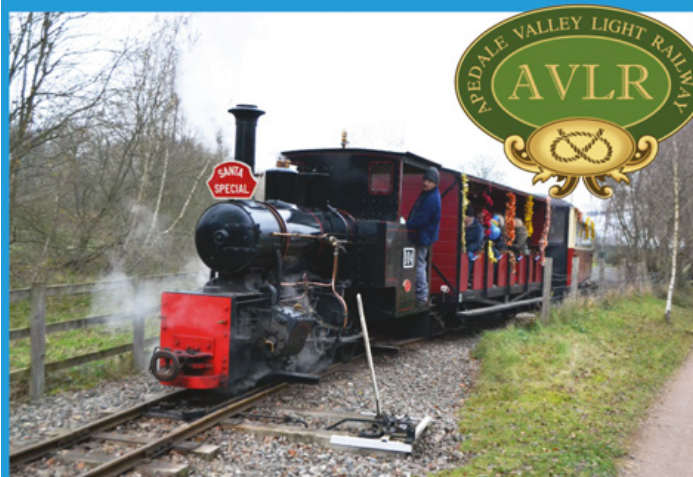
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