

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

ISSUE 171
NOV-DEC 2022



■ LAST DAY AS RHIW VALLEY CLOSES DOORS

NEW BUILD

CORRIS FALCON
MAKES ITS DEBUT

NG MODELLING



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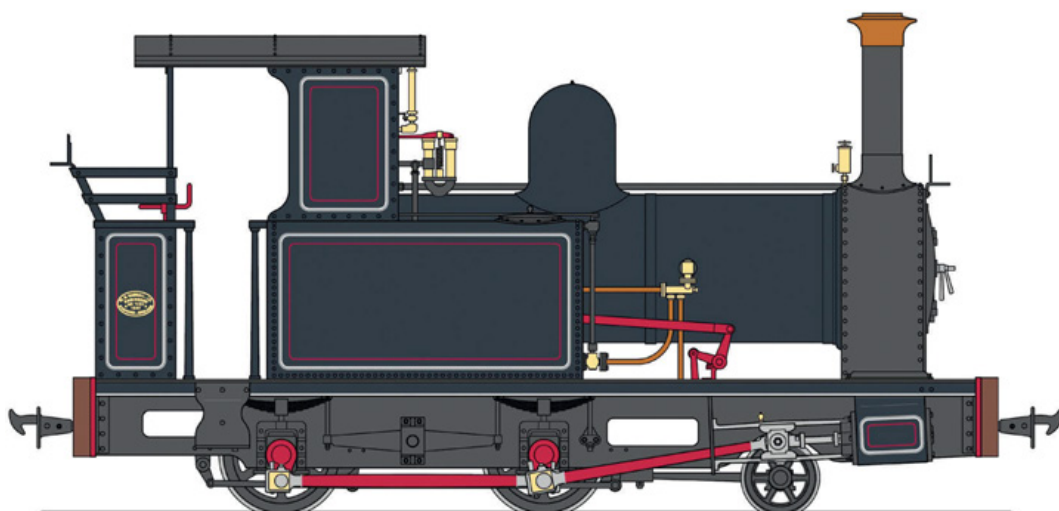
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Following the release of the gorgeous little Peckett, we are delighted to announce that our next small locomotive will be the Bagnall 2-4-0T *Rheidol*. We are sure many associated with 16mm scale will have soft spot for this engine! Originally named *Treze de Maio*, the engine was built by Bagnalls of Stafford for a Brazilian sugar cane plantation in 1896 but never delivered as the order was cancelled, instead the locomotive was regauged from 2' 5 1/2" gauge to 2' 3" gauge when it was sold to the Plynlimon and Hafan Tramway and named *Talybont*. In 1903, after the failure of that railway, it was purchased for the construction of the Vale of Rheidol Railway, regauged to 1' 11 3/4" and renamed *Rheidol*. Absorbed by the GWR in 1923 it was numbered it 1198, but it was withdrawn and scrapped the following year, having never carried its GWR number.

The model is gauge-adjustable (32mm and 45mm), gas-fired and fitted with a water top-up valve, water gauge with blow-down valve, lubricator and pressure gauge; constructed of stainless steel and etched brass with a copper boiler, the model will, as usual, be covered by our two-year warranty. The anticipated pre-order RRP is £1695.00 (subject to the usual provisos), available late 2022 or early 2023. Fitted with Accucraft chopper couplings, the model will be supplied with two chimneys, the original balloon stack and the more traditional type. Available in five liveries, full details can be found on the Accucraft UK website.



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Cover: On the way in – the Corris Railway's new-build Falcon 0-4-2ST makes its public steaming debut at the highly successful open day of Alan Keef Ltd on 24th September. In the inset, on the way out – the last public train on the Rhiw Valley Light Railway sets off for one more circuit of the mid-Wales 15-inch gauge line. The final open day after 50 years is described in this issue.

Photos: Andrew Charman

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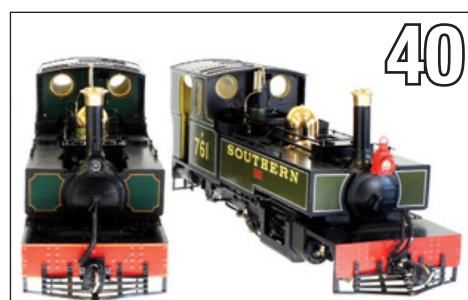
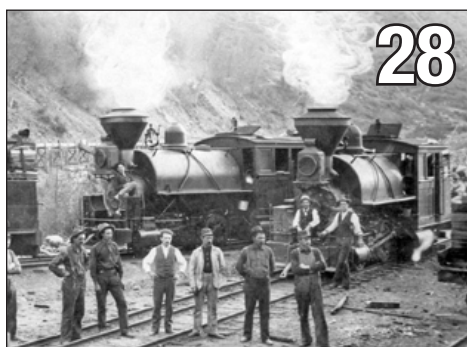
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Highs and lows...



"Be warned – the Rhiw Valley may not be the last line that we will wave goodbye to..."

Photos: The Rhiw Valley Light Railway's 'Powys' sets off purposefully for another circuit of the mid-Wales 15-inch gauge line on its final open day, while the inset shows the busy scene at the Alan Keef Ltd open day. Photos: Andrew Charman

Welcome to **NGW171** – they say a week is a long time in politics (or perhaps a day is right now?). That's very true in the narrow gauge world, I having recently experienced the highs and lows of our movement eight days apart.

Saturday 24th September was certainly a good day – I headed directly south from **NGW** Towers to attend the open day of rail engineer Alan Keef Ltd, the first in three years and celebrating the 50th anniversary of the firm so well known to anyone in our sphere.

The Ross-on-Wye works was packed with fellow enthusiasts, the sun shone and there was much to see, topped of course by the in-steam debut of our cover star, the Corris Railway's new-build Falcon 0-4-2ST.

Perusing the 'Walk the Decades' exhibition outlining some of the firm's achievements over the past half-century reminded one just how wide ranging is the equipment that wears Alan Keef works plates. And that variety extended to the current projects on display in the workshops.

I'm delighted to say that by the time your next issue of **NGW** arrives I should have returned to Ross-on-Wye for a chat with Alan Keef Ltd managing director Patrick Keef, in order to bring readers an in-depth feature on the firm. Which reminds me – apologies to readers expecting an insight in this issue on the Glyn Valley Tramway revival project, as indicated in **NGW170**. Truly horrendous weather saw our visit to

Chirk rained off (well, we do need it...) and postponed. Rest assured we will be bringing you this feature, just a little later than planned!

The lows? Well Sunday 2nd October was actually an enjoyable afternoon that was spent just 15 minutes away from **NGW** Towers this time, but it was an occasion with a sad overtone as I was attending the final open day of the Rhiw Valley Light Railway.

As reported in last month's issue, the owner of this private 15-inch gauge line had decided to call it a day, in an environment of ever-rising costs and declining numbers of volunteer help. As our report in this issue details, the final day brought a perhaps not surprising record attendance, and on another nice day everyone enjoyed themselves with one (or more) last ride around the circuit that the line describes.

Now, some readers might not pay too much attention to the demise of this line – after all it was built as a rich man's plaything around his farm, even if it was some 50 years ago some may well regard the RVLRL as a toy, not a 'proper' railway.

Even if you do subscribe to that view (and your editor doesn't...) you should take notice of the themes that have brought about this closure, because every line is feeling the effects of mushrooming costs (of coal, of electricity, of just about everything). And they are also seeing volunteer resource come under ever more pressure – remember even

that volunteer standard-bearer the Tallylyn is seeing the effects, as the line's manager told us in the last issue. So be warned – the Rhiw Valley may not be the last line we will wave goodbye to...

Coming attractions

This edition is when I traditionally remind readers that they need to keep track of when the next issue appears as we are now into our winter bi-monthly schedule. Those readers who have been with us a long time (thank you all) will be aware that the publication date of the next issue is normally brought forward to avoid the chaos of the Christmas holidays. Well not this year! Our production team reckon they are on top of such challenges and **NGW172** will publish as usual on the last Friday of the month, 30th December, or a week earlier for digital subscribers.

As ever, you don't have to remember any of this, as the best way to ensure your copy arrives on time (in fact, normally a little early) is to subscribe and let the postman do all the fetching and carrying.

It's particularly worth subscribing as I'm more excited even than usual with some of the in-depth features I've been lining up for future issues, going beyond the headlines to bring you the full story of new projects, old favourites, green coal, loco builds and much more. Jump on, you'll enjoy the ride!

Andrew Charman



The two restored carriages of the Dalmunzie Estate Railway, seen here with the vertical-boilered loco 'Taffy', were among the stars of the revived annual open day held at Alan Keef Ltd on 24th September. Photo: Andrew Charman

Four-strong steam sees record revival for open day

Rail engineer Alan Keef Ltd celebrated its golden anniversary with its most successful Open Day, boasting record attendance and record charity fundraising.

The event on 24th September was the first open day in three years at the firm's works near Ross-on-Wye, mid Wales and marked the 50th anniversary of Alan Keef Ltd, which has supplied mostly narrow gauge equipment across the globe.

An exhibition documented the history of the company and its many products, which ranges from miniature railway equipment to the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's new-build Baldwin 2-4-2T 'Lyn'.

In the works visitors saw progress on

current Keef projects, including a major overhaul of the Isle of Man Railway's Beyer, Peacock 2-4-0T 'G. H. Wood' which has been stripped to its frames.

Outside four locos entertained the 850 visitors, the highlight being the public debut of the Corris Railway's new-build 0-4-2ST on a length of temporary track specially laid to 2ft 3in gauge (see below).

Residents Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Woto' and vertical-boilered 0-4-0 'Taffy' were joined by much travelled Kerr Stuart 0-4-0ST 'Peter Pan' to offer passenger rides on the 2ft gauge line encircling the workshops.

Rolling stock for the occasion was special, a pair of carriages from the former

Dalmunzie Estate Railway in Scotland which the firm's managing director Patrick Keef had purchased and restored during lockdown; "my mid-life crisis project," he told *NGW* editor Andrew Charman.

By the end of the day £6500 had been raised for the local church. "We couldn't be happier with this year's open day," Patrick said. "We had good reason to be celebrating and were so very happy to see so many friends and enthusiasts arriving to share this very special event with us. We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2024."

■ We plan to feature Alan Keef Ltd and its wide-ranging work in *NGW* 172.

Falcon makes steam debut – but still work to do says Corris

The first public steaming of the Corris Railway's new-build Hughes Falcon 0-4-2ST no 10 helped Alan Keef Ltd celebrate its "best-ever" annual open day on 24th September.

The locomotive, which has been erected at Keef's workshops near Ross-on-Wye, mid Wales, recreates one of the original three locomotives that were built for the 2ft 3in gauge Corris Railway in 1878 at the Hughes Loco & Tramway Engineering Works Ltd in Loughborough.

One of the original trio survived and today runs on the neighbouring Talyllyn Railway as no 3 'Sir Haydn', having been transferred there in 1951 after closure of the Corris line.

In the weeks before the Keef open day work on no 10 proceeded rapidly, the boiler receiving its certificate on 20th September and the cab being finished afterwards – this is based on the original profile of the Corris locos and not the one Sir Haydn carries today.

Many Corris members attended the open day to see the results of much hard work and fundraising carried out over recent years. But the railway was keen to emphasise that still much remains to be done, and funds raised, before no 10 can join new-build Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST no 7,

completed in 2005, on the mid-Wales line.

Jobs still to be completed include fitting of buffers, couplings and an air brake pump, riveting the cab and making the internal coal bunker, cladding the boiler, adding wheel splashers, making and mounting the sanding gear and finally taking the machine apart, painting it and then carrying out reassembly.

This work is likely to cost in the region

of £20,000 and the Corris will be grateful for any further donations – these can be made online via www.corris.co.uk or by cheques, payable to Corris Railway, and sent to Peter Guest, 38 Underwood Close, Callow Hill, Redditch, B97 5YS.

Below: Looking the part, but while Falcon no 10 now steams the Corris Railway needs to keep on fundraising. Photo: Andrew Charman



Price is right at TR stalwart is honoured

The Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society honoured one of its stalwart members at its Annual General Meeting on 27th September, as he stepped down from the role of Society president.

David Mitchell, a well-known narrow gauge personality and a regular contributor to *NGW*, has given seven decades of service to the TR. His retirement was marked by the presentation by Society chairman Jon Mann of a specially-commissioned painting by Eric Bottomley – it shows locomotive no 4 'Edward Thomas' at the recently reinstated water column at Ty Dwr and includes David himself with his camera.

Members elected as their new president Chris Price, now manager of the standard-gauge North Yorkshire Moors Railway but a former TR general manager and lifelong volunteer on the line.

Speaking after the meeting Chris said that he took up his new role with great pride. "My 41 years in railway preservation started at the Talyllyn, and I had little idea at the time that the journey within the sector it would take me on when I started," he added.

"To be voted into this role by the members of the Society is indeed humbling, but also an honour I take seriously," Chris said.

The 72nd AGM was the first held live for three years, and for the first time the around 90 attendees were joined by another 50-plus people watching on a live stream.

Attendees were told that the railway is enjoying a positive financial position allowing it to proceed with planned projects (*see separate story at right*), while membership of the TRPS is at 4443, the second highest on record.

An appeal to equip all three passenger rakes with defibrillators was launched at the AGM. By the time *NGW* went to press it had passed £2,400 via donations on the TR website at www.talyllyn.co.uk

Below: Outgoing TRPS president David Mitchell (right) receives his retirement present from Society chairman Jon Mann, a specially commissioned painting by Eric Bottomley.
Photo: Lawrence Garvey/TR



Talyllyn development plans get boost from £110K lottery win

Talyllyn Railway plans for major development at both the line's Tywyn Wharf and Tywyn Pendre sites have been boosted by the award of £110,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The award will allow the railway to progress a full application for more than £1 million of funding from the NLHF towards the £3.5 million 'Preserving our Past, Building our Future' project.

Detailed in an insight feature in *NGW* 170, the wide-ranging project includes replacing the line's North carriage shed at Pendre with a new engineering works on a recently purchased piece of adjoining land known as The Orchard.

At Wharf a new heritage shed will be built with an interpretation centre and the line's offices will be moved into 'Trefri', the former home of the line's last pre-preservation general manager Edward Thomas. The house adjoins the station site and using it for offices and volunteer accommodation will allow a major internal redesign of the existing station building to better serve both visitors and staff.

The bid also includes improving engagement with visiting groups, particularly those with autism, and increasing the number and range of the line's volunteers.

Work on the new Wharf shed is expected to start this winter while the funding will now enable serious detailed planning for the major Pendre developments.

TR general manager Stuart Williams welcomed the news of the initial funding success. "We want more visitors, as well as the local community, to experience this unique line and understand its heritage," he said.

"Through the project we will increase our interpretation and key facilities, as well as providing volunteering opportunities for a wider range of people with differing skills," Stuart added.

"(The funding) brings our plans one step closer to reality and we would like to thank the Fund for its assistance in getting us to this stage, as well as everyone else who was involved in this application.

"Now the hard work really begins to develop the full bid and provide the railway with the people and facilities it needs for the future".

The TR will now launch a major appeal to help raise the balance of the monies that will be required for the project, with the hope of having the bulk of the building work underway by the time the railway celebrates the 75th anniversary of its preservation in 2026.

Top: Securing the development cash makes the Talyllyn's bold plans for Pendre, and the end of the North carriage shed at left, a more likely prospect. Photo: Andrew Charman

Right: The lottery application includes increasing the TR's wide-ranging volunteer workforce. Photo: TR





■ The very last train on the Rhiw Valley Light Railway heads out of the station during the private 15-inch gauge line's final open day on 2nd October, double headed by locomotives 'Jack' and 'Powys'. The line, near Welshpool in mid Wales, has now closed ending a history of around half a century. Our full story of the final day begins on page 35. *Photo: Andrew Charman*

Welsh rail co-operation wins community award

The 12 narrow gauge lines forming the 'Great Little Trains of Wales' (GLTW) marketing panel have proven victorious in a national awards scheme.

A joint project dubbed 'Wales on Rails' (WOR), led by Great Little Trains of Wales and supported by mainline rail operator Transport for Wales and the Community Rail Partnerships in Wales and the borders, won the tourism and leisure category at the Community Rail Awards.

The awards give recognition to community rail partnerships, groups and volunteers across Britain, helping to build stronger, fairer, greener communities, served and connected by their railways and the wider sustainable transport network.

The WOR project provides a resource for tourist travellers to explore Wales by public transport. Visitors are offered a series of maps, itineraries, and information cards while the heritage and social and cultural landscape of Wales is explained in a bid to enrich the experience of visitors and encourage sustainable tourism.

Commenting on the award Bala Lake Railway general manager David Jones, current chairman of GLTW, said that Wales has some of the best and most scenic rail routes in the World.

"Wales on Rails brings together the narrow-gauge steam railways of the GLTW and the scenic main-line routes, offering a sustainable and cost-effective means of accessing the best scenery and railway

journeys that Wales has to offer," he added.

"It's fitting recognition that the GLTW and the Community Rail Partnerships in Wales have received this award," he said.

Community Rail head at Transport for Wales Hugh J Evans commented that a unique partnership which has seen the CRPs working together with GLTW was the key element to the expansive project.

"The vision and joint team activity has meant that this project leads the way to exploring Wales – our expert tourist guides encourage behaviour change, for both locals and tourists, to discover Wales by using public transport," Hugh added.

The WOR website (<https://walesonrails.co.uk>) continues to offer ideas for days out, short breaks and holiday ideas, while GLTW is encouraging adventurers to travel on all the lines with a discount card.

Costing £20 and valid for one year, the card gives a 20 per cent discount on return journey costs on all 12 members' railways. Details are at www.greatlittletrainsofwales.co.uk/en/discount-card.

The GLTW is made up of the Bala Lake, Brecon Mountain, Corris, Fairbourne, Ffestiniog, Llanberis Lake, Snowdon Mountain, Talyllyn, Welshpool & Llanfair Light, Vale of Rheidol, Welsh Highland and Welsh Highland Heritage railways.

Below: Narrow gauge and standard gauge worked together on the award-winning project.
Photo: Michael Chapman



'Talyllyn' to enter its blue period

Talyllyn Railway original locomotive 'Talyllyn', currently under overhaul, will be wearing Great Eastern Blue when it returns to service next season.

TR general manager Stuart Williams announced the livery choice at the AGM of the mid-Wales 2ft 3in gauge line's Preservation Society on 27th September.

The Fletcher Jennings saddle tank, built in 1864 as an 0-4-0 but soon modified with a rear truck into an 0-4-2ST, has worn differing shades of green and red before, as well as black, but has never been blue.

"There was no rhyme or reason to the colour choice," Stuart told *NGW*. "One of the fitters suggested it and the idea seemed to gain favour."

The loco has been under overhaul since 2018 when its boiler certificate expired. Sister Fletcher Jennings loco, the 0-4-0WT 'Dologch', is also expected back in service before long, its chassis having been dispatched to the Vale of Rheidol Railway for valve setting.

Meanwhile TR Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Edward Thomas' will be repainted into the red livery of its former owners the Corris Railway for the final months of its boiler ticket, which expires in April 2023.

The move is mainly for the loco to play a starring role in a forthcoming David Williams photo charter.

Below: 'Talyllyn' has worn three different colours before including black, but never blue...
Photo: Andrew Charman





■ The repeatedly delayed restoration by the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway of France-Belge 0-8-0T 699.01 'Sir Drefaldwyn' passed an important milestone on 3rd October when a fire was lit in the locomotive's boiler for the first time since it was withdrawn from service in 2000.

The overhaul of the 1944-built engine commenced in 2014 but was beset by a number of issues, including several months when the W&LLR was prevented from using its workshop following a discovery of asbestos, and the sizable delays caused by the Covid pandemic.

But by the time *NGW* went to press on 16th October 699.01 had made its first moves around Llanfair Caereinion station, with more extensive testing only awaiting the refitting of the side tanks to provide the water supply needed. Confidence is now high that the loco will return to service early in the 2023 season.

The platform at the front, by the way is to ease work on the loco's smokebox and not a cunning plan to turn 699.01 into a steam railcar...

Photo: Joe Gunby/W&LLR

Ffestiniog launches 'Super Saloon' funded by supporters

The latest vehicle to be completed in the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways' 'Super Saloon' carriage building programme has entered service.

The construction of carriage 808 was entirely funded by a generous donation that was made by FF&WHR supporters Bob and Jan Bloodworth.

Built at the F&WHR's workshops at Boston Lodge the new carriage makes maximum use of the tightly restricted FR loading gauge to improve comfort and space for passengers.

"The building of carriage 808 is part of

our ongoing programme to construct a number of these spacious Super Saloons and the new carriage will go straight into service providing an immediate benefit to our customers," said F&WHR general manager Paul Lewin.

"The levels of comfort afforded by the larger carriages running on the Welsh Highland Railway are now available to passengers on the Ffestiniog, with heating and double glazing in every carriage, together with bigger windows and increased space and legroom," Paul added.

Photo: Chris Parry, FF&WHR



BRIEF LINES



Young tackle Baguley

Restoration of steam-outline Baguley 0-4-0DM 'Golspie' (2085/1935) has begun at the Amerton Railway, in a project being led by the Staffordshire line's younger members. The loco has spent its entire life in the county, initially at the Trentham Gardens Railway and then at Alton Towers where it never ran.

Photo: AR

TR Race the Train returns

The Tallylyn Railway hosted its popular 'Race the Train' event, in which athletes take on the train service on a 14-mile route along the line, for the first time in three years on 20th August. Up to 2019 the event, organised by Tywyn Rotary Club, had taken place annually on every August Bank Holiday for 36 years.

Steeple replaces track

Members of the Steeple Grange Light Railway began a major project at the end of September to replace flood-affected track between the 18-inch gauge Derbyshire line's workshop and the Porter Lane bridge. The works need to be completed in time for the line to operate its Santa Special trains which like on most lines generate major revenue.

Baldwin steams at Bygoness

Baldwin 4-6-0T no 608, owned by Graham Fairhurst, appeared in steam at the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygoness event on 7th-9th October, for the first time since its debut on the Welsh Highland Railway in late 2019, after which mechanical issues became apparent. The FR has carried out extensive work on the loco, featured in *NGW* 148.

Cavan misses out on award

The Cavan and Leitrim Railway (Dromod) was named one of five finalists in the National Lottery Good Causes Awards 2022 in the heritage category, but missed out on the top award. Trustee Darragh Connolly was pleased to be a finalist; "it is really encouraging the recognition this has given us on a national level," he said.



■ Perchance it's very much awake. Lynton & Barnstaple Railway new-builds, Manning Wardle 2-6-2T 'Lyd' and Baldwin 2-4-2T 'Lyn' were reunited when the former loco, normally based at the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways, made its latest visit to the Devon line's Autumn Gala over the weekend of 24th-25th September. The two last worked together on the line in 1918.

Photo: Stuart Chapman

IOM Steam Railway to run through November

In a further welcome sign of narrow-gauge lines operating throughout more of the year, the Isle of Man Steam Railway has extended its season by a month.

The line was originally intended to close for the winter on 30th October, but will now run two trains a day on weekends throughout November.

Douglas station will see departures at 9.50 and 13.50, with returns from Port Erin departing at 12.00 and 16.00.

IOM Transport has also confirmed the dates of its enthusiasts festival which in 2023 will mark 150 years of steam and

150 years of the Manx Electric Railway.

Saturday 1st July will see the 150 Years of Steam celebration, followed on 23rd-30th July by a week-long festival across the island's heritage lines.

Then on Sunday 10th September a commemorative day will mark the MER's 150th anniversary.

More details of the November operating dates and train times on the IOMSR are at www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/

■ With the main operating seasons of most railways ending in October our diary takes its usual two-issue break from this month.



■ Much progress continues to be made on the revival of the Glyn Valley Tramway, the Chirk station site now completely clear, the footings of the station building being worked on and clearance spreading along the trackbed. Tracklaying is expected to start soon and NGW hears this is now intended to be laid permanently to 2ft 3in gauge. We hope to bring more details soon, our planned feature for this issue on the revival project having been delayed by bad weather. Photo: Andrew Charman

Kirklees visitors to front November Ratty 'mini Gala'

The Ravensglass & Eskdale Railway is to hold an end-of-season 'Mini Gala' in November, traditionally a time of little activity in the narrow-gauge arena with lines having ended their main running seasons and planning for Santa Specials over the Christmas period.

The event, over the weekend of 5th-6th November, will focus on two visitors to the Cumbrian 15-inch gauge line from 'Whistlestop Valley', the Kirklees Light Railway in West Yorkshire.

'Fox' and 'Badger', both built for the Kirklees line in 1987 and 1991 respectively, will share duties with 'Katie', the Heywood 0-4-0T on one of its outings from the Ravensglass Railway Museum.

The event will include extra 'early morning' return journeys each day at 10.10am, heading to Murthwaite yard for a behind-the-scenes tour of the remains of the stone crushing plant that processed stone quarried in Eskdale until the 1950s.

A volunteer guide from the museum will lead the tours and participants will be able to watch a double-headed train passing the Murthwaite site.

The R&ER adds that good shoes and warm clothes will be essential for those taking the tours. More details of the event and ticket-booking facilities, including weekend rover tickets, are on the line's website at <https://ravenglass-railway.co.uk>

Gala success fuels Ashover extension

Highly successful participation in the August Mixed-Traffic Gala of its landlords the standard gauge Peak Rail has provided the Ashover Light Railway Society with the funds needed to carry out the next stage of building its 2ft gauge running line.

The event, the ALR's first official weekend of operating public passenger trains, saw the small group collect in excess of £2000 in takings and donations, enabling it to place orders for the track panels, points, ballast and other materials to complete the extension at Peak Rail's Rowsley station site.

The existing line will be extended around the picnic area and up towards the site of the Parkside station of the former Darley Dales Narrow Gauge Railway – this was effectively abandoned by its operator before the ALR took over at Rowsley.

The work will also see the completion of a turning triangle, replicating that at Ashover Butts on the original Ashover line.

More than 100 visitors travelled on the short line over the Gala weekend, while the ALR's Ruston locomotive was also able to offer occasional demonstration freight service between the passenger workings.

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New bid to restore 'forgotten' Tralee Hunslet after 13 years

Irish preservationists are making a new bid to secure the future of the only remaining steam locomotive of the 3ft gauge Tralee and Dingle Light Railway.

Hunslet 2-6-2T 5T (555/1892) is currently stored in pieces in a shed in Blennerville, County Kerry on the ill-fated Tralee & Blennerville Railway, which ran as a tourist line along a section of the original T&DLR between 1994 and 2009.

The loco was unique among the T&D fleet, other Hunslet and Kerr Stuart designs on the line being 2-6-0 tanks. It ran until 1949 and was extensively used during the line's goods-only years from 1939.

In 1949 5T was sent to Inchicore for an overhaul but instead headed north west to the Cavan and Leitrim section of CIE in late 1950. There it was used intensively on mixed and coal trains from Arigna and hauled the last train from Dromod in 1959.

Following closure of the C&L section in 1959, 5T was purchased by Edgar Mead along with Robert Stephenson built Cavan and Leitrim Railway 4-4-0 'Lady Edith' of 1887 and two Tralee and Dingle carriages for display at the Steamtown museum in Vermont, USA.

The loco remained at Steamtown until 1985 when the museum moved location to Scranton, a more limited site. Priority was given to US prototypes, and 5T being an Irish loco was not among those moved.

Boston resident Con Kelly funded the loco's purchase from Steamtown with a view to returning it to Tralee, his father having been a steam raiser on the T&DLR and Con himself born in the railway station at Blennerville. This station building survived into the 1990s before being

demolished by the revived railway.

A group of local business interests funded the transport of 5T across the Atlantic in 1988. It was returned to working order five years later and operated on the revived line until its boiler certificate failed and it was dismantled, the revival project stopping operations soon after.

Con Kelly's son Stephen, Micheal Kennedy and Darragh Connolly from the Cavan & Leitrim Railway were able to inspect 5T in October. Micheal was involved in the loco's repatriation and initial restoration through the Great Southern Preservation Group, which recommended the boiler be restored by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, while Darragh had previously been involved in a more local attempt to get the Blennerville line operating again.

Deteriorating condition

The group concluded that 5T is now in a far worse condition than when it was repatriated from America. While the loco is under cover there are a number of brass components that could not be accounted for and are presumed missing or stolen.

The loco is disassembled with parts scattered around the shed and reports indicate nothing has changed in 15 years. "It is evident from this assessment the current owners have no intention of restoring the loco or indeed the railway at Blennerville," Darragh said.

Following its successful restoration of Avonside 0-6-0T 'Nancy', the Dromod-based C&LR is now attempting to untangle the situation and making enquiries to get a clearer understanding of

the situation regarding 5T. Darragh added that the C&LR remains committed to the preservation and restoration of all Irish narrow gauge rail heritage, including 5T.

Those wishing to support the efforts can contact the C&LR on social media or by email at dromodrailway@gmail.com.

Above left: Needing some love: Hunslet 5T as it sits in the shed at Blennerville.

Above: Stephen Kelly and Darragh Connolly on 5T's footplate – Darragh is holding a unique part of his T&D collection, the tyers tablet from Annascaul to Castlegregory Junction.



■ Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl' wore a special headboard on 28th August, celebrating the fact that its driver, Simon Bowden, was clocking up a remarkable 50 years driving locomotives on the mid-Wales 2ft 6in gauge line. Simon is also a W&LLR Trustee.

Photo: W&LLR



Irish lines recalled in new centre

The development of Foyle Valley Railway Museum took a major step forward on 21st September with the opening of a new interpretation centre (reports **Hugh Dougherty**).

Destined, the charity working with people with disabilities and which leases the museum from Derry and Strabane District Council, invited Mayor, Cllr Sandra Duffy, to officially open the centre which has been backed by a £242,100 grant from the National Lottery Fund Northern Ireland.

Computers offer visitors information on the 3ft gauge County Donegal and Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railways, plus the 5ft 3in gauge Great Northern Railway of Ireland and London Midland & Scottish Northern Counties Committee lines, all of which served the city.

Attractions include a virtual reality walk-

through tour of the former GNR(I)'s Foyle Road Station as it was before the line's closure in 1965 and on whose site the museum now stands.

Destined guides take visitors round the exhibits, which include former County Donegal Railways 2-6-4T 'Columbkille', County Donegal Railways railcar 12 and other artefacts of Derry's railways.

Destined worked closely with the community and local schools on the development of the project which has also gathered memories and photos of the railways. Local pupils attended the launch, and the museum plans to continue to involve schools in its development.

Foyle Valley Railway manager, Caroline O'Hara, said that Destined is very proud of the opening of the interpretation centre to make the Foyle Valley Railway even more

accessible and relevant to the entire community, tourists and railway heritage fans alike.

"We have also made improvements to the museum building and have repaired and improved the exhibits – our ultimate aim is to re-open the Foyle Valley Railway itself, in due course, to further enhance our visitor experience and to provide unique training and employment opportunities for our Destined clients," Caroline added.

Above left: Dressed for the part – tour guides tell guests all about CDR 2-6-4T Columbkille at the interpretation centre's official opening.

Above: Computers give access to information about the four railways, two narrow and two standard gauge, which served Derry.

Photos: Foyle Valley Railway Museum



■ The community-run Poppleton Heritage Railway Nursery in York held a Heritage Open Day on 10th September. Lister Auto-Truck 'Loweco' operated demonstration freight trains throughout the day on the 2ft gauge line. *Photo: Ben Bucki*

■ The latest progress at the Workshop X restoration centre in Killamarsh, Cumbria has seen dismantling continuing of the Orenstein & Koppel 'Luttermoller' 0-10-0 that new owner Matt Dolby placed at the workshop for restoration on 29th March. The wheels have now been removed from the locomotive, the restorers surprised that they all appeared to have flanges on them having expected the centre ones to be flangeless – they then realised the 'flanges' were extreme wear from the loco's working life in Argentina!

Among other work underway at Killamarsh the reassembly is beginning of 3ft gauge Hudswell-Clarke 0-4-0ST 'Handyman', which is being cosmetically restored for the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust.

Photos: Workshop X



Battle to prevent Czech-mate on JHMD system



Enthusiasts have reacted with shock to news that the privately-operated 760mm gauge JHMD system, based in the town of Jindřichův Hradec in the south of the Czech Republic, has suspended train services with debts of CSK 160m, equivalent to £6m.

The future for the system, which runs a 21-mile line from Jindřichův Hradec to Nová Bystřice, close to the Austrian border, and a 29-mile line north to the town of Obrataň, is said to be bleak, with local authorities drafting in buses to replace diesel-hauled rail services.

The line has been operated by the privately-owned Jindřichohradecké místní dráhy (JHMD) for the past 25 years, with diesel services funded by the State and steam-hauled daily tourist trains in the summer months.

This season steam tourist services have run to Nová Bystřice on five days a week and on the other two days a shorter route to Kamenice nad Lipou, midway along the route to Obrataň.

Train loadings have appeared very healthy but now local media reports state that JHMD filed an insolvency petition in April after losing support of its bank, owing 140 creditors and in a major dispute with the regional government over the level of state support to the system.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Regular *NGW* contributor James Waite, who took the pictures accompanying this report, visited the line in 2008 and 2014 and described it as a go-ahead operation, actively targeting growing tourist traffic in the region and expanding its workshops to both service its own fleet and hopefully attract standard-gauge overhauls.

The line runs mostly original locos and rolling stock, though its roster includes three bogie carriages acquired from the Hungarian State Railways and similar to two vehicles in use today on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway. Some stock has been restored having been rescued from use for such purposes as chicken sheds.

Just as *NGW* closed for press there were indications that the line hopes its financial troubles will not be terminal. The JHMD website posted that customers holding vouchers for 'drive-a-train' experiences on the system who have been impacted by the suspension would have the validity of their vouchers extended.

Describing the current suspension as "a temporary replacement of rail transport by bus transport," the website added that, "we believe... we will be able to show the public again what it means to be a train driver on a narrow gauge track."

■ An edition of *Waite's World* coming soon in *NGW* will focus on the JHMD system.

Above: Former PKP 0-8-0 no Px-48 1916 approaches Albeř station on its way to Nová Bystřice on the JHMD system. The loco was built by Czarnów in 1949.

Below left: Diesel T47.005 traverses a level crossing near Hůrky on the Nová Bystřice line with a train bound for Jindřichův Hradec. The loco is one of a series built by CKD between 1954 and 1959 and based on a slightly earlier design, the TU3s, built for the Soviet Union. The diesels were expected to be replaced by railcars from 2014 but the unreliability of the latter saw two T47s kept in service.

Photos: James Waite, August 2008



■ The Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways is making progress with rebuilding of its Decauville-built Orenstein & Koppel 2-6-0T at its works in Butry, FRANCE. The 1897 loco's boiler has been undergoing hydraulic tests as the reconstruction continues.

Photo: Olivier Janneau/MTVS





Visitors star at Golden anniversary celebration

Two visiting locomotives joined the extensive home collection of the Association pour la Sauvegarde du Vicinal (Association for the preservation of the 'Vicinal', local railways) between 30th September and 2nd October as the Association celebrated its 50th anniversary (*writes Sjors van Dongen*).

The visitors to the Association's museum base in Thuin, Wallonia were Corpet-Louvet 130 no 1 from the Chemin de fer de la Baie de Somme in France and Luxembourgian Tramways no 34 from the Tramways and Bus Museum of Luxembourg.

The presence of no 34 was particularly welcome as the engine had not left its usual museum confines for several decades and had not run extensively since the closure of Luxembourg's tramway system in 1964.

A photographer's day on the Friday included a parade of all available electric trams

BELGIUM

on the route to Lobbes Entreville in the morning.

In the afternoon a special programme of goods and mixed trains was organised on the former SNCB standard gauge line to Biesmes-Thuin, which is now metre gauge. This used 1888-built SNCV Type 7 HL303 running with the visiting Corpet.

Over the weekend an intensive timetable operated over both lines with all available stock.

Above: The visiting Corpet-Louvet and SNCV HL303 rest between duties.

Above right: Luxembourg tram car TVL34 had its first significant operational outing for 58 years.

Below: The visiting Corpet-Louvet shared goods train duties with steam tram HL303 for the benefit of photographers on Friday 30th September.

Photos: Sjors van Dongen



Wagon acquisitions boost museum bid

Hopes that a narrow gauge museum will open in 2023 in Ditva, **BELARUS**, are rising, as members of the Belarus Narrow Gauge Federation continue to acquire wagons for the proposed display.

Recent acquisitions include a 20-ton covered van, one of only two examples known to survive in Belarus, and a combined passenger/freight 'Fakultativwagen', built in East Germany in the 1940s, in which the

museum plans to house a souvenir shop.

Negotiations are currently underway to acquire one of three buffet cars remaining in Belarus, which the group considers essential to future development of the museum.

Earlier this year the BNGF was given control of 11km of a former 750mm gauge peat line by the Belarus Ministry of Energy.

■ Information via New Europe Railway Heritage Trust – see page 16

BRIEF LINES

New train on busy Darj

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway has started a new tri-weekly service between New Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling in **INDIA**, the train combining a restaurant car and one of the vistadome observation carriages. Recent times on the line are reported to have been very busy, with 12 daily services all heavily booked.

Zig Zag closing on opening

Enthusiasts in **AUSTRALIA** eagerly awaiting a reopening date for the 3ft 6in gauge Zig Zag Railway are having to be patient as the line at Lighthow, ravaged by bush fires in 2013 and 2019, has still not announced a date. Hopes are high that reopening could still happen in 2022 and a number of training trains for staff have been run – one can be viewed at this link; <https://bit.ly/3T4ZwrD>

Kingston Flyer returns

The 3ft 6in gauge Kingston Flyer, a service in **NEW ZEALAND** that has had a chequered history, has announced a return to regular operation with Sunday services. Trains started running on 18th September and will continue to 18th December, offering a 1.5-hour return journey on a 14km route from Kingston Foreshore to Fairlight. The trains run twice on each day, departing from Kingston at 10.30am and 1.30pm. A 2023 schedule is currently at the planning stage.

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



Celebration boosts Billy's Shay project

The Puffing Billy Railway

AUSTRALIA

held an anniversary dinner on 15th October to celebrate 50 years since the arrival at the line's museum of a Shay locomotive from the Alishan Forest Railway, as efforts to return the loco to operating condition gather pace.

The Class A 13-ton two-truck Shay locomotive no 14, built by the Lima Locomotive Works in the USA in 1912 (works no 2549), was donated to the Puffing Billy Preservation Society by the Taiwanese Government after a working life hauling wood on the steeply graded Alishan line, and arrived in Melbourne on 8th October 1972.

The loco was put on display in the Puffing Billy's museum at Menzies Creek and has been there ever since, but in more recent times thoughts have turned towards restoring no 14 to operating condition, both the Alishan and Puffin Billy being built to 2ft 6in gauge.

The work has been costed at more than £1m Australian dollars (around £554,000)

and so far the fundraising has passed \$5,000 in what the Society admits is a long-term project requiring both significant funds and volunteer resources – the \$50 a head dinner is expected to be followed by a host of further events as fundraising continues.

Should the Shay be successfully returned to steam it will be the third type of articulated locomotive to operate on the Puffing Billy Railway. Former South African Railways NG/G16 Garratt no 129, built by Beyer, Peacock in 1951, is a core member of the line's operating fleet, while a two-truck Climax built in 1928 for Australian forestry railways has been at the Puffing Billy since 1965 and operational since the 1980s, returning from major overhaul in September 2013.

Above: Alishan Shay no 14 in the Puffing Billy's museum at Menzies Creek, where it provided the backdrop for a fundraising dinner on 15th October designed to help facilitate the loco's removal from display. Photo: Michael Chapman

Enthusiasts ignore invasion to keep projects on track

Narrow gauge projects in UKRAINE are continuing to make progress in the most difficult of conditions as the Eastern European nation battles the invasion by the forces commanded by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Those running the country's only private sector railway museum, the Korostiv Narrow Gauge Museum in Western Ukraine, have launched an appeal to the international heritage railway community in a bid to raise 7,000 Euros for projects at its site.

The group wants to improve the trackwork at the museum and erect a permanent building to provide much-needed accommodation for the collection – particularly the first steam locomotive acquired for the museum, a Yugoslavian 790mm gauge 0-4-0T built in 1942.

Stock transferred to safety

Meanwhile efforts to protect Ukrainian narrow gauge items from the conflict have seen the movement of locomotives and rolling stock of the Antonivka Railway. The 750mm gauge line, the longest narrow gauge route in Europe at 106km, is located close to the border with Belarus and therefore under threat.

The items were moved by Ukrainian State Railways on broad-gauge wagons. Some have gone to Lviv while others have been transported to the Borzhava Valley Railway. Plans to reopen this 750mm gauge line are reportedly at a standstill with the track in poor condition.

Some items kept at Antonivka were the property of the Korostiv group and these have been transferred by road to the main museum site.

According to reports the long-term aim is to return evacuated items to Antonivka once the war is over.

■ Thanks to the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust for information in this story. The Trust's newsletter *Eastern Star* can be downloaded from its website at <http://nerht.heritage-railways.com/easternstar.php>



■ NGW correspondent **Dominic Emery** enjoyed a close-up encounter with an in-steam Shay on a visit to the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad in California, USA on 21st September. The three-truck 60-ton C3 locomotive no 15, built by Lima Locomotive Works in 1913, has been at the line since 1986, having been used by several tourist operations since ending its working life in 1961.

A second Shay, the 82-ton no 10 dating from 1928, was in the line's shed being prepared for a repaint.

The Yosemite line runs for two miles along the trackbed of the Madera Sugar Pine Lumber Co, a network once extending to more than 145 miles but which closed in 1931 during the Great Depression. Dominic described his Railroad ride as "Authentic-liveried engines on an original logging line."



Bringing a Decauville back to life

NGW's United States correspondent *Bill Jolitz* witnesses the appearance of a not very American loco.

What is a little Decauville locomotive doing deep in Scandinavian Minnesota's farmland way 'op nort'?

It's a strange story, as much as is known. The loco was built in 1914 (works number 896) with the name 'Victoire', but the organization that now owns it admits to having an incomplete history.

They understand that the engine was used to haul munitions to the front line in Europe during the First World War while following the Second World War, it was employed in hauling rubble out from devastated German cities.

Exporter Klaus Arnold of Hamburg brought it and several other small locomotives to the United States during the early 1970s. Milton Martinson then bought the locomotive and sent it by truck from Iowa to Dalton, Minnesota where he restored it to running order.

After his death, Mr Martinson's family donated the Decauville to the Lake Region Pioneer Thresherman's Association. The loco carries Mr Martinson's name in tribute on its cab, along with the number 2 on its smokebox front.

Appointment at the show

The LRPTA made one modification to the loco, adding a small tender to carry wood fuel. The Association owns considerable acreage where a small museum has been established and twice annually a special show is held where local farmers bring their tractors for a meet – everything from early steam traction engines through modern vehicles are on display.

Volunteers built a half-mile of track in a closed loop and then built a turntable and small storage building, on which on 10th September it was planned to bring no 2 out of hiding to run.

No such luck – several of the boiler



tubes were bad and leaking. New tubes needed installation and rolling tight. Jim Johansen and his small crew went to work.

After several hours of effort, they lit the loco to bring up the steam pressure and see what was leaking. The answer was a lot. So, maybe tomorrow, maybe, it would run.

They were successful! Carrying 80 pounds of pressure, the loco duly rolled across the turntable and out on the 'high iron'. The carriages had to be rolled out by hand, actually six pairs of hands.

After a test run, the Decauville met its public, who were queued up for 75 feet. It

was beautiful and everyone was happy.

At the beginning of summer, the Decauville will come out again and strut its stuff.

Top: Effort rewarded, Decauville no 2 on its first run of the day, cars filled to capacity.

Above: The new tubes were rolled in by boiler engineer Jim Johnson (below left).

Below: Many hands were needed to push excursion cars onto the turntable and to line it up with the main line.

Photos: Bill Jolitz



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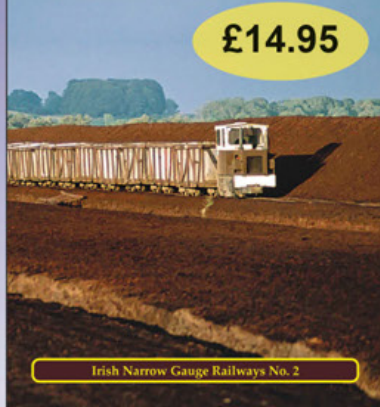
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Newbould Quarry Hunslet STATFOLD (HE3903/2005) was a visitor to the Apedale Valley Light Railway 11th September 2011.
(All photos by Iain McCall)

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This anonymous - but attractive - locomotive is seen running on a temporary railway at the Rail Gala at the Claude Jessett Collection, Tinker's Park, Sussex, on 3rd August 2013. (All photographs by Iain McCall)

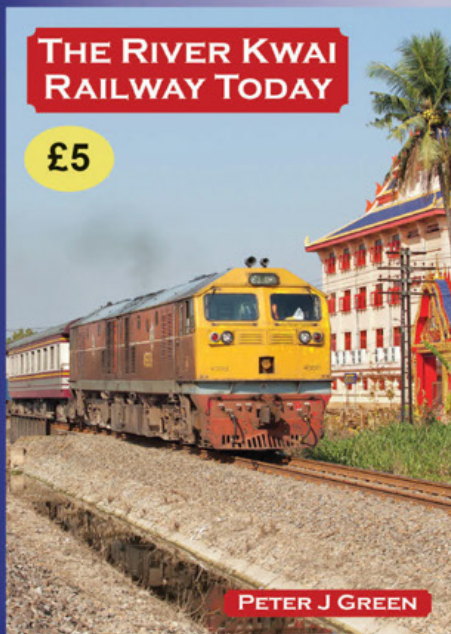
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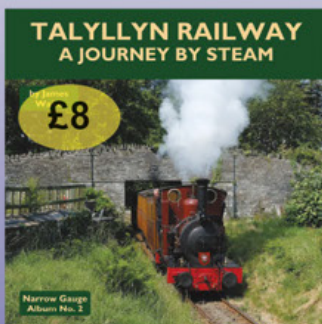
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Potatoes and Pecketts

James Waite describes the role of a staple crop and locos with geological names in the long saga of the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway.



The Lincolnshire Fens once formed the marshy hinterland of the Wash, prone to inundation from the sea until they were drained in a process begun in the Middle Ages. To their north east lies what is known locally as the Marsh, a strip of low-lying land, partly below sea level, which runs parallel with the coast for more than 40 miles from Gibraltar Point past Skegness towards Grimsby.

This area is protected from the sea by dunes, and much of it has also been drained. The Fens and the Marsh possess some of the richest agricultural land anywhere in England, and for more than 100 years

have been the country's principal district for growing potatoes.

Large-scale production began late in the 19th century but was hampered by transport difficulties, the tracks from the fields to the main roads often being swamped by heavy rain. With few natural obstacles this was ideal territory for light railways, and the initial lines were built before the First World War. Some small-scale lines relied on horse traction or manpower, but the major growers began to develop larger systems.

One of these, W Dennis & Sons, successfully went over to rail operations at its estate at Deeping St

Above: Pride of the line – Peckett 0-6-OST 'Jurassic' (1008/1903) on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway at Skegness.

Below: Jurassic leaving South Loop on the LCLR. The converted D-class open wagon is in front of the red 'Queen Mary' carriage.

Nicholas, near Spalding. Following the war construction throughout the district received a boost when large quantities of War Department Light Railways (WDLR) track and rolling stock used on the Western Front came onto the market, often at bargain prices. At their peak the area was home to more than 400 miles of potato railways.

In 1919 Dennis acquired an estate at Nocton, in the far north west of the Fens near Lincoln city. The 600mm gauge Nocton Estate Light Railway was built, using WDLR equipment including 56 D-class bogie open and E-class bogie well wagons, five tank wagons, 12 bogie ambulance vans and 36 P-class four-wheeled open 'ration' wagons. It went on to become one of the largest systems in the county.

In 1927 one of the estate's D-class wagons was converted to a carriage and used to carry the Dennis family and





their guests on shooting parties, the opportunities on the estate reputedly being amongst the best anywhere in the county. It became known locally as the 'Queen Mary'.

Most of the potato railways used internal combustion locos from the start, but the Nocton line was unusual in including a steep climb from the Fens to reach Nocton & Dunston main-line station on the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds. This taxed the abilities of the i/c locos and in 1926 a large and handsome Fowler 0-6-0T steam locomotive was bought to work this section. However it proved too heavy and was soon sold, becoming one of the many locos working on construction of Burnhope reservoir in County Durham. Several of these have been preserved, but sadly the Fowler was the only one to be cut up when the project was completed in 1938, still lettered for the NELR.

Potato preservation

The Nocton system survived largely intact until the late 1950s, latterly serving the Smith's potato crisp company which bought the Nocton estate in 1936 and opened a factory in Lincoln the following year – remember its product with the little blue bag of salt? A group of enthusiasts wanted to preserve something of the potato lines as a commercially viable venture, and built the 600mm gauge Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway to serve the holiday camps and beaches at Humberston, near Cleethorpes.

This line opened on 27th August 1960 on land leased from the local authority, initially for five years. Much of the rail came from Nocton along with a Simplex i/c loco, two ambulance vans and four D-class and six P-class wagons. The Queen Mary carriage was later recovered from a

scrapyard where it was leading a second life as an office.

In 1961 came the arrival of the bodies of two of the four carriages built in 1924 for the Ashover Light Railway, another user of ex-WDLR equipment – these had survived despite the withdrawal of passenger services in 1936. They were fitted with ex-WDLR bogies and restored to service. A distinctive acquisition in 1967 was the body of the only passenger carriage to run on the 18in gauge Sand Hutton Railway, another remarkable survivor despite the line's closure as early as 1932. The very long vehicle needed two adapted D-class frames to provide a chassis.

Smiths retained a short section of the Nocton line to serve potato chitting houses until 1969, after which a second Simplex and four more D-class wagons were acquired by the LCLR. Other diesels came from elsewhere.

The new railway initially handled a large amount of traffic, though it wasn't long before increased bus services made their mark. In 1965 the local authority required the site for development. The line relocated a little further south and was extended closer to the coast. A new lease of 25 years ushered in a period of greater stability, although as time passed passengers came more for the ride rather than using the railway as a means of transport.

Steam wasn't neglected. In the spring of 1961 ex-Cliffe Hill quarry Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Peter' arrived on loan from the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, though considerable work would have been needed to restore it to working order. Spares were obtained from Bagnall, but the loco weighed 7¾ tons and was considered too heavy for the light Nocton track. In 1963 it moved on, and today runs at Amberley museum in Sussex and »

Above: How it was – the former North Sea Lane base of the LCLR in July 1974, with the locos Jurassic, Hunslet 'Elin' and Simplex 'Wilton' all visible. Photo: Donald Brooks

Below: The Sand Hutton Light Railway carriage being restored in the LCLR storage shed.

All photos in this feature by James Waite unless stated. All taken July 2022 except where shown





has recently been fully overhauled.

One of the LCLR directors bought Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Elin' from Penrhyn Quarry in 1962. This was unlike any other North Wales Hunslet as during a rebuild in 1938 a secondhand high-pitched boiler from a Marshall traction engine had been fitted to it with a new saddle tank to match. After restoration it arrived at the LCLR on 2nd November 1969, but like Peter was too heavy for

regular traffic and only saw use on special occasions.

Pecketts from Southam

A much more suitable machine arrived in June 1961 in full working order in the shape of Peckett 0-6-OST 'Jurassic'. It was somewhat lighter at 7½ tons and with its long six-coupled wheelbase the axle loading was much lower. Jurassic was the first of six generally similar locos with 7 x

"The wood is home to a family of hares that relish the opportunity to outpace Jurassic on its leisurely journeys..."



Above: Cranmore class 'Sir John Grice' (1711/1926) under repair at the Puffing Billy Railway's workshops at Belgrave in January 2017.

Left: 'Mesozoic' (1327/1913) in store at Llanberis, June 1972.

Below: Sister locos of Jurassic at the Bala Lake Railway Gala in August 2022 (see NGW170). 'Liassic' (1632/1923) is about to haul the out-of-service 'Triassic' (1270/1911) to form a 'double-header'.

10in cylinders built for the 600mm gauge line at Southam cement works in Warwickshire between 1903 and 1923, though the final three were slightly longer at 12ft 6in instead of 12ft, which gave them a subtly different appearance.

They were preceded by three 1ft 9in versions which were built for the nearby Stockton works from 1897 and were the first purpose-designed narrow gauge machines from Peckett, the firm's earlier products adapted from standard gauge types. The Stockton locos were scrapped when the works closed in 1949, though some parts went to Southam to keep the four remaining there in service.

Peckett built only one other loco to this design which went to Moorewood colliery at Oakhill in Somerset in 1915, and in 1934 moved to County Kildare. There were also a 0-4-OST version known as the Cranmore class, again 12ft long, weighing about seven tonnes and inevitably with an increased axle load. Five were built between 1904 and 1926 for gauges between 2ft and 3ft.

A similar but low-slung 3ft gauge 0-4-OT was built for a gasworks in Poplar in 1903 and three 3ft gauge 0-4-OTs for the British Aluminium Company at Larne between 1904 and 1914 – the quartet of 3ft locos all had inside frames.

The 2ft 6in gauge 'Sir John Grice' based at the Puffing Billy Railway near Melbourne in Australia is the only surviving Cranmore, while two of the Larne locos remain in Ireland.

The first five Southam locos were named after geological periods. Two, 'Neozoic' and 'Liassic', both short-frame ones, were officially withdrawn in 1943, again with some components being reused as spares. However it may be more accurate to say that 'Mesozoic', a long-frame loco, was withdrawn and its saddle tank, cab and nameplates were fitted to Neozoic, so that the loco carrying the Mesozoic identity became a short-frame one. The nameplates of Liassic, and probably also its saddle tank, were transferred to the 1923 machine which had previously been nameless.

These four all survived the closure of their line in 1956. 'Triassic' became the first narrow gauge steam loco to be rescued by a private individual when Bernard Latham bought it in 1957. It now belongs to his son Bryce and is displayed in the Bala Lake Railway's heritage centre.

Mesozoic was one of several narrow gauge locos preserved in the 1960s by Graham Mullis. They were all bought by Tony Hills in 1970 and moved to his yard at Gilfach Ddu, Llanberis, next to the shed recently vacated by the venerable Padarn





Railway 4ft gauge loco 'Fire Queen'. Mesozoic moved on to a preservation scheme in Bromyard in 1977 and was dismantled soon afterwards. Sadly it has stayed that way ever since. Liassic went to Canada in 1959 but is now a prized exhibit at the Statfold Barn Railway, magnificently restored in its original elaborate Peckett paint scheme.

Returning to the Lincolnshire Coast, problems arose at Humberston over the years, and a decision was made not to take a new lease after the 25-year term expired in 1985. The line closed at the end of that summer and the stock was placed in store at Burgh-le-Marsh, near Skegness.

A separate trust was formed to safeguard Jurassic and the historic former Nocton equipment, some of which was displayed at the ill-fated Museum of Army Transport at Beverley until it closed in 2003. Elin moved on to the Yaxham Light Railway where it ran for several years, and is now at Jeremy Martin's Richmond Light Railway in Kent. It recently returned to service, restored magnificently to its 1938 Penrhyn condition after more than six years' work in Jeremy's small workshop, a most creditable achievement.

New life on the coast

A chance meeting in the late 1990s in East Lindsey District Council's planning office between a member of the LCLR and Frederick Ellis, whose

company owns Skegness Airfield and the associated water leisure park, led to a generous offer to rehouse the railway along the airfield perimeter, not much more than one mile away from the Burgh-le-Marsh store. Even more generously Mr Ellis funded the construction of a five-road shed to house all the stock, including the former WDLR vehicles which had returned after the Beverley closure.

The LCLR's second (or maybe I should say third?) life began when the new line opened in 2009 after several years of hard work by a small group of volunteers. It now runs for a little under one mile around the park.

A highlight was the return to service of Jurassic after a major overhaul on 2nd August 2017, most attractively restored in one of Southam's later liveries, somewhat simpler than the original Peckett one.

One of the D-class wagons is now fitted out with seating; its frame still displays shrapnel damage that must be more than 100 years old. Ashover carriage no 2 has also been superbly restored and now carries its original Midland red paint scheme.

My wife and I received great



Above left: Behind Jurassic inside the storage shed is the superbly restored former Ashover Light Railway carriage.

Above: A hare crosses the LCLR track in front of Jurassic midway along the line.

Below: Jurassic running round at Wall's Lane, LCLR, with the storage shed to the rear.

hospitality from the railway's volunteers when we visited in July this year. We rode in the Queen Mary, which had just entered service after an extensive overhaul, and also a degree of modification to make it suitable for regular use.

For much of the ride there's a fine view out to the west over the Marsh towards Middlemarsh Farm, where some of the historic grazing wetlands have been restored and wading and migratory birds and wildfowl are encouraged. The wood on the other side, separating the railway from the airfield runway, is home to a family of hares that relish the opportunity to outpace Jurassic on its leisurely journeys. I can't remember when I last encountered these exceptionally speedy animals. Our visit made for a really delightful day out which is thoroughly recommended! **NGW**



Chartering a positive image...

The traditional Autumn series of photo charters, plus some late-season Galas, certainly kept the photographers busy over recent weeks.





Facing page, upper: *Karl Heath* felt in a monochromatic mood when taking advantage of the photographic opportunities offered by the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones weekend. Here a trio of England 0-4-OSTs rest outside Boston Lodge loco shed on 8th October.

Facing page, lower: That monochromatic mood remained three days later when *Karl* captured this superbly lit shot of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl' at Heniarth – a shot that could so easily be from the line's period under GWR ownership.

Above: *Joey Evans* also attended the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones event, capturing double-Fairlie 'Merddin Emrys' with suitably period stock on Gwyndy Bank on 9th October.

Below: Smaller size, no less speed – the driver of 'Jack', completed by TMA Engineering in 2003, let the 15-inch gauge loco enjoy one last turn of speed during the final open day of the Rhiw Valley Light Railway on 2nd October. *Photo: Andrew Charman*

Overleaf: Photo charters may be a little contrived but they do produce some superb photos. Here some suitable lighting makes for a dramatic just after dusk image of Manning Wardle new-build 'Lyd' at Tan y Bwlch on the Ffestiniog Railway on 8th October. *Photo: Joey Evans*



**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**







Mining Railroads of California

Dan Quine looks at the amazing variety of lines built to extract seemingly limitless mineral wealth.

California is famous for the 1849 Gold Rush which established the state's fortunes. The Sierra Nevada mountains run parallel to the coast along the border with Nevada, and their mineral deposits were especially noted for gold and silver. The lower

coastal mountain ranges on the west side of California contained rich seams of cinnabar – mercury ore. Mercury was needed to separate gold from the rock containing it. California was also rich in copper, zinc and other metals.

All photos in this feature courtesy California State Library unless specified

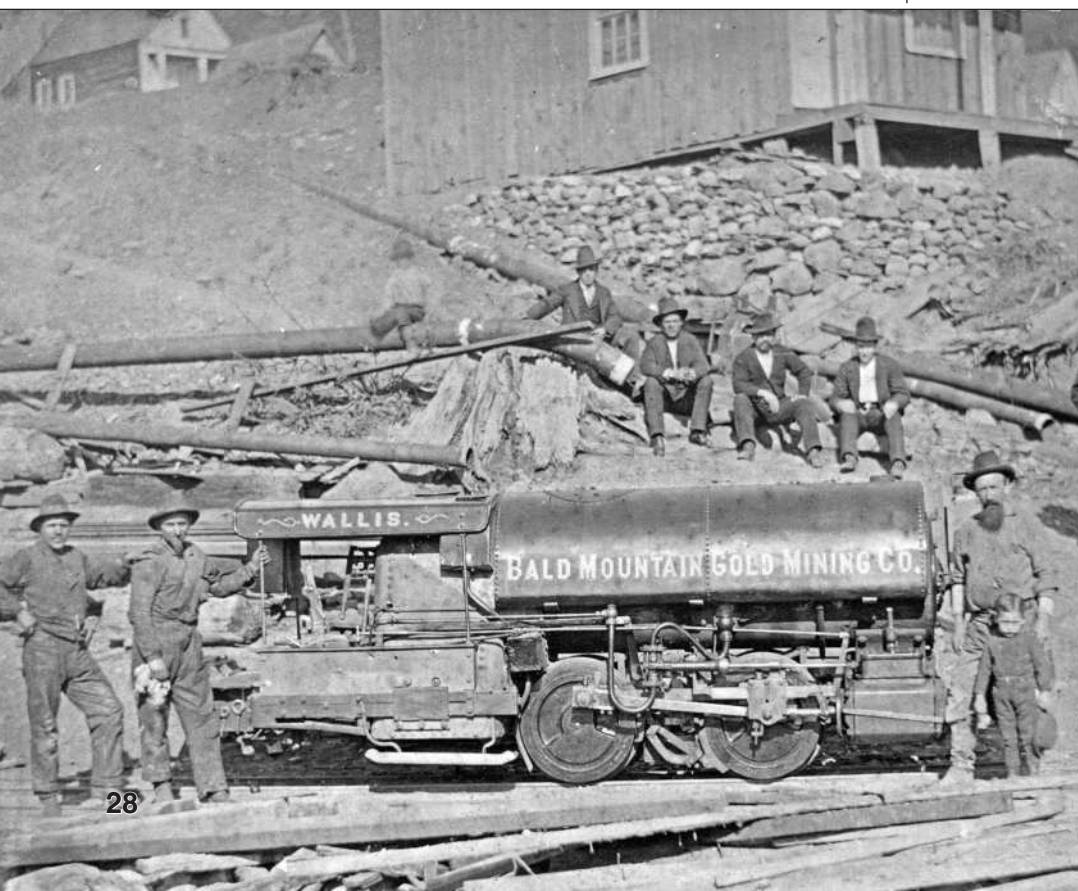
Mines sprang up across the state, often in difficult mountain locations, and narrow gauge railroads of various sizes followed. This article illustrates a handful of the thousands of these mines. The railroads range from hand-worked tubs in tiny adits to networks of locomotive-worked lines that served multiple mines.

Bald Mountain Gold Mine

California was connected by rail to the industrial east of America in 1868. This led to an influx of heavy equipment to the mines, allowing them to grow into significant operations. In the 1850s, gold was found near Forest City and miners quickly moved in.

By 1865 the surface deposits were worked out and the city was abandoned. But prospectors suspected the gold deposit continued underground, and in 1869 a 286ft deep shaft was driven into the mountain and struck a gold-bearing gravel deposit. This led to the formation, in 1870, of the Bald Mountain Gold Mining Company to work the gravel beds.

A 4,000ft long tunnel was driven into the mountain to reach the deposits; it was 5½ft high and 4ft wide at the base, tapering to 2½ft wide at the apex. A 20in gauge



tramway was laid through the tunnel, with curves down to 5ft radius, and gradients as steep as 1 in 21.

In 1870 the company purchased a steam locomotive from Baldwin. It was extremely compact with a 2ft diameter wheel on a 3ft 4in wheelbase to cope with the tight curves. It was the first steam locomotive to work underground in the western states.

Great Western Quicksilver Mining Company

Relatively few mines used steam locomotives, especially underground. Many were modest affairs, like the adit of the Great Western Quicksilver Mining Company, near Middletown in Lake County. This small mercury ore mine was opened in 1873 and had a simple horse-hauled tramway, probably 18in gauge.

Iron Mountain Railway

Iron and silver deposits were discovered on Iron Mountain, northwest of Redding, in the 1860s and 1870s. An attempt at silver mining in the 1880s failed because the ore was contaminated with other metals. The Mountain Mines Syndicate took over the property in 1895 and while exploring they found a large deposit of copper sulphide. They built a smelter at Spring Creek and a 3ft gauge railroad to connect with the Southern Pacific line at Keswick. Unusually, the railroad was a common carrier, not a private line.

The railway opened in February 1896. It covered 10½ miles and rose 1,850ft. To keep a ruling gradient of 1 in 27, it included a switchback just outside Keswick, 25 trestle bridges, two partial loops, one complete loop and a 163ft-long tunnel.

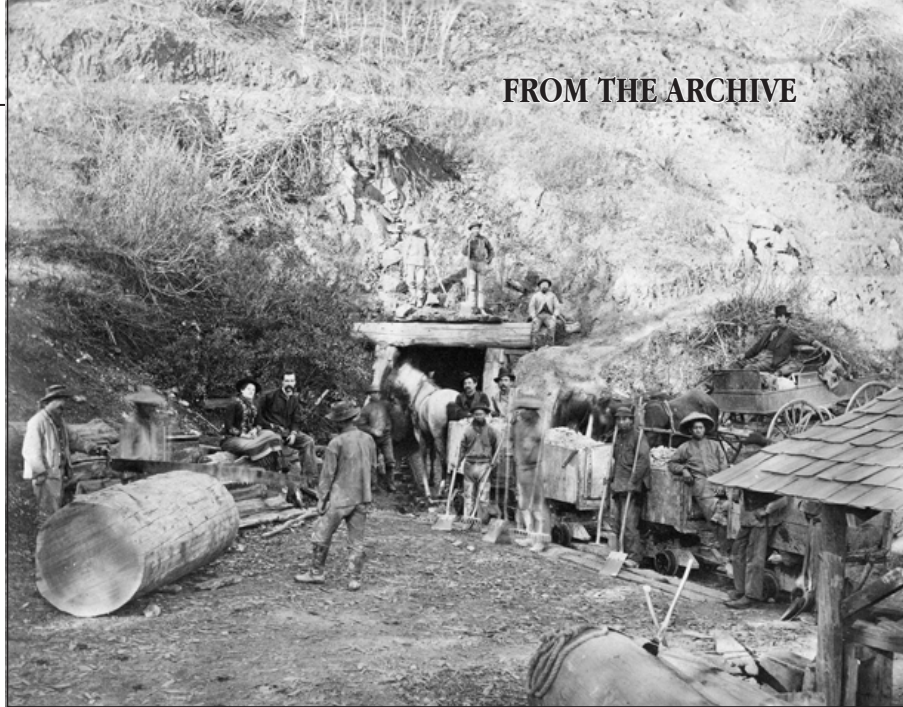
Between 1895 and 1899, five 0-4-4ST locomotives were delivered

Heading: The mining railways of California personified. Porter loco no 2 of the Yellow Aster Gold Mine at Randsburg in 1911.

Facing page, below: Baldwin locomotive 'Wallis' (3998 of 1876), named after W. H. Wallis, first superintendent of the Bald Mountain Gold Mining Company, who is standing at the right of the picture.

Right: At the Great Western Quicksilver Mine in December 1879. The horse-drawn train is made up of steel tubs mounted on wooden chassis with wide-tread wheels suitable for rough track.

Below: Three of the Iron Mountain Railway's Porter 0-4-4ST locos at the yard in Keswick. Part of the track here is dual-gauge to allow Southern Pacific trains to run to the smelter. Photo: Siskiyou County Museum



by H.K. Porter. These were originally wood-fired but were converted to oil firing in 1901. In 1905 the company moved its smelting operation from Keswick to Martinez on the San Francisco Bay. It installed dual-gauge tracks there and Porters nos 1 and 5 moved there to shunt the works. Seven years later the first of three geared Shay locomotives were purchased to work the railway, displacing the remaining Porters.

The railway deteriorated during the First World War and in 1921 most of its length was replaced by an aerial tramway. The railway saw some use in the 1920s, but was formally abandoned in 1927.

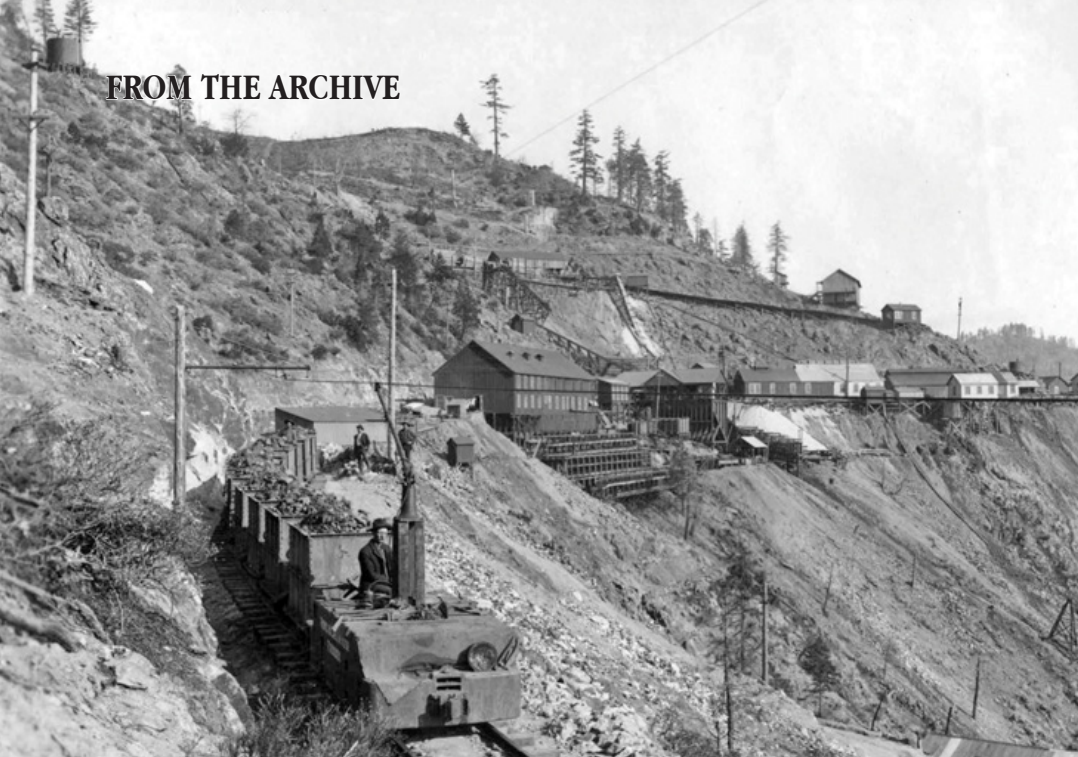
Mammoth Copper Mine

The Mammoth Mine is just north of Redding. The town of Kennett was founded in the 1880s as a construction camp for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Small amounts of alluvial gold had been found in the area as early as 1852, but it was not

until 1882 that copper was discovered and the Mammoth Mine was started. In 1904, the workings were purchased by the United States Smelting, Refining & Mining Company which built a smelter at Kennet the following year, the largest on the Pacific coast.

The mine was located at 3,500ft above sea level – more than 2,300ft above the smelter. Originally the two were connected by an aerial tramway, but in around 1907 it was replaced by a two-mile-long 3ft gauge railroad. An immense standard-gauge double-track gravity incline was used to cover most of the vertical descent; its 23-ton capacity wagons dropped the ore more than 1,700ft. Standard gauge steam locomotives worked the wagons from the foot of the incline to the smelter. A further network of 3ft gauge overhead-electric lines served the lower level at the smelter. The mine closed around 1920, reopened from 1923 to 1925, then was briefly worked for a final time in 1937. »





Bully Hill Copper Mine

Copper ore was first discovered at Bully Hill, 20 miles northwest of Iron Mountain, in the early 1850s though mining didn't start until 1877, when Alvin Potter & Co purchased the property. The Extra Mining Co then took over and laid a mile-long tramway from the mine to the mill, but the company only lasted until about 1881. The mine, mill and tramway passed through various owners in the 1880s, and was operated with only limited production of gold and silver.

In 1895, the Mountain Mining Copper Co purchased the property with the intention of extracting copper. It developed the mine, extending the earlier adit to 1,400ft where it ended at a 1,000ft deep shaft to the working levels.

In 1899, the mine was purchased by J.R. De La Mar who founded the Bully Hill Copper Mining and Smelting Company in 1901 to work the property. A Class A Shay locomotive was purchased in 1900 to

work the 2ft 6in gauge tramway from the mine. A year later the mill was replaced with a smelting plant.

General Electric purchased the operation in 1905 and extended the smelter. In 1908 a standard gauge line was laid from the smelter to the Southern Pacific Railroad main line, two miles north of Kennett. The mine closed in 1922.

Engels Copper Mine

Copper was discovered in Plumas County in the northeast of California in 1865 and small-scale smelting took place until 1869. In the late 1870s, Henry Engels discovered a rich ore deposit and began developing a mine, though the location was a challenge – the nearest railhead was 150 miles away in Reno, Nevada. Crushed ore was hauled over the mountains to Reno, then taken by rail to San Francisco. Some was even shipped to Swansea for smelting.

In 1901, the Engels Copper Mining Co was formed and production was expanded. In 1909, the Western Pacific Railroad line through the Feather River Canyon was completed. This brought rail

transport considerably closer to the mine and ore was hauled over the mountain road to the line at Keddie, 27 miles away.

In 1916, the standard gauge Indian Valley Railroad was built to connect the mine to Paxton, just west of Keddie. This gave the mine direct rail transport for the first time and production grew to 800 tons per day.

Also in 1916 the opening of a second mine, the Superior, gave lower access to the ore body. In September 1917 the new mill near the Superior mine was opened. Initially the two workings were connected by an aerial tramway, which was later replaced with a narrow gauge railway. More than 3,335,000 tons of ore had been produced at Engels when mining ceased in July 1930 after a slump in copper prices.

Three gauges were used at Engels. The main level at the original mine had an 18in gauge tramway with 3-ton General Electric battery-electric locomotives hauling 1-ton ore cars. When the new Superior Mill opened, level 10 of the Engels mine was driven out to daylight and connected to it. This 2ft gauge line ran 1½ miles underground followed by 1¼ miles overground. It used 7-ton overhead electric locomotives hauling 6-ton ore cars. Early in the history of the mine a gauge between 2ft 6in and 3ft was also in use.

Above: A train ready to leave the Mammoth Copper Mine on the 3ft gauge line to the head of the standard gauge incline. The ore crushing mill is behind the train, with offices and bunkhouses to the right.

Photo: Meriam Library Special Collections Department, California State University, Chico

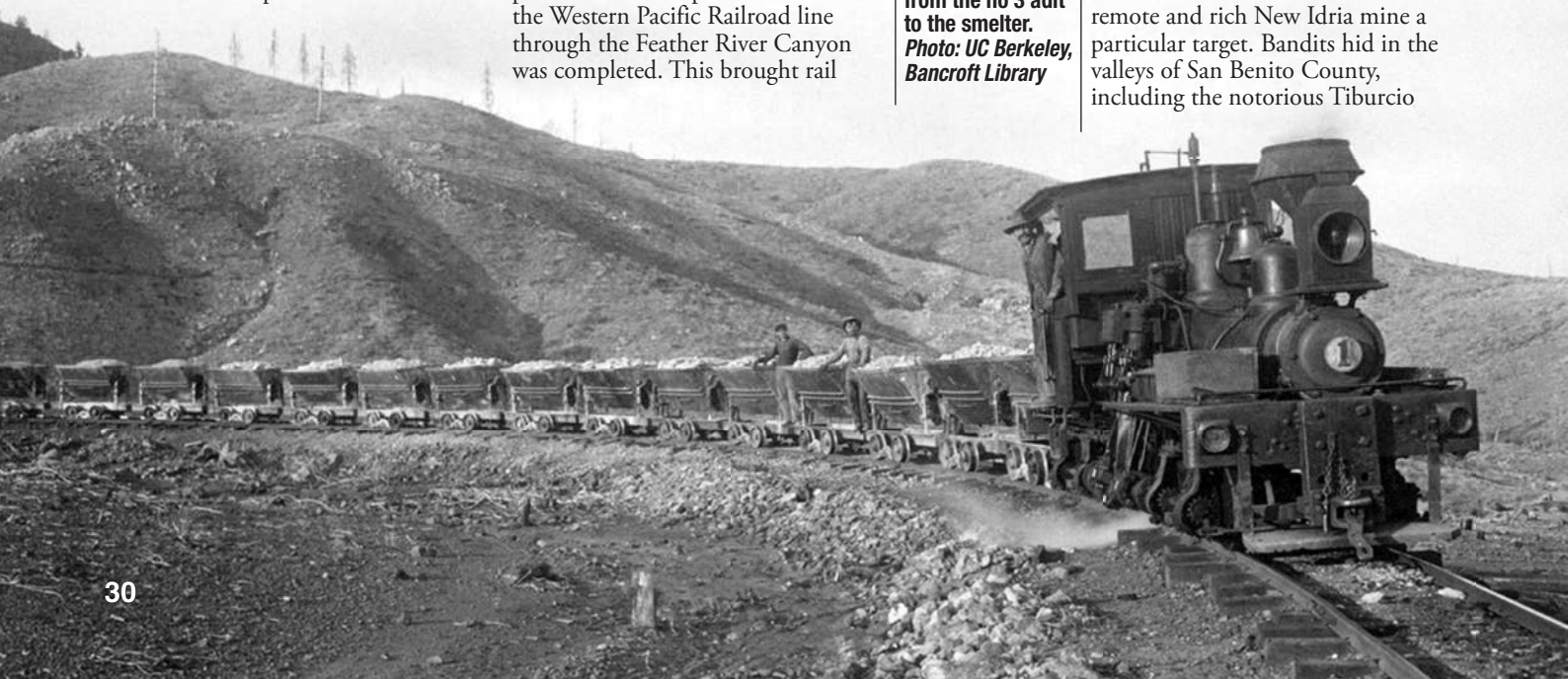
Below: Bully Hill Copper Mine class A Shay (629 of 1900) at the head of an ore train from the no 3 adit to the smelter.

Photo: UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library

New Idria Quicksilver Mine

The mercury ore cinnabar occurs at several points along the coastal mountains of California. In 1854, it was discovered in the San Benito mountains at the Aurora silver mine. The deposits proved rich and in 1858 the New Idria Quicksilver Mining Company was formed in San Francisco and the mine was soon supplying the gold fields in the Sierra Nevada to the east.

This period was one of extreme lawlessness in California, with the remote and rich New Idria mine a particular target. Bandits hid in the valleys of San Benito County, including the notorious Tiburcio



Vasquez gang, the Mason and Henry gang and the Joaquin Murrieta gang. The stagecoach from New Idria was robbed on several occasions, horses were constant targets of theft and murder and cattle rustling was rife. This really was the Wild West.

The 1880s saw the mine struggle and production drop to a minimum. In 1895, it was acquired by William Bradley Buckminster of Boston, who owned a large number of California mercury mines. A new furnace was installed in 1897 and production once again boomed. By 1900, New Idria was the largest mercury producer in the western hemisphere.

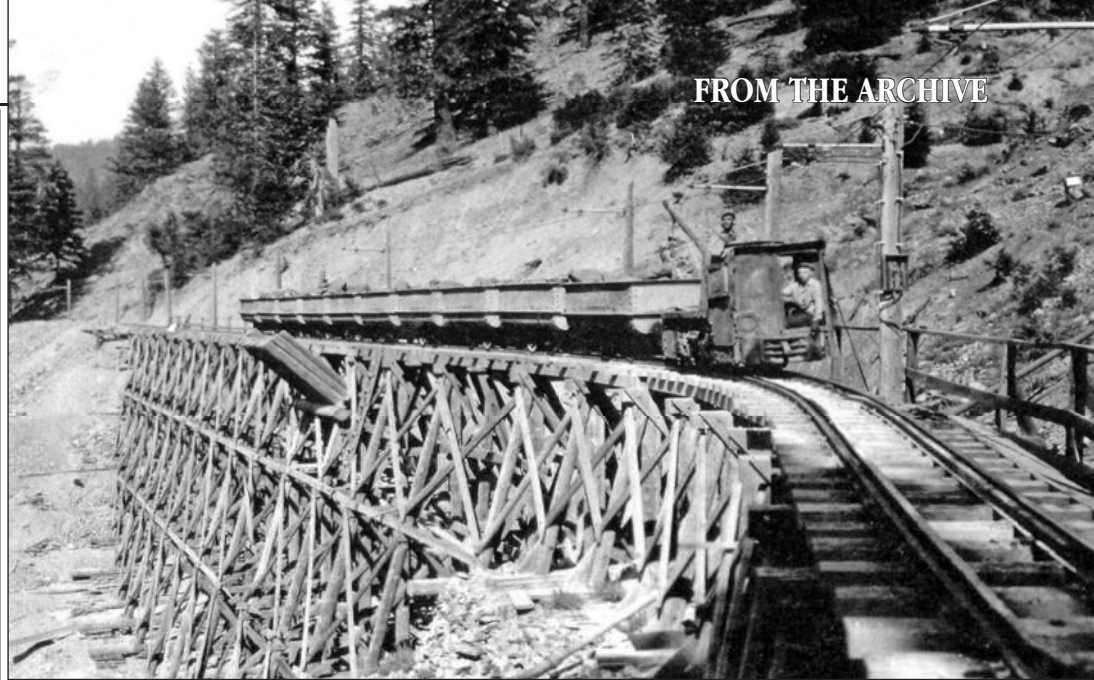
In 1908, Henry Gould arrived as the Engineer of the Mine. He introduced innovative new methods of working including the Gould Rotary Furnace, which became the standard across the industry. Gould also introduced gasoline locomotives to work the overground 2ft gauge tramways at the mine, and battery-electric locomotives underground, replacing mule haulage. New Idria continued in production until 1974. In its working lifetime, the mine produced 22,150 tons of mercury, which would be worth approximately \$1.3 billion dollars today.

Yellow Aster Gold Mine

The most southerly of the mines in this article is Yellow Aster, located at Randsburg on the edge of the Mojave Desert. The mine was established in 1895 and a 30-stamp mill was installed in February 1899. It was supplemented by a 100-stamp mill in 1900 as production expanded. In the first 35 years of operation, the mine processed three million tons of ore, producing half a million ounces (15½ tons) of gold.

A 2ft 6in gauge railway was installed before 1904 running along Rand Level, the lowest in the mine. Ore from a vast open pit near the summit of the mountain, and several intermediate underground levels, was dropped down underground chutes to be loaded into trucks. Originally a vertical boiler steam locomotive was used, later supplemented by a 15hp gasoline loco. Both of these appear to have been built at Yellow Aster. The gasoline loco could haul four-car trains carrying 12 tons of ore. In early 1908 it was described as 'shortly to be replaced by a steam locomotive'.

Two 7-ton Porter steam locos were purchased in 1909, and in January 1910 two more arrived along with 21 3-ton ore cars to expand work on Rand Level. By this time the tramway was 15 miles in length, mostly underground, and there were another 12 miles of tunnels to mine the gold-bearing granite. More than 500



Above: The 2ft gauge tramway on Level 10 of Engels Copper Mine which ran to the top of the Superior mill. One of the 7-ton locos is hauling a train of heavy ore cars. The line crossed more than 1,100ft of trestles. Photo: Dan Quine collection



Right: Mules hauling tubs of cinnabar at New Idria Quicksilver Mine before the First World War.

Below: Towards the end of the First World War, New Idria Quicksilver Mine built at least two gasoline locos to replace horse haulage. This is the second, photographed in December 1917.

tons of ore was being moved daily. By 1915 only three of the Porters were still operating, along with the 15hp gasoline locomotive which was shunting cars on the surface.

The Porter locomotives were oil-fired and rated at 25hp. At the peak in 1920, the system had 60 of the 3-ton ore cars. Porter no 3 (works number 4468 of 1909) survives at the

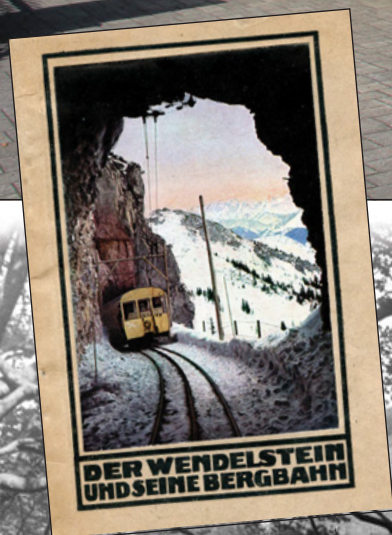
Rand Desert Museum in Randsburg, just below the Yellow Aster mine.

By 1936, the railway was delivering 350 tons a day of ore to the plant, using a 4-ton Plymouth gasoline locomotive. Rail operations ended in early 1938, when the mine was replaced with an open pit with dump trucks and conveyors moving ore to the mill. **NGW**



110 Years of the Wendelstein

Keith Chester has high praise for an electric rack railway in Upper Bavaria.



Above: Today's Wendelsteinbahn – railcar set 'Otto von Steinbeis' stands in Waching station shortly before departure in July 2011.

Left: How it once was – loco no 3 (Esslingen 3629/1911) with a typical formation in the early years of the line. *Photo: Steinbeis Archiv*
The inset shows an artist's depiction of the Wendelsteinbahn on the cover of a 1919 guidebook.

Facng page, top right: The former Brünigbahn 0-4-ORT no 1003 (SLM 503/1888), the only steam loco to work on the line, heads a construction train in 1910-11. Note the wooden masts for the overhead. *Photo: Archiv Wendelsteinbahn GmbH*

Right: Otto Steinbeis, the man who made it all happen. *Photo: Steinbeis Archiv*

In March 1972 I took the train from Munich to Innsbruck and for the first time in my life saw mountains. As the express sped through the small station of Brannenburg just south of Rosenheim in the Inn valley, we passed on the right, though I did not know it at the time, the Wendelstein.

From the top of this 1,838m-high mountain there are superb views of the Bavarian Alps. With the development of middle-class tourism in the 19th century, it became a popular destination for those with the energy to hike up it (about four hours) or willing to pay for a donkey.

In the shadow of the Wendelstein lived Otto Steinbeis (1839–1920). As a young man of 24 he had moved to Brannenburg to manage a large estate on behalf of a consortium in which he was a junior partner.

Steinbeis was a man of many talents and great energy. He had trained in Paris as an engineer but his true passion was wood. By 1890 he had bought out all the partners in the consortium and established a very successful international timber business centred on his large sawmill at Rosenheim.

In 1893 he obtained the concession to a large swathe of virgin forests in northwest Bosnia and laid a network of 800mm gauge forestry railways; in 1900 came a second, far larger concession and for this he began the construction of the first sections of what became known as the Steinbeisbahn, a 760mm gauge forestry railway that by 1918 had

grown to 400km in length. In Bosnia, Steinbeis, already a wealthy man, became a very wealthy one.

Throughout his career Steinbeis was fascinated by innovation and to the end of his long life was quick to adopt the latest technologies to enhance his many businesses. The first standard gauge electric locomotive in the world was built for use in his Rosenheim sawmill (1883), he operated the first locomotive-worked forestry railways in Germany (1891–92); he communicated with one of the first telephones in the Inn valley whilst his chauffeur drove the first car on its roads.

Steinbeis was not just a hard-nosed industrialist, however. As well as forests and timber, music and literature, he was passionate about the mountains with a particular place in his heart for the Wendelstein: he even had trees cut down so that he could see it from his villa.

Private venture

In the early 1900s various schemes were put forward to lay rails up the Wendelstein. All failed, primarily for the lack of capital. Then, in May 1909 it was announced that Steinbeis had been awarded a preliminary concession for a railway running from the Royal Bavarian State Railway station at Brannenburg to the top of the Wendelstein, where a hotel was to be built. The venture would be financed by Steinbeis privately.

The plan met with opposition on environmental and land ownership grounds. Steinbeis also clashed over the route, and the rack system to be used, with the senior engineer of the Munich-based Lokalbahn AG, a man named Proksch, who had been given overall charge of the project. But eventually all obstacles were swept away and the full concession for a 1500-volt DC electric rack railway on the Wendelstein using the Strub system was granted on 4th February 1910.

Construction began in the following month. Up to 800 men toiled on the mountain sides, many of them drawn from the teams who had worked on the building and maintenance of Steinbeis' forestry railways in Bosnia. It is said that the Bosniaks laboured on the upper half of the line and the Bavarians on the easier lower parts because the latter 'had to go to their sweethearts at least on Sunday'. The 9.9km-long railway was built with the aid of a little machinery, a lot of sweat and 35,000kg of gunpowder.

An 0-4-ORT, built by the Swiss Locomotive and Machine Works (SLM) for the Brünigbahn in 1888, was acquired secondhand via



Orenstein & Koppel to work the construction trains. It fell off the track at Aipl in 1911 and could not be recovered – it was cut up on the spot. The Wendelsteinbahn was opened with due ceremony on 12th May 1912.

The metre gauge line was built with Steinbeis' characteristic boldness and sense of economy: some of the rails are said to have come used from his forestry railways in Bosnia whilst the masts for the overhead were of wood. Given Steinbeis' fascination with the applications of electricity since the early 1880s, there was never any doubt that his pet railway would be anything but electrified. Motive power was provided by three HGe 2/2 class four-wheel electric locos supplied by Esslingen in 1911.

Electrified rack railways were already well established in Switzerland but these small engines were the first electric ones built by Esslingen and differed from their Swiss counterparts in that they were rack-and-adhesion locomotives. Weight and space considerations allowed the fitting of only two electric motors, equipped to drive either the rack mechanism or the two axles as required. With one of the 17-tonne locomotives at the valley end of the one or two-carriage trains, speeds were 15km/h on the adhesion section and 7km/h on the rack.

By 1914 Steinbeis had invested 2,749,000 marks in the operation, 1,871,000 on the railway itself and the rest on hotels and associated tourist infrastructure. The project was very much an old man's indulgence, one made, uncharacteristically, with

“The project was very much an old man's indulgence, one made with little expectation of a return on the capital...”

little expectation of a return on the capital. As many as 37,722 passengers were carried in 1913 but the outbreak of the First World War the following year saw this figure plummet to less than a third, with just 11,724 visitors.

Thereafter, passenger numbers fluctuated considerably reflecting the political events in Germany: boom in the initial post-war years, bust in the later 1920s, and revival in the 1930s as Hitler inflated the German economy. This led in 1935 to the acquisition of additional passenger stock and a fourth locomotive, again an Esslingen product and close in design to the original three. »



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Growing uncertainty

Passenger numbers rose again after the end of the Second World War but started to fall off in the mid-1950s. The Steinbeis family, who despite the post-1918 decline in their fortunes had retained control of the Wendelsteinbahn, now began to look for alternatives to the cost-intensive rack railway: a paved road and cable cars were both considered.

These were the years of the German economic miracle and growing car ownership meant that fewer than 10 per cent of passengers on the Wendelsteinbahn were arriving in Brannenburg by train. The main road through the small town, which the railway crossed, was getting busier and busier and in 1959 there was a major accident at the level crossing – two years later the adhesion section of the railway between Brannenburg station and Waching (2.3 km) was closed.

The Wendelsteinbahn struggled on uncertainly in the 1960s. When it was finally sold to the local power company, the Bayerische Elektrizitätswerke AG, its new owners planned to replace it with a cable car beginning at Bayrischzell-Osterhofen in the next valley across from that of the Inn. This was constructed between 1968 and 70.

Despite fears to the contrary, passenger numbers on the old rack railway were not materially affected by the competition. It was, however, running at a loss and in 1978 a 10-year support package was signed with the Free State of Bavaria. At the end of this, a new arrangement was agreed, one which provided for the modernisation of the railway which was urgently needed. Much of the



track and most of the locomotives and carriages, the public face of the railway, were 75 years or more old and there is only so far you can go with nostalgia.

Railcar replacements

Between 1987 and 1990 the track and overhead were all upgraded. Two SLM twin railcar sets, named 'Prinzregent Luitpold' and 'Otto von Steinbeis', entered service in 1989–90 and the four veteran Esslingen locos went into semi-retirement.

No 1 and a carriage were donated to the Deutsches Museum in Munich and today reside in its outpost in the old loco depot at Freilassing. The other three remained at work on

Above: The brand-new and Stadler-built no 5 ascends the Wendelsteinbahn with a snowplough.
Photo: Archiv Wendelsteinbahn GmbH

Below: Railcar 'Prinzregent Luitpold' begins the descent of the Wendelstein; the summit station is in the tunnel on the right.

Unless credited, images by Keith Chester or from his collection

special trips, permanent-way trains and snow clearance.

All good things come to an end and in 2019 no 4 was withdrawn following damage to its motors. The same year a contract was placed with Stadler Rail in Switzerland for a new and more powerful rack loco, which was delivered in October 2021.

With or without the old electrics, the modernised Wendelsteinbahn is well worth a visit. Brannenburg is easily reached from Munich by car or train. There is ample parking at Waching or you can walk the two kilometres or so from the DB station along the old track bed, passing on the way a small monument to Otto Steinbeis. The SLM railcars whisk you the 7.66km up the Wendelstein in 30 minutes and once you get to the top the views of Upper Bavaria are breathtaking. **NGW**



Last Whistle in the Valley

The Rhiw Valley Light Railway held the final open day of its half-century history on 2nd October and *Andrew Charman* was there.



You could argue that its survival for so long was a surprise. Jack Woodroffe built the Rhiw Valley Light Railway, just a couple of miles from the mid-Wales village of Manafon, as a retirement plaything in the early 1970s – as we reported last month he ‘upsized’ his plans from 10¼ to 15-inch gauge once he saw a locomotive in the larger scale being built by Severn Lamb Ltd.

Jack found a Welsh farm with two large fields to lay the line around and by 1973 was enjoying his personal line, as well as opening it for the odd enthusiast day.

The RVLR’s history could, however, have been quite short, as sadly Jack died in 1990. But thereafter his widow Helena decided the line should continue, aided by their son Mike. For a while there was just the one open day a year, held on the same weekend as the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Gala just a couple of miles away.

As we moved into the new millennium, however, Mike, aided by a small team of volunteers, was able to open the line once a month over the summer half of the year. There were plans for improvement too – such as extending the route beyond its existing length of around three quarters of a mile and remodelling the station track layout to provide two platforms and a turntable.

Dreams unfulfilled

There were even for a short time dreams of adding a third steam locomotive alongside the original Severn Lamb 0-6-2T ‘Powys’, built in 1973 and ‘Jack’, a 0-4-0 tender

Above: End of the line – ‘Jack’ and ‘Powys’ double-head the Rhiw Valley’s final train out of the station, ahead of multiple laps of the circuit.

Below: The final day saw all three resident locos in action, and lots of visitors riding behind them.

All photos by Andrew Charman, 2nd October 2022

design started by Jack and completed by TMA Engineering in 2003. Mike wanted a 15-inch version of a Lynton & Barnstaple Manning Wardle 2-6-2T – “my favourite locos,” he told the author at the final open day, “but when I had the energy to build the loco I had no money, now I have the money but no energy...”

Funding was a factor slowing any plans, and then the Covid pandemic put everything on hold. Helena always heavily subsidised the open days and on her death recently at the age of 93 the financial burden fell upon Mike, who also had to travel from his home in the Midlands to deal with anything railway related.

It was about more than money,

however. “Mike said that since his mother’s death the railway activities had ‘not been the same’”, one of the small team of volunteers told *NGW* – and the size of that team was another major factor. Not only were there not very many volunteers, they were also not getting any younger.

Faced with all that, it really should have come as no surprise when at this year’s September open day Mike announced that the next one, on 2nd October, would be the last. But certainly those who have grown used to the Rhiw Valley ‘just being there’ were shocked into action, and more than 200 visitors headed into mid Wales for the finale, far outstripping the numbers that had attended any »





Above: The open nature of the line makes for an attractive ride.

Left: Owner Mike Woodroffe busies himself organising the final train...

Below: ...but he chose not to ride it but instead to get some final pictures for the family album.



previous open day, and the dozen volunteers were kept very busy.

Both ways round

All three resident locomotives were in action throughout the day, Powys and Jack alternating on passenger services with the petrol-driven freelance-design 0-4-0T 'Monty' taking an occasional double-headed turn with one of the steamers, driven by Mike. Trains also ran in both directions around the kidney-shaped out-and-back route.

Your editor took a last chance to have a ride and grabbed a spot in one of the line's five tiny wooden carriages – all hand built at the RVLR, the first by Jack and the later ones by Mike and his team.

The line has just one station, in what is effectively the garden of the farmhouse and it then traverses a triangular junction before setting off around the route which circumnavigates the two fields. It's an attractive journey, the scenery open and framed by the River Rhiw on one side and hills rising on the other.

In a brief word with *NGW*, Mike admitted that the last day was as relieving as it was sad, before going off to organise the very final train, which of course had to be something special. Jack and Powys were coupled up together for a trip that consisted of two laps of the circuit, after which they were uncoupled, run through the triangular junction and attached to the other end of the train for a further two laps in the opposite direction – the train's owner choosing not to ride it but to photograph it from the lineside.



Then it was all over. The volunteers will stay together for a few months to assist Mike in dismantling the line. What is to become of the three locomotives and the stock is yet to be decided, but you can be sure Mike will be determined to find good homes for them.

Long-lasting

The Rhiw Valley was never a major line, it never wrote headlines. But it did give pleasure to its owners, the volunteers that worked with them and many visitors over the years.

In the process it carved out a history that stretched over more years than much more famous lines such as the original Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, the North Wales Narrow Gauge. Now it passes into history too – as Mike wrote in a final blog post on the line's website; “the trains have now been put away for the last time. So a big thank you to all our visitors, supporters and volunteers over the years. That's all folks!” **NGW**

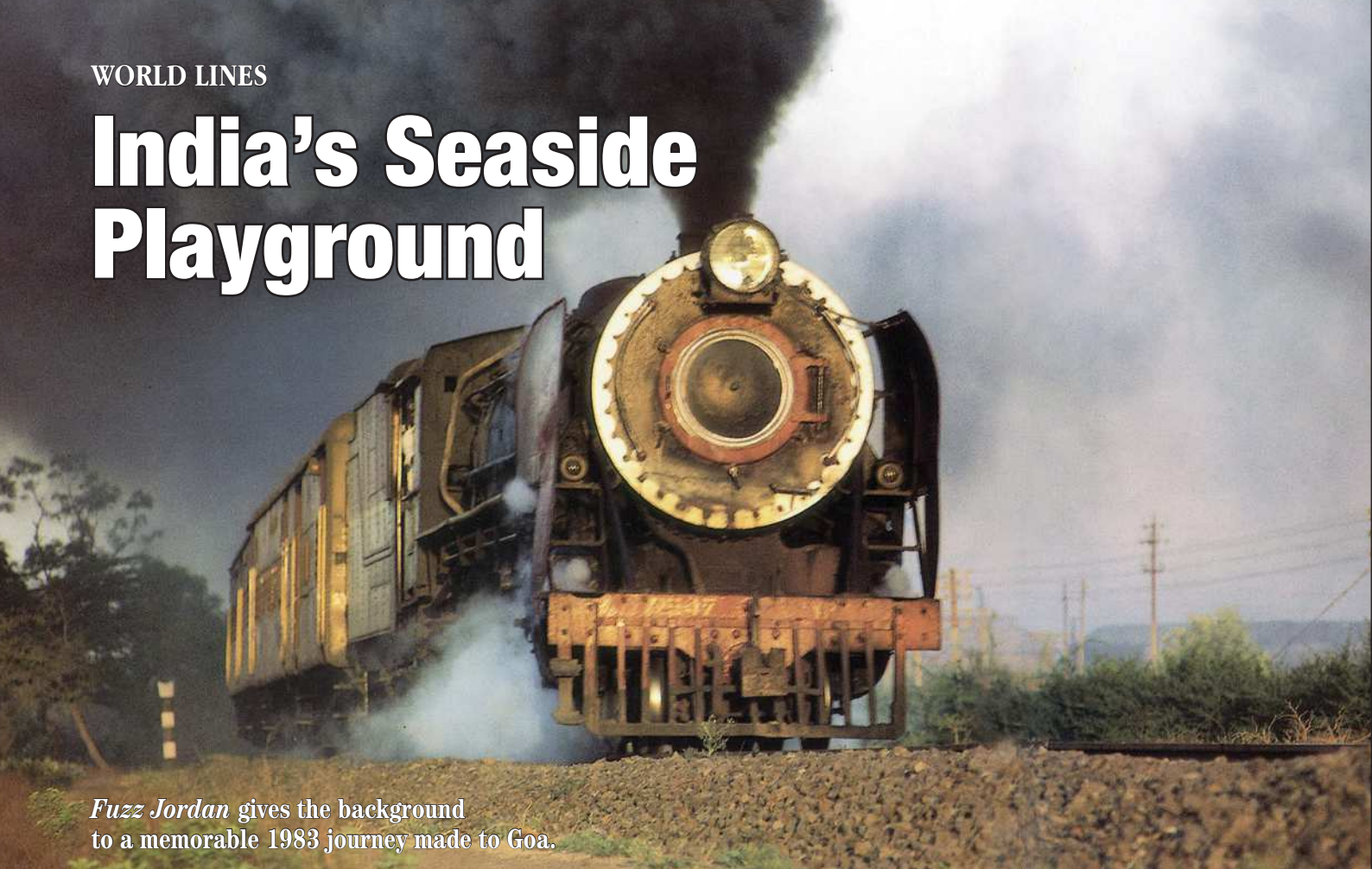
Above: Powys completes a circuit as Jack awaits its turn.

Right: Powys is centre of attention in the RVL's garden station.

Below: Finale – the two locos set out on the last lap of the line that's been their home for so long.



India's Seaside Playground



Fuzz Jordan gives the background to a memorable 1983 journey made to Goa.

India's well-known beach holiday destination of Goa is about 250 miles south of Mumbai (Bombay). Access by rail is now relatively simple since construction of the Konkan Railway, following the coast south from Mumbai, through Goa, and linking up with older lines much further south near Mangalore. From Mumbai to Madgaon, the main station in the Goa area, the best train takes less than 12 hours.

The Konkan line opened in 1993. Before that, getting to Goa by rail

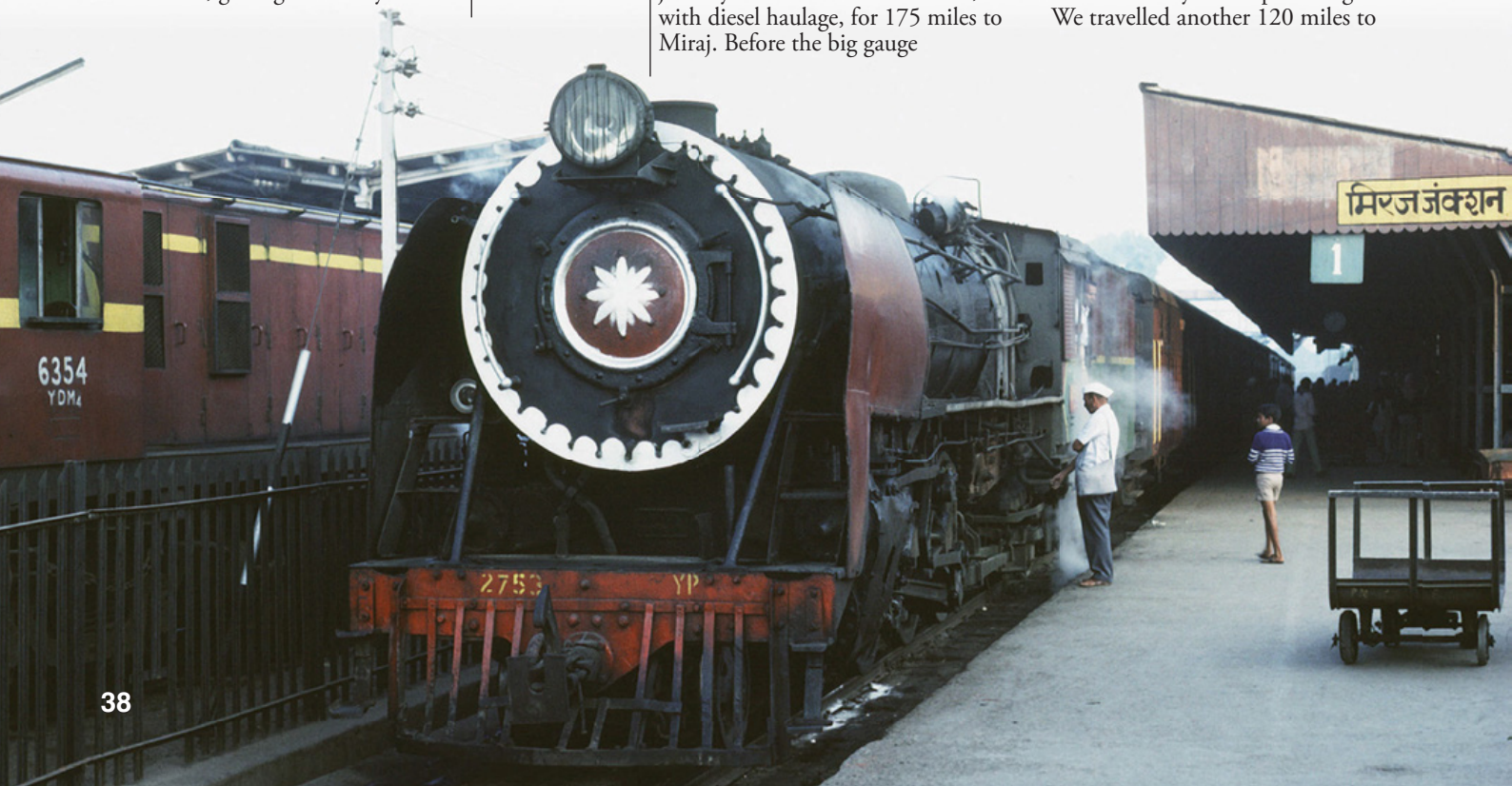
"It was far enough from Authority and cab rides were generally not a problem..."

was a lot more complicated, but, it has to be said, much more interesting! The first part of the journey was on India's standard 5ft 6in gauge, and covered 120 miles from Mumbai's classic CST, then known as Victoria Terminus, to Pune (Poona). The 1500V dc electrics climbed Bhore Ghat, a 1 in 37 grade that surmounts India's Western Mountains (a ghat is a steep bank, but can also refer to a river bank).

From Pune, the next part of the journey continued on the 5ft 6in, but with diesel haulage, for 175 miles to Miraj. Before the big gauge

conversion programme to eliminate metre gauge, Miraj was a place of great interest, being the junction of 5ft 6in, metre gauge and 2ft 6in gauge lines. The 5ft 6in from Pune extended for a further 30 miles to Kolhapur, and the Barsi Light Railway headed back north-eastwards to Kurduwadi and Barsi.

Travelling to Goa in 1983, we had to continue southwards on the metre gauge. This third part of the journey took us down a secondary trunk line that eventually ends up at Bangalore. We travelled another 120 miles to



Londa, where the branch to Goa begins. There was still 70 miles to go to Vasco-da-Gama, the terminus, but Madgaon is 17 miles short of Vasco. Two passenger trains a day continued from Vasco on the short two-mile spur to Marmagao Harbour.

Steam to Goa

The Goa branch was of great interest, too. In steam days, the Indian standard metre-gauge locomotives of classes YP (4-6-2) and YG (2-8-2) were not permitted to work west of Castle Rock, just 15 miles from Londa. Some trains were handled by the standard metre-gauge diesel, the YDM4, a 1,400hp Alco design from 1961, the majority constructed in India under licence. But most trains were still worked by YD class 2-8-2s, mainly built by Vulcan Foundry in 1949, although many European manufacturers supplied examples of these locomotives from about 1928. They worked all over the Western and Southern areas of the country.

Between Castle Rock and Madgaon, the line descended from the Western Mountains back to sea level. Every train from Goa travelling inland was banked on this Ghat section from Kolamb to Castle Rock. Between Kolamb and Vasco da Gama, there was quite a reasonable passenger service of five trains each way daily. It was popular with enthusiasts in that it was far enough from Authority and cab rides were generally not a problem!

Back in 1983, the memorable part of taking the train down the Ghat to Goa was being offered a large bottle of Kingfisher beer for one third of the Bombay price as soon as we crossed the state border! Goa, now part of India proper, was once a Portuguese territory, not under British control.

Halfway down the Ghat, the railway crossed Dudh Sagar waterfalls on a viaduct, and, yes, you got wet if you were leaning out of the train or sitting by an open window. Dudh Sagar translates as 'milk ocean'. The final stretch from Kolamb through Madgaon to Vasco ran along the coast through attractive tropical scenery.

The entire journey from Mumbai took 20 hours on two through trains. Departure from Mumbai was at 20.25 and arrival at Miraj, after a motive-power change in Pune, was at 05.55. Fortunately, copious quantities of chai, and breakfast, were available at Miraj.

From here the metre-gauge train ran right through to Goa, with a change of motive power from diesel to YD at Londa, arriving at 16.20. There would then be just enough time to take a tuctuc the five miles to Colva beach, check into the hotel and

Heading: YP class Pacific no 2847 makes a dramatic exit from Miraj in February 1985 with a southbound express heading for Hubli. Photo: Three Counties Publishing

Left: A southbound express to Bangalore waits to depart from Mahalaxmi in December 1983. It is headed by YP no 2753, built in Bihar in 1967 by TELCO (Tata Engineering & Locomotive Co).

Above: The Goa branch was far enough from local staff to welcome enthusiasts onto the footplate. No 30243, a 1949 Vulcan product, is approaching the Sal river bridge near Colva on a Kolamb to Vasco passenger service in December 1985.

Right: YD 2-8-2 no 30153 banks a passenger train up the Ghat in December 1985, and rests at one of the passing loops between Kolamb and Castle Rock.

Uncredited photos by Fuzz Jordan

sit at a beach restaurant with (another) Kingfisher to watch the sunset over the Indian Ocean.

There followed a few very pleasant days split between the beach, eating the excellent Goan pork, and watching the steady parade of trains, hauled by British built metre-gauge 2-8-2s. Even my wife enjoyed it!

In common with most of the Indian metre gauge, the line has now been converted to 5ft 6in gauge. With the opening of the Konkan line from Mumbai directly down the coast, it has reverted to carrying mainly local traffic, but the climb over Dudh Sagar Falls is still well worth the ride. **NGW**





Lionheart Lyntons set to be 7mm marvels

A very welcome discovery at the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Autumn Gala just over a year ago were part-built prototype components of a new range of models of the famed Devon line's stock, planned for 7mm scale by Lionheart Trains, which comes under the umbrella of UK manufacturer Dapol.

We've now received lively samples of both locomotives and carriages, and if the models are as good in the metal as they are in the pictures, then these could form a big shot in the arm for ready-to-run UK modelling in 0-16.5 7mm scale as have the efforts of the likes of Bachmann, Peco and Minitrains in 009 4mm.

All three original locomotives are being offered in six variations – 'Exe' as delivered with the early cab, 'Yeo' in similar form in the 1903-1913 independent L&B livery, 'Taw' in 1913-1924 form with the later cab, and all three as running under Southern Railway

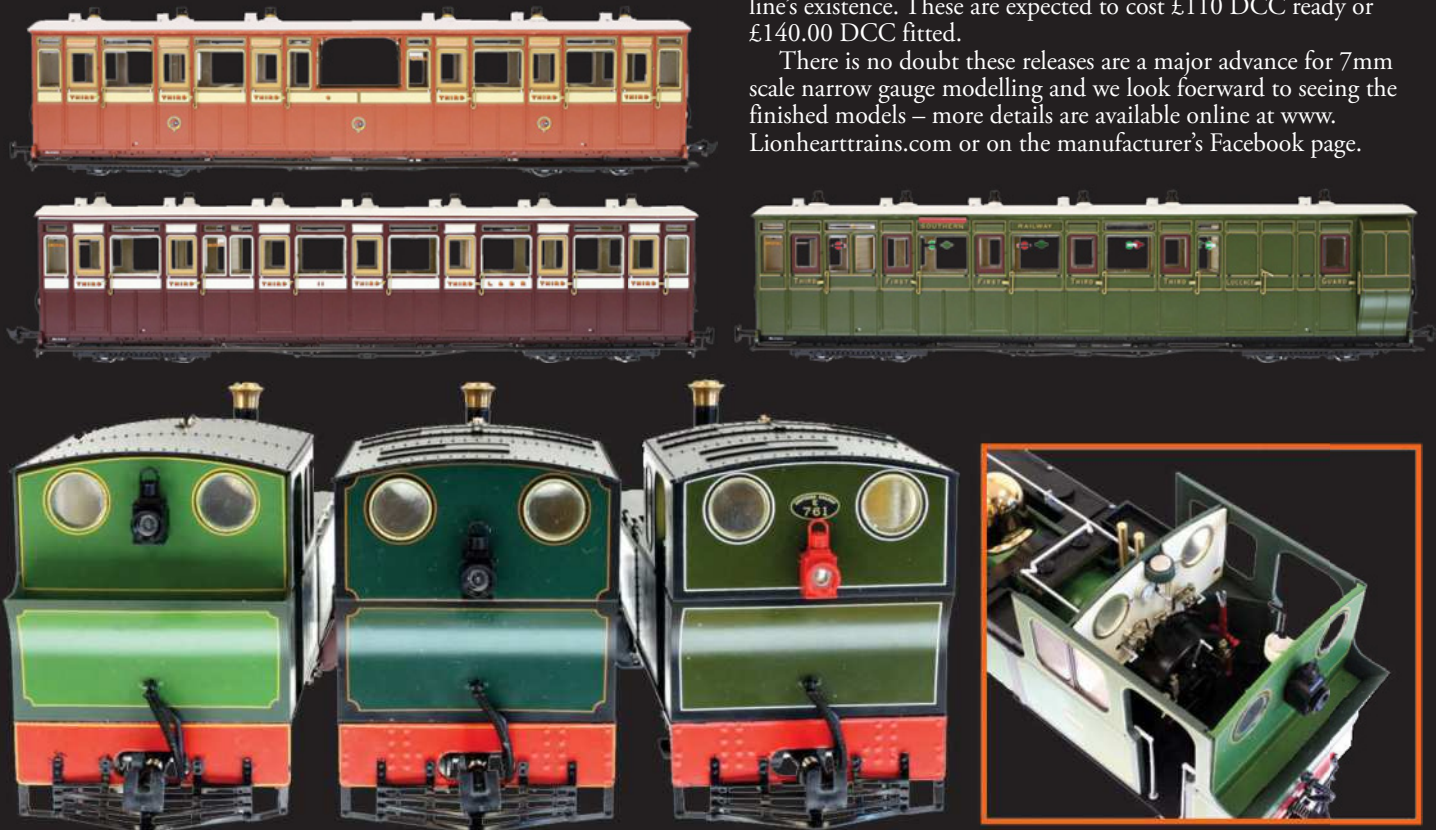
ownership – Exe between 1924-'27, Yeo between 1927-'29 and Taw between 1930 and the line's closure in 1935.

The locos have diecast chassis, tanks and boiler, with nickel-plated wheels and are powered by a five-pole motor. All come DCC ready with a pull-out decoder socket – features available include firebox glow, working headlamps and a full range of sound, the latter available factory-fitted.

Lionheart adds that it intends to offer all versions of the locomotives, and for finescale modellers the locos can be adapted to correct 14mm gauge. Anticipated prices are £350 DCC ready, £385 DCC fitted and £500 with DCC sound.

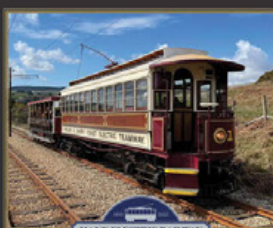
To compliment the locos a range of L&B bogie passenger stock is being launched, with open third, all third, brake third and brake composite vehicles available again in liveries from throughout the line's existence. These are expected to cost £110 DCC ready or £140.00 DCC fitted.

There is no doubt these releases are a major advance for 7mm scale narrow gauge modelling and we look forward to seeing the finished models – more details are available online at www.lionhearttrains.com or on the manufacturer's Facebook page.



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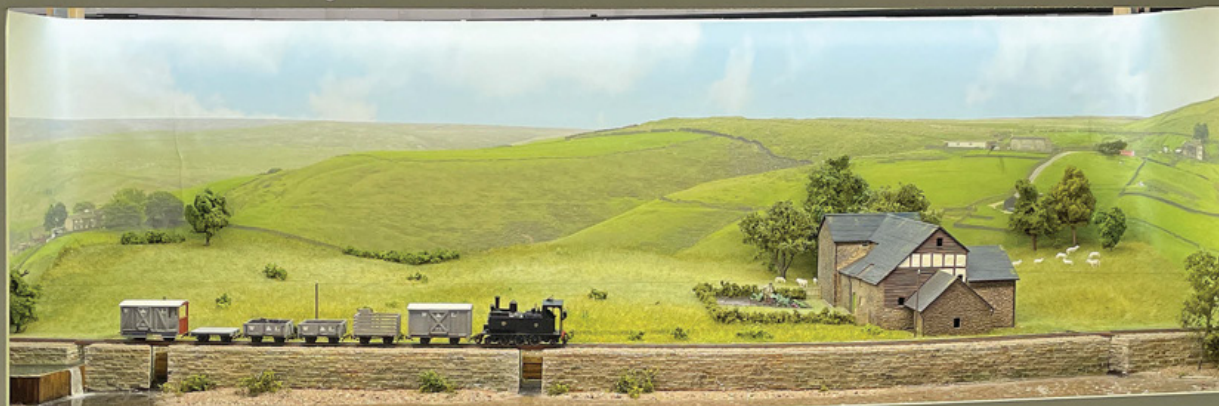
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Melin Dolrhyd



Variations on a Welsh theme

The growing model railway exhibition held as part of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Steam Gala this year featured three layouts linked by their inspiration, as *Andrew Charman* reports.

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's annual Steam Gala returned in full form on 2nd-4th September for the first time in three years, and included the model railway exhibition that W&LLR member Martin Rich has steadily developed in the display sheds at Welshpool Raven Square station.

This year Martin was able to take full advantage of the significant extension to these sheds completed in recent years, to display a selection of model layouts that

while not exclusively narrow gauge were all of great interest.

For the 2022 edition that interest extended to very different interpretations of a theme familiar to the many W&L members viewing the displays, the trio, all in 4mm scale, based on the Welshpool line itself. Two were simple and faithful reproductions, the other more inspired by the line with a little creative licence.

'Melin Dolrhyd', by Stuart Taylor from Reading, is more diorama than layout,

depicting the point not far outside Llanfair Caereinion where the W&L squeezes between a water mill and the river Banwy.

Stuart has modelled the mill as it might have been early in the 20th century just after the railway was built, and very fine modelling it is too. The only 'intrusion' is rolling stock from the line's preservation era, as Stuart hopes for a reintroduction of the 009-scale models of the W&L original locomotives 'The Earl' and 'The Countess', formerly offered by Golden Arrow Models.





All photos by
Andrew Charman

Martyn Harrison took a later theme for his rendition of the W&L's prime intermediate station of Castle Caereinion – the simple layout of single run-round loop and siding is modelled as the station was when the preservationists took over in the early 1960s, before it gained such additions as platforms while serving several years as the line's terminus.

Again a little creative licence has been allowed – while the Drewry diesel 'Chattenden' is modelled in the form it arrived on the W&L, it and the Austrian four-wheeled carriages were acquired in 1968 by which time Castle station had gained its platform.

True to the spirit

The impressive 'Spirit of Welshpool' by Mark Holland has been to the show before. Its name suggests a loose interpretation of the theme but the Welshpool end of the line in GWR days, with the original loco and carriage sheds and the interchange with the standard gauge, are instantly recognisable, as is the initial route through the town, over the canal bridge and up through what was known as 'The Narrows', where the W&L squeezed between houses.

The deviations? Well the narrow gauge GWR steam railcar is an interesting concept, and likely one that many current W&L members would have quite liked to have seen on the full-size line!

The three layouts were all inspiring in their own way and not the only attractions of what was an excellent little show – another definite highlight was the amazing and absolutely packed 'Museum of Transport', a layout that can hold one's attention for hours, but one to feature at another time... **NGW**



EDM launches Egyptian Bagnall for 7mm scale

■ A new release from 7mm scale manufacturer EDM Models is always good news, Ffestiniog footplateman Paul Martin renowned for the detail he puts into his kits.

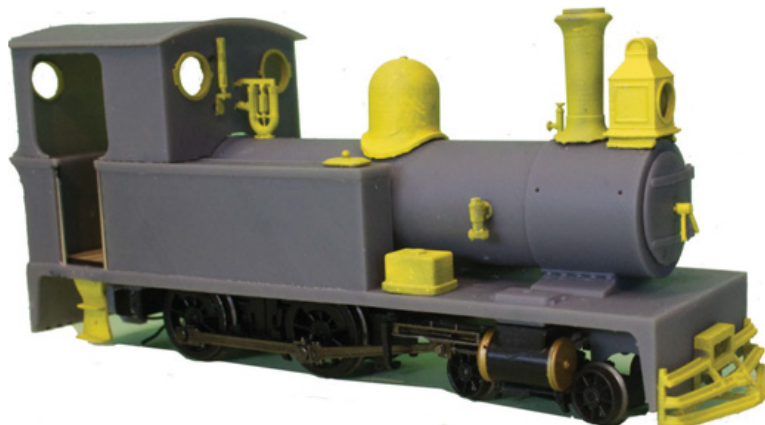
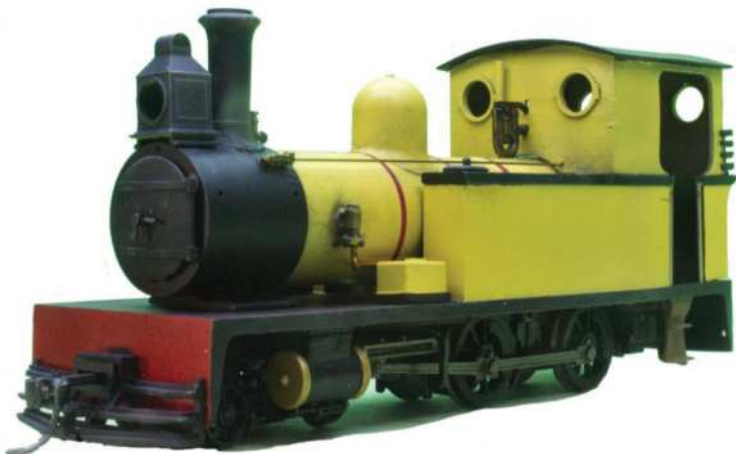
The model, development photos of which are shown at left, takes the form of a multimedia body kit for a Bagnall 4-4-0 which ran on the 750mm gauge Egyptian Delta Railways – the 35 prototype locos were built in four batches in 1898, in both long and short side-tank versions. Officially only the first 10 were for the Egyptian Delta Railway – by the time the others arrived the concession had changed to Société des Chemins de Fer Agricoles de l'Est.

The model is designed to mount onto a Bachmann 0n30 4-4-0 chassis – Paul acknowledges that the chassis isn't a currently produced model but there are plentiful examples on the used market.

Included in the kit are 3D-printed main body parts with laser-cut glazing and floorboards, plus many brass castings, wire and fixings. Paul intends to include either jigs for bending the handrails or pre-bent wires and holding tools to aid painting. Alternative parts will be included to allow different locos to be built.

The initial release represents the short-tank loco with plans to offer a long-tank version later. Price will be £130 – Paul told us he would have liked it to be less but for significant price rises on the bought-in parts. Latest information is on the EDM Models website.

Produced by EDM Models Tel: 01904 331973
Web: www.ngtrains.com Email: info@ngtrains.com



First-hand reference for Corris models

■ It's certainly a time for 7mm scale modellers – these injection-moulded kits of Corris Railway rolling stock are from Iconic Rail – creator Graham French is an experienced industrial model maker and should know his subject matter, as he's been part of the small team home-building parts for the new full-size Corris loco no 10 featured on this issue's cover.

Graham produced CAD drawings and organised laser-cutting in steel for the cab and saddle tank, researching surviving parts from Corris no 3. He's also CNC-machined the new loco's brass works plates.

The four 7mm kits so far available are for the brake van and three varieties of carriage – Falcon, Metropolitan and Clerestory. Drawings were produced from research of the originals, while the moulds and moulding all takes place 'in house'.

The kits have whitemetal bogies and buffer beams which add useful weight. Wheels are supplied, as is pre-cut glazing and water-slide decals with intricate gold lining and the blue and gold Corris crests.



Produced by Iconic Rail.
Email: info@iconicrail.co.uk
Web: www.iconicrail.co.uk
Prices: Brake van £25, Carriages £45.



■ There's not quite a complete lack of news this month for 4mm scale modellers – Peco's latest rolling stock is now reaching dealers in the form of two of the famed Welsh line's original quarryman's brake vans.

At around £27.00 each they are not the cheapest stock around but as our photos show (reproduced larger than the models are), they brim with detail, right down to readable works plates...

More details are on the Peco website at www.peco-uk.com, which also lists a whole host of forthcoming 009 releases, from Ffestiniog & Blaneau carriages to modern FR bogie stock, Vale of Rhedol bogie carriages and more – happy days...



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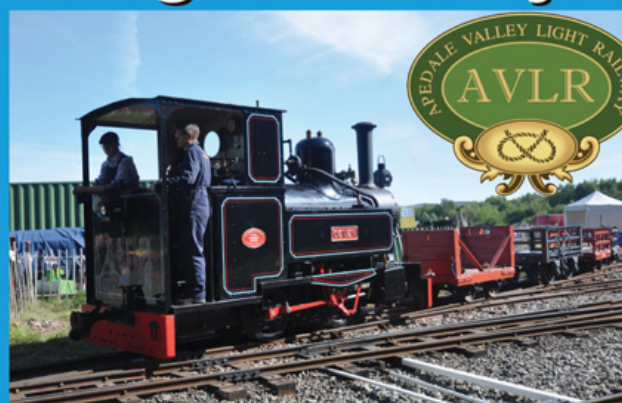
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ON THE FESTIVE SHELF



■ It's that time of the year again when **NGW** brings you a round-up of the festive offerings for the narrow gauge fan on offer from the various railways, a selection of cards and calendars which are both more interesting than general supermarket fare and of course help the funds of the railways we enjoy. This year there are some old favourites plus a couple of notable newcomers.

Chief among the latter is a card from the project constructing a new-build replica of the long-lost North Wales Narrow Gauge

Railways single-Fairlie 'Gowrie' (picture 1). It's a super card too, a painting of the loco outside its shed in a snowy Welsh scene – there are three other cards also available, including this one without snow! Cards cost £4.50 per pack of five plus £2.50 postage, with discounts for multiple packs, and details are at www.gwrielocomotivetrust.com

Again the Fairbourne Railway's Christmas card is in a slim landscape format (pic 2), and features North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway-style 0-6-4T 'Beddgelert', currently under restoration, at a snowy Fairbourne. The card and the previous 2021 card are available from the railway's shop in Fairbourne in packs of five, or online at www.fairbournerrailway.com in packs of 10 at £6.99 per pack including post, proceeds to the Beddgelert appeal.

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway again calls on the considerable talents of artist Jonathan Clay for its card, which shows 'The Earl' and 'Zillertal' passing each other on the recently reinstated loop at a snowy Sylfaen Halt (pic 3). The cards contain greetings in both English and Welsh and are available from the railway's website at www.wllr.org.uk in packs of five at £3.50 plus a £2.95 postage charge on the total order (UK). Alternatively they can be ordered by post, with a cheque made payable to W&L Sales, from W&LLR Cards (NGW), 7 Sutherland Grove, Perton, South Staffs WV6 7PA. Some stocks of cards from previous years are also available.

The Tallyllyn Railway goes for an upright format card this year, showing 'Tallyllyn' and 'Dolgoch' heading a train through a snowy landscape (pic 4). Again boasting bilingual greetings, the cards can be bought from the railway's shops, by phone at 01654 711012 or online at the shop page of www.tallyllyn.co.uk. Cost is £3.50 a pack plus a £3.95 postage charge for any number of cards.

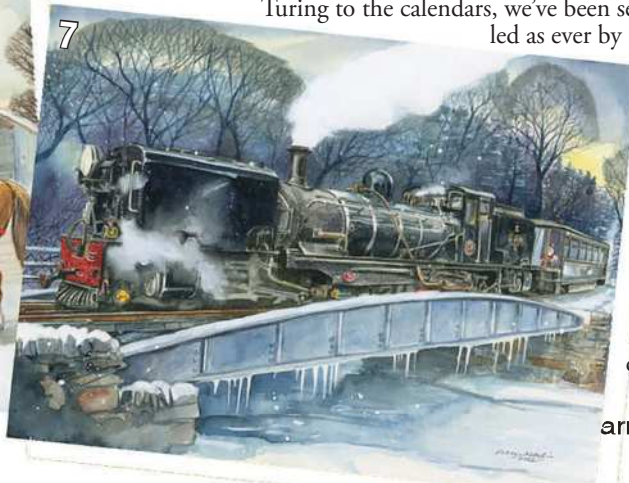
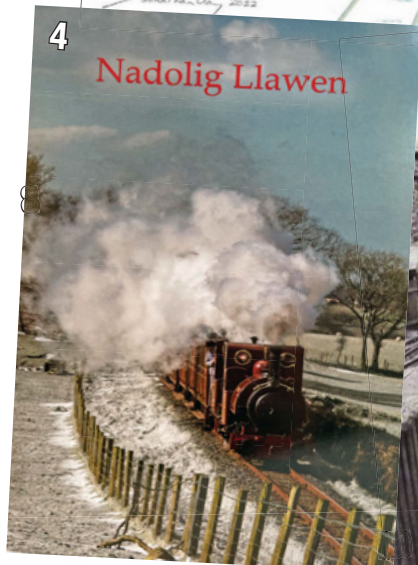
The Corris Railway offers three card designs, the two from previous years joined by a novel new design featuring a bright red Santa at a monochromatic Maespoeth (pic 5). Cost is £5.00 per pack of five cards plus £1.40 post, from the line's website at www.corris.co.uk

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway Christmas cards again feature the creations of watercolour artist Rebecca Kitchin. The FR one (pic 6) depicts England 0-4-0 'Welsh Pony' meeting Santa and his Welsh Cob 'Taran' at Boston Lodge Halt, while the WHR equivalent (pic 7) shows Garratt 87 crossing an icy river on the Plas y Nant bridge. Both include a seasonal message in Welsh and English and as usual are supplied in packs of 10, five of each design at £7 a pack plus postage from the railway's shops, by phone from 01766 516034 or online at www.festrail.co.uk/shop/

Turing to the calendars, we've been sent four different examples led as ever by the offerings from the

Tallyllyn and Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways. As usual they follow the format of landscape A4 opening out to A3 when hung, with date information in Welsh and English.

The TR calendar features 12 of the typically high quality pictures again donated by a number of



members, with some different angles this year (*pic 8*). The calendar costs £8.00 plus post from the same addresses as the cards.

The FF&WHR calendar (*pic 9*) features the usual high-quality and often quite unusual views across both lines and costs £9.50 plus post, again from the same address as for the FF&WHR cards.

Prolific **NGW** photographer Joey Evans has again produced his own calendar for 2023 (*pic 10*), featuring 12 of his favourite shots from another year of excellent work across a wide range of the UK narrow gauge. Copies can be had for £9.99 plus £2.99 post from www.joeyevansphotography.co.uk.

Finally a newcomer this year, a calendar from prolific book publisher Mainline & Maritime and again featuring the UK narrow gauge (*pic 11*), pictures taken by publisher Ian McCall. This upright format A4 calendar costs £8 plus £1.50 postage and can be ordered from www.mainlineandmaritime.co.uk

Bristol to Blaenau – 50 years of the Ffestiniog Railway Society Bristol Group

Tim Maynard

■ Just in time for the Christmas lists comes this interesting little hardback, telling the pictorial story of one of the Ffestiniog Railway's longest-lasting and most active area groups – the Bristol Group was officially formed in 1962, 11 years after 17-year old schoolboy Leonard Heath-Humphreys initiated the restoration of the railway at a meeting in the same city.

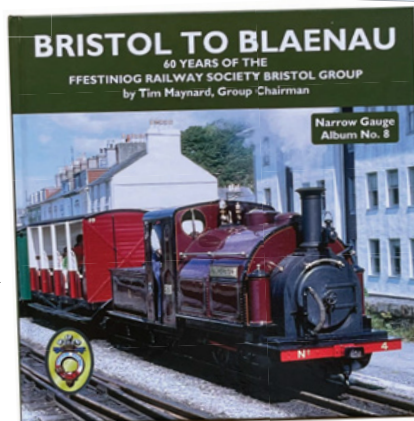
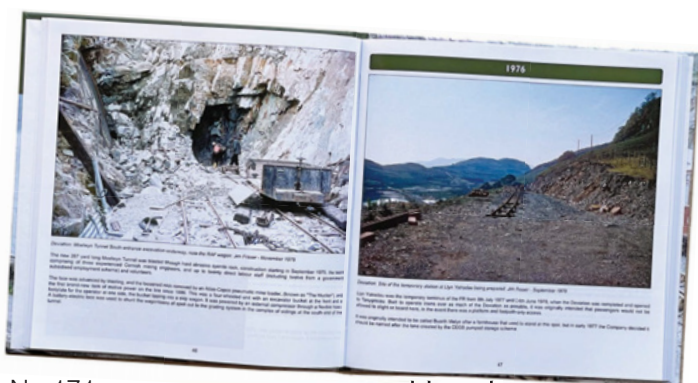
Over the years the group has been involved in a whole host of work on the FR. The trawling of group photo archives produces effectively a history of events on the railway over the years, but what lifts this from many other FR photo albums is that so many of the pictures are of behind-the-scenes activities, in the workshops, out on the line and particularly on the deviation built around the reservoir that flooded the line in the 1950s.

The good quality photos, almost entirely in colour, are accompanied by detailed captions that make this book a fascinating read, actually adding a little more to the so well documented Ffestinoog story. **AC**

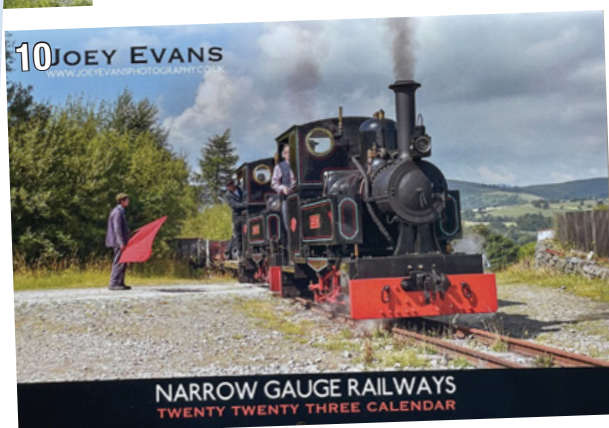
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2023 Calendar - Calendr 2023



Railways of the Raj

Alon Siton

■ A compact little A5 landscape softback delving into the historical archives to document the railways of India. Much of the content is of the country's standard gauge but narrow gauge is not forgotten, not just the famed hill railways of Darjeeling, Matheran and Kalka Shimla, but other lines including metre-gauge routes.

All of the photos are well-researched and reproduced to good quality, certainly suiting the landscape format and providing some highly interesting images. This is a booklet for a specialist audience and at an inexpensive price will be well received. **AC**

Published by Mainline & Maritime. ISBN: 978-1-900340-79-3

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Articulating error

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the latest issue (*NGW170*), however there are a couple of errors in the *Day Return to Matheran* feature that need to be mentioned.

The Matheran locos never had Klien-Lindner radiating axles, as mentioned, but had Heywood articulation fitted.

The tightest corner on the Matheran line is not 18-metre radius but actually 45 feet or 15-metre radius.

In recent years loco 738 was returned to service, but since the Orenstein & Koppel locos last ran in the early 1980s the corners have been made even sharper and 738 couldn't get round the sharpest one. I believe it has now been plinthed at Neral Station.

Adrian Corke

Top-notch on the Talyllyn

I would like to say a big thank you to the Talyllyn Railway through *NGW*. While on holiday in Barmouth on 5th October we decided to visit the line – myself and my partner are both disabled.

As we walked onto the platform one of the staff noticed we were both using rollators (*walkers*) and asked if we were going to be boarding the train. I said yes once we have bought some sandwiches. He then asked my name and said: "Okay, the first carriage is a disabled carriage and now it is reserved for you."

After getting some sandwiches the same man escorted us to the carriage. Then he put a disabled ramp down and made sure we could get into the carriage without any problem.

As the train pulled away I said to my partner what fantastic service. However this was not the end of it.

Right: Is this attractive view of a Southwold Railway train by the same artist who produced views of Penrhyn loco 'Ogwen'? A correspondent thinks so, but the editor's not so convinced..

Below: The guard waves right away on the Talyllyn Railway, a line earning solid praise from a reader this month.

Photo: TR

"I have so often seen someone put up news, or an interesting insight, only to have their efforts shot down by keyboard warriors..."



Anytime the train stopped they came to ask if we wanted to get off.

Shortly after leaving the rain stopped and the sun came out. The scenery was amazing and the staff were beyond belief. So keep up the fantastic service. Thank you all.

Rod Tandy

Andrew C replies: Not the kind of letter we often publish in these pages but good service is always worth sharing – this is the kind of thing that keeps the non-enthusiast coming back to our railways and providing the revenue to keep them running, so well done to the Talyllyn.

Social media – a curse?

Many railways seem to be on Facebook these days along with a number of groups for fans of the narrow gauge, but I'm wondering if this is a good thing?

Perusing the various posts I have so often seen someone, or a line, put up news, or an interesting insight, only to have their efforts shot down by keyboard warriors whose one purpose in life seems to be to criticise the efforts of others.

Some of this can get quite vitriolic at times and leads me to wonder whether social media is a curse that the narrow gauge movement could survive very well without?

R J Shallcross

Andrew C replies: Well to say straight away, no, social media is not a curse – it's just that some of the people that use it are.

I find Facebook and Twitter invaluable tools in gathering news for *NGW* as most railways seem to post their latest happenings on social media these days, probably because it is so easy to do! And the various groups throw up a whole host of information on sometimes quite

obscure narrow gauge subject matter, which can be as fascinating as it is usually informative.

But... some people do indeed consider it their life's work to seek out positive news on social media and do their utmost to tear it apart. They are known as trolls and sadly it appears there is little we can do to get rid of them – some of the vitriol I've seen over what should be quite innocuous posts concerning our railways have to be read to be believed...

It's the scare stories generated by this kind of person that scares off many people from using social media, and they miss out on a lot of fascinating information as a result.

My advice, ignore the trolls, and enjoy all the good stuff...

Narrow gauge art

I agree that is a very characterful picture of 'Ogwen' in the Statfold Barn invitation shown on page 47 of *NGW170*. You've probably got an identification of the artist by now, but in case not, can I attach another picture which it reminded me of with various similarities, not least of the locomotive though pictured from the opposite side.

The image is on a card I received a few years ago, showing the Southwold Railway's Sharp, Stewart no 2 or 3 with Blythburgh Church in the background. The picture is credited to Joe Crowfoot – it is more pastel overall than the Ogwen picture, but styles change with time and you may be able to see similarities.

Philip Williams

Andrew C replies: No, the artist behind the Ogwen invitation hasn't been revealed to us. Philip's picture reproduced above is equally attractive but I'm not convinced it's from the same skilled hand – but no doubt there are readers able to enlighten us?

That was the year...

News stories from the archives and their legacy...

From 40 years ago

Talylyn Railway (2ft 3in gauge)

Prince Charles and Princess Diana honoured the Talylyn Railway by travelling on the line during their visit to North Wales on 25th November. The Royal visitors arrived at Tywyn Pendre station to board a special train which departed at 11.45am. The couple left the train at Rhydyronen a few minutes later.

Prince Charles... travelled on the footplate of no 2 'Dolgoch' while the Princess travelled in the Corris coach. On arrival at Rhydyronen the Prince & Princess chatted with the small crowd of local residents... the Royal party and police/press outnumbered them! Soon the couple were on their way to their next engagement and within minutes Rhydyronen was a sleepy little station with not a soul in sight. (NGN, November 1982)

A topical item describing a visit by our future King. Some 20 years later in July 2002 your editor was honoured to be officially rostered as a 'Royal Train passenger' when the Prince visited the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, kicking off the line's centenary celebrations. On this occasion he rode the whole line, including guiding locomotive no 2 'The Countess' down the steep Goffa bank - under close instruction from the W&L footplate crew of course...

From 25 years ago

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway (2ft 6in gauge)

The W&LLR faces the threat of a very difficult start to its 1998 season after being forced to close its major river bridge, effectively



A timely legacy came to the W&LLR's rescue in 1998. Photo: W&LLR Archive

cutting the line in half. General manager Andy Carey suspended traffic over the Banwy Bridge as a precautionary measure in late October, after a survey by divers revealed a high level of corrosion to a steel pier supporting the bridge. (NGN, November 1997)

Your editor remembers this item because he wrote the press release in his role as W&LLR press officer! And he got it wrong – it was not corrosion but erosion of the river bed under the concrete base of the pier. In the event the issue was put right and fears of a season running over only part of the line proved not to be realised.

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



Today's Narrow Gauge...

■ Ayle Colliery near Alston in Cumbria is the last working coal mine in England and produces high quality anthracite coal (writes *Stuart Chapman*).

The current colliery dates back to the 1930s but the history of mining in the area goes back many centuries. Like so many mines before it the current drift mine uses narrow gauge locomotives to bring coal from the seam up in loaded tubs to the tippler where coal is sorted.

The mine was visited by the Industrial Railway Society on 1st October providing the opportunity to photograph the colliery and narrow gauge system. In the first picture battery locomotive LM03 WR N7607 is seen heading back towards the surface, while the second shot shows stabled locomotives at the entrance, and below an appropriate warning sign!



Powered by the Sun

Donald Brooks had reservations on seeing a prototype railcar in Dresden.

The rush towards decarbonisation has had its effect on narrow gauge railways, with NGW covering the potential impact on fuel supplies for steam-powered British heritage lines. Similarly, public lines that rely on diesel trains are rethinking their approach, with Austria's Zillertalbahn ordering hydrogen railcars and Japan exploring battery technology.

The ideal solution, renewable energy, can generally only be used at one remove, generating electricity to power trains through an overhead cable or third rail. Charging a battery-powered train at terminal stations is also an option. But is it possible to harness the sun's energy to power a train directly, without any additional infrastructure?

In the summer of 2012 I was in Dresden's Grosser Garten for an open day on the 381mm gauge Parkeisenbahn. As well as special workings on the park line other rail

attractions were on offer, including ST1 ELSE, the prototype railcar of the German Solarbahn project. ST stands for Solar Triebwagen or solar railcar while the name ELSE is an acronym – Elektrische Solar-Eisenbahn (Solar Electric Railway).

ELSE is a 600mm gauge bogie railcar, built in 2000 by Hans-Ulrich Ottensmeyer of Solarbahn with a maximum speed of 15km per hour. The car's batteries are charged by 3.6 square metres of photovoltaic cells on the roof, which make operation self-sufficient in sunshine, though in other conditions overnight charging using renewable power is necessary.

In the Dresden park it ran on a short stretch of temporary track alongside the Südallee, providing rides for €1, with passengers sitting on loose chairs. The system clearly worked on this very small scale, but I found it difficult to see a practical application for the technology.

“Operation is self-sufficient in sunshine, though in other conditions overnight charging using renewable power is necessary...”

Above Solar-powered railcar ST1 stands by the gazebo which formed the Solarbahn project information stand in the Grosser Garten, Dresden. A sunny summer day proved ideal for self-contained operation of the vehicle.

Left: ST1 running alongside the Südallee in the Grosser Garten. The solar panels are visible on the car's roof.

Photos by Donald Brooks, July 2012

Developments in Hungary

A year later, though, the Hungarians, from the early days pioneers in rail electrification, had built a solar-powered railcar for the 760mm gauge Királyréti Erdei Vasút (Királyrét Forestry Railway, now a passenger line), not far north of Budapest.

8204 001 'Vili' is a very lightweight four-wheeled semi-open railcar, with 9.9 square metres of solar panels on the roof. Like ELSE the power provided from the panels and regenerative braking is sufficient for operation in favourable conditions, though external charging from environmentally friendly sources proved necessary otherwise. Vili saw regular passenger service and a sister car was produced so that on less sunny days one could be charged while the other worked.

The prototype ELSE has been demonstrated throughout Germany, including by the Brandenburger Tor in Berlin, where its headlight rings, originating from Trabant cars, would have felt at home. It could carry six to eight passengers whereas the Hungarian solar railcars provide accommodation on cross-bench seating for 20 to 30.

Lightly-loaded summer services at relatively low speeds on an 11km narrow gauge railway seem to be the current limit for self-contained solar-powered vehicles. But as the technology develops, who can say what lies ahead?

■ Thanks go to Ferenc Joó for the Hungarian information. Full technical details of these railcars are on the Solarbahn (in German only) and Hungarotrain websites.

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