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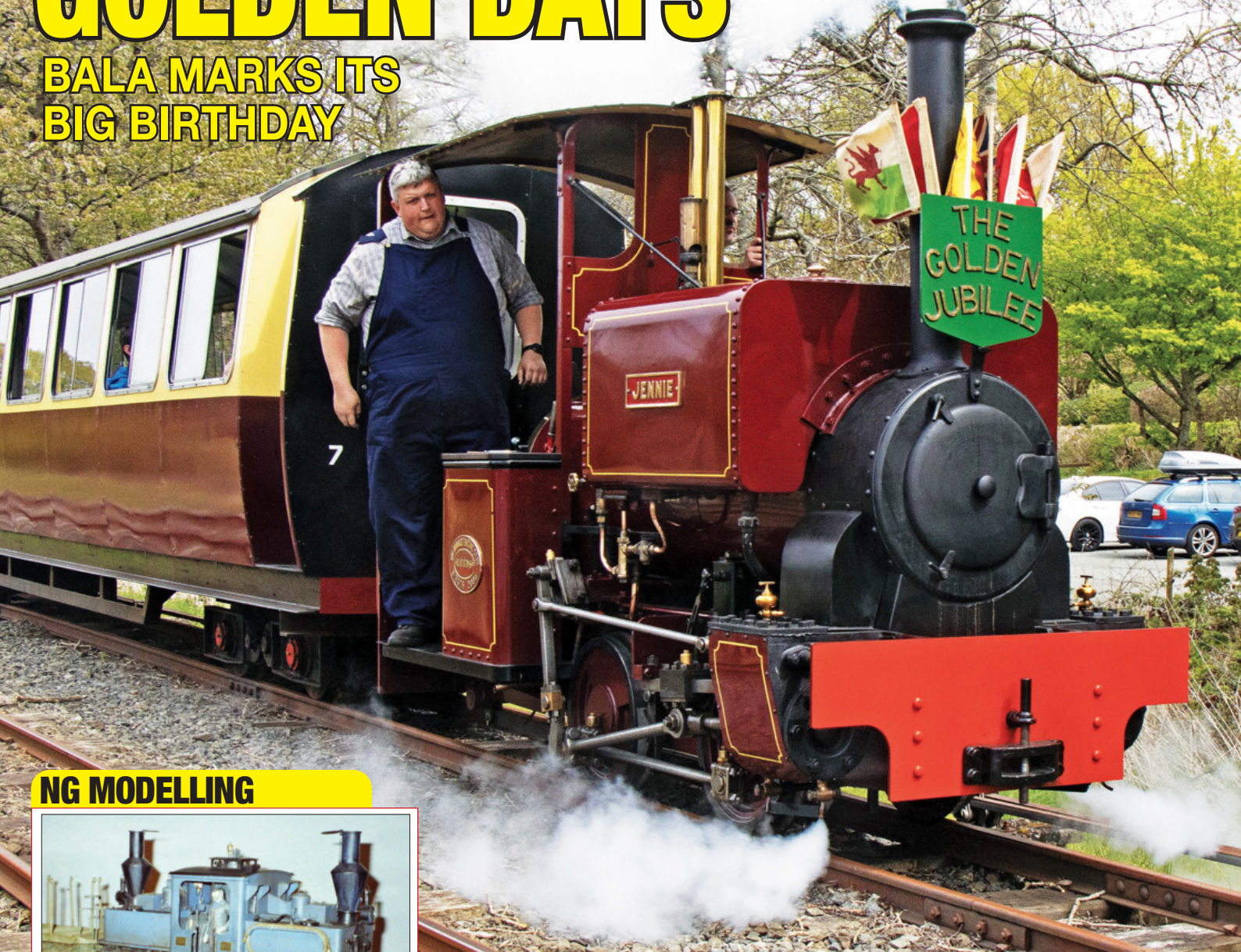
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JUNE 2022



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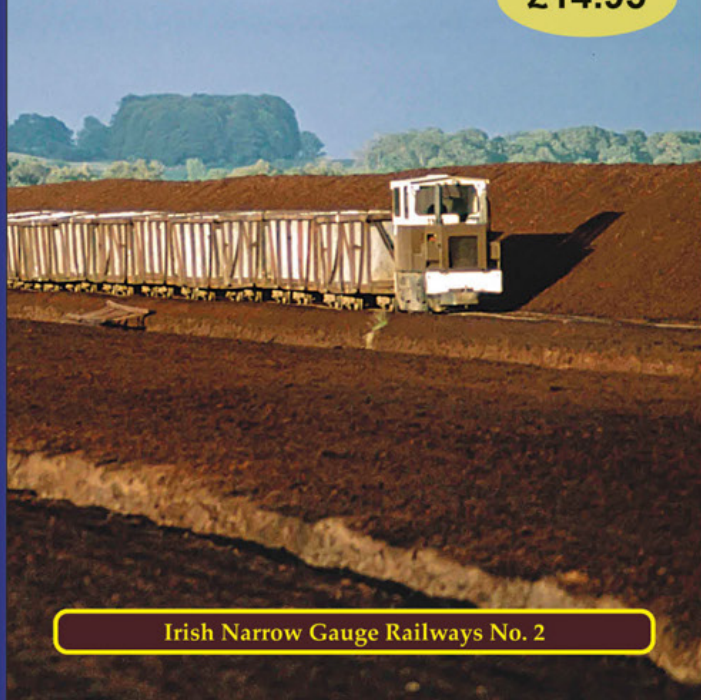
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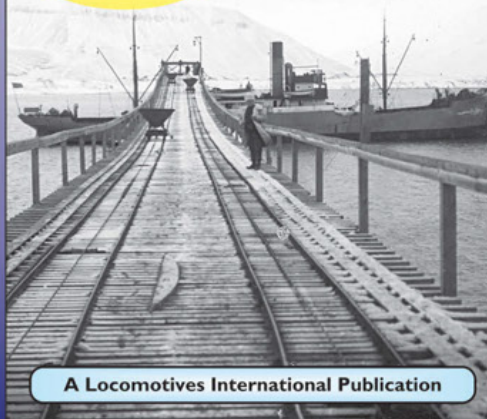


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Cover: Statfold Barn's Hunslet Wren 'Jennie' built in 2008, is some 36 years younger than the Bala Lake Railway but acquitted itself well at the 'Bala at 50' event, recalling another Wren that worked on the mid-Wales line in earlier days. The inset shows one of the UK's very rare 18-inch gauge lines at Bicton in Devon, a line which has changed a lot over the years but survives to this day, some 60 years after its creation.

Photos: Andrew Charman & James Waite

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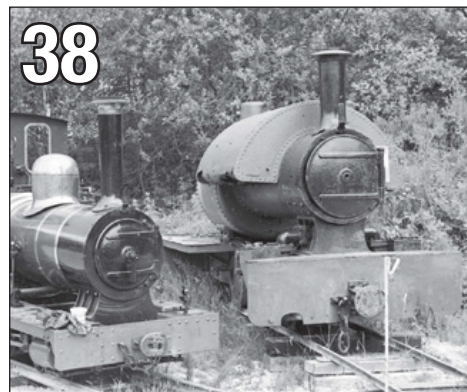
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Coal – can we be optimistic?



"Whoever thought that the perfectly oval shape of the Ovoids would mean they roll all over the place?..."

Photo: Visiting Hunslet 'Jennie' is almost lost in the scenery heading back to Llanuwchllyn on the first day of the Bala at 50 Gala. Riding an earlier train, our editor heard plenty said about the black stuff... Photo: Andrew Charman

Welcome to *NGW* 166 and I'm afraid the subject matter dominating the conversation amongst railway types still involves the round (ish) black stuff...

This month I was delighted to be among the guests on the first train of the Bala Lake Railway's 'Bala at 50' Gala weekend, celebrating, as the name suggests, half a century since George Barnes and his merry men first started laying narrow gauge tracks between the platforms of the then abandoned Llanuwchllyn station, on the former Bala to Dolgellau standard gauge route.

We certainly had some learned voices in our carriage, including management from the Talylllyn, Fairbourne and Statfold lines, as well as Bala GM David Jones, and of course the conversation soon turned to coal, and how the railways are coping with trying to find alternatives to the Welsh steam coal that's no longer available.

The surprising bit was that I did hear a lot of optimism – there seemed to be a real sense that a solution will be sorted to ensure we can continue to run our steam trains in the future. And I must admit that over the weekend I also heard suggestions that before long we will be able to get Welsh coal again, a result of the changing global energy situation that has been occasioned by the invasion of Ukraine.

Of course even if that does prove to be true, we know it will only be a short-term situation, and we will still need to wean ourselves off coal

in its traditional form. By now many railways have completed several tests of growing numbers of alternatives, and the further good news is that they seem to be getting used to these alternatives, to the extent that some lines are confident enough to use them as their regular fuel, though of course the cost remains a major minus factor.

It is by no means simple using a different kind of fuel in a steam locomotive – in this issue we have a 'from the front-line' description of the challenges firing with Trevithick Ovoids, the most popular of the alternatives currently being trialled, courtesy of Welshpool & Llanfair footplate crew.

The challenges are many – not just getting them hot quickly enough and maintaining such heat, keeping the fire clean and such like, but more mundane matters. Whoever thought, for example, that the perfectly oval shape of the Ovoids (well we suppose the name gives a clue...) would mean they roll all over the place – under the driver's feet, right out the cab door...

It's certainly no minor matter, finding a workable replacement for coal – but it is a challenge we must all overcome to ensure the future of our industry...

Full-size model

There is a lot of good stuff in this issue (well I would say that wouldn't I!) – James Waite's feature on the Bicton Woodland Railway brought back memories from a very long

time ago, the only occasion I have so far visited the Devon line, as a child. I still have a couple of Polaroid photos I took of it, which dates my visit to the mid 1970s – I'm amazed that the 'instant' pics haven't faded...

The feature that really made an impression on your editor, however, was the remarkable tale from Australia of Glenn Smythe and a 3ft 6in gauge new-build – that he has almost entirely done by himself!

I also edit *NGW*'s sister magazine *Engineering in Miniature*. We feature some amazing examples of fine model engineering in our pages, in some cases models built in 3½-inch or 5-inch scale that have taken decades for their builder to complete, their dedication eventually being rewarded.

Others are actually put off starting a loco build fearing that it will take too many years, perhaps be beyond them... But in one-to-one scale? It's perhaps no surprise that Glenn has spent close to 20 years on his project, perhaps remarkable he's achieved so much. We have no doubt he will complete his Z class and we look forward to bringing you the photos of it in steam on Australian lines.

Meanwhile the lines are gearing up for their first proper peak season in three years. After two years of following the rules, staying home when told, this is definitely the time to get out and enjoy as much narrow gauge as possible. Enjoy your *NGW*...

Andrew Charman



Whether narrow or standard-gauge, or in fact on the road, marine or miniature, the heritage steam movement is working together to try and secure future fuel supplies. *Joey Evans* took this picture of Kerr Stuart Wren 'Roger' and Terrier 0-6-0T 'Martello' at the Bressingham Gala on 30th April.

Railways take coal supplies appeal to Welsh Government

The ongoing crisis in coal supplies to UK heritage steam has taken a new turn with the Heritage Railway Association leading a direct appeal to the Welsh Government, in the hope of extending the licence of the UK's last remaining steam coal pit, Ffos-y-fran colliery in south Wales.

As documented in *NGW* 164 and 165, the current crisis was sparked at the end of January when following an equipment failure Ffos-y-fran announced it would cease coal supplies with immediate effect, arguing that with mining at the pit due to end later this year repair of the equipment was not economically viable.

Members of the HRA, including management of several heritage railways, were due to meet with a member of the Welsh Government's cabinet on Tuesday 17th May, in the hope of persuading ministers that at least one coal mine should

be kept open in the short to medium term, supplying railways and enabling them to continue running while new sources of sustainable fuel are developed and trialled.

Wales is home to a high ratio of particularly narrow gauge heritage lines, committing significant amounts to the nation's tourism income.

Ffos-y-fran is currently progressing an appeal to its planning consent, which if successful will permit the mining of around an additional 1.7 million tonnes of coal over a period of two years.

Those pressing for continued coal supplies have also been encouraged by suggestions that the UK Government is seriously considering allowing the opening of a new deep coal mine in Cumbria, on the basis that using coal mined in the UK would cause less environmental damage than importing it from abroad.

Meanwhile several railways have continued to trial various substitutes for traditional coal, with Trevithick Steam Ovoids, made from crushed anthracite fines, being most widely analysed.

Typical of these lines is the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, which after running a number of test trains on non-operating days, ordered 28 tonnes of the Ovoids and was planning to use them as its default fuel in the early part of the season.

W&LLR general manager James Brett emphasised to *NGW*, however, that testing of other types of fuel would continue.

The cost of such fuels, up to around double that of conventional coal, remains a major issue. But more than one railway manager has expressed to *NGW* their confident expectation that supplies of coal mined at Ffos-y-fran will resume at some point this year.

Irish lines escape 'smoky coal' ban

An Irish Government ban on burning smoky coal will not affect heritage steam train operations in the Republic of Ireland (*writes Hugh Dougherty*).

The new regulations, which apply throughout Ireland, say that any coal burned must not produce more than ten grams of smoke per hour, with the figure being halved to just five grams by 2025.

Asked if the ban, which comes into full force in September, would affect heritage steam operations, including the 3ft gauge Cavan & Leitrim Railway, the Irish Steam Preservation Society at Stradbally, the West Clare Railway, and the 15-inch gauge Diffin Lake Railway at Raphoe in Donegal, a spokesman for the Department of the Environment, Climate and

Communications, said that the new regulations on solid fuels relate to fuel for heating purposes only.

"The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is happy to engage with representative bodies at any stage if there are any concerns," he added.

The spokesman did not clarify whether or not consultation or talks had taken place with steam railway operators or societies prior to the regulations being enacted.

No smoky coal ban: 0-4-2T 'Countess of Diffin' will continue to burn coal on the 15in gauge Diffin Lake Railway at Raphe in Donegal, along with other steam train operators in the Republic of Ireland.

Photo: DLR



Working with coal substitutes – view from the footplate

Locomotive crews provide an insight into the practical side of adapting to new kinds of fuel for steam use.

The challenges being faced by heritage railway crews adapting to unfamiliar fuels have been crystallised by a discussion between footplate department members on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, reproduced here with permission.

The conversation was started by driver Geoff Gauntlett who provided a summary and advice to his fellow crew members. This followed his first two days rostered on Beyer Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl' using Trevithick Welsh Steaming Ovoids – produced by Hargreaves Services, these are made from crushed anthracite fines.

The W&LLR took delivery of a large quantity of Ovoids after running a number of empty trains trialling various replacement fuels, usually on Mondays when the line was not operating a public service. These trials are continuing.

The headline specification of the fuel is 17 per cent volatiles, less than two per cent sulphur, around 6.5 per cent ash, with a calorific value of 32,500kJ/kg. The calorific value quote is comparable with that for anthracite or dry steam coal.

Mind your feet

Each 'lump' is of 100 gram size, 75mm across its longest face x 60mm x 45mm, and as the name suggests, oval in shape. "They will roll everywhere around the footplate including under the driver's feet and out of the cab doorways – only open the bunker door far enough to get the shovel in," Geoff advised.

"It is slow to catch alight so prepare your fire with this in mind," he advised. "When cleaning the fire don't rake too much out or you will be waiting for ages to get to a point where you can make steam again."

The best fire format appears to be a gently sloping wedge from the firehole door down to the tubeplate. "Avoid using the front damper as this will cause it to burn away rapidly in the front corners.

"Once the stuff is hot it will produce plenty of steam. But it burns away very quickly – forget looking at the chimney for clues, you will not see enough smoke to discern anything about the state of the fire. Constant attention to firing is needed – firing little and often, ensuring that all parts of the grate are methodically covered, is a technique that seems to work."

Geoff added that clinker, unburnt elements that merge together and block air coming through the fire from below,

forms very easily with the new fuel; "The fire needs to be cleaned every trip – even after a run to Castle and back," (*a half-line trip without the 1 in 29 Golfa bank out of Welshpool – Ed*).

According to Geoff frequent ashing out is necessary to remove the mixture of ash and unburnt fines that have fallen through the firebars and at the end of the day there will be a lot of char in the smokebox.

Other footplate crew members added comments, fireman Alan Regan saying that in his experience a single layer of Ovoids will catch quickly if applied across a hot and bright fire. "Also, fully opening the rear damper drew more heat from an established fire – half open didn't yield the same result. Thin layers, applied frequently to a hot fire and plenty of rear air made the stuff manageable," Alan added.

Clean is hot

Having tried the fuel with on-hire Austrian 0-6-2T 'Zillertal', another W&LLR driver suggested that there is limited time available to fully clean the fire at each end of a run. "What I found worked best for me was to ensure that there was at least 10 bar of pressure and half a glass of water, and cleaning part of the fire and moving the lit part round – if it is allowed to die down there is not enough time to rebuild and gain pressure and water before departure," he said.

The other major element with the new fuel is the amount needed. The W&LLR measures its fuel by 'buckets', familiar to many an enthusiast photographing coaling up at Llanfair Caereinion, and Geoff suggested that on an eight-mile round-trip to Castle Caereinion with a train of two

bogie carriages and two four-wheelers, firemen were likely to burn 12 buckets on their first attempt. "On our last trip on Thursday we got it down to 10 buckets."

Over the full line to Welshpool, Geoff suggests that 24 buckets "seems par for the course – when we are coaling up the whole crew are going to be busy shovelling or handling buckets".

While fuel use varies depending on many factors such as the weight of the train, the weather and such like, with traditional steam coal the typical amount used on a round trip to Welshpool would be 14 to 16 buckets. With the sustainable fuels currently costing twice the price of traditional coal, the financial implications for our railways are clear...

Above: Ovoids are a practical replacement for traditional coal but they need some understanding to make the best of them.

Photo: W&LLR

Below: Clinker is an issue that has to be dealt with to maintain good heat in the fire.

Photo: Geoff Gauntlett

Bottom: The difference in shape and size of the ovoids (front) to the traditional coal behind is obvious. *Photo: Andrew Charman*





Bala marks 50 years of Lakeside running

The Bala Lake Railway kicked off its Golden Anniversary season on 30th April with a 'Bala at 50' Gala event.

Highlight of the bank-holiday gathering was the launch of a new book celebrating the history of the 2ft gauge line, which was



established on the trackbed of the former Bala to Dolgellau standard gauge line in 1972, centring on Llanuwchllyn which became the headquarters of the project.

The celebration was held exactly 50 years after the first tracklaying on the line began at Llanuwchllyn, and opening the event Bala Lake Railway chairman David Gwyn said that everyone was looking forward with confidence to the next half-century. "We've come a long way since 1972," he added.

A special train was run for visiting guests, including managers from several other Welsh heritage lines and hauled by former Dinorwic quarry Hunslet 'Maid Marian', the first steam locomotive to work regularly at the BLR.

Bala Lake Railway Trust chairman Julian Birley also used the occasion to update visitors on the line's progressing plans to extend into the centre of Bala town.

Locomotives wore commemorative headboards throughout the weekend, among them the Statfold Barn Railway's Hunslet Wren 0-4-OST 'Jennie'. This was visiting to recall sister loco 3114, today at the Vale of Rheidol Railway but which in the 1980s spent five years at the Bala line on loan from then owner the Gloddfa Ganol museum at Blaenau Ffestiniog.

■ The anniversary book is reviewed in this issue on page 44.

Top: All the Bala line's locomotives wore commemorative headboards throughout the celebration weekend.

Above left: Chairman David Gwyn encouraged visitors to buy the anniversary book and help raise funds for the extension into Bala.

Photos: Andrew Charman

Left: Wren 0-4-OST 'Jennie', visiting from Statfold, acquitted itself well over the Gala.

Photo: Jonathan James

Two appeals launched to boost Lynton extension

Both the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and its sister organisation Exmoor Associates have launched new funding efforts as plans for the Devon 2ft gauge line to break out of its current one-mile running length gain pace.

L&B Trust members received a 'Return to Parracombe' appeal leaflet with the latest edition of the Trust magazine, kicking off the first stage of the line's planned extension from the existing limit of operations at Killington Lane to the site of the former Parracombe Halt, which was acquired in 2021.

Measuring around 1600 yards, the new length of line is expected to cost around £1.6 million to reinstate, including building a new Bridge at Killington Lane, making repairs to four other bridges, excavating cuttings and demolishing a bungalow that was acquired as part of the Parracombe purchase.

The total cost of the section has been calculated at £30 per inch, the appeal having the sub-title of 'Give us an inch and we'll build a mile.' Thanks to recent legacies £450,000 can already be committed to the project.

Those wishing to contribute to the appeal can do so via the 'Donate' button on the www.lynton-rail website, by bank transfer to the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust account, sort code 30-90-49, account no 00445050, or by cheque to Trust treasurer Martin Swainson, Amberwood, The Vallance, Lynsted, Kent, ME9 0RP. In all cases the reference Parracombe should be included to ensure the money goes towards the extension.

Three parcels targeted

Meanwhile Exmoor Associates, the independent organisation formed to secure trackbed for the L&B revival, has issued an urgent appeal for funding after three new parcels of trackbed came up for sale.

The three sections are described as "significant" and connect with lengths of trackbed already owned. Securing them will provide the railway with a considerable length of unified route for its extension, extending over more than two miles save for one short section.

Supporters are being asked to contribute to the purchases either by purchasing shares or by making a donation to the Yeo Valley Trust, stating that it is intended for trackbed purchases.

Details of how to contribute to the plans are on the website at www.exmoor-associates.co.uk/support-us/



■ Bressingham Steam Museum staged an early-season Gala on 30th April, featuring two visiting locomotives from the Stafford Narrow Gauge Museum Trust, recently launched Avonside 0-4-0T 'Ogwen' and Hunslet Wren 0-4-0ST 'Roger'. During the day there was a frequent service of passenger, goods and slate trains on the Fen Railway, with in the morning, passenger trains being worked by resident locos 'Fernilee' and 'Gwynedd' while Ogwen hauled a rake of slate wagons and Roger worked a short demonstration train of two skips.

A feature after lunch saw Ogwen double-heading three passenger trains with Gwynedd, the two looking excellent in their matching Penrhyn Quarry livery while Roger also double-headed some passenger trains with Fernilee. *Photos: Gerry Balding*



Hopes grow for longer Ashover

Members of the Ashover Railway Society are highly hopeful that the running line they have established at the Rowsley station site of the standard gauge Peak Rail heritage line will soon be significantly extended.

Peak Rail has indicated that the planned closure of a rear entrance to the Rowsley premises will permit the 2ft gauge Ashover line to be extended and a turning triangle and station located in similar format to the

original Ashover line, which closed in 1950.

Subject to funding, the original 'Where the Rainbow Ends' cafeteria of the Ashover line, which the ARS owns the components of, could even be re-erected on the site.

In further good news, Peak Rail has indicated that it would also like the narrow gauge line to be extended southwards, past the standard gauge workshops to provide a link to the former LMS carriage shed.



■ On 17th April Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway Kerr Stuart Brazil 0-4-2ST 'Leader' was working some of its final trains on the Kent 2ft 6in gauge line before being withdrawn for overhaul. The loco will be part of an event over 21st-22nd May relaunching sister loco 'Premier' back into service, 38 years after the loco last ran. With sister Brazil 'Melior' also operating, the weekend will form likely the only opportunity to see three examples of the class in steam together before work starts on Leader. We will have coverage of the event in next month's issue.

Photo: Joey Evans

BRIEF LINES



Perrygrove loco progresses

The new 15-inch gauge steam locomotive being built for the Perrygrove Railway is taking shape at the Darlington workshops of North Bay Railway Engineering Services. On 6th May the boiler was positioned in the frames for the first time.

Photo: NBRE

Exmoor Ruston ready to roll

The restoration of a Ruston & Hornsby diesel loco that spent 42 years displayed at the former Lynton station (NGW160) is almost complete. Owner Exmoor Associates plans shortly to move it to a working railway for testing.

Dolgoch back to green

Tallylyn Railway Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch', currently under overhaul, is to return to the green livery that it last wore in 1987. TR staff hope to have the locomotive complete for the railway's 'Anything Goes' Gala on 2nd-3rd July.

Hunslet diesel at Ashover

The Ashover Railway Society has acquired a Hunslet Flameproof diesel built in 1980 for the National Coal Board. The loco, now by far the newest of the Society's motive power fleet, is air-braked, which will be useful on the gradients of its running line.

Bala quarry saloon progress

Visitors to the Bala Lake Railway's anniversary Gala on the May bank holiday weekend were able to see the significant progress being made on the latest addition to the line's heritage fleet, a recreation of Lord Penrhyn's private saloon from the Penrhyn Quarry Railway (below).



Leighton trains climb the hill



The Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway formally re-opened a further quarter of a mile of operational track on 30th April, when the first public passenger

trains ran up the new double-track section from Stonehenge Works up Munday's Hill (writes **Steve Sedgwick**).

The occasion was marked with a special train from Pages Park station which stopped at Stonehenge for the re-opening ceremony. After an introduction by chairman David Wood, the extension was opened with the traditional cutting of a red ribbon by Kathryn Embley, daughter of the late Alan Moore who was the President and a long-time supporter of the LBNGR.

A special train then took the party on up

the steeply graded Munday's Hill, hauled by LBNGR stalwart, Barclay 0-6-0T 'Doll' (1641/1919).

There was a nice twist in the selection of the footplate crew: Driver Marcus Breed has the longest record of continuous service on the line and was joined by the most recently qualified fireman, Hayden Gell.

Recalling the line's industrial past, an industrial train of skip wagons topped and tailed with 40hp Simplex diesels, ran alongside the special on the new parallel line up the hill..

The reopening completes four years of remarkable changes on this section, part of the original route to Double Arches Quarry. The rails of the original line had remained in place but over the years had been gradually reclaimed by nature with only the lower section in regular use as a headshunt for access to Stonehenge Yard. Further up, the overgrown rails were used for long-term storage before disappearing in the undergrowth.



Above: 'Doll' climbs Munday's Hill with the first of two service trains that ran after the opening special. The demonstration skip train follows on the new parallel track. The inset shows 'Rishra' on an expedition to the head of usable rail in November 2017, just before vegetation clearance started.

Left: Kathryn Embley cuts the ribbon officially reopening the Munday's Hill section.

Photos: Steve Sedgwick

Heatherslaw goes plastic to beat flooding

The Heatherslaw Light Railway has joined the move to recycled plastic sleepers, the 15-inch gauge line using them on track renewals along its 2.5-mile long route (writes **Hugh Dougherty**).



"We've introduced the sleepers on sections of line which are wet or subject to flooding," explained managing director, Darrell Smith. "We can't use creosote on sleepers in sections near the river, so wood ones tend to last just six or seven years.

"The plastic sleepers, although around two-and-a-half times the cost, have an

expected life time of 30 plus years, so they're well worth the extra expense."

The line has also confirmed that it will not be affected by the coal crisis in 2022, having enough stock to see it through to the end of the season.

"We've been able to source coal from our local supplier," said Darrell. "We have been offered 'green' coal from another supplier, but it's double the cost and only actually 50 per cent 'green', so we've not gone down that road as yet.

"With enough steam coal in stock, we don't plan to cancel any steam services this season, but, of course, we have diesel power on hand, too."

The plastic sleepers look appropriate once installed in the trackbed. Heatherslaw loco 'Bunt' will continue to use steam coal throughout 2022.

Photos: Hugh Dougherty



One name or two for Hudswell?

Hudswell-Clarke 0-6-0ST 'Handyman' (573/1900) has moved to 'Workshop X' at Killamarsh in Cumbria to undergo cosmetic restoration.

The 3ft gauge locomotive, which spent its working life in the Northamptonshire iron ore industry and was originally saved for preservation in 1964 by three members of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, was recently acquired by the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust after being listed for disposal by the National Railway Museum (NGW158).

Statfold is having the locorestored to go on display in its museum near Tamworth and appealed for more information, particularly regarding its name.

Handyman never carried cast nameplates, the loco's name believed to have simply been painted on its tank, and no photos have been found showing it in this condition. While most enthusiasts have always referred to the loco by the singular name Hudswell-Clarke records, which are in the Statfold archive, make reference to 'Handy Man'.

In other work currently underway at the busy Killamarsh workshops, dismantling has continued of the recently arrived Orenstein & Koppel Luttermöller 0-10-0T (10956/1925) with owner Matt Dolby carrying out most of the work.

Removal of the locomotive's side tanks revealed the unexpected find of a well tank – while well tanks were a common feature on O&K locomotives, its presence had been hidden from the restoration team by the large side tanks.

The loco's boiler was scheduled to be lifted off the chassis in mid-May while elsewhere in the workshop restoration of a rake of GWR slate wagons for the Apedale Valley Railway is proceeding well, work continuing on the frames of new-build single-Fairlie 'Gowrie' and on the restoration of Fowler 0-4-2T no 16341.

■ Anyone with information that might solve the Handyman name mystery, please contact the NGW editorial office and we will pass it on.

Below: 'Handyman' (or Handy Man?) on show at Statfold in April before the loco was moved to Killamarsh.
Photo: Andrew Charman



Kiln plans ruby celebration

The Old Kiln Light Railway is making plans for its 40th Anniversary Gala in September, at which it hopes to have three steam locomotives in action.

Celebrating the establishment in 1982 of the 2ft gauge line at the Rural Life Centre, near Farnham in Surrey, the Gala is set to feature resident 0-4-0T 'Emmet', a unique loco built in 2003 on the frames and wheels of an Orenstein & Koppel diesel, and O&K 0-6-0WT 'Elouise' (9998/1922) – Old Kiln members are

currently working hard to complete the loco's overhaul.

There are also plans to have a visiting locomotive at the event, details of which are still to be revealed.

Planned for 10th-11th September, the Gala will feature demonstration freight trains alongside the passenger workings and evening running to 9pm on the Saturday.

The line is now open on most Saturdays and Sundays – details are at <https://oldkilnlight railway.co.uk>

Traditional skills at Bala

The Bala Lake Railway has called on local traditional skills to help maintain its locomotives.

Bala resident Les Symonds, a member of the Register of Master Turners, has been making a pattern to cast new chimney tops for Quarry Hunslets 'Alice' and 'Holy War'.

Both locos are under overhaul and will return to traffic later this year. Until now they have been using chimneys that only bear a passing resemblance to the original.

Les has been working with foundry John Taylor and Co. in Loughborough to calculate the amount of shrinkage the casting process will cause, far from easy due to the complex design.

"Accurate detailing of these locos is so important to keep their historical integrity and accuracy," Bala Lake Railway Trust chairman Julian Birley said. "It's good to see such an art as this retained in the 21st century."



Photo: BLR

Manx tank joins in Welshpool's Beyer birthday

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's May 'Beyer Bash' event has gained a second narrow-gauge visitor from the Isle of Man.

The event, set to be held over the weekend of 20th-22nd May after this issue went to press and celebrating the 120th anniversary of the mid-Wales line's two original Beyer Peacock locomotives 'The Earl' and 'The Countess', was due to welcome Isle of Man Steam Railway Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T 'Fenella'.

The Manx loco, on a rare visit off the island and expected to be 'on the mainland' for less than a week, was on static display at Welshpool Raven Square station with the pioneer Beyer Garratt K1, owned by the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway.

Also booked for the event were two standard gauge Beyer Peacocks – a steam tram from Crich Museum and from the Foxfield Railway the former Gorton works shunter, which was planned to be in steam on temporary track.

■ Photos from the Beyer Bash event will be in next month's NGW.



Photo: Ken Elsworth/W&LLR

Talyllyn commits to living wage

The Talyllyn Railway has been accredited as a Living Wage Employer, making a commitment to that all paid employees at the line will receive a minimum hourly wage of £9.90, higher than the government minimum for over 23s, which currently stands at £9.50 per hour.

The TR decision comes as figures for Wales indicate almost 18 per cent of all workers, around 223,000, are paid less than the real Living Wage.

TR general manager Stuart Williams said that the railway has always believed that everyone putting in a day's work deserves a fair day's pay.

"Becoming a Living Wage accredited employer underlines our commitment to this – at the Talyllyn Railway, we put a lot of energy into maintaining a sustainable and responsible business culture," he added. "Treating staff well – and going beyond legislative requirements – is an important aspect of this."



'Gwirl' seen above shunting stock in the Fairbourne Railway workshop, will be in familiar surroundings but the Welsh coast line will be the latest of many venues for the Motor Rail (below). *Photos: Andrew Charman/FR*



Duo of new locomotives heading for Fairbourne

Just as *NGW* closed for press the Fairbourne Railway announced the purchase of two new locomotives.

The first is not strictly new to the line, being the original 15-inch gauge 'Gwirl'. The Lister Railtruck (20886/1941) became the first loco to run at Fairbourne after the Second World War, and remained on the line until it was regauged to 12¼-inch in 1986. It was then sold off along with virtually all the other 15-inch gauge stock.

Since the mid-Wales beach line started its project to install a length of dual 12¼/15-inch gauge track, Gwirl has visited on a number of occasions from its current home at the Windmill Farm Railway of Austin Moss. Not the opportunity has arisen to make this permanent.

Gwirl will be housed in the Fairbourne line's museum but will also remain available to run at special events.

The second loco is almost as old as Gwirl, but according to FR manager Murray Dodds cannot expect quite the same pampered life.

Further setbacks in the major rebuilding of the 1961 built Bo-Bo diesel 'Tony', and

the increasing need to carry out a full overhaul of the more modern Hunslet Jenbach four-wheel diesel (9354/1994), confusingly also called Gwirl, the FR has decided to acquire a further locomotive for shunting and permanent way duties.

Motor Rail 9837 of 1944 was new to Fylde Water Board, Warbreck Depot, Blackpool, Lancashire, entering preservation in the 1980s initially at the Moseley Narrow Gauge Tramway Museum, in Cheadle, Greater Manchester.

The loco moved in 1999 to Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum in Cumbria before in 2012 being acquired for the Oswestry & District Narrow Gauge Railway in Shropshire, moving with the collection when it transferred to Brymbo near Wrexham in 2017.

The well-travelled loco has since moved again to the Ashton Packet Boat Company in Greater Manchester 2021 from which it has now been acquired by the Fairbourne.

While in working order the loco will require regauging – it is expected to arrive on the Welsh coast in a few weeks, after the Fairbourne Gala at the end of May.

Siblings to be reunited at golden event

The Lakeshore Railroad will celebrate its 50th anniversary in July by reuniting two locos from the same maker that have not been seen together since they were built.

The miniature railway in South Shields, the only publicly operating 9½-inch gauge steam line in the UK, will be welcoming 4-4-2 'Auld Reekie' to its event on 2nd-3rd July. Built by Jennings of Chelmsford in 1935 to 9½-inch gauge, the loco formerly ran at the 10¼-inch gauge Kerr's miniature Railway in Arbroath, Scotland – the line closed to the public in October 2020.

Auld Reekie will be on static display at Lakeshore, posed beside operational resident Jennings locomotive 'Mountaineer' throughout the event. In fact Jennings originally sold Auld Reekie in 1936 to

finance the construction of Mountaineer, which like its predecessor was built as a 4-4-2 Atlantic despite being inspired by the American AT&SF 3400 Class Pacific locos.

Mountaineer's construction stalled in similar form to Auld Reekie's: lack of funds for a boiler prevented its completion and the loco was acquired partially-built in 1966 by Jack Wakefield and Don Proudlock. They finished the loco and ran it on a portable line before establishing the Lakeshore Railroad at South Shields, opening in 1972.

Once a second loco, 'Adiela' was built for the line Mountaineer was taken out of service for conversion to the original inspiration – a lengthened frame and extra pair of driving wheels saw the engine

emerge as a 4-6-2 in 1977, and it has worked at the railway ever since.

Further visiting engines from the Downs Light Railway are expected at the anniversary Gala, which on the Saturday at 10.30am will see the National Railway Museum's Anthony Coulls host a 'reopening ceremony.' Two historic Wembley Exhibition carriages will also be on display, making a rare public outing from the private Crewe and Weston Railway.

More details of the event can be found at www.lakeshorerailroad.co.uk

'Auld Reekie' (below left) and 'Mountaineer' (below in original form with Jack Wakefield and Don Proudlock) will be reunited at the Lakeshore anniversary. *Photos: Lakeshore RR*





■ The Ffestiniog Railway Society's AGM weekend on 29th April-1st May saw the north Wales line running special trains with two visiting locos as well as giving members an inside view of a myriad of projects underway at Boston Lodge works.

Visitors from the Richmond Light Railway, quarry Hunslets 'Sybil' and the newly restored 'Elin' (above), combined with FR resident Hunslets 'Lilla', 'Britomart' and 'Hugh Napier' – they were displayed briefly at Harbour station and hauled passenger and freight specials.

Many on the workshop visit were keen to see progress on the new Double Fairlie locomotive 'James Spooner'. This has been moved out of the erecting shop to one of the carriage sheds (below) to make room for welding of the frames for three new carriages being built under contract for the Talylyn railway (above right). Members were told that

around six months' work will be left on the Fairlie once it returns to the erecting shop.

The cylinder castings for the two new replica Manning Wardle 2-6-2Ts being built for the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, under the stewardship of the 762 Club, attracted much interest (right). They have been colour-coded, the green ones for 'Yeo' and the blue ones for 'Exe', the black one being a spare.

Other work currently underway at Boston Lodge includes an overhaul of the ex-Cadeby Light Railway 0-4-OST 'Pixie' for Jeremy Martin's Richmond Light Railway, rebuilding of the wheels and motion of the privately owned Baldwin 4-6-OT 608, and a replacement boiler for the Launceston Steam Railway's Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Velinheli'. Unlike this loco's current boiler the new boiler being built at Boston Lodge will be domeless though apparently the loco will still carry its brass dome cover.

Meanwhile the conservation project for the oldest and most historic part of the Boston Lodge site is progressing (bottom), with old track outside the blacksmiths' shop, complete with its wagon turntable being refurbished.

Photos: James Waite



■ Among lines getting back to some form of normality this season after severely feeling the effect of the disruption in 2020 and 2021 is the Bredgar & Wormshill Railway.

Joey Evans pictured the Kent 2ft gauge line's Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Lady Joan' busy on Easter services on 17th April.

The line will be continuing its monthly open days through 2022 – the next on 4th-5th June will be a 1940s-themed weekend, followed by a classic cars open day on 3rd July and four days of opening between 28th-31st July as the line hosts "the largest gathering of spoon carvers located in the Garden of England". The annual Steam Gala is scheduled for 2nd October – more details are at www.bwlr.co.uk





Contractor's line makes return at station project

An Irish heritage project is reviving the days of Victorian railway construction by using narrow gauge to build standard gauge track (*writes Hugh Dougherty*).

At Maam Cross Station, where the Connemara Railway Project is restoring the site as a typical Irish country station on the Galway Clifden line, 3ft gauge wagons running on temporary track are being used to transport 5ft 3in Irish standard gauge track panels, for laying as the running lines through the station.

The narrow gauge lines were laid at the start of the project to get trains running as a statement of intent.

"It's just like the way many railway contractors used narrow gauge locomotives and wagons when building lines, just like

the Clifden one, which opened in 1885," said project chairman Jim Deegan.

"We realised that our narrow gauge track gave us a unique system for moving the broad gauge track panels, with the trains powered by one of our 3ft gauge, ex-Bord na Mona diesel locos, so it's very much a case of backtrack to the future!"

Jim hopes to run narrow gauge trains for the public later this summer and is seeking approval from the Commission for Rail Regulation (CRR), with standard gauge running starting in 2023.

Above: Tracks broad and narrow: Standard gauge track panels are moved into position using the 3ft gauge wagons on the rails on the right. Photo: Connemara Railway Project

Oldest line recalled 300 years later

The 300th anniversary of the opening of Scotland's oldest railway was marked on 7th May (*writes Hugh Dougherty*) when members of the 1722 Waggonway Project held a celebration on the course of the Tranent Cockenzie Waggonway.

The ceremony recalled the opening of the pioneering 3ft 3in gauge line, built for coal transport with wood rails and sleepers.

A wooden replica railway wagon was brought out of the project's museum and pushed along the course of the line, without the help of rails, with volunteers dressed in period dress.

"We decided to mark this significant event in as visual a way as possible as the opening of the first railway in Scotland was a really important historical event in the development of rail transport," said Chairman, Ed Bethune.

"The waggonway has become very well-known both locally and nationally, thanks to our annual industrial archaeology excavation programme, which has taught us a great deal about early railway construction and development," he added.

Right: Project members found out the hard way why railways were invented to make transporting coal easier. Photo: 1722 Waggonway Project



Pub grill inspires cab simulator

A steam locomotive cab simulator is to be built at Donegal Railway Heritage Centre, thanks to a €17,695 grant from The Heritage Council.

The cab will incorporate digitally-operated controls, visuals, authentic sounds and gauges, to give centre visitors the chance to see what it was like to be in control of a Donegal railway steam loco.



Centre manager Niall McCaughan came up with the idea when he visited the Railway Tavern Fahan, housed in the former Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway station on the Derry-Buncrana line, and saw the railway-themed restaurant's firebox grill, designed to resemble the cab of a Swilly loco.

"I was there with director Jim McBride for a launch of our Lough Swilly book and saw the firebox. It got me thinking as to why we couldn't have a replica cab, with all the controls, to allow visitors to experience actually driving a steam loco over the railways through hills of Donegal," he said.

"It will allow us to offer that experience until we have our steam loco, 'Drumboe', back in steam," Niall said, adding that when complete later this year the interactive cab will be the first of its kind in Ireland.

Left: The Railway Tavern's grill, replicating a Lough Swilly Railway loco cab, inspired the interactive exhibit.

Photo: Donegal Railway Heritage Centre

Corris Falcon gets its footplate

The new-build Hughes Falcon locomotive being built for the Corris Railway has been fitted with footplate sections after work restarted at Alan Keef Ltd in Ross-on-Wye.

The footplate being fitted in place will allow the final mounting of the 0-4-2ST loco's smokebox.

Further works has been completed on the braking system while a volunteer has constructed a wooden ashpan for trial fitting. With very tight clearances in this area accurate dimensions before the same volunteer commits to producing the final ashpan in steel.

Elsewhere another volunteer has made the firebox doors and opening mechanism. With progress again ramping up Corris Railway personnel are hopeful that continued successful fundraising will ensure the loco meets its projected first steaming date of 24th September. This is planned to be part of the Alan Keef works open day.

Sibiu encouraged to head north

Enthusiasts working to restore the Sibiu to Agnita Railway in ROMANIA are expected to focus their next extension plans north of the current operating section of 760mm gauge line between Cornăţel and Hosman.

Local politicians are understood to have given their support to the return of passenger trains to their districts, and clearance of track beyond Hosman has begun towards Marpod.

Challenges on this section include a culvert that has previously had its girders stolen, but the line's Friends organisation, which includes a sizable number of UK volunteers, has sourced replacements and intends to install them before the end of the year.

A sign of the international nature of the revival is the acquisition of a tamping machine, sourced from the Talylyn Railway in Wales.

Meanwhile hopes of heading south from Cornăţel have been boosted by the recommissioning of a level crossing at the south end of the station.

The route was blocked when road resurfacing covered the tracks,



but this has now been cleared and the work was celebrated by the President of Sibiu County Council driving the initial train over it. However track is missing immediately south of the crossing.

Above: One major reason for political enthusiasm for the northern extension might be the keen involvement in the project by young people, pictured here in September 2021 by SAR UK's Alasdair Stewart.

Achenseebahn reopens after €5m State funding

The Achenseebahn was expected to reopen at the end of April after two years of closure since it filed for bankruptcy in March 2020.

As reported in *NGW* 152, the collapse of the metre-gauge line, which uses a rack on its steeper sections, turned into a scandal when an offer of 3.4 million Euros of support by the Tyrolean State Government was withdrawn a day before it was due to be confirmed by the State Parliament.

The tale became murkier with an independent report recommending immediate protection for the line, Austria's president getting involved and complaints made against the line's supervisory board alleging they had tried to get State subsidies to the line frozen.

Eventually in December 2020 the State

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of Tyrol committed itself to establishing a new company to take over control of the Achenseebahn, owning 60 per cent of the shares with the neighbouring Zillertalbahn also involved.

The State is understood to have invested €5 million by the time of reopening and this is expected to double to €10m by 2024.

The line planned to run three trains a day at weekends from the end of April, extending the service to operate every day except Tuesdays from 4th June, and running five trains a day in the peak season between 25th June and 18th September.

Below: The Achenseebahn's unusual rack locos, pictured here in 2014 by Ian Morison, are back in action in 2022 after two years out of use.



BRIEF LINES

Tank loco flees invasion

Reports from UKRAINE suggest that enthusiasts have saved a 2ft 7in 0-4-0T from invading Russian forces. The loco, built in Croatia in 1942, was transported 500 miles west from Dnipro, under serious threat from Vladimir Putin's invasion, to Ternopol. The fate of the Kyiv Children's Railway, featured in last month's *NGW*, remains unclear.

Steam and diesel to summit

The Harzer Schmalspurbahnen in GERMANY launched its summer timetable on 9th April, scheduling 11 trains a day on its busiest route to the summit of the Brocken mountain. However management added that with motive power shortages still not completely resolved, two afternoon trips to the summit on Fridays to Tuesdays would be diesel hauled instead of the usual steam.

Broad Top to add stock

The East Broad Top Railroad in Pennsylvania, USA, is having four new passenger carriages built. One of the vehicles for the recently reopened 3ft gauge line will be specially designed to accommodate disabled passengers.

Museum veteran mourned

The Museum of FRENCH Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways is mourning the passing of one of its longest-serving members. Described as a pillar of the museum, Lucien Bertrand died in early May aged 96 years.



Major project to reroute two miles of Zillertalbahn

The famed Zillertalbahn is to reroute around two miles of its line to better serve a town and winter sports facility.

Local authorities are set to approve the plans that will see a stretch of the 760mm gauge line between Aschau and Sell am Ziller abandoned and a new deviation built to bring trains to Rohrberg and the Zillertal winter ski arena. Currently connecting buses run between the station and the two venues.

Zillertalbahn managing director Helmut Schreiner said that landowners affected by the plans had not objected to the project in principle but certain conditions had to be settled under civil law – a building permit for the work was expected imminently.

“Approximately 30,000 square metres of land is required for the new 3,384-metre long section,” he said, “and the same length will be dismantled on the existing line.”

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The work will see six existing level crossings abandoned along with the 1900-built Zeller river bridge. This will be replaced by a new 174-metre long rail bridge which will become the longest regional railway bridge in Austria.

The Zeller bridge, which is a listed monument, will remain in place and will become part of a walking and cycle route.

Funding for the project will come from a €43 million Government investment programme which includes funds for the introduction of hydrogen-powered trains on the Zillertalbahn, expected in around five years' time.

Zillertalbahn management have not given a completion date for the work but progress is expected to be rapid and local enthusiasts suggest that those wanting to travel on the current route should visit the line sooner rather than later.

Photo: Zillertalbahn

Prospect of more foot traffic hastens bridge renewal

The Östra Södermanlands Järnväg (Eastern Södermanland Railway) in SWEDEN is close to completing a major refurbishment of its bridge at Skallaholmen, a 12-metre long riveted steel structure built in 1923 and last fully overhauled in 1958.

Corrosion levels on the bridge persuaded the line that remedial work was necessary, and it was considered that the work should be done now as it required the closure of a walkway across it – in the Autumn the opening of new residential areas just east of the bridge is expected to greatly increase foot traffic across it.

Funded by a heritage preservation grant from the local council, work on the bridge started on 4th April with completion expected in mid May ahead of rail services beginning on 3rd June.

Work has been focused on four of the line's steam locomotives over the winter, with no 8 'Emsfors', a Hartmann Brigadelok (4290/1919), undergoing a major boiler overhaul – the boiler is currently away at a specialist engineers.

Photo: OSJ



Berlin lines back in action

A park line in Berlin, GERMANY, ran trains over the Easter weekend after three years of closure due to track relaying and Covid restrictions.

The 600mm gauge Britzer Parkbahn, which traverses a 6km long circuit around the Britzer Garten in the German capital, re-opened on Good Friday.

The line was originally built and opened in 1985 for the Bundesgartenschau (Federal Garden Show). It employs three LKM Ns2f diesels (upper right), built by the Locomotivbau Karl Marx in Babelsberg (Potsdam) in the 1950s.

The line was forced to cease operations in 2019 due to the condition of its trackwork. Relaying of 2.1km was carried out using new steel sleepers, only for the arrival of the

Covid pandemic to prevent the line reopening in 2020.

Lifting of Covid restrictions also allowed the Parkeisenbahn Wuhlheide, a former Children's Railway in East Berlin, to operate steam services over the Easter weekend (lower right). Tickets were sold to match places in the carriages and each ticket given a seat number.

Again sleeper renewal required changes to the complex and normally circular route of the line, with the loco running round its train at Betriebshof station. The line also had a water train spraying the undergrowth to guard against fires.

Thanks to Dominic Emery for supplying the information and photos for these reports.





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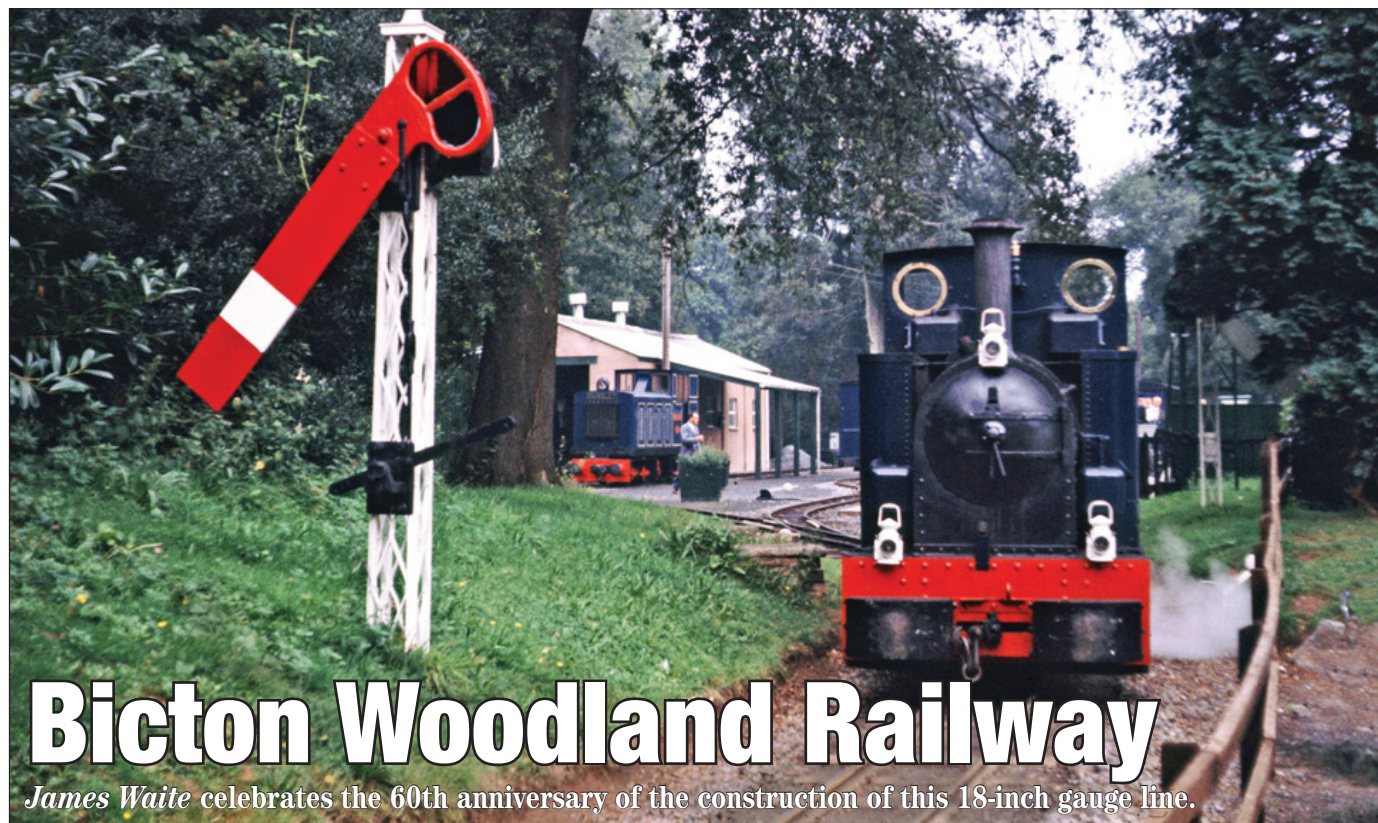


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Bicton Woodland Railway

James Waite celebrates the 60th anniversary of the construction of this 18-inch gauge line.

The summer of 2022 is a timely moment to look back at this pretty little railway near Budleigh Salterton in East Devon. It made a small, though significant, contribution to the preservation of the UK's narrow gauge heritage.

The Bicton estate dates back more than a thousand years and there has been a grand house there since medieval times. In 1616 it came into the ownership of the Rolle family, and in 1735 work began on laying out its gardens.

These gardens were greatly expanded in the early 19th century under the direction of Lady Louisa Rolle, an enthusiastic gardener and plantswoman, and it wasn't long before Bicton became home to one of the UK's most significant botanical

collections. An ornamental lake, dug by French prisoners of war in 1812, forms the centrepiece, and especially notable is the spectacular Palm House with its curved glass walls, completed in 1825 and a precursor of the larger one at Kew Gardens.

The house was taken over by Devon County Council after the Second World War for use as a horticultural college, but the Rolle family's successors retained the gardens. After some 20 years of relative neglect, work began on their restoration in the late 1950s with a view to opening them to the public. Without access to the house being available another attraction was considered desirable and in 1961 thoughts turned to a miniature railway, both as an attraction in itself

and to help less able-bodied visitors reach outlying parts of the gardens.

One problem was that the estate was hilly. Gradients steeper than 1 in 30 would be needed and none of the miniature locos available seemed likely to cope. Mr N D G James, the estate's agent who was overseeing the project, widened his search to include proper narrow gauge locomotives, and soon discovered the 18-inch gauge 0-4-0 tank 'Woolwich' (Avonside 1748/1915) in a dealer's yard at Brackley in Northamptonshire.

Woolwich was the last surviving steam loco from the 18in gauge system at Woolwich Arsenal, and had seen very little service since its most recent overhaul. A firm from Bedfordshire was commissioned to put it back into working order, the only significant change being the replacement of its spark-arresting chimney by a conventional one. A test steaming took place on 9th April 1962 and two days later Woolwich moved to its new home.

Above: 'Woolwich' (Avonside 1748/1915), pulls out of Bicton Gardens terminus on the Bicton Woodland Railway. The diesel 'Carnegie' (Hunslet 4254/1954) is visible alongside the station buildings.

Left: Woolwich, the last survivor of the 0-4-0T Charlton class, at Bicton with George Clarke at the controls.

Photos by James Waite, at the Bicton Woodland Railway between 1967 and 1971 except where otherwise stated



Woolwich Arsenal

Founded in the 17th century, the Arsenal grew to become the world's biggest armaments factory and also the largest industrial facility ever seen in the UK. When it reached its zenith during the First World War it directly or indirectly provided work for more than 100,000 people. The first standard gauge railway in the complex was completed in 1859, but a narrow gauge system was also needed to serve parts of the site that the bigger railway

could not reach, to misquote the well-known Heineken advert!

The 18in gauge was chosen for Woolwich after its successful introduction in 1862 on the London & North Western Railway's Crewe Works tramway, which served a similar complex of closely spaced buildings. Military authorities were at that time advocating the gauge for service behind the front line in times of conflict.

For many years the system was served by a disparate array of mostly conservative and sometimes whimsical loco types, but this changed in 1915 when Avonside supplied the 16 thoroughly modern 0-4-0Ts that became the Arsenal's Charlton class.

The design of this class developed from locos Avonside had built for the sugar lines of what is now KwaZulu Natal, the earliest of which was the 20in gauge 0-4-0T (1422/1900), supplied to Reynolds Brothers at Esperanza. Changes included the use of outside Walschaerts valve gear and a straight instead of a dropped footplate. Six of the class, including Woolwich, were oil fired for use where there was a risk of explosion, while the remainder burned coal.

By the end of the war there were 70 miles of 18in gauge track in use at Woolwich, with at one point some 64 steam locos employed, but thereafter the Arsenal downsized rapidly and the standard gauge system became increasingly preferred. By 1922 only the Charltons remained at work.

The narrow gauge had also been notable as the home of the UK's first successful internal combustion loco, named 'Lachesis' and built by Richard Hornsby & Sons in 1896. Five more followed but they had all gone by 1919, while 13 Charltons were withdrawn between 1932 and 1936.

'Albert', a chunky 0-4-4-0 diesel mechanical with outside coupling rods, arrived from Hunslet in 1934 and took on much of the remaining main line work, leaving the three surviving Charltons to shunt the more constricted lines, aided later by three small Ruston & Hornsby locos.

'Carnegie', similar to Albert, was delivered in 1954 by when Woolwich was the last surviving Charlton and was coming to the end of a protracted overhaul. Further reduced activity in the aftermath of the Suez crisis led to the loco being stored in 1956, and it was despatched to the Brackley yard in 1959. The last section of the 18-inch railway closed in 1971.

Preparing to open

Mr James consulted W J K Davies, the well-known light railway expert, about suitable carriages or wagons for Bicton. Despite the unusual gauge

Right: Reynolds Brothers' 0-4-0T Avonside 1422/1900, the first steam loco built for service on the sugar railways of KwaZulu Natal and one of the forerunners of the Charlton class. It is now preserved at the Maydon Wharf sugar terminal in Durban. December 2014.

Below: 0-4-0T Sezela no 1 (Avonside 1719/1915), the first of the well-known 2ft 0-4-0Ts at this sugar factory, was built just a few months before Woolwich. Its resemblance to the Charlton class is abundantly clear. Here it stands on the lawn at the factory in December 2014.



this proved unexpectedly easy, since the Arsenal had several powder vans available. But one problem was that only their frames and bogies could be bought because the Arsenal required that the bodies of all vehicles previously used to carry explosives should be burned. It must have been an interesting process if traces of the explosives were caught by the flames!

Six were acquired, along with one complete open wagon which had never been used for explosives. All had been built between 1901 and 1915 and there was also at least one spare bogie.

The frames were used as the basis for three open and two closed carriages. The body of a 2ft gauge vehicle, acquired from RAF Faulds, was later fitted to the sixth frame and a small guard's van was built around the spare bogie. A fourth open carriage was later built on the frame of the Faulds vehicle.

Tracklaying began on 3rd May 1962, and the railway as first planned was completed on the following 10th August. From a terminus at Bicton Gardens station the route passes the lake and continues to Pine Junction, from where a balloon loop runs through a pinetum. The total track length at that time including sidings was 1,357 yards.

Mr James consulted the shedmaster at Exmouth Junction about a possible driver for the line, and on his recommendation took on George Clarke, who had begun his career under the London & South Western Railway and was keen to continue railway work after retiring.

The line opened on 6th April 1963. Trains ran almost every day and there was a need for backup motive power. 'Jack', the 18in gauge Hunslet 0-4-0T which worked for John Knowles Metal Box Limited at Ashby-de-la-Zouch until 1958, was

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offered on loan, but the cost of restoring it was considered excessive. Instead one of the Arsenal's Ruston & Hornsby diesels was acquired – it had been languishing at the Brackley yard along with Woolwich. At its new home it was fitted with enclosed bodywork and, appropriately, was named 'Bicton'.

In 1976 a 400-yard branch serving the Hermitage to the west of the lake was built, giving an out-and-back ride of 2,380 yards and bringing the railway to the configuration it still has today. Nearly all of it runs through woodland, with the only significant breaks being beside the lake and across an avenue at the far end of the pinetum.

The Hunslet diesel Albert had been scrapped in 1961, but Carnegie continued in service at the Arsenal until 1964 and after being found in an Essex scrapyards was bought for Bicton early in 1966. By then traffic had grown so much that two-train operation was needed and an extra platform was built at the terminus. Two further small diesels without Arsenal connections were subsequently acquired.

Features of the line

One of the Arsenal system's most distinctive features was the use of oval-shaped blocks as buffers because of the sharp bends within the complex. Only Albert and Carnegie carried conventional ones in view of

their main-line use, but their couplings were fully compatible with the other stock. The Arsenal locos and stock all retained their existing buffers at Bicton.

Lower-quadrant signalling equipment from Lymington, on the Southern Railway Exeter to Exmouth branch line, was purchased when the signal box there closed in 1962. It must have pre-dated the Southern's adoption of upper-quadrant signalling in 1928 and may well have been of LSWR origin. The intention was to install a complete signalling system, though I only recall the signals as non-working decorative features. Lymington also provided the equipment for a phone line installed between Bicton Gardens and Pine Junction stations – it must have come into its own when two trains were running on the line.

At the Arsenal, Woolwich and Carnegie – and probably other locos – were latterly painted green with yellow lining. This was replaced at Bicton by royal blue, again with yellow lining though at times this was omitted.

In 1984 Woolwich visited the Ffestiniog Railway in north Wales, initially for assessment, and in 1986 received a heavy overhaul. By the late 1990s a much lighter shade of blue was being used.

The park, including the railway, was handed over to a charitable trust in 1986, but the

arrangement was not long-lived since it was sold in 1998 to Simon and Valerie Lister. Woolwich, Carnegie and the carriages were by then showing their age.

The Listers therefore bought a new steam-outline diesel and carriages from Alan Keef Ltd to take over the work. It wasn't quite the end of the old era, however, as Bicton stayed on, and in 2007 Keefs rebuilt it as a diesel-hydraulic with steam-outline bodywork. Two of the old carriages are also still stored at Bicton.

My first visit to Bicton was in 1963. Getting there involved rides behind a West Country class Pacific to Sidmouth Junction and a BR 80000 class 2-6-4T to East Budleigh, on the Tipton St John's to Exmouth branch, followed by a long walk through the fields. Mr Clarke was most welcoming and seemed genuinely to enjoy meeting enthusiasts. I returned several times between 1967 and 1971, but didn't go again until August 2000.

On the move

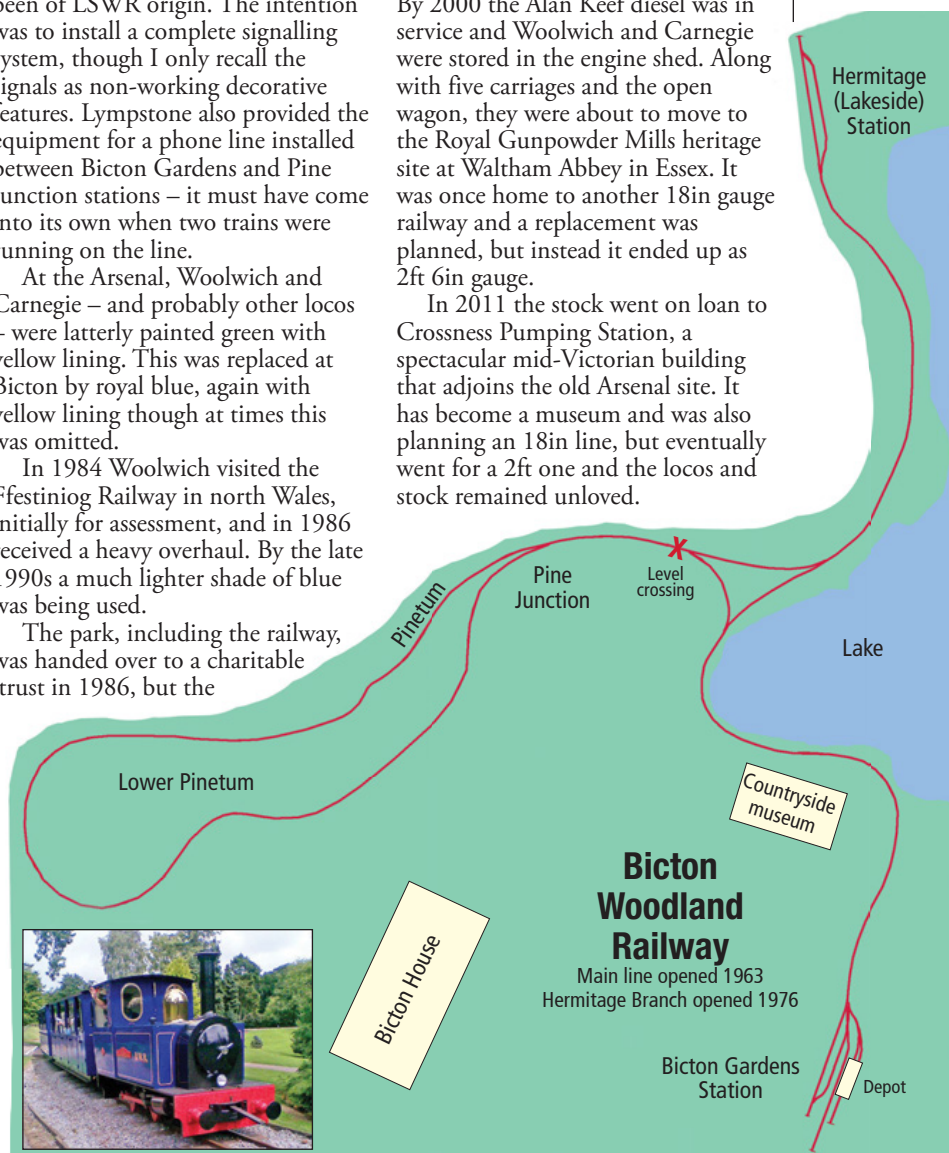
By 2000 the Alan Keef diesel was in service and Woolwich and Carnegie were stored in the engine shed. Along with five carriages and the open wagon, they were about to move to the Royal Gunpowder Mills heritage site at Waltham Abbey in Essex. It was once home to another 18in gauge railway and a replacement was planned, but instead it ended up as 2ft 6in gauge.

In 2011 the stock went on loan to Crossness Pumping Station, a spectacular mid-Victorian building that adjoins the old Arsenal site. It has become a museum and was also planning an 18in line, but eventually went for a 2ft one and the locos and stock remained unloved.

Left: The route that runs alongside the lake is an attractive feature at the Bicton line. Hauling the train is Carnegie.

Below left: In its distinctive blue livery, Woolwich is stored inside Bicton engine shed awaiting its move to Waltham Abbey. August 2000.

Below: Map of the Bicton line – the inset shows an Alan Keef steam outline loco at work on today's railway. Photo: Wikipedia Commons





Above: Carnegie, painted once more in her old green livery, at Statfold Barn. 10th March 2022.

In 2020 they moved again, this time to the Statfold Barn Railway which is also the home of 'Jack', the Hunslet 0-4-0WT that nearly moved to Bicton in 1962. They were accompanied by a complete powder van, the only survivor of the many that once ran at the Arsenal. I have not discovered how it managed to escape the flames!

With the usual Statfold panache, restoration of Carnegie began almost immediately, and as I write this it has partly been completed. The loco is painted once more in its old green livery, though significant work on the

Above right: The last surviving Arsenal powder van went with the locos to Statfold.

Below: Woolwich crosses the avenue at the southern end of the Bicton line.



drive of the rear bogie is outstanding. Woolwich suffers from a bent frame and restoration is a longer-term project. When they are finished perhaps the Listers will invite them to revisit their old Devon home! **NGW**

More Information

Details of opening times for Bicton Gardens and its railway can be found at www.bictongardens.co.uk

Research for this article was made much easier by authoritative accounts in the first two editions of the Bicton railway's guidebook written in 1963 and 1967 by Mr James. The third

edition appeared during the Lister era in 2013. Although Woolwich and its friends had long since disappeared, it gives due prominence to them and the vital contribution that the original Bicton enterprise made to the preservation of the UK's 18in gauge heritage. It emphasises that without it the locos and stock would almost certainly have been scrapped.

The Royal Arsenal Railways (ISBN 978-1473844001) by Mark Smithers, is likely to remain the definitive history of the Woolwich system for many years to come and is essential reading for more information.



Last Train to Les Brenets?

Donald Brooks looks at three contrasting Swiss metre-gauge lines, with emphasis on a short branch due to become a busway.

Switzerland is usually considered the European country which has done most to maintain modern narrow gauge railways as an integral part of its public transport system. And justifiably so, when projects such as the construction of the completely new Vereina route to the Lower Engadin and current work to replace the Albula Tunnel are considered. But it isn't all plain sailing for the narrow gauge as the contrasting recent fates of three short metre gauge lines demonstrate.

A railway which survives and thrives is the 5km Meiringen –

Innertkirchen Bahn (MIB) in the Berner Oberland. Built in 1926 by the Kraftwerke Oberhasli (KWO) for the construction of reservoirs and hydro-electric power stations, it introduced a passenger service in 1946 with four-wheeled battery railcars. Overhead electrification followed in the mid-1970s, using secondhand German trams until Stadler supplied a new 1200V DC car in 1996.

The MIB connects with the Luzern – Interlaken metre gauge Brünig line, now part of the Zentralbahn (ZB), at Meiringen but

Above: When heavy traffic was expected, a trailer was added to Les Brenets trains. On a sunny autumn day no 3 and a trailer wait to leave Le Locle. The connecting SBB standard gauge service from La Chaux-de-Fonds is just visible behind.

Photos by Donald Brooks, October 1986

until recently terminated at its own platform an unhelpful 200 metres away. Since the main station was rebuilt in 2010 half-hourly MIB services have been fully integrated with the ZB, which has owned the line since the beginning of 2021 after KWO decided to concentrate on its core business. The ZB is currently investigating the possibility of through trains between Interlaken and Innertkirchen, despite the lines being electrified at different voltages.

Further west, in Canton Fribourg, the long and circuitous metre gauge route connecting Montbovon with



Palézieux opened in stages between 1901 and 1904. From the main intermediate stop of Bulle, 25km from Montbovon, a 5.4km long branch to Broc opened in 1912, terminating at Broc-Fabrique just outside the Cailler chocolate factory, part of the Nestlé empire since 1929.

The electrified branch was latterly operated by Transports Publics Fribourgeois, which decided in 2014 to rebuild it to standard gauge for through trains from Broc to Fribourg and Bern, using its existing Bulle-Romont standard gauge route to connect with the SBB main line. The last narrow gauge trains ran in early 2021, replaced by a bus until the first stage of the new line opens in December 2022, almost certainly for passengers only.

Until 2018 Nestlé used the branch for freight services, with standard gauge wagons descending the curves and gradients down to Broc on Vevey transporter bogies, traffic which now seems to have been permanently lost to rail.

Harsher fate?

At least from 2023 it will be possible to travel by rail between Bulle and Broc again. A worse prospect than mere regauging looks set to be in store for a third Swiss metre gauge branch, the line from Le Locle to Les Brenets in Canton Neuchâtel's Jura mountains, which is right on the French frontier.

When a railway was first mooted in the mid-19th century the proposal was for a much longer metre gauge route from Le Locle, running via Les Brenets to the French city of Besançon. In the end a standard gauge line was built on a different alignment, leaving Les Brenets to become the terminus of its own railway, a little more than four kilometres long.

The Régional des Brenets (RdB) opened in 1890 with two diminutive 0-6-0T locomotives built by SLM, the Swiss Locomotive & Machine Works, and joined by a third two years later. In 1947 the RdB merged with another nearby metre gauge line, the longer route from La Chaux-de-Fonds to Les Ponts-de-Martel, forming the Chemins de fer des Montagnes Neuchâteloises (CMN).

Both lines were electrified in 1950 at 1500 volts DC, the ex-RdB route running its first electric trains on 1st July. Unusually for Switzerland CMN ordered five BDe4/4 electric railcars from an Italian builder, Reggiane, and 72 years later the remaining two cars, 3 and 5, still provide the daily service to Les Brenets.

All three of the steam locomotives also survive, with no 1 'Le Doubs',



Below left: No 3 has emerged from the last tunnel on the line on the approach to Les Brenets at the end of its journey. The restricted loading gauge in the tunnels was a factor in the rejection of a plan to convert the line to standard gauge.

Above: After arriving at Les Brenets, no 3 propels its trailer into the shed before returning to Le Locle solo.

Below: Loco no 2 'Le Père Frédéric', preserved in the unusual glazed concrete 'tunnel' outside Les Brenets station. It forms a memorial to the industrialist without whose generosity the line might never have existed.

SLM 618 of 1890, at the Blonay – Chamby heritage line, while 2 and 3 are at Les Brenets and Le Locle respectively. No 2 'Le Père Frédéric', SLM 619 of 1890, named after Frédéric Perret, a local industrialist who gave 25,000 francs towards the building of the RdB, is preserved in a glazed concrete structure just outside Les Brenets station.

In similar fashion to the Meiringen – Innertkirchen Line, a significant proportion of the RdB is in tunnel. Both lines terminate at small villages but gain much of their traffic from tourism – the Aare Gorge in the case of the MIB and the lakes and waterfall of the River Doubs for the RdB.

At the 125th anniversary of the RdB in 2015 the local press reported that on average 327 passengers used the line daily, equating to roughly 120,000 annually – but that 12,000,000 francs were necessary to upgrade the line and its stock. Things deteriorated two years later when axle problems on the elderly railcars forced a temporary closure from 1st August 2017 to 16th April 2018 while one car was repaired with the second following later.

Even today Les Brenets has a

population of barely over 1,000 and in 2020 the RdB's current operator, Transports Publics Neuchâtelois or transN, took the decision that the essential investment was unjustifiable and that part of the railway would be converted to a busway, due to open in 2025.

The electric buses will run half-hourly, double the frequency of the train, using the converted trackbed between Le Locle and the isolated halt of Les Frêtes, roughly half way. From here the buses will use normal roads, running through to the tourist areas of Les Brenets though terminating at the station in Le Locle.

There is local opposition to the plan and while the end of the line will be regretted by narrow gauge enthusiasts too, perhaps it is something of a minor miracle that such a short route serving one small community survived so long with just two generations of motive power.

Closure is scheduled for 2023, though transN cannot yet confirm the precise date. Anyone interested in seeing some of the oldest trains in Europe still in daily service should head for Le Locle as soon as possible, after checking online that the line has not closed prematurely. **NGW**



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A very photogenic month...

New sections of line, locos on their travels and of course the odd Gala ensured the photographers did not run short of subject matter over the past few weeks...



Left: As reported in the UK News pages Leighton Buzzard Railway opened its new extension up Munday's Hill in style on 30th April, with a Simplex-hauled train of skip wagons pacing the first special train up the hill. Steve Sedgwick got this on-train view.

Below: James Waite pictured Ffestiniog Railway resident Hunslet 'Hugh Napier' with 'Elin', visiting from the Richmond Light Railway on the evening of 29th April during the Ffestiniog Railway Society AGM weekend, standing on the Cob awaiting the token to Harbour station. The picture provides an interesting comparison between a Quarry Hunslet in its original form and Elin, which was rebuilt with a higher-pitched boiler from a Marshall traction engine in 1938 and fitted with a specially built tank to match it.





Above: The other visitor to north Wales from the Richmond Light Railway, Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Sybil', enjoyed a run up the Welsh Highland line on 23rd April, pictured in the Aberglaslyn Pass by *Joey Evans*.

Below: Back on 'home ground' at the Statfold Barn Railway, *Joey Evans* pictured this meeting of two very different kinds of horsepower on 27th April, with Hudsell-Clarke 'Fiji' hauling the train.



Overleaf: Heywood 0-4-OT 'Katie' may be a part of the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway's museum collection but the loco enjoys a run up the Cumbrian line when the occasion allows. During the line's Gala at the end of April *Matt Ditch* pictured Katie on a train to Ravenglass, near the site of Gill Force Junction where the original line to Boot branched off the line to Gill Force mine.

**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**







More scenes from the Ravenglass & Eskdale Gala from *Matt Ditch*. Above the line's newest arrival, Krauss Pacific 'Whillan Beck' paired with the recently overhauled Clarkson 2-8-2 'River Mite' on the climb up Hollin How bank with a train for Dalegarth.

In the shot below the *NGW* editor's favourite loco, Davey Paxman 2-8-2 'River Esk' (something to do with footplating the loco at a very young age in the 1970s...) is seen with a good head of steam climbing Hollin How bank with a service to Dalegarth. Leading the train is the initial member of a new class of vehicles built for the R&ER by the Ffestiniog Railway, clearly showing its more generous proportions compared to normal passenger accommodation on the 15-inch gauge line.



Missing the Boat in Cumbria

David Joy relates how an island quest to a remote industry location ended in deep dismay.

It happened all too often when it came to capturing the dying days of 'real' narrow gauge steam. In the late 1950s information was sparse and it was common to learn of a line that clearly needed a visit at the earliest possible opportunity. Plans were drawn up with eager anticipation, the destination duly reached and hopes ran high.

Then would come the bleakest disappointment. The line had closed at short notice, or switched to diesel traction, or steam had ended as recently as the previous week. It was a case of metaphorically missing the boat, although on one unforgettable occasion more than 60 years ago this proved to be more than a mere figure of speech.

As an enthusiastic junior member of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, I was fascinated to read its November 1959 *Newsletter* with details of the Piel & Walney Gravel Company. The note by John Newman made it all too tempting: "Situated at the southern end of Walney Island, approximately nine miles from Barrow-in-Furness, this concern operates a line of 36-inch gauge connecting the gravel workings with a pier from which it transfers gravel into ocean-going ships.

"All their output goes out this way, and when a boat comes in every

ten to fourteen days every available loco is pressed into service. This, in an endeavour to load on board within the eight to nine hours the tide will allow."

Adding to the enticement were details of five steam locomotives – one was a typical Orenstein & Koppel well tank of 1930, but there were also two saddle tanks from the little-known firm of Grant Ritchie of Kilmarnock. Above all there were two former vertical-boilered engines built by Balmforth and now of "most unusual appearance".

The note continued: "Apparently, when the original boilers wore out, the management, instead of buying new ones at prohibitive cost, decided instead to buy two secondhand traction engine boilers, available very cheaply from a scrap dealers.

Thus one has a Robey boiler, and the other one started life on a Burrell showman's engine. Both locos carry a traction engine chimney, plus the cylinder castings on top of the boiler!"

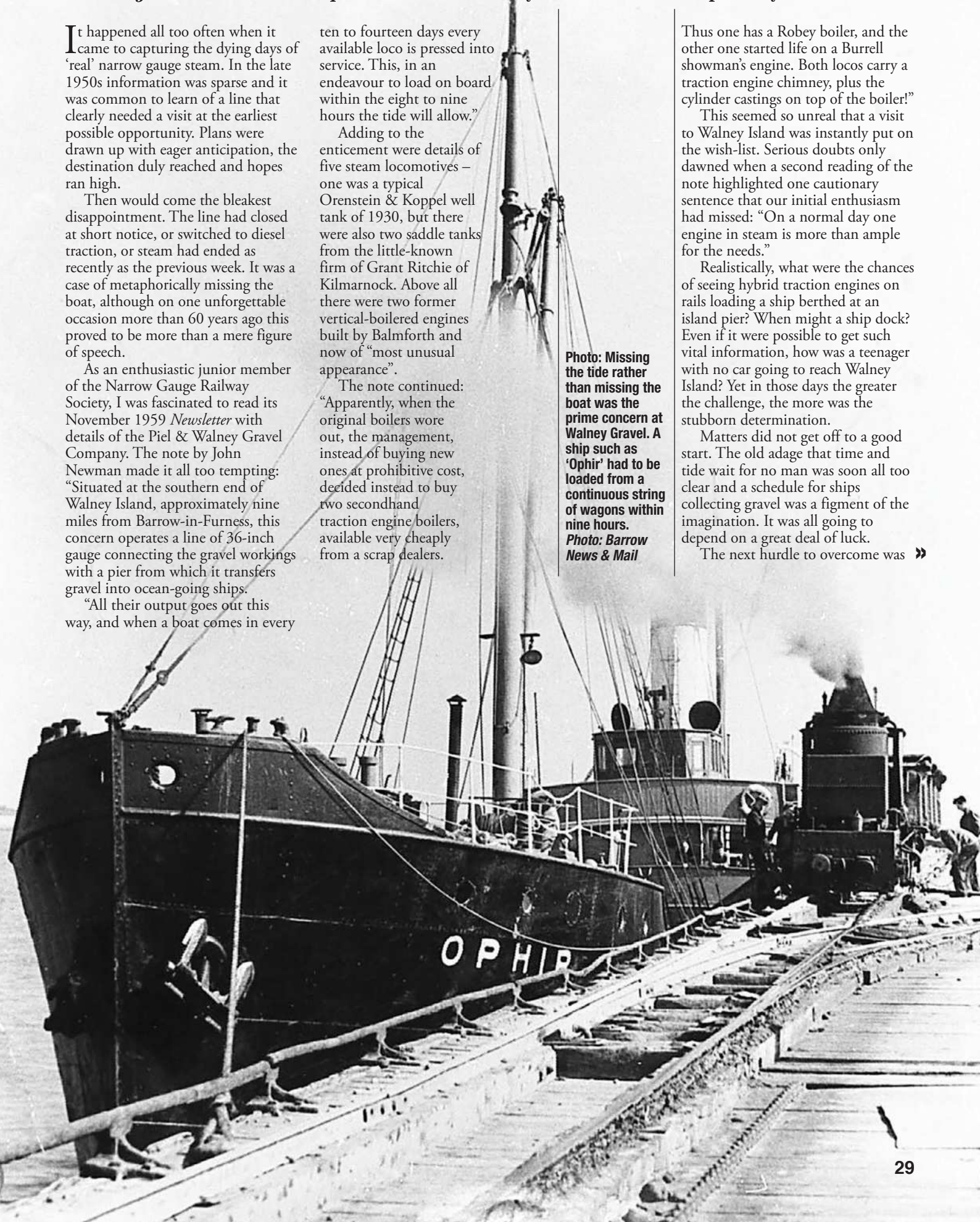
This seemed so unreal that a visit to Walney Island was instantly put on the wish-list. Serious doubts only dawned when a second reading of the note highlighted one cautionary sentence that our initial enthusiasm had missed: "On a normal day one engine in steam is more than ample for the needs."

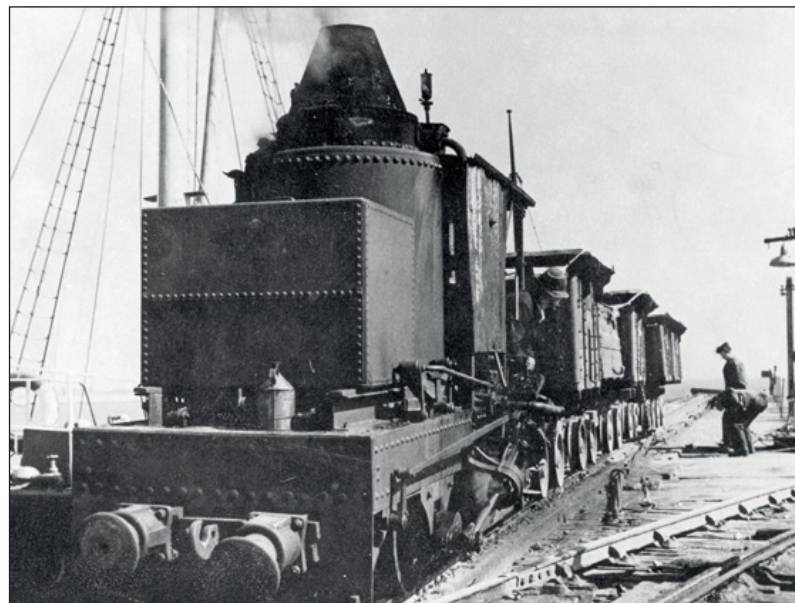
Realistically, what were the chances of seeing hybrid traction engines on rails loading a ship berthed at an island pier? When might a ship dock? Even if it were possible to get such vital information, how was a teenager with no car going to reach Walney Island? Yet in those days the greater the challenge, the more was the stubborn determination.

Matters did not get off to a good start. The old adage that time and tide wait for no man was soon all too clear and a schedule for ships collecting gravel was a figment of the imagination. It was all going to depend on a great deal of luck.

The next hurdle to overcome was »

Photo: Missing the tide rather than missing the boat was the prime concern at Walney Gravel. A ship such as 'Ophir' had to be loaded from a continuous string of wagons within nine hours.
Photo: Barrow News & Mail





Left: The older Balmforth loco, known on Walney as 'Coffee Pot 1' and coupled to a rake of side-tipping wagons for unloading gravel at the pier in 1953. The dual sprung buffers were a distinctive feature. Photo: Barrow News & Mail

Below left: This well-known but highly evocative portrait of 'Coffee Pot 1' was taken in September 1950. Seen as a classic narrow gauge image, it has heightened the interest in Balmforth locos.

Below: Balmforth Brothers 'Coffee Pot 2' underwent an extraordinary transformation in February 1955. Fitting a boiler from a Marshall portable traction engine prolonged the loco's life for five years.

Uncredited photos by Frank Jones

an unexpected layer of bureaucracy. The south end of Walney Island is a nature reserve and written sanction had to be obtained from Barrow Town Hall before a visit could even be contemplated. Eventually a permit was received, but there was then the grim reality of school exams and it would be September 1960 before the island quest could be made. Would it be too late?

Going west

With decidedly mixed feelings, I embarked on the only possible means of heading west. The bike was bundled into the back of a Land Rover and I was duly taken down from the family farm to be deposited at Skipton station.

It then seemed an interminable rail journey to Carnforth and onto Barrow where serious cycling had to begin. Out beyond the docks, across the bridge to Walney Island and into surroundings that became increasingly wild and windswept. Once past the former smuggling hamlet of Biggar, the narrow road ran

between tangled hedges and across marsh favoured by shelduck before deteriorating into a rough track lapped by high tides.

Suddenly, the gravel workings and railway loomed into view, looking totally incongruous in a landscape of dazzling shingle and marram-thatched dunes sporting thousands of squawking birds. The line to flooded gravel pits led past a corrugated-iron engine shed, in which were two small Hudswell Clarke diesels.

Outside, the O&K 0-4-0WT 'Gannet' was in light steam but in those days it was scarcely anything special and its condition looked near-terminal. There was little sign of life and no trace of hybrid traction engines on rails or the other two locomotives that had been mentioned in the previous year's NGRS *Newsletter*. The scrap merchants had been and gone.

Saddest of all, there was no ship berthed at a wooden pier that had clearly seen better days. Luck had let me down. In more sense than one, I had missed the boat.

There was just time to take a few photographs of the line at rest, sketch a track plan and then peddle furiously back to Barrow to catch the last train eastwards. Walney Island joined a lengthy list of places that had promised so much only to fall far short of high hopes.

Much later it became painfully apparent that a visit earlier in 1960 might not have been quite so dismal. Even if there had again been no ship, four of the five locomotives listed in the November 1959 *Newsletter* were still there.

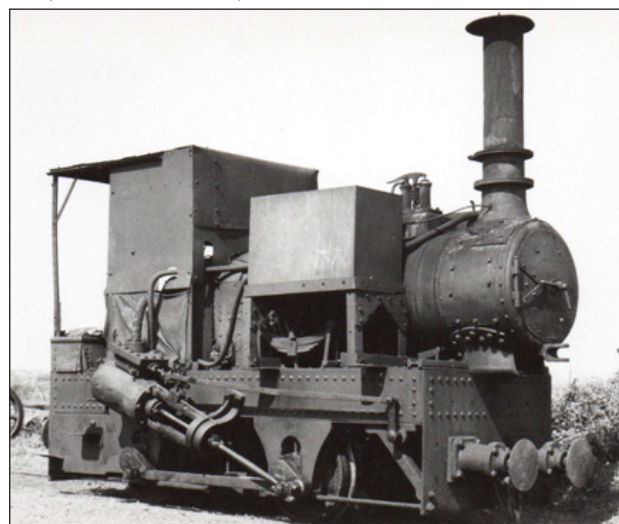
One of the Grant Ritchie 0-6-0STs 'Wadham', delivered new in 1903, was scrapped in February 1960. Yet it seems its older sister of 1886 survived for several more weeks, as did the Balmforth locomotive with its Burrell traction engine boiler. Most galling of all, the other Balmforth engine is now recorded as scrapped in September 1960. I must have missed it by days!

At least I was one of the relatively small number of narrow gauge devotees to get to the far reaches of Walney Island. The railway had not long to survive. A ferocious gale of February 1962 damaged the pier to the extent that repair could not be justified. Gravel extraction ceased and the O&K well tank was scrapped in the following year.

Today there is no trace of the railway, nor any hint that the line and its pier once served Barrow Salt Works close to the gravel workings. During a brief but hectic ten years from 1897, a pair of Falcon 0-4-0STs carried coal from the pier and took out salt processed from brine.

Two coffee pots

The railway may have gone but not the abiding interest in its Balmforth locomotives. This is in part due to a 1950 photograph of the older of the two at work as a vertical-boilered 'coffee pot'. Often reproduced and widely regarded as a classic narrow



gauge image, it includes the driver Walter Lauderdale with his pipe and battered hat. The corrugated-iron apology for a cab was an attempt at protection from gales sweeping in from the Irish Sea.

Another facet is the obscurity of Balmforth products compared with the De Winton coffee pots of North Wales. Quite when and how many locomotives William Balmforth built at his Peel Ings Foundry in Rodley, near Leeds, is unknown but it could well have remained in single figures. The older Walney engine was completed in the mid-1870s. When William died the business passed to his two sons and it was Balmforth Brothers that produced the other Walney coffee pot about 1903.

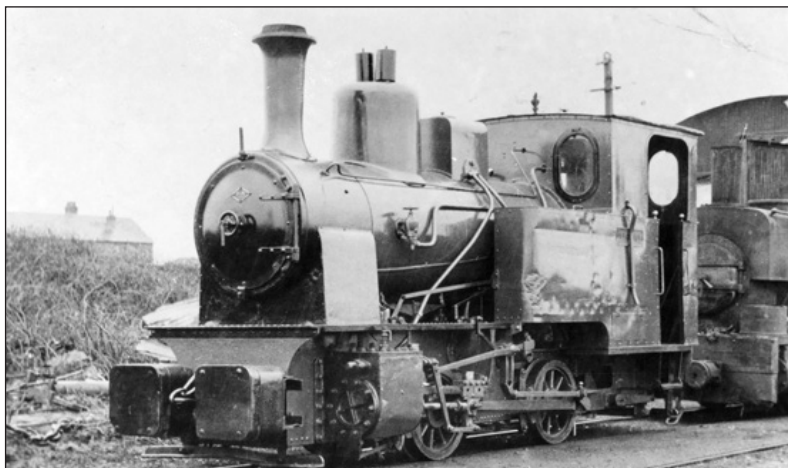
Enterprise of a high order saw the ingenious rebuild with traction-engine boilers to create an extraordinary vision with over-sized chimney and protruding smokebox. The older coffee pot received its Burrell boiler in 1956, a year after its younger sister had survived essential surgery. Contrary to what had once been thought, it did not use a Robey boiler but one from a Marshall portable engine that had been heating some local greenhouses.

Able to venture onto the fragile pier, the 'converted' Balmforths only had the briefest of lives before succumbing to the Hudswell Clarke diesels. Word spread in the railway world that they had to be seen to be believed, although the gravel company took a different view. An enthusiast who sent a letter in 1958 asking for permission to visit duly received a polite reply. It suggested

Right: Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-OWT (12242 of 1930) soon after it came to Walney Gravel in May 1953. Six years later its name changed from 'Vyrnwy' to the more pronounceable 'Gannet'. Photo: Walter Shepherd Collection

Below right: The chunky 'Wadham' (Grant Ritchie 435 of 1903) was one of two sister 0-6-OSTs that hauled loaded wagons out of the gravel pits. They then handed over to a much lighter 'Coffee Pot' to take them onto the pier.

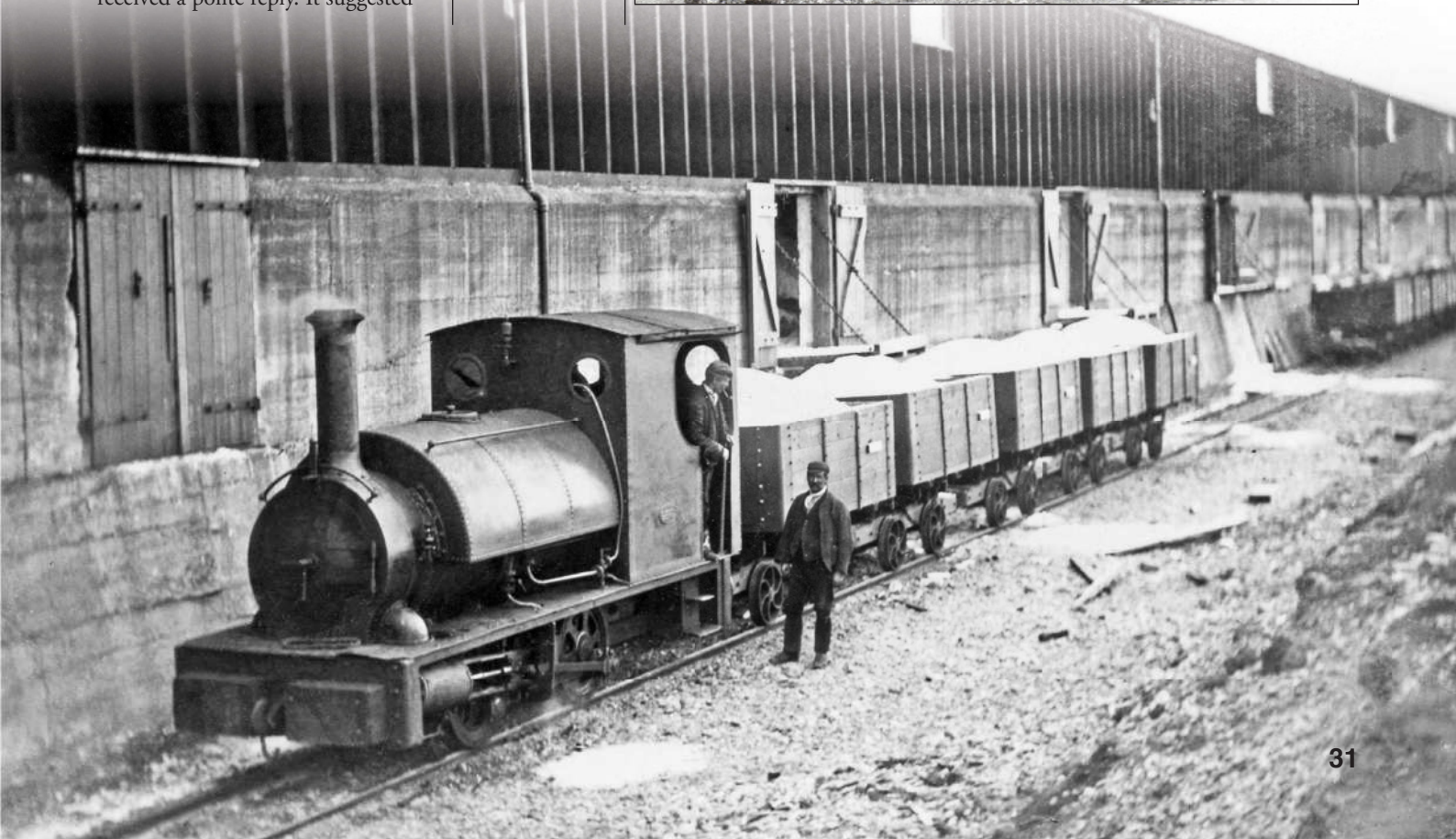
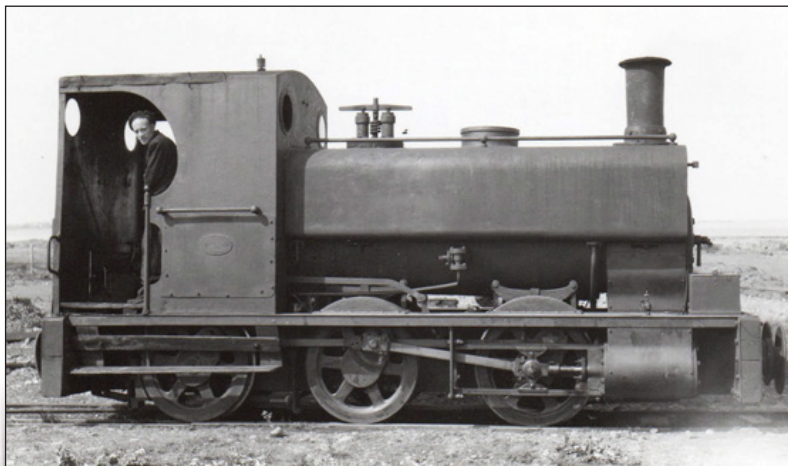
Below: Falcon 0-4-OST 'Mersey' of 1882 at Barrow Salt Works, which for ten years from 1897 used the same railway as Piel & Walney Gravel. Photo: Cumbria Record Office, Barrow – James Melville Collection



that the arduous journey was no longer worth the bother. Both Balmforths had been rebuilt and were now "not so unusual as hitherto." Opinions differ! **NGW**

■ Much help in preparing this feature has been given by Peter Holmes, who

supplied definitive information from the forthcoming *Furness, Westmorland and the Isle of Man Handbook* that he has compiled for the Industrial Railway Society. He is the author of *The Railways of Walney Island*, which will shortly be published by the Cumbrian Railways Association.



Narrow Gauge on Gotland



Frank Stenvall visits a Swedish island with a long narrow-gauge history and a popular preserved line.

The island of Gotland in the Baltic is roughly the size of Kent and has had a network of narrow gauge railways, built by several companies and the first line opened in 1878. The railways were nationalised in 1947-48 and the last section closed in 1960. The gauge is unique to Sweden; three Swedish feet or 891mm (2ft 11in).

In 1972 a society was formed to restore the train that had been rusting away in the open at Romakloster and to establish the Gotlands Hesselby Järnväg as a preserved railway. This was opened at Gotlands Hesselby station in 1978, but the line was only about a kilometre long.

The natural extension was six

kilometres south to Roma, the former junction where the sugar factory was located. Most of the trackbed was still there, but about 700 metres had been reclaimed for farming, and the farmers were unwilling to have a railway across their fields again.

In 2007 the line was extended from its terminus at 'The Oak' for a few hundred metres across a road and a stream to Munkebos at the edge of the disputed field, and tracks were laid out at Tule halt on the other side of the field. This section was extended in the following years, but through traffic was still just a dream in an uncertain future.

The breakthrough came in June

"The farmers were unwilling to have a line across their fields again..."

2012, when farmers signed the contract to sell the land. Equally important was approval of EU and state grants to finance the extension into Roma. On 17th April, diesel shunter Z4p 397 and a ballast wagon were brought by lorry to Tule to ballast the mile of track there. It was 54 years since a locomotive had been



at the station – and then only to lift the track.

A particular problem was the small bridge at Roma Kungsgård, which is shared with a farm road and required signal protection. The line was opened in stages and inaugurated at Roma on 14 May 2015.

A station with three tracks was built at the northern end of the once vast yard, which now serves other purposes. The present small station building was originally used at the eastern gate to the medieval ring wall at Visby. The line is now accessible by public transport (by bus from Visby).

The well-kept base of the railway, with workshop, wagon shed, and a museum in the former goods shed, is at Hässelby (the earlier spelling 'Hesselby' is now considered retro). Restored rolling stock is on display and the station café serves saffron pancakes with salm berry (blue raspberry) jam, a famous local delicacy. The timetable shows three return workings over the four-mile line on Sundays between June to August, four days a week from July till mid-August.

Motive power

At present the trains are worked by three small class Z4p diesel locomotives. The pride of the railway, Slite–Roma railway 2-8-0T 'Dalhem' (Henschel 1920), has had its boiler overhauled and attention is now being turned to the bearings and valve gear – completion depends on finance being available.

It is also hoped one day to bring 0-6-0T 'Klintehamn' (Kristinehamn 1897) back into service, but there are no plans to restore to working order a gem in the collection – this is 0-6-0T Gotlands Järnväg 3 'Gotland' (Nohab 1878), which was awarded a silver medal at the 1878 Paris exhibition before being delivered. There is also one industrial 0-4-0T.

Work is progressing on two other motive power projects. One is Mönsterås–Åseda XC 10, which was originally built in 1910 as a Purrey steam railcar. In 1932 it was rebuilt with a petrol engine, but it was recorded as scrapped in 1940.

Some years ago, however, it was discovered that the railcar body had survived as an outhouse. A new underframe has now been constructed and work on the engine and transmission is continuing.

The other current project is the reconstruction of a Hilding Carlsson railcar, the type that dominated services on Gotland in the final decade. This will be an exact replica of SJ Yo1p 690, using parts from a standard gauge vehicle that has been salvaged from Denmark.



Heading: Slite – Roma Railway no 3 'Dalhem' in August 2014, the principal motive power of the line until 2018. This loco's frame and motion are now in need of costly attention.

Map: Railways of Gotland, the heritage line marked in red.

Below left: Dalhem departs Hässelby, August 2015.

Above: Hässelby station – the café is noted for its pancakes. Dalhem arrives from Roma, August 2012.

Above right: Z4p diesel no 312 coupled to a 1903 carriage that entered service in June 2021 after a full restoration.

Right: 0-6-0T no 1 'Klintehamn' at Hässelby, August 2019. Pedal draisines can be hired on off-traffic days at this and several other Swedish former and preserved railway stations.

Latest developments

Even though Sweden has not practised Covid lockdowns, the number of passengers in 2020 was low. In 2021 the railway had a reasonably good season. Because of the pandemic, a few of the large passenger ships normally sailing between Stockholm and capitals on the east coast of the Baltic were diverted to cruises along the Swedish

coast, including calls at Gotland's main port of Visby. On certain days, this brought busloads to the railway's base at Hässelby, 14km inland.

Two new carriages were ready for the season, allowing passengers to spread out. One is former SJ Bop 878, a bogie vehicle on a 20-year loan from the Jädraås–Tallås railway, built in 1911 for the Stockholm–Roslagen system. It seats 63 and has been »





restored and repainted red at the Hässelby workshops.

The other is a cute little four-wheel carriage, SJ Cp 407, originally built in 1903 for the Norsholm–Bersbo railway. It last served as a temporary station building at Vena, just north of Hultsfred on the mainland. It was brought to the island in 1978, but restoration did not start until 2015, a major work which was completed this year.

Limestone railways

The northern part of the island has also had some isolated 600mm and 891mm gauge railways serving limestone quarries. The 891mm gauge line, 1.1km in length, from the quarry and the kiln to the harbour at Bläse was in operation between 1895 and 1954 and lifted in 1972.

The kiln was reopened as a museum in 1985, and six years later part of the track was relaid, now to



“The bigger stations can be easily identified but the majority look like crofts, typically red with white corners...”

Above: The train at Bläse limestone museum, August 2012, headed by the former Heeresfeldbahn diesel loco.

Centre left: The halfway stop at Tule, where the bi-directional T-semaphore is typical of small Swedish branch lines. The station building, with 1950s interior, is available for hire by the week as a holiday cottage.

Left: At Roma three wagons are placed to remind visitors that sugar beet was once the principal goods carried on the line.

Photos by Frank Stenvall, taken in August 2021 except where shown



600mm gauge. Three round trips are operated daily during the season; the departures are at 11.24, 13.02 and 15.03 (‘to lend an impression of a real railway’). Primitive limestone wagons have been fitted with benches.

The single locomotive has an interesting history: Demag 2452 of 1942 was built for the German Heeresfeldbahn and brought to Norway. After the war, in 1946 it was acquired by the Furillen quarry, near Bläse. The new owners found the gearbox full of explosives: the loco had been part of a reserve plan to blow up a bridge if the main plan to sink the ferry carrying heavy water from the plant at Rjukan had failed!

The engine used to be started with the aid of a Volvo engine mounted on a wagon frame. In the past winter, an old 3-cylinder Bolinder-Munkrell tractor engine was fitted in the loco, replacing the old and somewhat cumbersome system.

Preserved stations

More than 60 years after the railways closed, most of their station buildings still stand. The bigger ones can be easily identified, but the majority look like crofts, typically red with white corners, and unless they have retained their nameboards they may be more difficult to make out.

The halt at Tjuls on the Klintehamn–Roma railway has been turned into a small railway museum. Here little has changed since the railway closed in 1953. On Sunday afternoons, the guide welcomes visitors and tells them about life and work on a small station, where crofting was as important for supporting a large family as serving the few trains.

The body of a van, which had served as an outhouse, has been salvaged, fitted with new axles and other items and put on display by the loading quay. It has been joined by a typical wagon for sugar beet. The complete underframe of a wagon was acquired from the mainland and has been fitted with high sides.

Sanda, the halt next to Tjuls, is now also a museum, dedicated to jazz composer and saxophone player Lars Gullin, who was born here in 1928. This museum opened in 2011 and also displays timetables and the like from the railway age. A 4km long path connects the two stations.

Gotland is a popular holiday destination among Swedish people, but relatively few foreign visitors venture here. Gotland must not be confused with Götaland, which is the southern part of mainland Sweden. The island is served by modern car ferries from Nynäshamn and Oskarshamn, and by air. **NGW**

One man's new-build

A superb project in South Australia, as an enthusiast gets closer to fulfilling his two-decade dream to recreate a lost 3ft 6in gauge locomotive class.



New-build locomotives are a familiar part of today's heritage railway scene, whether narrow or standard gauge. No matter that a particular loco or class has long been rendered extinct by the scrapman's torch – for a determined railway or group commissioning a recreation of said engine is almost routine.

What, however, if you are just one person? And the lost narrow gauge locomotive that you really desire to bring back to life is no diminutive prototype but a 3ft 6in gauge 4-4-0 with tender, weighing in at around 36 tonnes and comparable in size to a standard gauge loco?

Well size has certainly not deterred South Australian enthusiast Glenn Smythe, who decided that he really wanted a Z class loco of his own. So far he's spent almost 20 years building it, basically by himself, but now he's beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. One major component still needs making – okay it is the boiler, but when you see what Glenn has achieved already, you won't doubt his determination to see this project through to the finish.

The lost ten

First a brief history. Just ten examples of the Z class were built for South Australian lines, eight by James Martin's Phoenix Foundry at Gawler, and two by the South Australian Railways at the Islington workshops, in 1894-95. The locos were employed on country routes running on from where the broad gauge (5ft 3in) main line terminated, in the Peterborough Division in mid north of the state,

the Mount Gambier Division in the south east and on the isolated Port Lincoln Division. By 1956 all ten had been withdrawn and scrapped.

Enter Glenn, employed with Australia's main-line rail network since completing an apprenticeship in machining in 1989, and whose experience in maintaining as a volunteer a fleet of heritage steam locomotives owned by the Australian Railway Historical Society goes back even before his apprenticeship.

Glenn left the steam work behind in 1998, frustrated by what he described as "volunteer politics", and as his day job in modern running sheds involved mainly finding faults and replacing components, he started a machining and steel fabrication business at home, basically so his engineering skills did not go stale.

By 2000 he admits he was feeling the void left from the volunteer work and thought of how he could fill it. "Building a steam locomotive was not the first thing that came to mind," he insists, adding that initially he thought about constructing a 40ft-long paddle steamer – the major advantage being that it would not need someone's railway to run on...

He kept coming back to steam locos, however, and following the progress of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's project in the UK that would result in the celebrity standard-gauge Pacific 'Tornado', he considered what might be possible on a smaller scale, to build as a private individual.

Choosing what to build was the first challenge. Economies of scale decreed that it should be narrow

gauge, it had to be South Australian and of a class that no longer existed.

According to Glenn the Z class stood out like a neon light. "I had always been a fan of SAR small power, designed by Tom Roberts with the Beyer, Peacock inspiration evident. Also the SAR had many classes of 4-4-0 and not one had survived, so this would fill a huge gap in the state's preservation."

From that point investment in his business was made with an eye to what would be needed for the loco project. He estimated the cost, and the time it would take, coming up with a figure of 25 years. Today he admits to having surprised himself with the accuracy of that prediction.

He quickly realised that almost all »

Above: Looking like a locomotive – the Z Class is clearly taking shape at Glenn's workshop in South Australia.

Below: The man himself – the sheer size of the loco is evident.

All photos by Glenn Smythe





“Glenn stripped off everything above the tender frame, getting a bite from a red-back spider and a resultant hospital visit in the process...”

of the work must be done by himself in-house to keep costs manageable, and that he must not treat it as a complete loco, for fear of being overwhelmed, but a series of projects. “I would not think too far ahead of the component I was working on until it was 100 per cent complete.”

The project was duly broken down into smokebox, cab and other superstructure, main frame, valves and motion, brake gear, bogie, cylinders, boiler and the tender.

Glenn also needed to allocate a number to the loco. The typical new-build trait of choosing the next number after the last built of the original inspiration was not possible – the Z class locos were numbered 187 to 196 but 197 onwards were taken by T class engines, the first unused number being 259; “far

enough away from the Z class numbers to be meaningless.”

The problem was solved by acquiring an original SAR-spec surviving headlight from RX 199 – the new loco would take the same number as a tribute to its forebear.

Work began in March 2003 with the smokebox and included what Glenn still regards as the most difficult and frustrating item in the entire build, the copper cap for the chimney. He had to scrap his first attempt before getting it right second time around.

The cab and superstructure proved “fairly straightforward” to make though Glenn wishes he had discovered computer-controlled oxy-acetylene cutting before he made the platework, as this technique has since made his life a lot easier.



Above left: Cast and mounted on their former diesel loco axles, the main driving wheels in the surroundings of Glenn's ‘day job’.

Left: The cab was the second part of the project to be completed – but a big hole remains between it and the smokebox which kicked off the build.

Facing page top: Mounting the driving wheels in the frames has required some ingenuity – building a pit with removable rails so that the wheel set and axleboxes can be lifted into the horns.

Right: All the parts for the motion, just awaiting some cylinders to attach them to. A much dreaded job, they were all machined from solid billets.

Visual inspiration

Having items so visually impressive as the cab and smokebox to look at provided inspiration to continue, next being the main frames. Friend Peter Manning, a former fitter at British Rail's Horwich Works, brought his computer-aided design skills into play and Glenn admits the project would not be where it is today without Peter's commitment to it.

The 25ft long plates were cut in July 2005 by Adelaide Profile Service, for free after the firm's manager was enthused by the project – APS is still a major supporter today. Glenn took them home, laid them flat together and drilled all the holes required.

Many say that a loco exists once its frames are erected, and for Glenn this was towards the end of 2006. Work needed had included designing a “mobile milling machine of sorts” to machine the horn openings in situ in the upright frames.

He also managed to obtain another original part – a spare six-wheeled tender which is on loan from the Pichi Pichi heritage line. While built in the UK by Beyer, Peacock for a Y class loco, its specification is identical to the Australian-built Z class item.

Glenn stripped off everything above the tender frame, getting a bite from a red-back spider and a resultant hospital visit in the process, and fabricating the new body has proven a “good filler task” when finances precluded work elsewhere.

The brake gear followed and was mounted on the frame, Glenn able to connect up an air line and watch the brake blocks move towards imaginary wheels; “I could stop but not go”. He then tackled the motion, a job which he had dreaded – eventually deciding to machine everything from solid, three years of swarf creation produced all the parts needed.

By early 2015 he was working on the front bogie, using suitable wheels acquired from a freight van, and in 2017 came the casting of the 4ft 6in diameter driving wheels – believed to be the first full-size steam loco wheels cast in Australia since 1958. These have been mounted on scrapped diesel loco axles cut down to size, and Glenn has recently started fitting the sets to the frames, in a novel manner as the caption to the photo testifies.

Glenn considers the project close to three-quarters done – the cylinders need machining but the boiler will take up the major part of what's left. Some would be fazed by such a major item but not him. Another friend is designing an all-welded boiler which Glenn will construct. “Building this loco has involved hundreds of different processes, the boiler will be around half a dozen.”

"He regards being able to be self-sufficient as essential to the future of all preserved railways, but also has a simple reason for the build; 'to leave something behind when I am long gone'..."



So why is he doing it? He says firstly for the engineering challenge, but also to prove what's possible, regarding being able to be self-sufficient as essential to the future of all preserved railways. But he also has a simple reason for the build; "to leave something behind when I am long gone."

While this has indeed been basically a one-man build, Glenn is very grateful to the many friends and colleagues who have helped him along the way. Once the locomotive is complete he plans to assemble and test it on the Pichi Pichi Railway. Plans for its home after that are still to be revealed – watch this space... **NGW**

More Information/Acknowledgements

NGW will of course be printing updates on this inspiring project as they are made available. We also intend in due course to publish a more technically-focused article on the new-build in our sister magazine Engineering in Miniature.

We would like to thank Glenn, Bob Burton and Stuart Gamble who made available his article for *Catch Point*, journal of the National Railway Museum in Adelaide. They provided much useful information for this feature.



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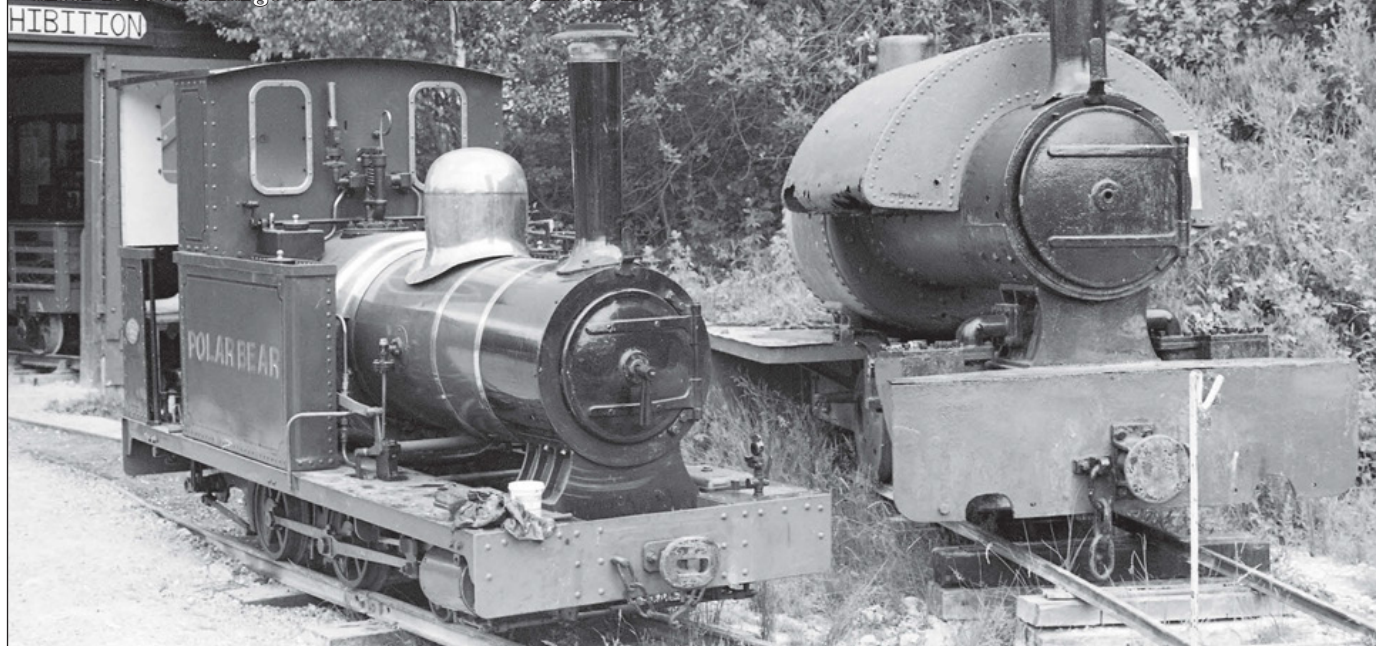
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First time at Amberley

Andrew Charman recalls his first visit to the Sussex museum, not long after it took charge of the Brockham collection.



Your editor was brought up in Surrey, only around five miles from Brockham Museum, the often traumatic history of this narrow gauge collection so eloquently described by the late Dave Billmore in his *Pioneers on the Pilgrim's Way* series that appeared in *NGW* issues 109 to 111.

In the early 1970s as a child I visited the museum a couple of times with my father, but I was too young to consider volunteering there. By the time I was old enough to have a driving licence, later in that decade, motorsport had taken over as my prime interest. So I never became involved with Brockham, or I might

have got to know Dave many years before I shared a footplate with him on the Welshpool & Llanfair.

Brockham's history came to an end in 1982 when planning permission for more permanent buildings and a demonstration line was finally refused by the local Mole Valley District Council. An agreement was reached with the then newly-established Chalk Pits Museum at Amberley, near Arundel in Sussex, to transfer the entire collection, and the move took place in the summer of that year.

Two years later, in the summer of 1984 I made my first-ever visit to Amberley, accompanied by my father

Above: Amberley in 1984 – 'Polar Bear' was steamable but restoring fellow Bagnall 'Peter' would take several more years.

Below: A battery-electric loco and Groudle Glen carriage provided services on the running line to the then rather bleak surroundings of Brockham station.

All photos by the author, June 1984

and my grandfather – both railway enthusiasts, and as a former Southdown bus driver dad also attracted by the road transport exhibits on site.

Visual progress

Working alongside their new colleagues, the Brockham team had already achieved quite a lot. A demonstration line had been built from close to the museum's entrance building to the area in the chalk pit now occupied by the rail exhibits, terminating at a station of course named Brockham.

Locomotive restorations were underway with the diminutive former Groudle Glen Railway Bagnall 2-4-0T 'Polar Bear' looking particularly complete – it steamed that year and worked trains for a couple of seasons before more issues were found.

Cosmetic restoration had been carried out on Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0T 'Townsend Hook' which was displayed in a prime position. On my return a couple of years later the loco had been joined by sister 'William Finlay' but also moved to a less prominent location in the chalk pit.

The whole scene looked very different to today, however. With very little covered accommodation available the locos and rolling stock, some in virtually derelict condition, were scattered around the site and there was a pleasing industrial sense of chaos, a stroll amongst the collection a bit of an adventure as one





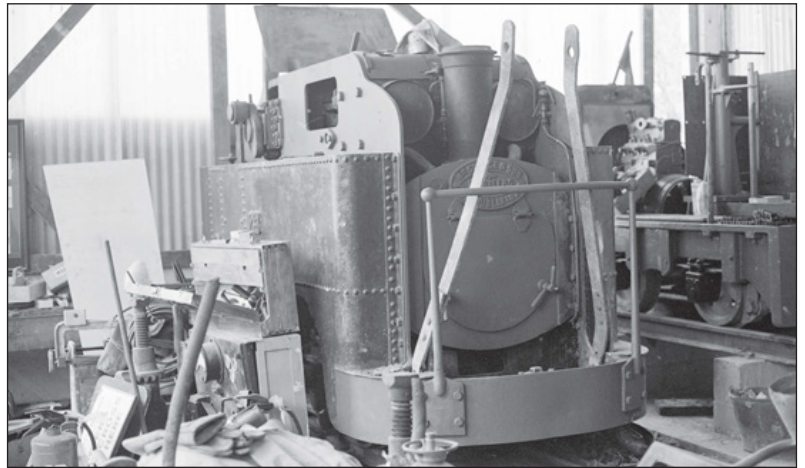
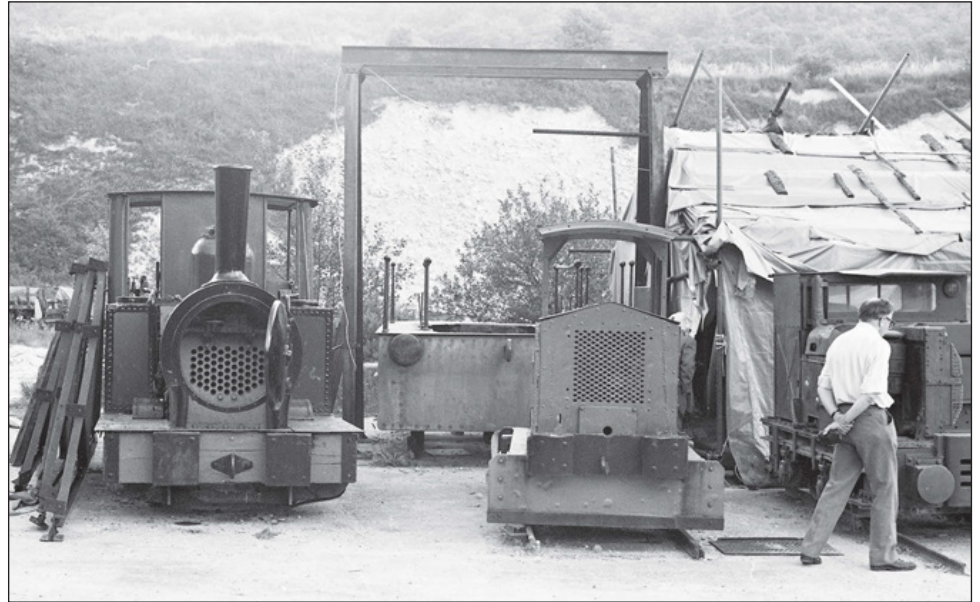
Above: A mine tunnel hid a Ruston diesel – said tunnel was about to find fame as a James Bond film location.

Above right: Former Betchworth Quarries Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0T 'Townsend Hook' had been cosmetically restored and was displayed with the broad-gauge hoist and carry wagon from the Guinness Breweries in Dublin. Charman senior investigates the diesels.

Right: The novel 1ft 10in gauge Guinness locomotive was one of few items on display under cover though surrounded by various bits of industrial 'stuff'.

Below right/far right: Amongst items awaiting attention, an original Penrhyn Quarrymen's carriage body, and several other wagon types of varying parentage and condition.

Bottom right: A chalk pit, a line of skip wagons and the bare bones of an i/c loco – could this be more industrial?



found yet another i/c loco or wagon that had clearly seen better days.

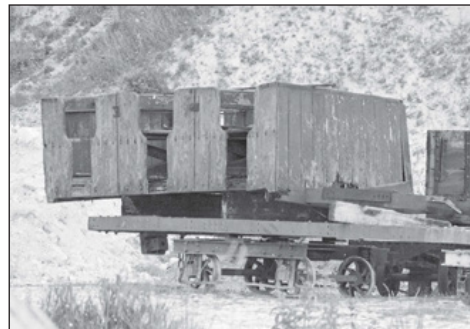
Different age

I've been to Amberley many times since, and of course with the dedicated enthusiasm of the museum's narrow gauge group the collection has grown to become the highly impressive display one enjoys today – there is certainly no sense of chaos on a visit to today's museum.

I'll never forget that first visit, however, and hopefully the photos bring over some of the delights of those early days.

Why black-and-white? At the time I was learning to be a press photographer, freelancing for the local paper (which I would join in the following year) and also working at Brands Hatch race circuit, where producing black-and-white prints to try to sell to the drivers was far more economical a prospect! Mind you, I've also always liked monochrome as a medium – it has its own appeal.

I did take some colour photos that day, but my sorting of a photo archive hardly touched for more than three decades is yet to reveal them! **NGW**



WW1 in 16mm scale

David Pinniger recalls the final, unfinished layout of that skilled modeller of finescale in large scale, Henry Holdsworth, and ponders its fate.



In *NGW*164 I wrote about my visit to Henry Holdsworth's house in 2000 to see his wonderful Lynton and Barnstaple based 16mm scale layout 'Lynbridge'. I knew that Henry had also scratch-built a superb South African NG11 Garratt and a War Department Hunslet 4-6-0T, and in his 1990 article in *Railway Modeller* magazine he mentioned that he was planning a World War 1 layout.

When I visited, I discovered that he had indeed built another 16mm scale layout with a First World War setting, in an adjoining room. Although this was unfinished, there were quite a few buildings already in place along with a long wooden trestle viaduct. He had also started on other scenic details, including some trees blasted by artillery fire.

I wish I had taken more and better

photos at the time, but this was in a pre-digital age when 35mm colour film was not so forgiving. I did photograph the Hunslet 4-6-0T and a WD Baldwin 4-6-0T which Henry had built from a Malcolm Wright kit.

There was a Baldwin gas mechanical, also built from a Malcolm Wright kit plus a Dick Kerr petrol electric loco and a couple of Simplexes.

Unusual prototype

The highlight for me, however, was an amazing double ended 0-4-4-0T Pechot Bourdon locomotive, a prototype I had never seen modelled before – I do not know who built the model.

Henry ran a double-headed train with the Hunslet and Baldwin 4-6-0 tank engines pulling a train of WDLR (War Department Light Railways) wagons which he had built from Wrightscale kits. There were also other interesting WDLR and French wagons around the layout which unfortunately I did not photograph.

Above: Rarely modelled – the Pechot Bourdon on the trestle with a French Pechot Artillerie platform bogie wagon.

Left: Henry Holdsworth watching his War Department Hunslet and Baldwin cross the trestle with a mixed train.



All photos by David Pinniger

MODEL LINES

Return of Midlands ME show...

The Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition will return in October having not been held for the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Organisers Meridienne Exhibitions tell us that the show, which usually includes plentiful narrow gauge content, will be held from 13th-16th October at its usual venue of the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, on the Fosse Way near Leamington Spa. More details are on the website at www.midlandsmodeleengineering.co.uk

...and the 7mm NG show

Also making a triumphant return this month is the annual show and AGM of the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association, which will be held at its usual venue of Burton-upon-Trent Town Hall on Saturday 11th June between 10.30am and 4.30pm.

Some 12 layouts of widely varying themes are currently confirmed for the event, together with a dozen traders. Admission is £5 for adults, reduced to £3 for Society members, and more details can be found on the Society website at www.7mmnga.org.uk

Large-scale Llanfair back

Completing our show round-up, the Llanfair Garden Railway Show will be back this season, no doubt pleasing larger-scale modellers who like to combine this mid-Wales event with a visit to the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Steam Gala. This is held over the same weekend and also returns to its full format this year after a Covid-restricted event in 2021. The Garden show will be at its usual venue of Llanfair Caereinion Leisure Centre on 3rd and 4th September. More details are on the show page at www.currinnbooks.com

Crew for Peco England

Much excitement in 009 circles as deliveries begin of the Ffestiniog Railway England 0-4-0STs produced as a joint effort by Peco and Kato, and to add the finishing touch Devon-based Osborn's Models has produced suitable crew for the locos. A pack of two unpainted figures costs £5.99, part of a wide range of figures offered by Osborn's including models of Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his former rival Jeremy Corbyn, should you be so inclined! More details are at www.osbornsmodels.com

Hopper new wagon...

Peco continues to launch useful items for 009 scale and we hear that coming soon will be models of the former Snailbeach District Railways hopper wagons. No pricing or delivery date yet, we will let readers know when we do...



Top The Baldwin 4-6-0T, built from a Malcolm Wright kit, and the Dick Kerr petrol electric outside the loco servicing facility.

Above: A close-up of Henry's superb scratchbuilt Hunslet 4-6-0T No 304.

Below: The Hunslet and the Baldwin 4-6-0T double heading over the trestle.

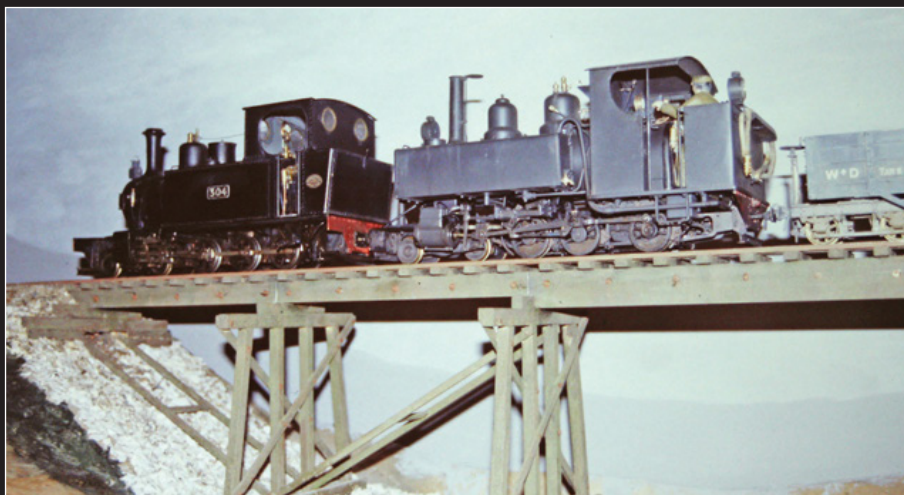
I do not believe that the layout was ever finished but I understand that it, and Henry's superb locos and stock, still exist today and that they are looked after.

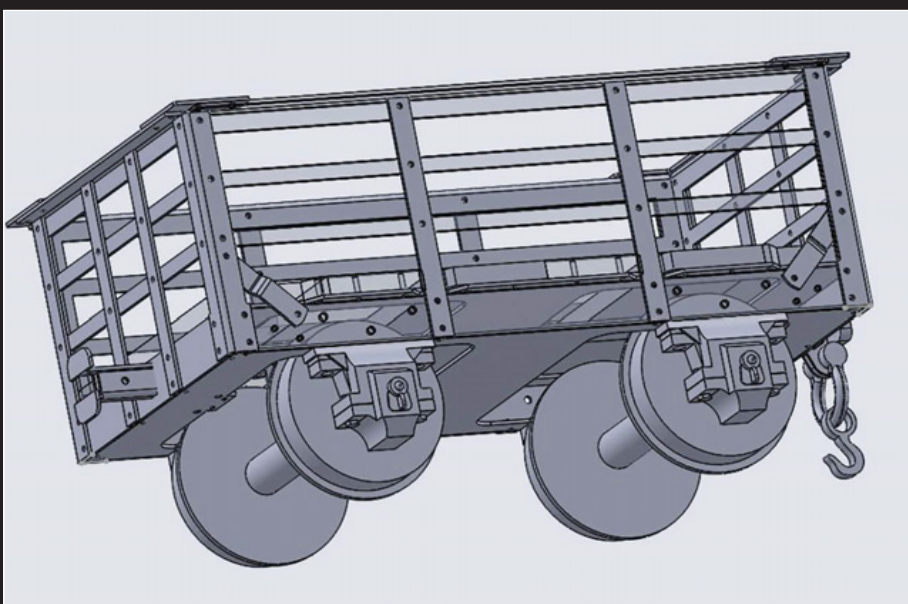
I would dearly like to hear more about this superb layout (*as would we – Ed*) and to see some new photos if somebody out there is willing to share them with the readers of *NGW*.

More Information

'WD No 304 arrives at Lynbridge'. *Railway Modeller magazine*, January 1990

For more information on WW1 military railways David recommends; *Colonel Pechot: Tracks to the Trenches*, by Sarah Wright. 2014. *WDLR Album*, by Roy Link, 2014.





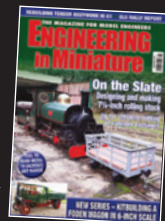
On the slate – in 3-inch scale

Modelling in *NGW* encompasses any scale, right up to the miniature gauges, and this 3-inch scale slate wagon for 7¼-inch gauge track is appropriate as it is a replica of a prototype, a Penrhyn Quarry cut-slate wagon that was built by De Winton & Co in Caernarfon in around 1879 and later modified in the quarry's Coed-y-Parc workshops.

The model was designed by Harry Billmore, technical editor of *NGW*'s sister magazine *Engineering in Miniature* (EIM) as well as being engineer at the Fairbourne Railway and a driver at the Welshpool & Llanfair. With a fellow W&L footplate department member he designed it effectively as a kit of parts and in particular wanted to ensure that there was not a whole lot of drilling of angle-iron necessary to connect the four sides together. Instead once laser-cut the four side components are easy to bend up to shape, creating the angles.

The wagon employs commercially available wheels and Harry created suitably correct axlebox covers by means of 3D-printing.

As can be seen in the top picture, paired with a suitable locomotive the wagon certainly looks the part. Harry hopes it will become commercially available at some point, but in the meantime a detailed account of the build, with dimensioned drawings, is in the June edition of EIM.



■ This superb 009 (4mm/ft scale) layout was photographed by *NGW*'s Phil Parker when it appeared at the Bristol Model Railway Exhibition at the end of April. Built by Charles Insley, the 'St Etienne-en-Caux' layout is set at the heart of the Tramways de Caux, a 60cm railway system set in the Pays de Caux in eastern Normandy. It really oozes with the atmosphere of French street tramways and we hope to feature more on the layout in a coming issue.





■ After the delight of fully liveried Quarry Hunslet samples and a whole host of new rolling stock (NGW165) we could not expect the next Summer 2022 set of 009 scale announcements from Bachmann UK to be quite as exciting, but they do comprise some highly useful items, not least the return of the ubiquitous slate wagons. The wood-framed examples will be supplied in sets of three, in either brown or grey, and with 'slate' loads too.

Bachmann is also adding to its range of narrow gauge structures in 009 scale, under the Scenecraft banner. Already including various slate buildings directly inspired by the kind of structures to be found on the Ffestiniog Railway, the newcomers include a representation of a corrugated iron engine shed. This kind of structure will be suitable for many a line as the cheap material was used widely – for example just about every building on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway was built in corrugated iron both when the line was built and in preservation to maintain the authenticity!

The second building is a neat little station structure, again in corrugated iron and offered in either brown or cream and red and cream. All are expected to reach dealers in around the middle of the year and more details of these and the rest of the 009 range are on the Bachmann website at www.bachmann.co.uk



■ Latest releases in G scale from German giant LGB are models of a small but fascinating class of three highly unusual locomotives built in 1902 for the Royal Saxon State Railways, a network of metre-gauge lines in Germany.

The three engines were of the Fairlie double-ended articulated type, running on power bogies. They were originally intended for street tramway running on a line at Reichenbach in the Vogtland region and as a result they were closed in with roofs like typical tram engines – as well as the traditional cab in the centre of the engine, they also had driving controls at each end for when running in the street – three cabs anyone?

In 1918 the three locos were taken over by the German State Railroad (DR) and in the subsequent rebuilding lost their roofs, becoming more like a typical Fairlie. One of them survives today on display in the museum station at Oberheinsdorf.

LGB is offering the loco both in its original Royal Saxon and later DB forms, and as is typical of the firm's product these are very well-made models. Measuring some 47cm over the buffers, they include loads of fine detail particularly in such areas as the motion covers on the power bogies. These skirts can be opened as can the cab doors and the smokebox doors.

The models are each powered by two motors and boast DCC sound decoders offering many functions including headlamps, cab lighting, running sounds, a whistle and a bell.

Smoke units are also built in, and these are synchronised to the wheels along with the cylinder steam and steam exhaust when activated.

The models are limited editions, released to celebrate the 120th anniversary of the loco type. UK prices have not been confirmed but won't be cheap! LGB quotes a price of 3690 Euros! Details are at www.lgb.com



Bala Lake Railway – The First 50 Years

■ Even if you did not see the feature on the early years of the Bala Lake Railway in *NGW* 163 then the cover of this month's issue makes it very clear that 2022 is a very special year for the Welsh 2ft gauge line as it clocks up its half century. This book is a very worthy celebration of the line's 50th anniversary – especially as previously no-one has properly written up the history of the Bala Lake Railway in the way that other Great Little Trains of Wales have been immortalised.

The book is very much a team effort – while retired journalist and Bala volunteer guard John Huxley co-ordinated everything, several others contributed their particular skills to produce what is a very readable account of how the line was established on a former standard-gauge trackbed, going through several testing times before becoming today's well-established 'Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid', looking forward to a very exciting future with the planned extension into Bala town centre.

Principally this is a photo album, drawing on extensive archives, and highly fascinating the pictures are too. But the well-written text plays just as important part in creating a book that students of the Welsh narrow gauge in particular should have on their shelves. *AC*



Published by Bala Lake Railway. ISBN 978-1-73978-280-1, Available at the railway or online from www.nigelbirdbooks.co.uk Price: £15.00



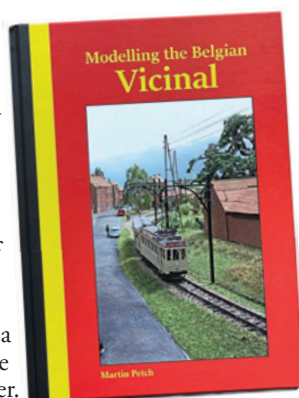
Modelling the Belgian Vicinal

■ Modelling books covering exclusively narrow gauge subjects are few and far between and one that focuses on a subject as little-known as rail and tram routes in a single European country almost unheard of! The author is one of the leading experts on the secondary network of railways and tramways of Belgium and it certainly shows – this is a comprehensive work which will generate interest far beyond its core subject matter.

The prototype lines are discussed in detail, not just in terms of text but also a number of very well reproduced colour photos and most notably many plans, stretching across steam locos, steam trams, electric tramcars, rolling stock, even buildings.

The bulk of the book is taken up with models of the Vicinal lines, but not just in Martin's chosen scale but in a whole host of gauges from tiny 2mm to the larger garden scales. Each section includes colour photos of layouts or individual items of stock, the photos reproduced to a large scale enabling one to appreciate the levels of modelling skill involved.

The author seems to have left no stone unturned – a very full set of appendices includes where full-size examples of Vicinal stock are preserved, to listing what models have been or are currently commercially available. An excellent book that even modellers without any major Continental passion will find of interest. *AC*



The Swanley New Barn Railway at 35

■ While the 7¼-inch gauge is a bit below *NGW*'s usual remit this attractive and inexpensive softback, focusing on one of the UK's leading 7¼-inch gauge public lines and penned by one of our regular correspondents, is well worth a look.

The Swanley New Barn Railway celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2021, having been established in a park in the Kent town since 1983 and a line that the author has visited many times. As a result he has been able to produce a bright and colourful survey of the Swanley line's operations which benefits from the inclusion of many colour photos.

A compact history of the railway includes some memories contributed by early members, while a quartet of route maps show how the route has developed over the years. A photographic trip along the line is followed by a chapter describing how the railway is operated. Each of the 12 resident steam locos are described individually while past and present i/c engines and the rolling stock are also given detailed coverage.

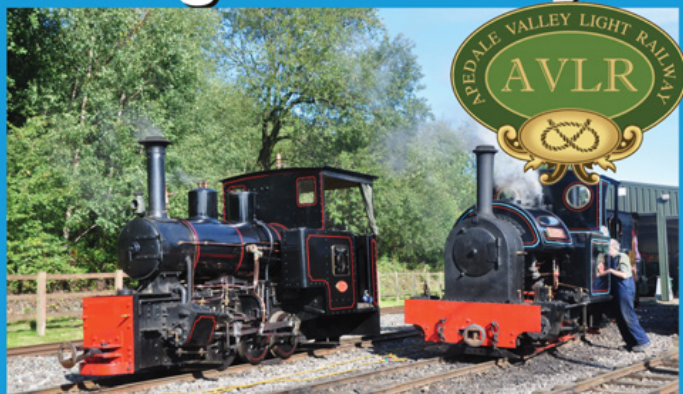
All in all this is a well-produced book on an interesting miniature line within which fans of the narrower gauges will find much to enjoy. *AC*



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Jack Buckler's legacy

I'm responding to the interesting 'snippet' in *NGW165* (*That was the Year - Ed*) regarding the closure & sale of Jack Buckler's Howdenclough Railway. As I now live quite close to Jack's old home, I have taken rather an interest in the history of his private line.

The quote from *Narrow Gauge News* (May 1982) teases with the promise of a 7¼-inch gauge miniature railway to be laid on the site. Unfortunately that railway was never built, however the proposed locomotive was.

The original 'Sweet William' was completed in 1995 and ran on the track of the Spenborough Model & Experimental Engineers at Royds Park in Cleckheaton near Bradford, where its owner and joint builder, Dr Roger Jackson was a member. Dr Jackson later donated the loco to the society.

Apparently the locomotive was received in bits, midway through a major overhaul, and the opportunity was taken to replace the troublesome Hackworth valve gear with more reliable Walschaerts.

The society is still active and gets very busy on open days when Sweet William may often be seen on regular passenger hauling duties.

I'm enclosing a recent photo I took of the loco outside the Royds Park Shed.

Stephen Seale

Andrew C replies: I should have twigged that this loco was the first of the Sweet William design – Jack's Sweet Peas, and their variations, have become mainstays of the model engineering circuit.

Common sense on coal

Your lead editorial in issue 164 highlights the latest crisis to hit the world of narrow gauge – the loss of UK coal supplies. I am sure the new situation happening in Ukraine does not help.

The problem which you hinted at over two years ago is that DEFRA is intent on implementing the Government's aim for the UK to be 'carbon neutral' by the end of the decade. The energy and fuel crises over this winter prove that the UK still needs fossil fuels - domestic renewable sources are not yet adequate for our needs.

The fact that as a result we need to import not just coal but gas and oil from countries such as Russia means that we must pay significantly more for these commodities. We are also handing these countries the leverage to carry out actions such as the invasion of Ukraine without fear of economic sanctions.

The UK still has not insignificant

"Until the scientists come up with reliable and practical replacements for fossil fuels, it makes common sense that we should employ such fuels in a way that does the least damage to the environment"

Above right: The Sweet Pea locomotive, designed by Jack Buckler, has become a signature narrow gauge design in the model engineering fraternity and this larger Sweet William version, the original pictured here, has also proven very popular. **Photo:** Stephen Seale



reserves of coal as well as gas and oil that could be exploited but for the government carbon neutrality policy. In the long term fossil fuels will run out but until then we should reduce our dependency on foreign sources by allowing domestic sources to be produced. What difference does it make to carbon emissions whether we burn domestic coal or Russian coal at many times the price?

I'm afraid you are right about politicians not wanting to sanction re-opening of mines. The whole subject of global climate change and carbon emissions is not yet scientifically understood but has been turned into received wisdom by politicians whose sole objective is getting re-elected.

What we need is a pragmatic approach from the politicians that recognises that carbon neutrality while a worthy long-term aim is not currently achievable and is harming the country in many ways. The domestic fuel industry should be reactivated while more investment is made into developing more practical alternative energy sources such as biofuels and hydrogen.

Ian Gordon

Andrew C replies: I fully agree. Don't get me wrong, I full appreciate the issue of climate change and that we need to move away from fossil fuels. But we can't do this overnight because the technology is not yet available to fully replace the uses which we cannot do without, such as in steel production for example.

Until the scientists come up with reliable and practical replacements for fossil fuels, it makes common sense that we should employ such fuels in a way that does the least damage to the environment – and that way is by

using the fuel stocks we have in the UK, rather than importing halfway across the world in ships belching CO2 emissions into the atmosphere..

First French Railway

The first thing that struck me when I opened *NGW165* was an apparent typo in my article jumping straight out of the page – was 'Fedora' really a 0-2-0? Both illustrations show that it is clearly a 0-4-0T.

The French system counted axles, not wheels, so our 2-6-4 is their 132, with no dashes. However, in an English language publication with a predominately British readership, I should have used Whyte notation, or at least got the French notation right. Humble apologies!

Dick Paterson

Andrew C replies: In fairness to Dick, the editor should have spotted that when he was subbing the piece!

An impostor in Lithuania

In his article about Kyiv's Children's (Pioneer) Railway in *NGW165*, James Waite mentions TU1-001, a short-lived precursor of the prolific TU2 (TY2) class members which is still in use 66 years after they were introduced. Like many ex-Soviet locos – they were built to last!

Many ChME3 shunters have been rebuilt from the chassis upwards as a TEM-TMH, and some 2M62s have been modified in similar fashion.

TU1-001 was destroyed by fire and scrapped long ago, but if you visit the ASG Siaurukas depot in Panevezys, Lithuania, you may catch a glimpse of a loco numbered TU1-001. However this is actually an impostor – a TU2 that was painted black for use in a film set.

Tony Olsson

From a different age...

Diesel do at Bala...

I was particularly pleased to see *NGW* 163, not only for the article on the Reverend Awdry's model railway but also for the feature about early days at Bala (*writes Michael Farr*).

My first visit to the Bala Lake Railway was, I imagine, in March 1972 (*five months before it opened to the public – Ed*). At the time my day job was PRO for the AA (the motoring association, not Alcoholics Anonymous) covering the West Country and Wales. However I moonlighted with the BBC in Bristol, first with regional radio and then when BBC Radio Bristol opened in 1970 I moved to them.

Before long, as well as three-minute voice pieces on transport matters, I did weekend shifts in the news room. I sent my rail-related interviews to Jim Palm who, as well as being Assistant Gramophone Librarian at Broadcasting House, also produced the *Rail* programme, taken by some local radio stations (but sadly not Bristol!).

In 1972 I joined a working party of the Talylyn Railway Preservation Society Bristol & Western Group, taking along my eight-year-old son Andrew. To appease him I had arranged to drive over to Tan-y-Bwlch on the Sunday for us to ride on the Ffestiniog Railway train.

At that time the AA produced leaflets with suggestions for off-the-beaten track journeys, one of which was Trawsfynydd to Llanuwchllyn and on the way home we set off to follow this. Along the route, Andrew had to get out of the car and open gates and when it began to snow I did question the wisdom of the journey.

However, when we arrived at the railway we were made extremely welcome by George Barnes and his volunteers and I came away with a very good interview for Jim Palm.

■ We again raid the prolific photo archive of David Mitchell this month, for a picture from a very different age on the Fairbourne Railway, in the 1970s when the line was of course still of 15-inch gauge.

The other major difference in those times today was the way that the line ran round the seaward side of the little promontory at Penrhyn Point, as can be seen in this picture.

When in the 1980s new owner John Ellerton regauged the line he retained a balloon loop at Penrhyn Point, and our editor remembers arriving by train this way in 1994. But the loop was constantly being buried by the tide in times of poor weather and the line was eventually rerouted to remain on the opposite side of the sand dunes.



In the following year, on the family holiday at Dolgoch Flats, we called at Llanuwchllyn at a time when there were no other visitors, just as they were unloading Severn-Lamb's diesel 'Meirionnydd' and we were lucky enough to experience its first trip up the line. Sadly, I didn't make a note of the date. The picture here is from the only slide I retained – I sent several to Severn-Lamb, for which they were very grateful.

While looking for this, I also found a

slide of the Ffestiniog's Silver Jubilee carriage, which I thought might be of interest with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee scheduled for June.

I took this slide for making a 7mm model of this carriage, but along with most of my FR coaches the glued-laminated-card construction (as described in Don Boreham's *Narrow Gauge Railway Modelling*) didn't take kindly to storage in our loft and they disintegrated.



That was the year that...

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

From 30 years ago

Steam on the S&D again...

(Ed's note – The AGM of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society was held at the 2ft Gartell Light Railway near Templecombe, partly laid on the former Somerset & Dorset Railway trackbed and which imported Kerr Stuart Wren 'Peter Pan' for the occasion). The extremely smart 2ft gauge line starts at the rear of the Gartell's workshop, describes an S bend and climbs at about 1 in 30 up onto the old Somerset & Dorset trackbed...

Normal motive power on the line are several Lister diesel locomotives – the loading gauge and coaching stock are built to match. Peter Pan only just cleared the splendid bracket signal at the exit to the main station and further up the line a signal arm had to be moved. The whole line is fully signalled with ex-standard gauge signals and there is a very imposing signalbox at the terminus. (Report by Dave Billmore, NGN, July 1992)

The Gartell Light Railway has continued from strength to strength ever since with monthly open days, but today steam is the norm with two locomotives specifically built to the line's restricted loading gauge in 1998 and 2009.

Woking Miniature Railway

This Society has only been going for three years or so but tremendous strides have been made in that time. A new 5-inch gauge line is being laid to join the 7¼-inch gauge already extant. On site is ex-Dorking Greystone Lime 3ft 2¼-inch gauge 0-4-0T 'William Finlay' residing on a short length of track at this farm shop cum garden centre on the outskirts of Woking. A short length of track will be laid to allow William Finlay to air its tubes. Ex-Penrhyn 0-4-0ST 'Lilla' is also on site. (NGN, July 1992)

This was the early days of the Mizens Railway, today established as an extensive and busy miniature line that also has several items of full-size stock on display including a 3ft 6in gauge South African Class A 4-8-2, built by North British and repatriated in 2011. The two locos mentioned, both then owned by local resident Bernard Latham who was famed for rescuing several narrow gauge engines, found new homes. Lilla soon moved to the Ffestiniog Railway where it remains today, while William Finlay never got the chance to 'air its tubes'. The Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0T spent a while on display at Amberley Museum alongside its sister 'Townsend Hook', photographed there in 1987 by NGW editor Andrew Charman (right), before in 2015 being bought for display in the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at the Talyllyn Railway – the TR's original locos 'Talyllyn' and 'Dolgoch' are also Fletcher Jennings products.



From 25 years ago

Exmoor Steam Railway Bratton Fleming, Devon (2ft gauge)

The second 'big-un' arrived here this Spring in the form of NG15 no 135 from South Africa. The loco is said to be in good overall condition. (NGN, July 1997)

The loco is still at Exmoor and with the site no longer open to the public has effectively disappeared from view. However restoration of sister loco no 134 is proceeding at Dinas on the Welsh Highland Railway.

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 on page 45.



Diary & Special Events

■ No responsibility can be accepted for dates on these pages and anyone planning a visit for a ride or to an event should check the line's website and/or social media feeds for the latest update before travelling. Not all trains operate over full lines – on some days for example the Ffestiniog Railway only runs from Porthmadog to Tan-y-Blwch.

Special Events in June

Only events of interest to rail enthusiasts are included in this guide.

■ **Thur to Sun plus 1st, Devon Railway Centre Open Day** Museum nr Tiverton, 2ft gauge line. <http://devonrailwaycentre.co.uk>

■ **Every Saturday, Great Laxey Mines Railway operating**; novel 19-inch steam line on Isle of Man. www.laxeyminesrailway.im

■ **10th-11th June, Welsh Highland Railway Rail Ale**; Real ales, live music at Dinas, pre-book only. Shuttle trains from Caernarfon

■ **11th June, Hampton Kempton Railway Gala Day**; Details tbc, see website – tickets pre-booked only

■ **12th June, Rhiw Valley Light Railway Open Weekend**. 15in gauge line close to Welshpool & Llanfair. www.rvlr.co.uk

■ **19th June, Gartell Light Railway Open Day**; 2ft Somerset line, frequent timetable. 01963 370752, <http://newglr.weebly.com>

■ **25th June, Apedale Valley Railway Diesel Gala**; All trains i/c hauled with each train having a different loco.

■ **25th-26th June, Amerton Railway Steam Gala**; visiting locos, intensive service, industrial railway demonstrations

■ **25th-26th June, Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway Steam & Beer**; Real Ales available

■ **26th June, Leighton Buzzard Railway Vintage Vehicle Rally**; Page's Park, 100-plus cars, commercials, buses, military vehicles

Photo: Andrew Charman



Seen here in 2017, the Amerton Gala is always a good day out.

Tramways

- **Douglas Horse Tramway** www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/ No reopening date announced at press time
- **Great Orme Tramway**: Conwy 01492 577877, www.greatormetramway.co.uk Open daily between 10am and 6pm
- **Manx Electric Railway, Snaefell Mountain Railway**: Isle of Man, 01624 662525, www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/ Daily services
- **Seaton Tramway**: Devon 01297 20375, www.tram.co.uk Daily services from 10am

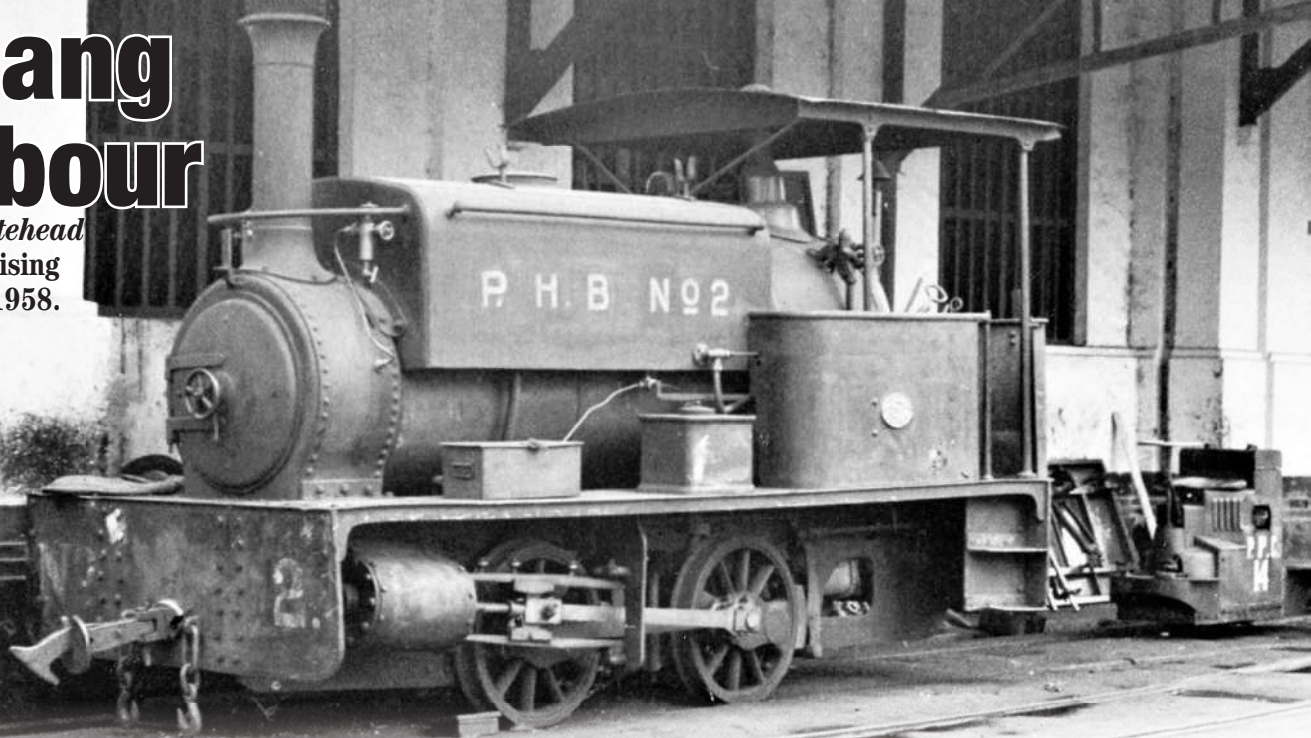
Miniature Railways

- **Audley End Railway** (10.25in): Essex 01799 541354, www.audley-end-railway.co.uk Daily services
- **Beer Heights Light Railway** (7.25in): Devon 01297 21542, www.pecorama.co.uk Daily services
- **Lappa Valley Railway** (15, 10.25, 7.25in): Cornwall 01872 510317, www.lappavalley.co.uk Open daily. Steam Wknd 18th-19th
- **Littlehampton Miniature Railway** (12.25in): Sussex www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com 1st-5th then weekends
- **Moors Valley Railway** (7.25in): Hants 01425 471415, www.moorsvalleyrailway.co.uk Daily – Summer Gala 25th-26th
- **North Bay Railway**, Scarborough (20in): Yorks 01723 368791, www.nbr.org.uk, Daily services
- **Rhyl Miniature Railway** (15in): Clwyd 01352 759109, www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk 1st-5th then Fridays-Sundays
- **South Downs Light Railway** (10.25in): Sussex 07518 753784, www.south-downs-railway.com 2nd-5th then weekends

What's On	Wed 1st	Thu 2nd	Fri 3rd	Sat 4th	Sun 5th	Mon 6th	Tue 7th	Wed 8th	Thu 9th	Fri 10th	Sat 11th	Sun 12th	Mon 13th	Tue 14th	Wed 15th	Thu 16th	Fri 17th	Sat 18th	Sun 19th	Mon 20th	Tue 21st	Wed 22nd	Thu 23rd	Fri 24th	Sat 25th	Sun 26th	Mon 27th	Tue 28th	Wed 29th	Thu 30th	
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KEY Trains (steam or diesel), Special events, No trains	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	

Penang Harbour

Graham Whitehead made a surprising discovery in 1958.



In *NGW* 162 I recalled the last days of steam in Malaya when I was doing National Service there. As it turned out, these weren't the only steam locomotives I was to see. Early in 1958, while based in Singapore, I took leave in Penang, an island off the west coast of Malaya some 500 miles to the north.

The train from Singapore took us to Prai, opposite the island, and we boarded an ancient ferry to Georgetown, the principal town, because there is no rail connection, although there is a splendid station building. After weaving through a lot of ocean-going shipping, we disembarked from the ferry.

I got around quite well – it seemed to me that Penang had it all. In the north of the island, there were traditionally-dressed workers in the fields and their goods were then

taken to Georgetown in bullock carts. There were rickshaws – not the pedalled trishaws I had seen in Singapore, but man-powered. I went down to the harbour, which was teeming with activity, and watched goods being carried on and off the ancient tongkangs.

Tracks on the pier

As I wandered around Swettenham Pier, now the cruise liner terminal, I suddenly encountered some metre gauge tracks and a small saddle tank, obviously British-built and seemingly abandoned, with 'PHB No 2' (Penang Harbour Board) painted on the tank sides. I wasn't particularly interested in it, but thought I should photograph it anyway. Further back there was a small diesel shunter, which didn't look at all interesting, but I took a shot of that as well.

Above: Penang Harbour Board No 2, Manning Wardle F type 1495 of 1900, a loco that had worked on two gauges and two continents, seen out of use by the warehouses at Swettenham Pier.

Below: It's just as well that the PHB Armstrong Whitworth diesel no longer needed to move on Swettenham Pier as it looks trapped by cars.

Photos by Graham Whitehead, 1958

The 0-4-0ST is recognisably a Manning Wardle, and I later found out it was delivered as a standard gauge loco in 1900 to Millom for the London contractor John Aird, who was then working on the Hodbarrow sea defences.

Aird moved the locomotive to an ill-fated contract in Singapore, where it was regauged and later worked for the Harbour Board. It was numbered 137 at Millom and at Singapore it was number 9. As it carried the number 2 when moved north to Penang, it presumably arrived later than the diesel which perhaps had failed to live up to expectations.

The diesel, PHB No 1, was a 1935 Armstrong Whitworth 0-4-0DM. The PHB railway had closed in 1956, but the locos once shunted wagons of tin ingots from the Eastern Smelting Company, which had reached the harbour electrically-hauled over the surviving tracks of the closed Penang tramway system. It seems likely that the Manning Wardle and the diesel were the only two locos ever owned by the PHB.

Singapore and Penang are now vastly different places from those I saw more than 60 years ago. I have been back to Singapore twice, but much has changed and everything is now virtually unrecognisable. I still feel privileged to been given such an experience in the late 1950s. And I do wonder whatever happened to the old Manning Wardle saddle tank in the end. **NGW**

■ **Andrew C adds:** If anyone can throw a light on the fate of either of these locos, please let us know!



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