

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

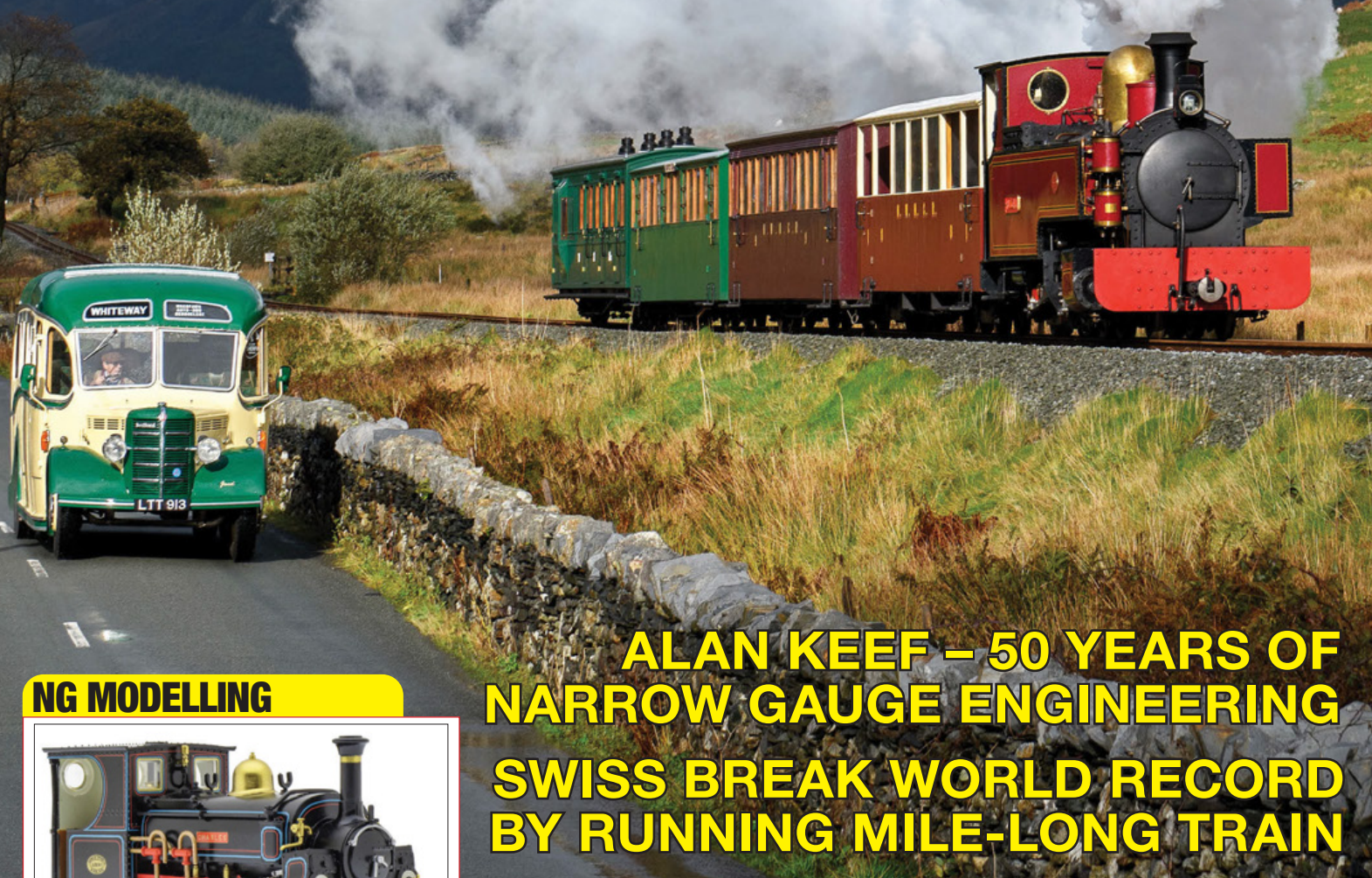
ISSUE 172
JAN-FEB 2023



■ LAST RUSTONS STILL WORKING IN INDUSTRY

HAPPY NEW YEAR

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND BIG CELEBRATIONS AWAIT IN 2023



NG MODELLING



■ BACHMANN – MORE 009 DELIGHTS

ALAN KEEF – 50 YEARS OF
NARROW GAUGE ENGINEERING
SWISS BREAK WORLD RECORD
BY RUNNING MILE-LONG TRAIN

► INSIGHT INTO THREATENED CZECH LINE
► ALL NARROW GAUGE NEWS OVER 10 PAGES

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023 | £5.49



9 771466 018090 >
www.world-of-railways.co.uk

Mainline & Maritime
3 Broadleaze, Upper Seagry,
Chippenham. SN15 5EY
07770 748615
www.mainlineandmaritime.co.uk

MAINLINE &
MARITIME

PLEASE ADD
10% UK P&P,
MINIMUM £1.50, MAXIMUM £5

NEW BOOKS!

MALLETS (AND MORE!) IN THE MASSIF

A Pictorial History of the CFD Vivarais

£16.95



John Organ

NARROW GAUGE IN SWEDEN & NORWAY

by James
Waite

£23.95

BRISTOL TO BLAENAU

60 YEARS OF THE
FFESTINIOG RAILWAY SOCIETY BRISTOL GROUP
by Tim Maynard, Group Chairman

£23.95

Narrow Gauge
Album No. 8



GIFT VOUCHERS NOW AVAILABLE!

SPECIAL OFFERS!

More Railways

£5

No.2

Argentine
Adventure.
A Railwayman at the
End of the World.



Chris Parrott

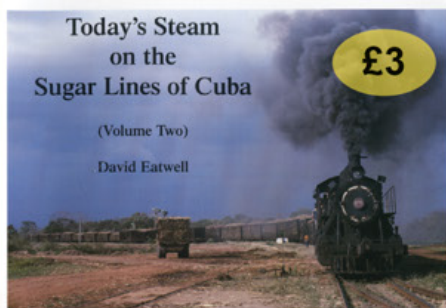
CHEONA PUBLICATIONS

Today's Steam
on the
Sugar Lines of Cuba

(Volume Two)

David Eatwell

£3



DDR STEAM
40 YEARS AGO

£5



Kevin Hoggett

UK Narrow Gauge Railways
2023 Calendar

£5



Newbold Quarry Hunslet STATFOLD (HE303/2005) was a visitor to the Appleton Valley Light Railway 11th September 2021.
(All photos by Ian McClellan)

MAINLINE &
MARITIME

PUBLISHER
Steve Cole
stevec@warnersgroup.co.uk

EDITOR
Andrew Charman
12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys,
SY21 0BD. Tel: 01938 810592
Email: editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk

FEATURES EDITOR
David Joy
Email: dawjoy1@gmail.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION
Andrew Charman

GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER
Bev Machin
Tel: 01778 392055
Email: bevm@warnersgroup.co.uk

AD PRODUCTION
Allison Mould
Tel: 01778 395002
Email: allison.mould@warnersgroup.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel: (0) 1778 392469 (UK & Overseas)
Fax: (0) 1778 421706
Email: subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk
UK: \$40.50; Rest of Europe: \$52.00;
Outside Europe: \$60.00

DISTRIBUTION
News trade
Warners Distribution – Tel: 01778 392417
Model Trade
Warners Trade Sales – Tel: 01778 392404
Overseas Agents
JAPAN: Eriei Co, Ltd, 1-1-12
Toyotama-kita, Nerima-ku, Tokyo 176
Printed by: Warners Midlands Plc
Lincolnshire

All rights reserved. Material is only accepted on the understanding that there are no copyright restrictions. Although every care will be taken, all materials submitted are at the owner's risk and Warners Group Publications cannot be held responsible for loss or damage however caused. Copyright on all materials in this magazine remains vested in the Authors and Warners Group Publications. Reproduction of the whole or any part is forbidden without the relevant permissions. Warners Group Publications and the Editor cannot be held responsible for any error that might occur in text or advertisements. Reliance placed upon the contents of the magazine is entirely at the reader's own risk.

© WARNERS GROUP
PUBLICATIONS PLC 2023
ISSN: 1466-0180

Cover: Autumn brought the traditional rush of photo charters and Karl Heath captured this rather splendid shot of the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway's Hunslet 2-6-2T 'Russell' in old haunts, at Rhyd-Ddu on the WHR, on 30th October. Russell will play a starring role in celebrations of the centenary of the WHR's opening in 2023. The inset shows the interesting road quality of the Bord na Mona lines, final haunt of working industrial Rustons...

Photos: Karl Heath and Ted McAvoy

NARROW GAUGE WORLD is published nine times per year.

This issue on sale 30th December 2022
Next issue published 24th February 2023



www.warnersgroup.co.uk

Issue No 172 Jan-Feb 2023

www.narrow-gauge-world.co.uk
www.facebook.com/narrowgaugeworld
Twitter – @NarrowGaugeWrld
Email – editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk



CONTENTS

- 05** **First Lines**
A new year begins...
- 06** **Headline News**
Mile-long train sets a record
- 07** **UK News**
Taiwan to Wales trip underway
- 14** **World News**
Coal cost kills early school train



- 19** **The Narrow Gauge Industry**
50 Years of Alan Keef excellence
- 24** **News Gallery**
Chilly end to another year
- 28** **Waite's World**
Insight to under-threat Czech line
- 32** **Future Narrow Gauge**
Could 'Green Coal' be the answer?
- 36** **Today's Narrow Gauge**
Last of the Irish industrial Rustons



- 40** **NG Modelling**
Narrow gauge at Warley show
- 42** **NG Modelling**
Pernhyn delights from Bachmann
- 44** **On the Model Shelf**
Another good month for 009
- 46** **On the Shelf**
Sandstone and Ffestiniog releases
- 47** **Viewpoint**
Memories of a line under threat
- 48** **NG Extra**
When not to look at Ebay...
- 50** **Encounters**
Decade-old Swiss rack memories



NEXT ISSUE – MAR-APR 2023
On Sale 24th February

BERWYN STEAM FABRICATIONS



**High Quality welding and fabrication of Steam Boilers
7¼ gauge upwards | 4 inch traction engines to fullsize
Narrow gauge steam Locomotives**

Our workshop facilities offer:

Full CNC milling and Manual Turning/Milling, Slotting, Fabrications
in a wide range of materials. Restorations & rebuilds, including new builds.

6 inch Devonshire Agricultural and Road Locomotive boilers and fully
machined components including Cylinder Blocks,
wheel hub assemblies. Part built or fully built models to your requirements.

Currently building: • 6 inch Devonshire Agricultural and Road locomotive

• 7¼ Romulus Boilers • 4½ Burrell Plaistow Boilers

• New range of quality Bronze steam fittings for the larger model.

Please call or email Chris Pickard to discuss your requirements...

01691 860750 • sales@powysteelfabrications.co.uk

www.berwynboilers.co.uk



New Year's Revelations...



Photo: A blanket of snow hit the UK just as this issue closed for press, and just in time to add a whole lot more seasonal atmosphere to Santa Special trains on the various railways. Steve Sedgwick just managed to beat our deadline with this shot of the Leighton Buzzard Railway's Barclay 0-6-0T 'Doll' preparing to meet young visitors to the line on 14th December.

Welcome to *NGW* 172 and with this issue officially publishing on the penultimate day of 2022 a Happy New Year is in order. The question is, will it be a happy time in 2023 for the narrow gauge world?

There is much to be concerned about – the ravages of the Covid pandemic may be behind us now, though its effects will be felt for a long time, but new challenges have replaced it, principally mushrooming energy costs that we are of course all feeling.

The heritage rail sector knew all about energy issues long before they became a crisis point for the whole country – the strangling of coal supplies, both due to the war in Ukraine and the political environment, will be for all railways the stand-out memory of 2022.

Talk to any general manager or financial director on a railway and the conversation will very quickly turn to gloom at the rocketing price of the fuel we need. We've seen this year some lines reduce their steam services because of such costs and the evidence keeps coming. In this issue's *World News* pages we report on the ending of early-morning school trains in Germany – proper narrow gauge transport services – due to coal becoming *five times* more expensive to buy – scary numbers indeed.

Is there hope? Yes! Fros-y-fran colliery in south Wales, the cessation of supplies from which effectively

kick-started the crisis, has begun supplying to railways again – we had a big delivery at the Welshpool & Llanfair just a few weeks ago. And the granting of permission for a new colliery in Cumbria, controversial yes, raises hope that Fros-y-fran may yet be allowed to continue supplying beyond the end of its current permission. And before I get slammed by the environmental lobby, I'll remind them that the UK currently needs coal for such things as steel production, there is no current alternative, and therefore it is more environmentally sensible to dig coal out of UK ground than import it in heavily polluting ships...

The Green answer?

There is hope for alternatives too, as you'll learn by reading the feature in this issue by Phil Thompson on 'Green Coal' – the name given to a fuel made from rapeseed husks.

Now I'll admit that when some of us who have in the recent past thrown the odd black lump into a steam locomotive firebox first saw this coal, we were pretty dismissive – it looked like cheese, smelt, well not very nice and melted as soon as a drop of rain fell on it.

As you'll read in the feature, however, much dedicated work has gone into solving these issues in what is a trial period for a very new potential fuel. With each update the hopes for Green Coal look more promising and we'll follow further

development with close interest.

So just a couple of the many challenges likely to face us in 2023, is there any reason to look forward positively? Absolutely... Despite cost worries, the global situation and so many other deterrents right now there is so much going on in the narrow gauge world – restorations, new-builds, extensions, very special events, even new railways. If our industry is feeling the pinch it's not showing in the sheer variety of things going on to interest those of a narrower persuasion...

And let's face it, in a world where a mad idea to couple together 25 four-car units and create the world's longest train can be accepted as, well not mad at all, there's every reason to be optimistic!

I particularly enjoyed laying out some of the features in this issue – from the innovation of that green coal to the seemingly ever-lasting excellence of Alan Keef Ltd. For half a century now this quite small business really has been producing just about everything the narrow gauge operator might need (and in fact rather more than many might realise, as you'll read in the feature). When I walked round the workshops and saw the variety of contracts underway – it was another reason to be confident for what's coming in 2023, and beyond...

So enjoy your *NGW*, and stay with us for more fun in '23!

Andrew Charman



Rhaetian sets a world record with mile-long train

The Rhaetian Railway (RhB) successfully set a world record on 29th October when the Swiss metre-gauge system ran the longest-ever train – comprising 100 carriages and measuring some 1,906 metres from front to back.

As we first reported in *NGW*168, the record attempt on the RhB, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was dreamed up as part of the celebrations for 175 years of Swiss railways.

On the day several thousand spectators positioned themselves along the route of the train, which ran from the Albula Tunnel in Preda to the world-famous Landwasser Viaduct just outside Filisur, a distance of just under 25km.

The train, comprising 25 four-car Capricorn railcars from Swiss manufacturer Stadler, was assembled “like a string of pearls” in the Albula Tunnel overnight on Friday. It set off at about 2.20pm and arrived at the climax of its record-breaking journey, crossing the viaduct at 3.30pm, after which the attempt was declared

successful by a representative of Guinness World Records.

The journey, conducted at an average speed of between 30 and 35km/h, saw the train descend 789 metres, crossing 48 bridges and traversing 22 tunnels, the longest being the 698-metre long Greifenstein Tunnel just before Filisur.

“After intensive preparation, we are overjoyed to have achieved this world record,” said RhB director Renato Fasciati. “Not only did we have a wonderful railway festival here in Bergün, but we were able to present ourselves around the world as a fascinating and innovative mountain railway thanks to our dedicated partners, sponsors and an incredibly dedicated team.”

Alongside the record attempt a festival

Above: Yes, the three rakes of carriages are all part of the same train! The record attempt reaches its climax at the Landwasser Viaduct.

Below: The train was formed of 25 four-car units built by Stadler.

Photos: RhB

site was built outside Bergün which attracted around 3,000 visitors and included the record train in miniature – 25 Capricorn LGB model trains in G-Scale measuring 80 metres long.

Welsh Highland suffers collision on road crossing

The Welsh Highland Railway has joined an increasing number of lines affected by recent level-crossing incidents – on 28th October NGG16 Garratt no 143 was in collision with a car on the crossing at Cwm Gloch Isaf, just north of Beddgelert.

The incident resulted in the car involved being dragged for a short distance alongside the train. With the driver's side door against the train the elderly female driver was briefly trapped inside but was quickly released by the train crew, who were praised for their professionalism. The driver was taken to hospital as a precaution but was able to walk to a waiting ambulance.

The loco, pictured below on its return to service just a month earlier after an overhaul, suffered minor damage, principally a bent buffer beam and damaged lubricator pipework.

Trains on the line were cancelled for the rest of the day – *NGW* understands that the FF&WHR is conducting an internal investigation into the incident.



Photo: Chris Parry/FR



Talylllyn's Stuart to head north

The Talylllyn Railway will lose its general manager in February when Stuart Williams leaves to take up a new post in Orkney with a development trust, looking after three islands.

Stuart arrived on the line in 2017 and has since guided it through the major challenge of the Covid pandemic. He has also overseen new heritage initiatives such as the recreated original locomotive watering point at Ty Dwr, plans for a heritage shed at Wharf and a major rebuild at Pendre, detailed in *NGW* 170.

Stuart will not be specifically replaced but instead the GM duties will be split; "My role is being absorbed by two of the existing managers, and we will recruit a project manager to take the many developments forward," he told *NGW*. "Liz Porrett is our new-ish Safety & Environmental manager, and she will take on the role of GM (Operating) – which will see her have responsibility for the operations and engineering.

"Lorraine Simkiss – currently our Commercial Manager – will become GM (Commercial) and look after commercial and people services (volunteers and staff)."

Photo: Stuart Williams, heading for the Isles.
Photo: Andrew Charman



Alishan diesel starts its journey to Wales

A planned loan programme between the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway and its 'sister railway' in Taiwan, the Alishan Forest Railway, is set to come to fruition with Mitsubishi diesel DL-34 expected to arrive in the UK early in January.

We first reported in *NGW* 167 the plans to place the 1972-built and recently overhauled loco on a three-year loan to the W&LLR, primarily allowing the mid-Wales 2ft 6in gauge line to take its two existing 'mainline' diesels, Drewry 'Chattenden', and former Taiwan resident Diema TSC175, out of service for overdue and much-needed major overhauls.

One of several large diesels on the Alishan line, DL-34 is rated at 520hp, the 25-ton loco described as one of the most powerful diesels built for running on a 2ft 6in gauge line.

Having worked on gradients of 1 in 16 and the sharp curves of the Alishan line, it is likely to be eminently suitable for the W&LLR. Those behind the agreement expect the loco to be able to rescue a failed steam locomotive and its loaded train from any part of the Welsh line.

On 23rd November W&LLR company secretary Michael Reilly, a former UK

diplomat to Taiwan, took part in a ceremony and news conference announcing DL34's impending departure to the UK. The latest event in an increasingly successful relationship since the W&LLR and AFR signed a 'sister railway agreement' in 2017 attracted widespread coverage in the Far East nation, including on national TV.

Above: Up and away – DL-34 is loaded for its journey to Wales. Photo: Michael Reilly/W&LLR

Below: The W&LLR's Michael Reilly and Frank Lin, Director General of the Taiwan Forestry Bureau which owns the Alishan line, celebrate the agreement with a headboard designed for the loco's impending UK adventure.

Photo: Daphne Lai, Fengchia University/AFR



Adrian Shooter

Just as *NGW* went to press we were saddened to hear of the passing on 13th December of Adrian Shooter.

Adrian was a major figure in the modern rail industry with a number of top-profile roles throughout his career. He was the founder, managing director and later chairman of Chiltern Railways, and more recently headed Vivarail, rebuilding former London Underground stock for use on UK main lines.

He also had a number of involvements across the heritage rail scene, best known for his 2ft gauge Beeches Light Railway, which he built around his Oxfordshire home to run Sharp-Stewart 0-4-0ST 19B (3518/1889), the only locomotive from the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway to operate outside India.

NGW sends condolences to Adrian's family and many friends – a full appreciation will appear in our next issue.

Right: Adrian Shooter in happier times, entertaining visitors to his Beeches Light Railway in March 2019.
Photo: Denis Chick





'Collection X' Henschel sold to bakery line

A 600mm gauge Henschel 0-4-0T that has been stored as part of the fabled 'Collection X' since being brought to the UK in 1969 has been sold to the Little Braxted Railway.

The loco, works no 16045 built for the Madrid Military Railway in 1918, was among the very first engines to join the collection amassed by Peter Rampton, when he acquired the entire loco roster of the Hulleros de Sabero y Anexas colliery line in Spain. The eight locos brought to the UK to form the nucleus of what enthusiasts would dub Collection X, due to its very private storage site in Surrey, included 16045 and its sister Henschels 16043 and 16073 – they had been on the colliery line since 1941.

Following the passing of Peter Rampton in July 2019 some assessment of the collection has taken place and as a result the loco was put up for sale.

According to Robert Gambrill, who now administers the collection, the sale will "give someone the chance to restore the engine," which otherwise would sit untouched for many more years. Funds raised from the sale will be invested in other collection items, some of which are set to be displayed in the museum that will be created in the former standard gauge running shed at the VoR's Aberystwyth station.

The Henschel is described as being in exactly the condition in which it was acquired in 1969, and in need of full restoration. Just before this issue closed for press it was revealed that it has been bought by the Little Braxted Railway, a new 2ft gauge line established at the Braxted Bakery near Witham in Essex – its opening in April 2022 was reported in *NGW* 164.

We were unable to establish the Bakery line's plans for the loco before we went to press – more news as we get it.



FF&WHR reveals 2023 events

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways have released a list of 2023 special event dates for enthusiasts to put in their diaries.

The calendar starts with the traditional 'Snowdonian' train over the entire 40-mile route of the two railways on 21st-22nd April, while small-scale fans will be catered for with a model railway workshop on 20th-21st May.

The Rail-Ale Festival, usually centred on the WHR's Dinas station, is scheduled for 9th-10th June to be followed a fortnight later by likely to be the biggest event of the year, the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Welsh Highland Railway's opening in 1923.

The enthusiast events season will conclude with the traditional Bygones, formerly known as the Victorian Weekend, on the Ffestiniog on 6th-8th October – we will of course publish more details of all the events as they are released.

Photo: Hunslet 'Russell' will play a central role in the 'WHR 100' festivities in June.

Photo: James Waite

Polar Bear goes into hibernation

Amberley Museum has begun a major overhaul of its Bagnall 2-4-0T 'Polar Bear', following the expiry of the former Groudle Glen Railway loco's boiler ticket.

The 1905-built 2ft gauge loco worked its final services on the Sussex museum's Halloween Ghost Train service on 29th October, running into the night before dropping its fire, with dismantling beginning the following day.

Work planned will include a full bottom-end rebuild and boiler refurbishment – to what extent the latter is required will not be established until after the boiler is transferred to Bennett Boilers in January, but a full retube is expected to be part of the menu.

Andy Bennett most recently carried out the boiler work on the museum's Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Peter', which returned to steam in July (*NGW* 168). Polar Bear's overhaul is expected to last two years, partly to create a larger gap between its 10-year boiler cycle and that of Peter's.

The museum is raising £25,000 to help pay for the work – details are at <https://justgiving.com/campaign/supportpolarbear>



'Polar Bear' is in the shed at Amberley on 29th October, the 'end of BR steam' style messages chalked on the smokebox door indicating that it has just dropped its fire for the last time before overhaul. Just 24 hours later the loco was in components.

Photo: Phil Barnes

Bala reveals physical progress on extension



After years of planning its extension into Bala town centre and raising funds, the Bala Lake Railway has finally been able to reveal tangible progress on the route.

Work on the lake's flood defences currently being undertaken by Natural Resources Wales is including the civil engineering for the BLR's trackbed, which will run along the top of the defences.

Having the trackbed preparation done now will save the railway significant costs and has been made possible by supporters of the project who raised £277,000 to fund it.

Releasing the pictures, BLR Trust chairman Julian Birley said that planning permission will be required before the railway can start to lay track on this formation. "Over the past few years we have acquired land for the route and worked with our consultants to prepare and submit the planning application," he added.

"This has been very challenging, demanding, time-consuming and much more costly than originally anticipated. However,

we have now managed to fulfil all the requirements, which will hopefully allow the Snowdonia National Park to determine and grant that permission in early 2023."

Once planning permission is secured the railway plans a general appeal for the next stages of the line's development, but is encouraging supporters to keep up the project's momentum by making donations at www.balalakerailwaytrust.org.uk

■ A double-headed train on 28th October celebrated the Bala line breaking its record for the total number of passengers carried in an operational year. "With the bounce-back during the latter part of 2021, together with restricted foreign travel, people were holidaying 'at home' thus the BLR and other attractions benefited greatly," general manager David Jones said. "We did not expect 2022 to be as good because of the easing of restrictions on travel but we are delighted by the success of exceeding last year's numbers".

Photo: BLR



■ The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's Funkey diesel 'Castell Caernarfon' made its long-awaited return to service following a protected overhaul on 18th November, returning from Boston Lodge works on the FR to its 'home shed' of Dinas on the WHR, at the head of a rake of ballast wagons.

Built in 1967 for the Consolidated Diamond mines in Namibia, the loco was one of two purchased by the FR in 1993 from the Portland Cement Co, as preparation for the rebuilding of the WHR. It was the first loco to arrive at the WHR's Dinas works in 1997 and worked on the line until 2017, receiving a heavy overhaul in 2005. Gearbox issues extended the overhaul and the pace was only stepped up after a runaway incident sidelined its sister 'Vale of Ffestiniog' in 2019.

The loco now looks distinctly different to previously, having received a new and redesigned cab and been painted in a green livery, replacing the previous maroon.

Photo: Chris Parry/FF&WHR

BRIEF LINES

African loco's boiler steams

The team working to restore former South African Railways NG15 2-8-2 no 134 for use on the Welsh Highland Railway passed a milestone on 14th November when the refurbished boiler of the loco, built in 1952 by Societe Anglo-Franco-Belge, underwent a successful steam test. It will now return to the WHR's Dinas works where restoration of the loco's chassis has made major progress.

Manx runs into November

The Isle of Man Steam Railway has surprised many observers by extending its operating season. Due to close for the winter on 30th October, the line instead ran across every weekend in November.

Snowdon to go all the way

Snowdon Mountain Railway trains will again run to the summit of Yr Wyddfa, Wales' highest mountain, in 2023, for the first time in more than three years. Track renewal work delayed by the pandemic has now been completed and weather permitting the first summit services should commence on 1st April.

Vandals ruin Lake festivities

The Llanberis Lake Railway was forced to cancel its 2022 Santa Special programme after vandals caused repeated damage to a building used as Santa's grotto at the north Wales line's halfway crossing point of Cei Lydan.

Sybil feels the pressure

The boiler of Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Sybil', under restoration at the West Lancashire Light Railway, successfully underwent a hydraulic pressure test in November, described by members as a milestone in the loco's rebuild.

Simplex at the Kiln

The Old Kiln Light Railway in Surrey has acquired Motor Rail Simplex 9655, formerly based at a private line in Bedfordshire, the Stevington and Turvey Light Railway which closed in 2014. The loco is now awaiting overhaul.

Groudle on winter track

Off-season maintenance at the Groudle Glen Railway on the Isle of Man includes the longest track renewal the 2ft gauge line has ever undertaken, involving close to half of the three-quarter mile long line between Headland Loop and the terminus at Sea Lion Rocks.



Talyllyn and Amerton earn heritage accolades

The Talyllyn and Amerton Railway were jointly presented with the Hendy and Pendle Trust Volunteers Award by HRH The Duke of Gloucester at the National Rail Heritage Awards on 6th December.

The Talyllyn earned its accolade for the restoration of the original loco watering point at Ty Dwr, beyond Abergynolwyn. The point was installed when the railway was built in 1865, a nearby waterfall supplying refreshment by a series of troughs supported on slate columns.

Demolished in 1954, Ty Dwr was reinstated in a project that began in 2019 and concluded last winter, local contractors being employed to rebuild the slate columns while volunteers made the new water troughs from locally sourced larch.

The other joint winner of the Award was the Amerton Railway in Staffordshire, for rescuing, restoring and installing the former signal box from Waterhouses station.

Between 1904 and 1937 the signal box controlled train movements at Waterhouses on both the standard-gauge North Staffordshire Railway and the 2ft 6in gauge Leek & Manifold Railway. In 1915

automation rendered the box redundant – it served many years as a garden shed, hen house and cement store before being acquired by the Amerton Railway in 2001.

The box then underwent a long restoration under the leadership of woodwork expert Roger Strike and despite looking rotten, around 95 per cent of the timber was able to be retained.

The box was installed at Amerton station, housing a 12-lever frame, part of a 36-lever Midland Railway unit formerly in use at Longbridge East signal box and donated to Amerton by the Chasewater Railway. The final touch was to spectrally analyse uncovered flakes of the original paint so that a matching colour could be created by a specialist paint supplier.

Above: The Talyllyn earned its award for the recreation of the Ty Dwr watering point...

Photo: David Mitchell/TR

Below: ...while the Amerton Railway was awarded for the restoration of the historic – and compact – Waterhouses signal box. The inset shows the box being rescued in 2001.

Photos: Peter Bell, Robin Mathams/Amerton



Moseley restores its first Ruston

The Moseley Railway Trust has completed the restoration of the very first operating locomotive in its collection.

Ruston four-wheel 20 DL 354013 of 1953 was the very first loco to run at the Trust's original Cheadle School railway back in 1971.

Built to 20-inch gauge, for a brickworks at Crowle (near Scunthorpe), the loco was acquired by the Trust in 1970 and restored with part of the work being carried out in the school's metalwork room.

It ran on 20-inch gauge track which had been laid to suit but as the school railway developed, the limitations of the gauge became apparent, and when the operator of one of the few remaining industrial 20-inch lines, Darlington-based The Chemical and Insulating Co Ltd required a new loco a deal was done, the Ruston moving in February 1977.

After C&I ceased using its railway the loco was preserved at the Darlington Railway Preservation Society and in 2019 loaned to the Trust at its new Apedale base, becoming a key exhibit in an event in September of that year marking 50 years of the Trust.

Cosmetically restored for the 2019 event, the loco has now been fully restored to operating condition and the Trust intends to build a 20-inch gauge railway for the Ruston to run on.

Photos: Moseley Railway Trust's first Ruston loco in 1974 (above) and today (below).

The same member is at the controls in both pictures, he reputedly claiming that the cab area of the engine appears to have shrunk somewhat in the intervening period...

Photos: MRT



EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR YOUR DIGITAL RAILWAY

DIGITRAINS

**Just starting out in DCC and not sure what's available?
Grown out of your system and thinking of upgrading?
Getting into sound and want to know the best decoders?**

DIGITAL COMMAND CONTROL (DCC) is one of the fastest growing areas of the model railway hobby.

As the first new company to set up as a DCC specialist in the UK, DIGITRAINS now has over 16 years experience to share.

Working in all the popular scales, we are here to guide you through choosing the best equipment.

We stock a wide range of products as well as offering free advice, a decoder installation service, a huge range of sound files and the best DCC 'test drive' facility around.

Don't leave that major purchase to chance!

Why not visit our shop? Our comprehensive library of loco sounds can be demonstrated.

We stock 1,000s of products from more than 30 leading manufacturers. And don't worry if you're not digital. We're also a traditional model shop, holding all the major ready-to-run lines



- **Try before you buy**
- **Expert advice**
- **Great service**
- **Experience**
- **Major brands**
- **Worldwide mailing**



**15 Clifton Street, Lincoln LN5 8LQ
01522 527731**



**www.digitrains.co.uk
enquiries@digitrains.co.uk**



Luttermoller boiler goes for repair

The team undertaking a number of narrow gauge locomotive projects at 'Workshop X', near Killamarsh in Derbyshire, have made significant progress in recent weeks.

The restoration of Orenstein & Koppel 'Luttermöller' 0-10-0 no 10956 of 1925, acquired in March from Preston Steam Services by Matt Dolby, passed a milestone in early December when the extracted boiler was collected for transport to Israel Newton in Cromford, near Matlock.

Work to be done will include a full retube and a number of repairs, while a new smokebox will also be required.

Meanwhile work is continuing to strip the loco's bottom end back to its bare frame before refurbishment can begin.

The cosmetic restoration of Hudswell-Clarke 0-4-0ST 'Handyman' is also making progress with more layers of paint applied to the refurbished frames in recent weeks. The bearing faces of the axleboxes are being machined and a new set of shims made and there were hopes the loco would be back on its wheels before Christmas.

Above: The Luttermoller's boiler is collected for rebuilding at specialist Israel Newton.
Photo: Workshop X

Sutton line revival plan

A 15-inch gauge Atlantic locomotive that formerly ran on the Sutton Miniature Railway was displayed at the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition in November, promoting plans to revive the spirit of the Midlands line, once one of the UK's premier miniature railways.

The SMR was built in 1907 to 10¼-inch gauge as a fairground railway in Sutton Coldfield, east of Birmingham, but regauged to 15-inch just a year later.

It ran until the First World War, and was revived in the late 1930s on a longer parkland route, surviving until 1962.

Following closure the SMR stock, including 4-4-2 Atlantic locomotives 'Sutton Belle' completed in 1930, and the 1950-built 'Sutton Flyer', went into storage until 2000, when backed by a Heritage

Lottery Grant the collection transferred to the Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway.

The 'Sutton Collection' has more recently moved again to the premises of heritage railtour operator Vintage Trains, based at Tyseley Works in Birmingham, and it is here that the revival project will be based, the SMR's former site having been swallowed up by industrial development.

Those behind the project, costed at £520,000, aim to establish a new line of around 1km in length around the Tyseley site, under the umbrella of Vintage Trains.

First step will be to restore the stock – the two Henry Greenly-designed steam locos need total rebuilding at a cost of around £100,000.

Sutton Belle was displayed at the model railway show in Birmingham on 26th-27th November, as an initial appeal begins to raise £25,000 for a new boiler.

More details and updates on the initiative, including how to donate to the appeal, are on the group's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/smr.tyseley>

Warley model show report – page 40



Left: 'Sutton Belle' attracted a lot of interest at the Warley show. Photo: Andrew Charman

Cost goes up for Corris experience

The Corris Railway will continue to offer its 'Your Railway for The Day' experience package in 2023, but has been forced to increase the cost.

The day includes opportunities to sample all aspects of the CR's work including working on the footplates of all the locomotives (one battery-electric, an internal combustion trio and a steam 0-4-2ST), joining the guard in their duties, controlling the yard at Maespoeth Junction from the signalbox and enjoying a ride in a gravity train between Corris Station and Maespoeth Junction.

Participants can also see behind the scenes in the workshops of both the original locomotive shed and the modern carriage shed at Maespoeth Junction and may have the opportunity to walk down the planned route of the southern extension, subject to any works in progress on site at the time.

The availability of Your Railway for The Day depends on there being no other operations due to take place on the Corris and crucially the availability of volunteers to run the day.

Cost will now be £500 and the maximum number attending the day will be six. This can be reduced to £400 if participants do not wish to include the steam engine.

More information and booking facilities for experience days are available by emailing bookings@corris.co.uk

Build begins on small loco shed at Boston Lodge

The Ffestiniog Railway has begun construction of its new 'Small Loco Shed' which forms part of the £4.2 million Boston Lodge Redevelopment & Interpretation project.

Backed by a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £3.1 million, the shed is being built on the seaward side of the works complex on the site of a former quarry, behind and slightly to the right of the current loco running shed when looking from a train when approaching from Porthmadog.

The new shed will consist of three roads connecting into existing lines, with an inspection pit on the longest, right-hand road. It will be used as a running shed for the line's smaller engines, with a larger shed to cope with the FF&WHR's Garratts being added later.

The new buildings will allow the oldest parts of the Boston Lodge complex to have their heritage status enhanced and parts of the historic works site to be made more accessible to visitors.



Swilly wagon found in wood – 70 years on

A wagon of the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway has come to light near Letterkenny, almost 70 years after the 3ft gauge Irish line closed.

The four-wheeled covered wagon is thought to be the only Swilly goods vehicle still in existence (*reports Hugh Dougherty*). A local landowner contacted the Donegal Railway Heritage Centre to say that he had a rail wagon partially hidden by greenery and invited staff to examine the find.

Donegal railway heritage centre director Jim McBride said that it was believed that no Lough Swilly wagons had survived, although it was known that the company auctioned them off to farmers for use as stores after the line closed in 1953. "It was a great surprise to come across this example – we visited the site to verify the wagon's origins and we're currently assessing the find to see if it can be rescued and rebuilt at the railway heritage centre."

The wooden body, with intact metal fittings, is either an example of one of 27 covered wagons, or of 29 versions that were built with centre roof canvases. It will date from either the opening of the Letterkenny Railway in 1883, or the regauging of the Swilly mainline from Derry to Buncrana, two years later.

A six-wheel Oldbury-built carriage and a former Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway crane truck, both preserved at the Foyle Valley Railway Museum, are the only other known survivors of Swilly rolling stock.



Above: The Swilly wagon hidden in the undergrowth, nearly 70 years after the Irish line closed.

Left: The inside of the wagon, with part of the frame clearly visible.

Photos: DRHC

The last few weeks have seen enthusiasts and photographers taking advantage of the last few events of 2022, along with the traditional Autumn photo charters, before everything shuts down for the winter.

Top right: Amberley Museum's Industrial Trains day on 16th October included the usual interesting mix of train sets, such as this triple-headed freight of tubs hauled by Orenstein & Koppels 'Sonia' and 'The Major' and battery-electric loco 5034 of 1953.

Photo: Phil Barnes



Right: Now with its resident steam loco Astley Green Colliery staged a Photo Charter on 20th November featuring Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT 'Utrillas'.

Photo: Karl Heath

Below: The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway's 'Mini Gala' on 5th-6th November featured visiting locos 'Fox' and 'Badger' from Whistlestop Valley, the Kirklees Light Railway, here double-heading together at Muncaster Mill.

Photo: Matthew Pye



Bottom: Mountain class 4-8-2 'Samson' showing the kind of Gresley-style speed it was designed to recall at the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's End of Season Parade on 29th September.

Photo: Steve Town





Coal crisis dooms early morning school train

The soaring cost of coal has brought to an end the early-morning steam-hauled public transport in Dresden, **GERMANY**, with the metre-gauge Löbnitzgrundbahn running its last 05.15am departure.

The early train has seldom carried many passengers on its outward journey but provided transport for schoolchildren on its return trip. *NGW* correspondent **Tim Lockley** fulfilled a long-held ambition to ride the early train on 9th December, only to find on his arrival at Radebeul Ost station that there were very many passengers and messages proclaiming 'the end of an area' chalked on the tanks of 2-10-2T locomotive 99 1761.

"A quick conversation with the guard revealed that this was the very last day of the school service, as due to massive increases in the price of steam coal (from

GERMANY

€150 to €750 a tonne) it was no longer viable – and our decision to ride today seemed much more fortunate than we first thought," Tim told *NGW*.

Tim added that the line has a diesel loco capable of pulling passenger trains but it is not currently authorised to do so, and lacks the ability to heat the carriages so would not be practical for off-peak winter services.

"So from Monday the school kids rode a bus, and whilst the Löbnitzgrundbahn carries on, one of the ingredients that helped make it special is gone," he said.

Above: 2-10-2T no 99 1761 makes ready for its last before-light departure from Radebeul Ost on 9th December. The inset shows the messages on the loco's tanks, making clear the significance of the occasion.

Photos: Tim Lockley

Frisco overturn injures seven

Seven passengers were injured on 26th October when a train derailed on the Frisco Silver Dollar Line, a 2ft gauge, steam-operated line of 1.6 miles in length forming one of the attractions at the Silver Dollar Theme Park in Missouri, **USA**.

Local media images showed two of the carriages laying on their sides on a curve in a woodland section of the line, and news sources reported that the train was virtually full at the time of the incident.

The injured were transported to hospital – later their injuries were said to be not life-threatening. State authorities have since opened an enquiry into the accident.

Opened in 1962 and running on a circular route, the line is home to seven steam locos, four of which are in operating condition. It is set to an 19th century US railway theme, with suitably styled buildings. Staff also act out a 'wild West' train robbery halfway through the ride.

Crowds flock to ride reopened Matheran line

The Matheran Hill Railway in Maharashtra, **INDIA**, has seen a major influx of passengers since it reopened after the rebuilding of flood damage.

The 2ft gauge, 13-mile line suffered serious washout damage after monsoons in 2019. Rebuilding was completed and the line reopened for traffic on 22nd October.

"Passengers have welcomed back the toy train services with unbridled joy and have given an overwhelming response," local media reported, quoting initial figures that saw 3,700 passengers travel in the first week of services.

MOB launches revolutionary gauge-changing train

A rail operator in **SWITZERLAND** has solved the perennial argument between rail enthusiasts by merging standard and narrow gauge.

MOB, the Montreux Oberland Bernois Railway, has developed gauge-changing bogies for its Golden Pass Express, which runs from Montreux to Interlaken across some of the finest scenery in Switzerland.

The Golden Pass route through Gstaad and Zweisimmen is operated by both the metre-gauge MOB and the standard-gauge Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway (BLS) but until now travellers on the full route have had to change trains at Zweisimmen.

To remove this restriction MOB developed the bogies, which reduce in width by 435mm to allow trains to directly transfer to the narrow gauge route, and also change the height of the vehicle's steps by

200mm to suit the lower platforms of the metre-gauge route.

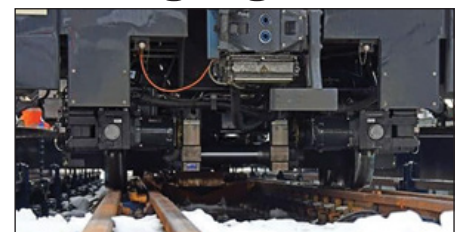
The bogies are being manufactured by Alstom to go under 20 new vehicles built for the Express by Stadler.

On 9th December MOB officially launched the new trains, with Swiss Alpine skier Michael von Grünigen and global country music star and Lake Geneva resident Shania Twain naming train sets after themselves.

The first commercial services started two days later. Initially just one train each way will run daily, taking 3hrs 15 minutes, but in June 2023 these will increase to four daily return services.

Right: The innovative gauge-changing and height-reducing bogies were designed in-house by MOB but built by Alstom.

Photos: MOB



BRIEF LINES

Cane train rolls over

The driver of a train on the 610mm gauge sugar cane network in **AUSTRALIA** was taken to hospital after his loco derailed and rolled onto its side on 17th November. Luckily he was not seriously injured in the incident at Duingal, 50km southwest of Bundaberg, Queensland.

Muskau plans trackwork

The longest 600mm gauge heritage line in **GERMANY**, the Waldeisenbahn Muskau or Muskau Forest Railway, is planning major maintenance in the Spring to tackle deteriorating trackwork. Diesel-hauled photo special trains were scheduled to run on 20th November to 'say goodbye' to the line in its present condition.

Service cuts in Saxony

Reader **Dominic Emery** has confirmed that in addition to our story at left, timetable changes on the Löbnitzgrundbahn in **GERMANY** for December will now see only two trains per day that go all the way through to Radeburg. The Fichtelbergbahn (Cranzahl-Kurort Oberwiesenthal) will reduce its service to four through trains per day from Cranzahl. Ticket prices on the two lines and the Weißeritztalbahn have been increased due to rising costs.

Green Hornet rides again

Fowler 0-6-0T 'The Green Hornet' (12271/1910) returned to service on 16th December in time for Christmas trains on the Timbertown Heritage Railway in New South Wales, **AUSTRALIA** – based at the 2.4-mile long 2ft gauge line since the 1970s, the locomotive had been out of action for more than two decades.

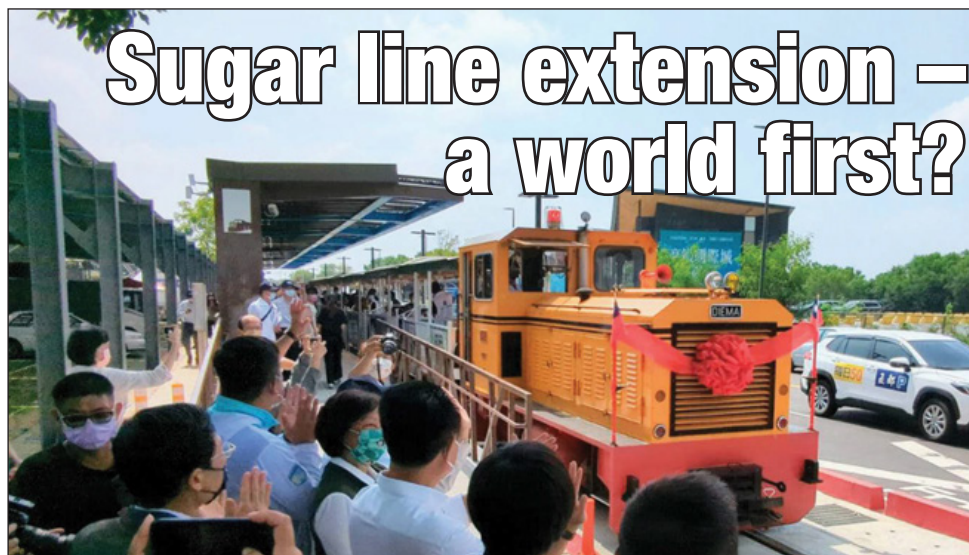
WW&F carriage progress

Making progress at the Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington Railway Museum in Colorado, **USA** is coach 9, the 2ft gauge vehicle a reconstruction of original Wiscasset & Quebec coach No. 2.



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

Sugar line extension – a world first?



In what is almost certainly a world first for a heritage railway (*reports Michael Reilly*), in mid-October the Taiwan Sugar Corporation (TSC) opened an extension of its 2ft 6in line at the Suantou sugar mill near Chiayi to provide a direct link to the Taiwan High Speed Railway station at Chiayi.

All but a short spur into the high-speed station grounds has been built on the trackbed of the former sugar mill line from Chiayi to Suantou. With several level crossings on the 3.8km route, trains are currently limited to a speed of 5kph until road drivers become more accustomed to seeing trains using the line.

For good measure the crossings also have lights, barriers, and flagmen. At least one of the crossings is over a ten-lane highway and one wonders how the ORR would react to a proposal for similar level crossings in the UK...

For now, just two round trips daily run between the high-speed station and Suantou mill, using converted (and still unsprung) cane cars to carry passengers.

This is only the first phase of an ambitious expansion plan. Next year will see a further extension opened, from Suantou mill to the southern branch of Taiwan's world famous National Palace Museum, and this is expected to lead to a big increase in traffic as the line will provide a direct link from the high-speed line to the museum.

Passengers using the line to travel to the museum are likely

TAIWAN

to expect a rather more comfortable ride than that

offered by the converted cane cars, so TSC is in the process of building a fleet of 21 new carriages, to a heritage design based on early four-wheel passenger rolling stock that ran on Taiwan's sugar railways, but with the addition of air conditioning.

The new stock will make possible a three-train service between the high-speed line and the museum, but the converted cane cars will continue to be used for shorter, more traditional journeys around the old mill complex. Three of the new carriages are intended to be fitted out as dining cars, to allow meals or other refreshments to be served to travellers.

There are no run-round facilities at Chiayi HSR, so trains are topped and tailed by some of TSC's fleet of Diema diesels and this arrangement will continue when the new carriages are introduced.

In preparation for the expanded operations, TSC has also completely restored the original wooden station building at Suantou mill to its original condition, complete with copper guttering and downpipes.



Above: Celebrations on 8th October as the first train departs from the new station at Chiayi's High-Speed Rail interchange.

Photo: TSC

Above: The extension includes crossings over busy roads...

Photo: Michael Reilly

Right: Heritage in action – the original station building at Suantou Mill has been completely restored.

Photo: Michael Reilly





Progress is being made towards an extension of Pete's Hobby Railway, a private 2ft gauge line that enthusiast Peter Neve has been building around his property at Junee in New South Wales for some years – the first section opened on 6th February 2017 as part of Pete's 75th birthday celebrations.

Pete and his small team of helpers plan to extend the running line, currently 416 metres long, around the rear of the property to create a continuous route in a dog-bone shape.

The route will require a new point in the line leading away from the turntable and running shed – some years ago Pete purchased what he thought were most of the components for three 60lb points, but which on further study proved to be one complete right-hand point plus various components of heavier weight.

It is planned to assemble this point for placing in the main line leading onto the new section and Pete is appealing for enthusiasts who fancy putting the point together to get in touch with him.

It has also been decided that the availability of an in-house ballast wagon would greatly speed tracklaying. The railway was offered an operating four-wheel ballast wagon previously in use at a North Queensland sugar mill and this was subsequently purchased, arriving on the line in mid September.

The vehicle is able to discharge into the track centre and the sides, of considerable advantage to volunteers not only building the new route but for a planned subsequent upgrade of the existing line.

The line is home to two steam locos

AUSTRALIA

of which Hunslet 0-4-2ST 'Torpedo' (1187/1915) is in operating condition but had not been steamed since 2020 when its boiler ticket expired. The Covid-delayed boiler test took place earlier this year and Pete expects to obtain a two-year certificate.

All railways over 600mm in gauge are governed by Australian and State legislation and Pete's line operates under a 'Hobby' exemption – visitors can view the trains but are not allowed to be given rides.

Above: Future plans; the extension will head up the centre of the picture – the loco shed turntable is just visible at right.

Below: The new ballast wagon was delivered in September and quickly coupled to the line's 1955-built Ruston 48hp diesel.

Photos: Peter Neve



First steam raised for 46 years in Decauville boiler

Members of the Museum of French Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways (MTVS) in Butry, FRANCE had plenty to celebrate on 7th December when a fire was lit in the boiler of the museum's Decauville-design, Orenstein & Koppel built 2-6-0T no 5755 of 1913, for the first time in 46 years.

The steaming, for boiler inspectors from French authority APAVE, marked a milestone moment in the restoration of the locomotive, which has been underway at the museum for some years.

"It's a bit like Santa's gift to the MTVS!" commented Olivier Janneau of the museum. "We still have at least one to two years of work before the loco rolls, but the most important step has been taken – thank you to those who work in the shadow of the Butry depot to advance this beautiful work."

A 'Monument Historique' (the French equivalent of listed status), the loco formerly worked on the Linha do Vouga line in Portugal.

Photos: Olivier Janneau/MTVS



Regular NGW correspondent Kevin Hoggett joined the Ffestiniog Travel tour to JORDAN in October and while he reports steam working in Amman appears to be doomed due to the 3ft 6in gauge track being upgraded for rapid transit use, further south, at Wadi Rum, was better news. The tourist operation, which includes a re-enactment of an attack by Lawrence of Arabia and his Arab tribesmen on camels and horseback, is normally diesel operated, but for the tour Japanese Pacific no 85 was steamed. "This loco has been shorn of all identification to try and fool tourists that it is an original Hedjaz loco from the First World War period," Kevin adds. Despite previous reports of the loco being pushed by a diesel, he confirmed it is now back on oil-fired steam. *Photo: Rika Laporte*





**New HOe / 009
Narrow Gauge Diesel**



The range of narrow gauge diesel locomotives still operating for Taiwans Alishan Forest Railway and soon coming on loan to Welshpool & Llanfair

This very detailed model is available in 4 versions with a special limited production of DL 34 the locomotive on loan to W&LLR

A donation to W&LLR will be made for every special edition model sold
All models only £189.99

These locos have too many features to list so
visit our website and search HOe

**For more information visit
www.dmgelectech.co.uk
or call 02920813136**

You will also find one of the largest ranges of electrical
& electrical components for your model railway



Amerton Railway

**Come to Amerton in 2023
Heritage Walk Opening at Easter**



**New Heritage Walk & Narrow Gauge Museum
Open for 2023 !**

**Summer Steam Gala in June with visiting Locos
Everything Goes Gala in September:
Quirky Steam & Diesel Mix
Picnic Area open at Chartley Halt**

For updates on what's going on
at Amerton please visit

**www.amertonrailway.co.uk
Facebook@Amerton Railway**



Jones Springs have been supplying UK heritage rail operators for over 50 years giving us a reputation for being reliable and trustworthy as well as allowing us to develop a range of skills and techniques which we have been able to apply to our work in the manufacturing of springs.

All our work on railways and locomotives is produced to British Rail standard 166 and British Rail standard 148a ensuring that all products we manufacture are created and tested to the levels of quality and precision required by British Rail.

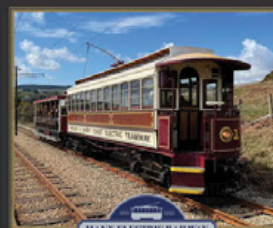
With a general engineering shop based locally in the Midlands we can offer a range of services such as the manufacturing and repair of springs, our facilities also allow us to carry out load tests to make sure that your products are fit for purpose and use. We can also provide full certification for any test we carry out for you at our site.

JONES SPRINGS (ENGINEERING) LTD.
Gladstone Street, Darlaston West Midlands WS10 8BE
T: 0121 568 7575 F: 0121 568 7692
E: sales@jones-springs.co.uk
www.jones-springs.co.uk

Reg. in England - Company No. 00520744

SAVE THE DATES

Join us in 2023 to celebrate two remarkable milestones
of the Heritage Railways on the Isle of Man



SATURDAY 1st JULY 2023

A glorious celebration of 150 years of steam.

SUNDAY 23rd JULY – SUNDAY 30th JULY 2023

A week-long festival on our Island's award-winning Heritage Railways.

SUNDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2023

A special commemorative day to mark 130 years of the unique Manx Electric Railway.



For details of operating dates and timetables
visit www.rail.im or call 01624 662525

[/IsleOfManTransport](https://www.facebook.com/IsleOfManTransport)





SUBSCRIBE

If you're enjoying reading *Narrow Gauge World*, and you would like to explore the hobby in depth, in your own time, why not subscribe and we'll deliver a lot more directly to your door, 9 times a year.

There are 2 easy ways to receive *Narrow Gauge World*. Which format is best for you?

PRINT

- Have each issue posted through your door in high quality print.
- Get away from a screen and enjoy the tactile nature of flicking through the pages of the magazine.
- Receive your issue one week before it is on sale in the shops.



3 ISSUES FOR £5

After your three issues your subscription changes to a quarterly Direct Debit of £10.99.

VISIT: www.bit.ly/ngwmags22
CALL US ON: 01778 392465
(Quote: NGW/MAGS22)

DIGITAL

- Instant access to the magazine as soon as it's published.
- Read the magazine on your tablet, desktop or smartphone.
- App is free to download, in-app purchase of individual issues, or take out a subscription.
- Page view replicates of the print version and a mobile-friendly digital version makes for easy reading.



SUBSCRIBE

from just £3.33 an issue!

DOWNLOAD:
www.bit.ly/ngwdigital

On Track for the Next 50

Andrew Charman celebrates a Golden Anniversary at Alan Keef Ltd, and discovers the firm is about more than people might think...



Recent years have seen a big jump in the number of companies offering specialist engineering services to the narrow gauge, newcomers including the likes of Statfold, North Bay and the Vale of Rheidol Railway. But through all this one veteran company name has not only endured but flourished – Alan Keef Ltd.

As the turnout among enthusiasts to the recent 50th anniversary open day at the company's headquarters on the English/Welsh border showed, Alan Keef Ltd has for decades been a lynchpin of the heritage railway industry, particularly on the narrow gauge. But visiting a few weeks after the open day for a chat with brother and sister management team Patrick Keef and Alice Basey, the first surprising fact I learn is that the heritage rail side is not only just a part of the business, but also by no means the most significant part.

Simplex start

First a brief history – the seed for what became a life in rail engineering was planted in the late 1960s when Alan Keef built a short 2ft gauge line to move food around his pig farm in Core, Oxfordshire. Doing up derelict locos and selling them soon became a business and Alan Keef Ltd was formed in 1972, initially as a used rail equipment dealer.

An early contract secured was to maintain the various lines at Butlins holiday camps, which soon led to manufacturing items such as carriage bogies and other equipment – more orders duly followed from lines both inside and outside the UK.

Above: The many enthusiasts at the Open Day thought they knew Alan Keef Ltd – but the company is about much more than was on display. Photo: Lawrie Rose

Below: Alice Basey and Patrick Keef – at the helm of a very busy engineers. Photo: Andrew Charman

The first of so far close to 120 locomotives wearing Alan Keef works plates was an oddity, as the 0-4-0ST 'Trixie', featured in *NGW* 117, was built by Trevor Barber with specialist help from Alan. AK2 set the trend for the future, a diesel built for Carlisle-based peat extractor Richardsons, and the first of a standard design that soon saw Alan Keef Ltd competing in the industrial loco market against such established names as Motor Rail.

In 1986 the company moved to its present home of Lea Line, close to Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire. By now regularly winning industrial loco

contracts, Alan Keef Ltd started building locos under sub-contract for Motor Rail and when in 1987 the latter decided to get out of loco building, Alan Keef Ltd acquired Simplex Mechanical Handling Ltd and the rights to build Simplex locos. "Father views this as a key turning point in the business," Patrick comments. "It put us on the world stage as a serious player – the Simplex name went a very long way back."

The industrial roots of the company, however, now play a much smaller role in today's business. "There are virtually no Simplexes left »



Projects on the go...

Visitors to the Alan Keef Ltd Open Day on 24th September were able to view progress on just a small variety of the work carried out by the company...



'G H Wood'

The Isle of Man Steam Railway's 1905-built Beyer, Peacock 2-4-0T is under heavy overhaul, following a similar rebuild carried out on sister 'Maitland' between 2019 and 2021. The work, expected to take around 18 months, includes adding a new front end to the frames, replacing the cylinders, horn guides and axleboxes and overhauling all the motion.



Corris Railway No.10

This is the latest new-build completed by Alan Keef Ltd, other notable examples including the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Baldwin 2-4-2T 'Lyn'. The 0-4-2ST recreates Corris Railway nos 1 to 3, built in 1878 by the Hughes Locomotive Company – no 3 runs today on the Tallylyn Railway. Erected at Ross-on-Wye with many components made by Corris members, the loco made its debut at the open day, but with several jobs still to be done before it moves to mid-Wales.



Coferna diesel

Owned by a private collector, this French-built 600mm gauge machine is undergoing a major rebuild including substantial frame modifications and fitting of a new hydrostatic driveline. It will also have a new bonnet and cab made for it.



working commercially worldwide and our business is largely servicing the heritage market – we still do a small amount, a consignment of spares has just gone to Guyana for example, but it's not now a significant part of the business."

Alan is now retired, though keeping a fatherly eye on things with a home adjacent to the works. Patrick joined his father's company from school and became a shareholder on his 21st birthday, being appointed managing director in the early 2000s, and the company has continued to flourish with he and his sister Alice at the helm. Joining the family firm in 1999, Alice's official title is finance director and general manager but she tells me her speciality is trackwork.

While Keef's 'raison d'être', the

small industrial locomotive market, may have all but disappeared, it has not been entirely replaced by heritage railway work. Today this forms an important part of the business, but by far the most important is the leisure market – building and maintaining lines in country parks, tourist attractions and other venues across the world.

Complete package

Patrick describes today's firm as light railway engineers and loco builders, supplying customers in the heritage, leisure and pleasure, industrial and materials handling sectors; "from cutting the first sod to selling the first ticket – the only thing we don't get involved in is buildings, civil engineering is a different market."



Above: Projects such as restoration of the Welsh Highland Railway Hunslet 'Russell' are familiar to NGW readers. Photo: WHHR

Left: Built for the Cotswold Wildlife Park were the first steam-outline i/c locos – photographed in 1989 by NGW's Editor, on his honeymoon!

Facing page: Trackwork varies from closing an A-road on the Seaton Tramway to maintaining Mail Rail under the streets of London!

Photos: Alan Keef Ltd

Below: Typical Alan Keef Ltd motive power, these three locomotives all built for the 15-inch gauge line at Longleat.

Photo: Alan Keef Ltd





He adds that yes, as the industrial market declined the heritage market expanded and burgeoned out of all recognition from the early days. "But the one thread that has developed and grown the whole way though is leisure and pleasure, park railways, which I think in the mainstream railway scene goes unnoticed. People forget that there are lines dismissed by observers as 'only a park railway' carrying hundreds of thousands of people each year, much bigger numbers than in the heritage sector."

These lines are operated by semi-skilled staff with fairly limited maintenance facilities, if any; "Some places we go to you struggle to find a bench and a vice." This market has grown out of all proportion, Patrick says, and Alice concurs; "Those that operate park railways have realised they can do serious business and earn serious money. At Longleat (*a 15-inch gauge line at the Wiltshire Safari Park that has run for almost five decades*) there is always a major flap if the railway's not operating as the revenue goes down with a lot of disgruntled people in the park – they are expecting that ride.

"We built two new seven-carriage trains for the 10¼-inch gauge Audley End Miniature Railway three years ago; their Christmas trains start on November weekends and run through

December – 800 train movements and they sell out. Last year they carried 154,000 passengers – is there a heritage railway doing that?"

Skill shortage

While this market has expanded, both Patrick and Alice admit it has also become more challenging, due not to the actual railways themselves but a reduction in specialist skills among those running them. "Our customers, especially in the park market, are less and less able to commit staff capable of taking responsibility for operating railways," Alice says.

"These days we are commissioned to sort the simplest things that in the past the on-site fitter who dealt with the Land Rovers and the tractors would have done, because technically those and locos are not very different.

"Now work that used to be accomplished in a day trip takes longer, and you need more servicing staff, so you are either overstaffed 60 per cent of the year or you have to disrupt staff from other projects to go and carry out jobs such as changing brake blocks, which we never used to do – it's a greater challenge matching staff numbers to workload."

Patrick adds that if anything the situation appears to have got worse since the Covid pandemic; "General engineering and fitting skills seem to >>



Tallyllyn Railway BEVs

The Tallyllyn recently acquired a pair of 1960s-built battery electric locos and sent them to Alan Keef Ltd to establish whether they could be practical subjects for rebuilding, and successfully regauging from 2ft to 2ft 3in gauge. The company has established that both aims are possible and is now awaiting the TR's next move.



Darjeeling loco and carriages

This 10¼-inch gauge version of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Sharp Stewart 0-4-0ST was built in 2014 (*not by Alan Keef*) for the Ferry Meadows Railway in Peterborough. It is now in private ownership and is set to run on a railway being built at its owner's home. Alan Keef Ltd has carried out various general repairs and modifications to it along with a repaint.

When the loco returns to its owner it will be accompanied by two bespoke-design bogie carriages built at Ross-on-Wye. Displayed as 'kits of parts' at the open day, by the time *NGW* returned a few weeks later one had been erected and was being painted.





Cotswold Wildlife Park no 4 'Bella'

Alan Keef Ltd supplied its first steam-outline locomotives to Cotswold Wildlife Park in 1985 and has to this day remained responsible for the current two working locos, four carriages and track. 'Bella' is currently in the Ross-on-Wye works for upgrading and modernising with a new engine and transmission.



Dalmunzie carriages

These two carriages were built in 1921 by the Motor Rail & Tramcar Co Ltd in Bedford, later to transfer its railway business to Alan Keef Ltd. They were to the order of the Dalmunzie Estate in Perthshire, Scotland, and intended to carry shooting party guests along a 2-mile long line from the house, today the Dalmunzie Hotel, to a shooting lodge at Glenlochside.

Patrick Keef acquired the two vehicles, in virtually derelict condition, from the hotel in 2016, dubbing their restoration his "midlife crisis project"...

Restoration of the bodywork was carried out entirely by Patrick's father, proving an interesting project for Keef senior to get his teeth into while he was 'confined to barracks' during the Covid lockdowns. The two made their debut at the Open Day, and as can be seen from the pictures are both unique and dissimilar – the open-sided vehicle has basic seats while occupants of the closed carriage relax in leather armchairs.

Patrick intends to recreate the entire Dalmunzie 'train set'. Work has started on a third, replica carriage while the original Motor Rail loco that hauled them, 'Dalmunzie', is stored off-site awaiting restoration.



be in very short supply these days."

Alan Keef Ltd is doing its bit – a new apprentice who started over the summer is showing great potential, and another young new recruit is also flourishing; "there is potential out there – harnessing it and giving young people the all-round potential to know what to do is the challenge."

The two newcomers take the entire Alan Keef Ltd team to 17 people, working for a company with an annual turnover of just over £2 million. And contrary to what many believe, they are not all confined to the Lea Line works. "We have a unit, taken on 'temporarily' 20 years ago to produce carriages for the Welsh Highland Railway, and today used for storage," Alice says. "And we have a works in Mitcheldean, two miles from here, about half the size of this site and used for specific projects, predominantly those involving wood – our carpentry shop is there."

The customer list is very wide indeed – leisure lines built and/or supplied with stock by Alan Keef Ltd, for example, can be found all over the UK, in the USA, the Caribbean, Denmark, Belgium, Lithuania...

Permanent way

Then there is the trackwork, a major part of the business, overseen by

Alice. Many *NGW* readers likely noted that it was Alan Keef Ltd that recently built the Leighton Buzzard Railway's new deviation, while not realising that the company also carries out trackwork on such lines as the Seaton Tramway, the Perrygrove and Eaton Hall Railways, even 'Mail Rail', the 2ft gauge line deep under London streets and one of Alice's favourites.

"Trackwork has been a constant from day one," she says. "It used to be seasonal, but we are now doing work that heritage lines in the past would have done themselves – once we go in it becomes a regular contract."

"We started at Woburn Safari Park today and we will be there until Christmas, then after Christmas at Audley End, then Longleat, Perrygrove... We have a team of trackworkers we can call on – we commission them and they provide the gang needed from their numbers."

Is there anything Alan Keef Ltd doesn't do? "We don't do boilerwork," Patrick says. "There are plenty of specialist people able to do such work far better than us. And we don't do castings and foundry work."

"Otherwise we can do most of what we need to. If it's broadly between 10¼ inches and occasionally straying into standard gauge, from 12hp to 150hp and powered by



whatever you fancy, we can do it.”

As mentioned at the start, in recent years the challenge from younger engineering concerns has grown, and Patrick says he's more sanguine about such things these days than he once was. “The whole time we've been doing this someone out there has been happy to do it for less, do it quicker... You have to stick to your guns and accept you'll lose some work – there's no point fighting for every bit of business if you are going to lose money at it.”

One market that did not exist when Alan Keef Ltd was formed but which has mushroomed in recent years is in new-build steam. “If anyone had said we were going to be making new-build steam locos even 25 years ago, they would not have been believed,” Patrick says, Alice adding; “the only sadness for us is that we quite often end up as the house of correction – we will get undercut by someone else, they then do the job not very well and we end up putting it right. That happens with monotonous regularity.”

Lion's share

So with such an extensive back catalogue, what are the Keef favourites? For Alice, Longleat is pretty special; “It's a not-too-long, very attractive railway with all the right features, and it's been there a long time so it has heritage.”

“It's where my trackwork started and I've enjoyed helping to upgrade their track – the 0-6-0 we supplied there is one of my favourites, basically my design and quite a little Tonka Toy. The bo-bo locos we've done since, you can open them up and they seriously go.”

Patrick admits that his favourite is not narrow gauge! “The replica early locos, the ‘Steam Elephant’ and ‘Puffing Billy’ we built for Beamish museum – to do one iconic engine was remarkable, but two... They were great projects carried out with really passionate people and they work every day just like they should do.”



Above left: A new market in new builds. Baldwin ‘Lyn’ steams for the first time on 4th July 2017.

Below left: Not narrow gauge! The ‘Steam Elephant’ at Beamish is a favourite loco build for Patrick.

Both photos: Andrew Charman

Above: Metre gauge supply in Guadeloupe was fun despite the challenges.

Below: Longleat is Alice's favourite; “a very attractive railway with all the right features.”

Below right: Paira Daiza in Belgium – “it's such a good railway,” Patrick says, adding he is proud of the Keef role in this line.

Photos: Alan Keef Ltd

Pressed, he names two narrow gauge lines, both overseas. “The 600mm gauge line in Paira Daiza Park, Belgium – we built carriages for it, co-ordinated what the railway should be and it all works. I go once a year to do an annual inspection, I drive a train and it still gives me a buzz because it's such a good railway – I feel proud of our part in it.”

He also has great memories of a metre-gauge tourist railway in Guadeloupe for which a diesel loco and three carriages were built. “That job had its challenges but because it was playing trains in the Caribbean, it stands out.”

Finally he highlights a line the rest of us don't see, a private garden railway, “built for a gentleman in the Cotswolds, completely off the radar. It's 10¼-inch gauge and very special – the brief was to build effectively an Edwardian garden railway, and it's perfect in every way.”

So what of the future? Alan Keef Ltd will continue to serve its ever-widening customer base, and expecting that the park railway market will continue to expand.

Electric avenue

The ‘next big thing’, however, appears to be electrification. “Battery-electric locos and stock will be a big new market, everyone seems to want that now,” Alice says. “We have parks

running fairly new locos with not many miles on them but they want to replace them with a ‘green’ loco. Every other vehicle on their site is green so they need a battery loco to fit with the image.”

Patrick adds that the heritage sector is beginning to see the same trend. “We are getting more and more enquiries for battery locos and we are fortunately well-placed to serve them, we've built them for our original industrial market and more recently 10¼ and 15-inch locos which have been hugely successful.”

“What surprises people is that it is very simple, reliable technology,” he adds. “You plug it in at night, go home and next morning you unplug it and off it goes. Such locos are really easy to live with operationally before you consider their green credentials.”

Alice believes this trend can only accelerate. “The younger generation are being pushed green agendas every day – they will grow up and question the relevance of steam, and their grandparents will no longer be there to provide the nostalgia aspect.”

Whichever way the future of narrow gauge rail goes, it's clear that Alan Keef Ltd will be a central part of it – moving confidently into its second half-century... **NGW**

More Information

Alan Keef Ltd; www.alankeef.co.uk



Chilly but creative end to year

The final operating days of 2022 and a host of photo charters ensured the photographers were kept busy.



Above: Looking very miniature indeed... *Steve Town* caught Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Greenly Pacific 'Green Goddess', dwarfed by the looming bulk of Dungeness Nuclear Power Station, during the line's End of Season Parade event on 29th October.

Left: This could almost be the Welsh Highland Railway in the 1930s, with a Fairlie and Baldwin no 590 peeking out reluctantly from Dinas depot. In fact it's Boston Lodge shed on the Ffestiniog on 1st November during a David Williams/Bob Branch photo charter, with Fairlie 'Merddin Emrys' and Baldwin no 608 on shed. *Photo: Steve Sedgwick*

Facing page: The power of monochrome – much more than simply black and white as *Karl Heath* has very clearly demonstrated.

At top are two shots from a photo charter on 20th November at a new and suitably evocative venue – Astley Green Mining Museum in Lancashire, featuring Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT 'Utrillas', a recent recruit to the museum's fleet.

Centre, a cameo set up during a photo charter on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway on 17th October. One could imagine this sort of scene being played out many times in the line's pre-preservation history.

At bottom the Ffestiniog Railway England 0-4-0ST 'Welsh Pony' catches the evening light as it heads across the Cob in a photo full of atmosphere.

Overleaf: If you are prepared to climb some dramatic pictures are possible, as *Steve Sedgwick* shows during the Russell Photo Charter held on the Welsh Highland Railway on on 31st October.





**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**





Twilight of the JHMD?

James Waite gives more background on the Czech line which we reported in NGW171 is threatened with permanent closure.

Since 1998 the Jindřichohradecké Místní Dráhy a.s., or JHMD, has operated the 760mm gauge network based at Jindřichův Hradec, a historic town in southern Bohemia served by the secondary railway between Veselí nad Lužnicí and Jihlava.

There are two lines, one running north through undulating farming country to another junction with the standard gauge at Obrataň, and one to Nová Bystřice, in the district close to the Austrian border known as Česká Kanada or Czech Canada, and which is characterised by hills, forests and lakes.

What is now the Czech Republic formed a part of the Austrian empire until it was broken up after the First World War, and the network was built by kkStB, the Austrian state railway. The Nová Bystřice line opened on 31st October 1897 and the one to Obrataň on Christmas Eve in 1906. There is a short section of mixed-gauge track at Jindřichův Hradec and altogether the lines are 79km long.

Nová Bystřice lies only 12km away from Litschau, the northernmost point of the extensive Waldviertel 760mm gauge network in present-day Austria, with its operating centre at Gmund. During the early years there were plans for a connecting line, and these were revived when Czechoslovakia and Austria came under German control in 1938, but it was never built.

The Obrataň route serves a significant population. It became much the busier of the two railways and in later years was relaid with heavy-section rail. In comparison the Nová Bystřice line fared less well. There was a significant population of German-speaking people throughout Česká Kanada, and in some of its towns and villages they were in a majority. They were expelled after 1945 and Česká Kanada became something of a backwater.

Tourism was actively discouraged

by the post-WW2 communist authorities due to the proximity of the Austrian border, and some of the villages close to Nová Bystřice were cleared of their remaining residents and demolished. Unsurprisingly traffic became sparse, and as a result little track maintenance was done.

The two lines were typical of many narrow gauge railways throughout the Austrian empire. For

the opening to Nová Bystřice three of kkStB's ubiquitous U-class 0-6-2Ts were built by Krauss Linz in 1897, numbered U.1 to U.3. Despite their numbers they were not quite the earliest members of the class as four, later numbered U.8 to U.11, were built for the Murtalbahn in Styria which was then also operated by kkStB. Two more, nos U.33 and U.34, arrived when the Obrataň line opened, followed by a sixth, no U.41, in 1908.

Altogether 43 of these locos had been built for kkStB by the time construction ended in 1913. Another six were built between 1898 and 1900 for the Niederösterreichischen Landesbahnen (NÖLB) which was run by the regional government until it became a part of the post-WWI Austrian state railway in 1922. There were also Zillertalbahn nos 1 and 2, the latter currently being on loan to the Welshpool & Llanfair in Wales.

State control

After World War 1 the network became part of ČSD, the Czechoslovak state railway. By then only U.1, U.34 and U.41 remained at Jindřichův Hradec. When ČSD reclassified its locos the U class became the U37s, and these three were renumbered U37.001, U37.005 and U37.006. Nos U.2 and U.3 had been requisitioned by the Austrian military and never returned – at least one is believed to have been moved to Bosnia, and no U.33 ended up on the Trieste-Parenzo line on what became Italian territory.

In 1930 no U37.005 moved to Teresva, in a portion of eastern Czechoslovakia that became part of Hungary when the country was dismembered following the Nazi takeover. Teresva now lies in western Ukraine. No U37.006 moved to another narrow gauge line at Ružomberok in central Slovakia in 1929. It closed many years ago and the loco now resides on a plinth there. It is the only survivor of the original six locos.

In their place several other U-class locos spent varying periods of time on the line. They included no U37.002, which arrived from Osoblaha in 1950 and went back there three years later. Over the years several locos moved between Jindřichův Hradec and Osoblaha, and today the railway based there is the only state-owned narrow gauge line in the Czech Republic. In preservation no U37.002 has become an iconic loco at Jindřichův Hradec.

Longer-term residents were 0-4-4-0 Mallet tanks nos U47.001 to 4, four members of a class of 12 locos built by Henschel and Hohenzollern



Facing page: At the end of the journey from Nová Bystřice Polish 0-8-0 Px48 heads into Jindřichův Hradec, under the wires on the mixed gauge section of line.

Above: Romanian Reșița 0-8-0T no U46.001 shunts at Cernovice, the last station before Obrataň. Riding on the footplate is Jan Šatava, a very hands-on JHMD manager.

Below: No U46.001 is near Jindřichův Hradec and approaching the junction with the standard gauge.

for the Serbian state railways between 1907 and 1911. They found their way to what became Czechoslovakia during WW1 and never returned.

No 47.001, formerly Serbian no 391, moved to Jindřichův Hradec in 1920 and remained until it was withdrawn in 1965 and acquired by the National Technical Museum. It returned to Jindřichův Hradec in 1992 to operate the railway's first heritage trains and stayed until being recalled to the museum's store at Chomutov because of concerns about JHMD's financial situation.

No 47.002, Serbian no 394, worked at Jindřichův Hradec between 1921 and 1959, after which it moved to the Prešov Pioneer Railway in eastern Slovakia. It is now on a plinth at Prešov station and is the only other surviving steam loco from the JHMD's pre-preservation years. The other two Mallets also spent long periods on the line.

Two M.11 class diesel railcars arrived in 1929 and were followed by two M.21 ones in 1939, but railcar operation ended after the Second World War. A major change between 1955 and 1959 saw 26 class T.47 diesel electrics built for ČSD. It wasn't long before they took over most services at Jindřichův Hradec, and as other ČSD narrow gauge lines closed more arrived to completely replace the last steam locos.

Passenger stock at first consisted of four-wheeled carriages, mostly built by Ringhoffer of Prague. More carriages, which originated on Saxony's state railways, came in the 1960s from the Frýdlant-Heřmanice railway, effectively an extension of the Zittau system in south-eastern Saxony. It had acquired them in 1945. New bogie carriages were built in 1966 by Tatra Smichov and have dominated passenger operations ever since. Freight was initially handled by »





typical four-wheeled wagons, but the network later became an early user of standard-gauge transporter wagons.

Soon after 1989 ČSD embarked on a programme of rationalisation. Its remaining narrow gauge railways were earmarked for closure, though there was also official encouragement for privatisation schemes. There was much resistance to the closures among local residents, especially around Jindřichův Hradec, and this led to the takeover by the JHMD company.

The company was promoted by nine enthusiasts and financiers, whose mission was to maintain a working rural railway rather than just a tourist operation. Subsidies were on offer from central government funds, and contracts were entered into with the regional authorities for the provision of daily services – the heritage steam operations that were an inherent part of the new business model were expected to pay for themselves.

At first the steam services relied upon no U47.001, but when it was

Above: Diesel no T.47.015 enters Hurky station. JHMD painted these locos in a variety of colours in place of the state railway's uniform red livery.

Above right: Plinthed at Prešov station in eastern Slovakia is no U47.002 (Hohenzollern 2788/1911), the only survivor from the period before the JHMD was preserved.



taken out of service in 2000 the Prague museum at first resisted any further overhaul on the grounds that it was too precious to operate again. The new company bought four locos to ensure that steam services could continue. They were no U37.002 (formerly kkStB no U.12), along with no U37.008 (a parts donor when it was restored), Polish 0-8-0 no Px48 of 1916 and 0-8-0T no U46.001 (using the Czech numbering system and previously CFI Brad-Criscior no 8), which was the very last of the numerous 760mm gauge 0-8-0Ts to be constructed by the Reșița factory in Romania in 1958.

First visit

I first visited the JHMD in 2008 and followed the Romanian loco working on the Obrataň line, after which I was introduced to Jan Šatava, the very hospitable manager and one of the nine shareholders. He took the following morning off work to drive me to some photo spots he thought I wouldn't otherwise find. Later he opened up the sheds where U37.008

and U47.001 were stored, and also bought me a superb lunch of regional specialities – a really kind person and a very knowledgeable enthusiast.

He explained that the railway was expanding its workshop facilities in order to carry out full heavy steam overhauls, both for its own locos and for other railways on a contract basis. Later he treated me to a ride from Jindřichův Hradec to Nová Bystrice on the footplate of no Px48.

The T.47 locos were fitted with new engines, a project which was so successful that their fuel consumption was halved and the state railway, by then known as ČD, contracted JHMD to rebuild the locos used on the Osoblaha line. Mr Šatava also showed me the historic carriages, some of which were rescued from their second lives as summerhouses and chicken sheds after the arrival of the Tatra vehicles in 1966, and the company's freight stock.

The stock included several transporter wagons which, I was told, didn't contribute much in financial terms but as he put it, real railways



offer a freight service and this was a real railway! I saw several trains with transporters attached. They weren't fitted with air brakes but the railway had bought 10 brake compressor wagons built by Czech industry as 1067mm gauge vehicles for use in Indonesia but never delivered. They were converted to 760mm gauge for use on the freight services.

Another sideline was the production of Edmondson card tickets for heritage railways all over Europe, for which the JHMD bought ČD's last traditional printing presses.

Hard times

Alas, it was all too good to last. Operating losses on the day-to-day services from 2010 led to a management coup in 2012, when Mr Šatava was ousted from his job and replaced by a Mr Boris Čajánek, another of the original nine shareholders. He has remained in post ever since, but the operating losses continued to grow, and turbulent personnel relations led to a high turnover of staff. I visited again in 2014 when nos U37.002 and U47.001 should have been running, though the latter was at the back of the shed receiving urgent remedial attention. It was obvious everywhere I went that the railway was no longer a happy workplace.

One project from this period was the reconstruction in 2014 of four secondhand railcars built by FAUR in Romania for the Polish railways, which included new and unusual-looking bodies with fixed porthole-style windows and air conditioning. The railcars were notoriously noisy and unreliable in Poland. This remained the case at the JHMD, and when the air conditioning failed

Below far left: No U47.001 (Henschel 7930/1907) rests in the steam running shed at Jindřichův Hradec.

Below left: No U37.002 (Krauss Linz 3814/1898) being prepared at Jindřichův Hradec before taking a train to Kamenice nad Lipou.

Above right: Three of the FAUR railcars, newly fitted with their new bodies, stored at Kamenice nad Lipou before entering service.

Below: A Czech Post van waits for Px48 to traverse a level crossing near Hurky.

Photos by James Waite, taken August 2008 and August 2014



conditions inside on a hot day were insufferable. It wasn't long before two of them were set aside, never to run again, leaving the T.47s in charge of the daily services.

The money ran out in 2021 and the company applied to the Court for insolvency protection. New funders emerged, led by one Jan Kysela who bought out several shareholdings including Mr Šatava's. Seemingly it was all too late. The bank called in its lending of £1.9 million in April 2022. In September Mr Kysela was sacked, and days later the company applied for insolvency once more. Mr Čajánek asserted that he personally was owed some £1.3 million, although this had not been disclosed in the 2021 proceedings and the Court questioned the reliability of

the figures presented to it. Another hearing was fixed for 13th January 2023, and Mr Kysela has begun a separate Court action.

The railway's safety certificate expired on 3rd October. The last train was the 19.06hrs from Jindřichův Hradec to Obrataň on the previous day, and the staff turned it into a farewell trip. Mr Šatava joined them and received a big welcome, but Mr Čajánek did not show up. It will be a real shame if the closure becomes permanent, but clearly major financial reconstruction will be needed if the railway is to reopen. **NGW**

Acknowledgements

James is most grateful to his friend Svatopluk Šlechta for his help in the preparation of this article.



Green coal...



Developing a solid fuel for steam locomotives made from rapeseed, a 100 per cent renewable source – Phil Thompson tells the story so far.

The light bulb moment came in the afternoon of 14th December 2019 – some 8½ weeks before the term Covid-19 entered the lexicon. As a pre-Christmas treat for my granddaughter Holly (then aged 4) we were at Alston station on the South Tynedale Railway to meet Father Christmas.

The bunker of our loco, 'Green Dragon', contained what looked like lumps of shiny wood, rather than coal. The crew explained how this dragon was fired on a renewable fuel – briquettes of compressed wood chippings. They said the fuel worked okay, although sparks and smoke were an issue, but their biggest bugbear was disposal of the polythene

cover on each briquette in an environmentally-friendly way.

I work for a farming and food production business. One of the group companies, Phoenix Speciality Oils Ltd, produces cold-pressed rapeseed oil. A co-product from production is rapemeal – the flakes of rapeseed husk. This is usually sold for animal feed but Phoenix can also make a solid fuel by compressing the rapemeal into briquettes. Perhaps these could fire Green Dragon in place of compressed wood chippings?

After email exchanges with the railway in early 2020, we offered to make a couple of tonnes of rapemeal briquettes to try out in Green Dragon. The plan was to carry out

“The fuel as it then existed was not a viable replacement for coal, but neither was it a complete failure...”

testing around Easter 2020. Sadly, this never happened as, some weeks beforehand, Covid arrived.

Green coal?

Rapeseed is a small round seed, 1.5mm to 3.0mm in diameter. It grows in pods on the oilseed rape plant (*brassica napus*), giving us those bright yellow fields in the summer. The oil inside the seed makes up just under half its weight, the husk is just over half. When extracting the oil by cold-pressing, the husk is cracked open and most of the oil flows out of the press to be filtered and bottled.

What's left is rapemeal, a mix of the husk and some residual oil, which together make up around 62 per cent by weight of the seed's original weight. Phoenix has developed a way of compressing this rapemeal into briquettes, making a solid fuel from a wholly renewable source, grown in the UK. It's greenish in colour, so has been dubbed 'green coal'.

Phoenix produces a food-grade rapeseed cooking oil, sold in some supermarkets under the 'Borderfields' label. Other grades are used in bio-diesel; in Victorian times, the oil was used in railway carriage oil lamps.

The rest of 2020 was not the time to think about testing an alternative fuel in steam locomotives and the briquette equipment went into storage. By summer 2021, a number of heritage railways were cautiously re-opening their carriage doors. We re-commissioned the briquette equipment and made contact with the engineers at the 2ft 6in gauge Great Whipsnade Railway, the 12¼in

Above: Green coal in action – a good fire ready before departure of the fourth trip of the most recent tests on the Kirklees Light Railway. The arch is hidden but clearly visible is the firedoor deflector to direct secondary air below the arch.

Left: The colour shows why it's called green coal, though some wags have dubbed it cheese... A full bunker at the start of the day's trials at Kirklees.

All photos by Phil Thompson



Fairbourne Railway and the 9½-inch Lakeshore Miniature Railway, all of whom agreed to give the fuel a try – motivated by their concerns about climate change.

These trials, with the first generation of green coal, proved the fuel as it then existed was not a viable replacement for coal, but neither was it a complete failure. On the positive side, lighting-up time was similar to coal and boiler pressure was maintained when running under a light load. But excess smoke was an issue, especially in a very small firebox, when under a heavy load or running up-gradient. Fuel consumption was worse than coal and the briquettes were also hygroscopic – they absorbed moisture from the air.

How to reduce the smoke?

We decided to try and tackle the issue of excess smoke first – working on the principle that smoke is a combination of incomplete combustion of the volatiles in the fuel coupled with unburned particles.

The unburned particles were our fault, since the briquette equipment was set up to make lumps of triangular cross-section, with two 45-degree corners which chipped easily, creating dust which could be ejected up the chimney before it had a chance to burn. To reduce it, we altered the briquette equipment to make a briquette of square cross-section, with edges at 90 degrees.

Second: incomplete combustion. Rapemeal burns in a different way to coal, due to its higher level of volatiles and lower level of carbon. To extract all the heat energy, all the volatiles must combust before passing out of the firebox. Any unburned volatiles stop burning (due to lack of air) once they pass into the boiler tubes and also equate to wasted heat energy.

There seemed three ways to achieve complete combustion in the firebox: either a highly efficient firebox, or modifying the shape of the briquettes to slow down the rate at which volatiles are released into combustion – or perhaps both of these together.

A simple way to slow the rate at which volatiles are released is to alter the ratio of their volume to surface area – so we tried this first. With a novel fuel, the optimal volume to surface area ratio for a loco firebox was unclear, so we went with just a little more, 14 per cent, than the first generation briquettes. It was time for further trials.

Take two – Spring 2022

We're grateful to a number of railways which tested samples of the



Above: The journey begins – on the Great Whipsnade Railway in June 2021, with the first-generation briquettes. Smoke wasn't too bad when 'Superior' was running light engine, but was a problem on lighting up and when pulling a train up-gradient.

Below: More first-generation briquettes in September 2021 on the Fairbourne Railway. 'Russell' was running well enough, but the dark smoke is a clear indicator of incomplete combustion – even though the safety valves are lifting.

second-generation briquettes during the spring, and reported back on their findings: the 15-inch gauge Kirklees Light Railway (aka Whistletop Valley), the 2ft gauge Lynton & Barnstaple and Ffestiniog Railways, the 2ft 3in gauge Talyllyn Railway and more tests at Fairbourne.

These trials proved that altering the shape and increasing the ratio of volume to surface area had improved combustion, but not by enough. Levels of smoke were still too high, causing irritation to some loco crews and passengers. This was less of an issue in locomotives fitted with an arch in the firebox – especially when combined with a gas producer combustion system, as used at Kirklees. And fuel consumption was still more than coal – possibly due in part to unfamiliarity with the different combustion characteristics.

On the plus side, the Talyllyn Railway ran two trips with Barclay 0-4-0WT 'Douglas', lightly loaded, and provided us with some very positive feedback. They also released a video of their experiences.

In July, Alex Tring, a lecturer from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), contacted us having seen the video of tests on the Talyllyn.

Alex explained he was supervising an MSc student researching the possible use of renewable fuels in the heritage railway sector and that he wanted to trial a renewable fuel, but had discovered the chlorine content of their initial choice of N+P Subcoal could not be determined with sufficient confidence. We offered to help, explaining that analysis of our green coal showed a low chlorine level, broadly the same as coal.

Alex is a volunteer fireman on the Stainmore Railway, a short standard gauge line in Cumbria. He asked us to make some larger briquettes, better suited to the firebox of a standard gauge loco. We also made some of these for a planned follow-up trial on the Talyllyn. Late August saw two days of trials at the Talyllyn, using Douglas and Hughes 0-4-2ST 'Sir Haydn', followed by two days on Peckett 0-4-0ST 'Lytham St. Annes' at Stainmore and, in early September, further trials at the Kirklees using geared 0-4-0+0-4-0 'Owl'.

The good news...

A favourite saying of a boss I once worked for was "tell me the good news first". Applying this mantra, I'll start with the test outcomes at the »

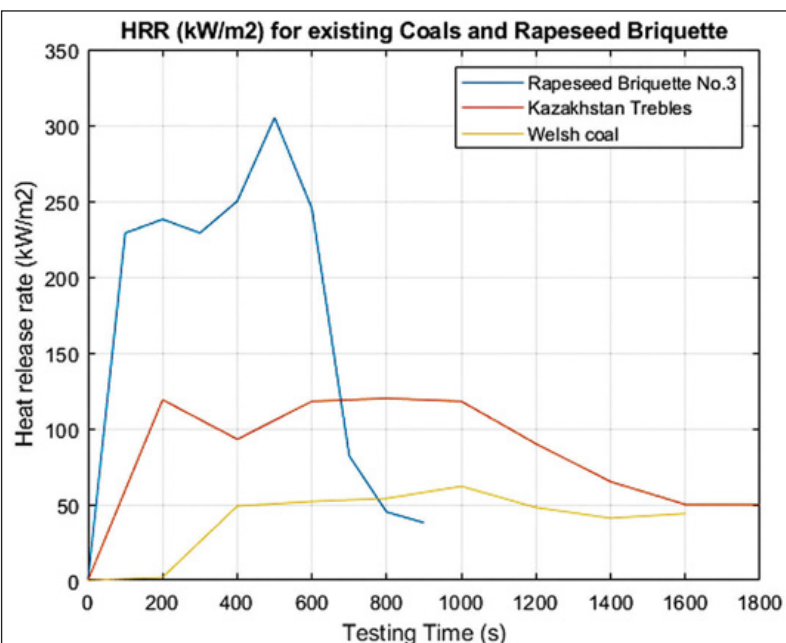




Stainmore and Kirklees railways.

Stainmore first: fire tests were initially carried out by UCLan, using a calorimeter to measure the efficiency of combustion of the rapemeal briquettes, compared with two coals – a sample of Kazakh

“Trials over four return trips revealed a good fire...”



Source: *Assessment of Alternative fuels for Stainmore Railway Company*, a dissertation for the degree of Master of Engineering submitted by William Clancy (September 2022). In the dissertation, it is surmised that the low heat-release curve for Ffos-y-fran coal may be due to insufficient heat energy applied to start its combustion in the calorimeter: as a hard coal, Ffos-y-fran requires a higher energy input than either green coal or the Kazakh coal before it starts to burn efficiently.

trebles (from Kazakhstan) and some from the Welsh Ffos-y-fran colliery.

The practical tests, also compared with the Kazakh coal, included steam raising from cold and an operating day. In summary, using data from the MSc dissertation:

- Total heat release from the green coal was around 95 per cent of the Kazakh coal
- Total smoke production, under laboratory conditions, was around 62 per cent of that from Kazakh coal, showing what should be possible if complete combustion is achieved
- Carbon monoxide yield was less than half that of Kazakh coal, with a 10 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide yield compared with Kazakh
- Lighting up from cold was achieved around one hour faster than with Kazakh coal.

The measured fuel consumption on the operating day (with a fireman using it for the first time) was some 25 per cent more by weight than with Kazakh coal. The dissertation states that some of this excess was probably due to the fireman's lack of familiarity with the green coal.

In his MSc dissertation, William Clancy has produced the graph above, showing the heat energy released from a sample of rapemeal briquettes (blue line), compared with the same volumes of Kazakh coal (brown line) and Ffos-y-fran (yellow line), each measured over time. Whilst the green coal generated some 95 per cent of the total heat energy derived from the Kazakh coal, this energy was released in around half the time.

A sceptic might say that laboratory testing is not quite the same as operating under real-life conditions. The same sceptic might add that the practical tests on the Stainmore Railway involved undemanding operating conditions. I would agree with both assertions. But now look at the bottle half-full: if we can flatten and lengthen the heat-release curve for the briquettes (perhaps by altering their size and/or shape and/or density), we'll have a fuel with heat-release properties that more closely match those of coal.

To expand on the 'bottle half-full' view, recent tests on the Kirklees, a more demanding railway than the Stainmore, show what can be achieved in real-life operating conditions. On this 15-inch gauge line chief engineer Ian Screeton has fitted five of the six steam locos in the fleet with steel arches and deflectors in their fireboxes and four of them also have a firebox gas-producer combustion system and a Lempor blastpipe. Arguably, this gives the Kirklees one of the most technically advanced slim-gauge steam locomotive fleets in the UK.

Following initial promising trials on 2-6-2 'Fox' in April 2022, further trials on the Kirklees were deferred until after the line's busy spring and summer periods. During this time Ian did some research, including looking at the design of locos fired on bagasse (sugar cane waste). He discovered some locomotives were modified with a smaller diameter blastpipe, to produce a sharper blast.



He decided to try a smaller blastpipe when using the green coal and was easily able to replace the old Lempor blastpipe on Owl with one having an approximate 10 per cent smaller cross-section, to create a sharper blast. Trials using Owl over four return trips revealed a good fire throughout the three-mile average 1 in 72 uphill run from Clayton West to Shelley, with pressure maintained all the way.

Complete combustion was apparent, with just a light haze of smoke from the chimney, echoing the laboratory trials carried out for the MSc dissertation and the practical tests at Stainmore – but this time in more demanding operating conditions. Fuel consumption was not measured precisely, but judged as ‘similar’ to coal.

...And the not so good

The trials on the Talyllyn could not be judged a success, although we learned a little more. Firstly, the design of Sir Haydn is essentially more than 140 years old. I’d guess that this loco, with its small and narrow firebox, really needs the extra heat energy that coal can deliver.

In its design, Douglas is 40 years more modern than Sir Haydn. It has a larger firebox and steamed better on the green coal, especially when using the larger size of briquettes.

Compared with the trial earlier in the year, however, this time Douglas was pulling a heavier train, in normal revenue service. It did manage two full return trips along the line, keeping broadly to timetable, but required firing with around twice the volume as coal. Excess smoke was also an issue.

What's next?

We are getting closer to a viable solid fuel, grown and manufactured in this country from a renewable source. But we're not there yet – although we

“Complete combustion was apparent, with just a light haze of smoke...”

Far left: Neat piece of kit – the UCLan calorimeter. The test sample goes in the cabinet on the right and is ignited. Gases are analysed above and the electronic wizardry on the left produces the test report.

Below left: Up the line on the Talyllyn, with a full service train in August 2022, fired using the largest size of third-generation briquettes. ‘Douglas’ just managed it, but it was hard work for the fireman.

Above: Lempor blastpipes at the Kirklees – coal on the left and a smaller version for the green coal on the right.

Above right: Virtually no ash in the smokebox of ‘Owl’ after four return trips up the Kirklees line.

Right: Arrival at Shelley at the end of the fourth run.



might be almost there for locomotives with larger fireboxes, or those with modern fireboxes designed to extract heat energy in the most efficient way. We're going to try and engineer the fuel so it works better in locomotives with small fireboxes, but part of the solution in such locos might be a sharper blast and a steel arch – which, of course, might not be practicable in all cases.

Over the coming months, with input from UCLan, our development work will look at fixing the hygroscopic nature of the fuel, so it can be stored outside in the open. A possible solution might be to incorporate a plant-based additive to act as a binder. We would also like to increase the density of the fuel so the fireman needs to deliver fewer shovel-loads.

Then we need to determine the optimum size and shape for the briquettes, to deliver a flatter and

longer heat-release curve. As part of this, UCLan will re-run the calorimeter tests on both coals, using a higher initial heat input, to confirm the heat release curve we're aiming to match. Once all this is done, we will need to optimise the briquette manufacturing process.

As for the selling price of the fuel, this will depend on alternative use values for rapemeal and on optimising the manufacturing process, but should be competitive compared with current coal prices.

Finally, I'd like to thank the management, staff and volunteers at all the railways mentioned above for their help in developing a renewable solid fuel, which could keep the wheels turning on our steam railways. We hope some of you will continue to help us, as we take the next steps – successful trials early in 2023 could see the fuel go on sale from next Summer. **NGW**



WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
providing you various content:
brand new books, trending movies,
fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



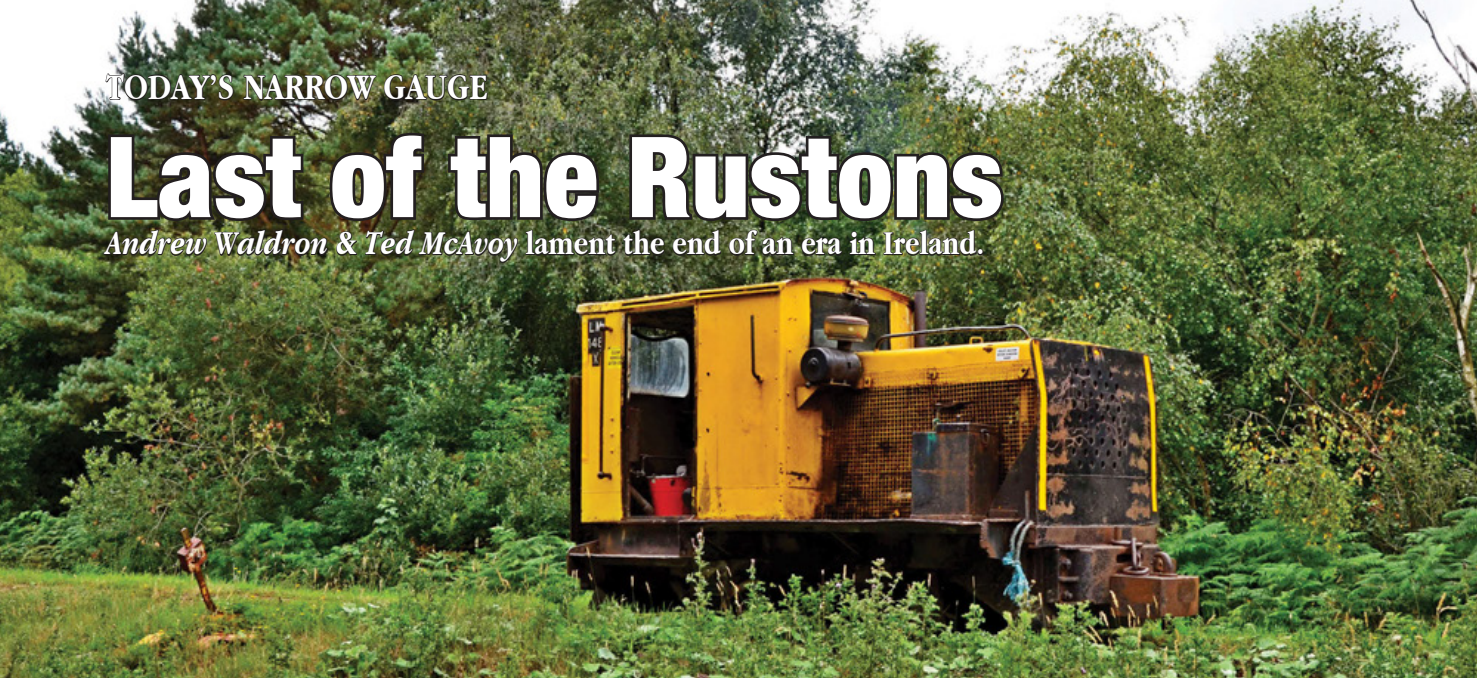
AVXLIVE ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>

Last of the Rustons

Andrew Waldron & Ted McAvoy lament the end of an era in Ireland.



The age of Ruston & Hornsby locomotives serving industry is rapidly drawing to a close as the final few eke out their last months on the Bord na Mona peat railways in Ireland. Rustons have served BnM far longer than anywhere else – the resilient Irish would patch them up, add new bodywork and even new engines to keep them running. The Ruston breed has lasted so long in Ireland because of the nature of the industry, often required to use only small and lightweight locos.

BnM purchased its first Ruston (LM 13) in 1939, followed by LM 14 to 16 in 1940. After the Second World War – or the ‘Emergency’ as it was known in neutral Ireland – Rustons were the sole new make of loco that BnM favoured. They were mostly 40 or 48hp types, although there were a few oddities such as two 13hp locos. What possessed the company to buy such a diminutive pair, only God knows (let’s be honest – they couldn’t pull the skin off a rice pudding...). A few 20hp types were also obtained, mostly to serve the few 2ft gauge systems.

Batches of new

locos were delivered in 1946-47, more in 1952 and yet more between 1954 and 1957. BnM subsequently became the last firm in the British Isles to purchase an off-the-shelf brand new Ruston, LM 263 in 1968.

So why buy Rustons? Well, the first few in the Emergency years proved their reliability and, following the end of hostilities, Ruston had locos in stock for immediate delivery, hence the mixed bag of early post-war examples. Most were used for hauling peat, mainly of the sod type, though there was a little milled peat even as far back as 1941. There were many other jobs – haulage of supplies,

“The Ruston breed has lasted so long because of the nature of the industry, often required to use only small and lightweight locos...”

service trains, rails, water for the tea stations and fuel plus tip-head duty and, wait for it, passenger trains. Yes, BNM once ran passenger operations!

The introduction of milled peat on a giant commercial scale saw a need for more powerful machines and the Rustons were steadily relegated to the more mundane duties of service use and shunting. Yet as recently as 2015, BnM was still running more than 30 Ruston locos daily.

Revolving tippers

Over the years the BnM railways have become a unique transport system. One of the most unusual features has been the revolving tippers, where wagons are emptied by turning them through 90 degrees and then back again



without the need to uncouple. The early installations used a very narrow tippler aperture, designed originally for chain creeper haulage, but only two of these are left.

A few selected Rustons were cleverly rebuilt to enable them to haul wagons through these tipplers, loco and all. The 48hp design was modified by cutting out the rear frame running board and dropping it some eight inches. A lower cab was then added, so the locos would fit inside the tippler drum. LM 148 (RH 394026, built 1956) became the prototype and 149, 150, 156, 157, 159 and 165, all also built in 1956, were similarly altered.

Tipplers requiring the use of these 'Special Locos' were at Croghan briquette plant and Rhode power station, both in County Offaly. At Croghan the turbines were worn out and demand for briquettes was falling, so it was closed in 1999 and the plant later demolished, but the single-road tippler remained.

We all thought that was the end for Croghan, but in 2004 the tippler was bought back into use to provide a backup supply for BnM operations elsewhere. Horticultural peat from new bogs could be sent to BnM packing plants and fuel peat to power stations or briquette factories.

For this a pair of low-height Rustons would be required and LM 157 and 165 were deemed the most reliable candidates. LM 157 did most of the work. Between 2010 and 2019, it became the busiest shunting loco in Ireland, handling up to 1,500 wagons weekly, running on a three-tier shift system on five and sometimes six days a week.

Above left: LM 148, the first of the Ruston locos to be given a lower cab to fit inside the BnM tipplers. Still at work, it stands near Almhain North tippler on 28th August 2022. Photo: Geoff Warcup

Above right: LM 30, with Eddie Lenahan driving, inches its way towards Gilltown tippler with yet another rake in July 2013. The driving controls were out on the running board!

Below: Drafted onto peat haulage, LM 123 is seen coming over the bog at Gilltown in September 2006.

Uncredited photos by Ted McAvoy



By 2014 its engine was at the brink of going bang. In use, it appeared to be impersonating a steam loco, as it smoked more than someone on 200 fags a day! A brand new Gardner engine was located and the loco received a thorough overhaul – new brakes, lights and new tyres. It became the very last Ruston loco at BnM to be so treated. Its pulling power is prodigious with a record of 32 loaded wagons – twice as much as a typical load for a modern heavy-haul loco. LM 157 has recently been retired, as thieves pinched the batteries and there are no spares.

When Rhode power station closed in 2002, one of the twin rotating tipplers was removed for use at Almhain North Horticultural Works in County Kildare. LM 148 went with it to the new installation and remains there on tippler duty to this day. Almhain, like other systems, is now nearing the end and LM 148 might prove be the very last Ruston in operation with BnM.

Motley bunch

At the time of writing, Gilltown Horticultural Works in County Kildare remains the other location where the Ruston still reigns supreme. Four are on site and two regularly in use, although Gilltown has only enough peat for a couple of months.

The tippler here, unlike that at Almhain, has no problem with loco height, so any locomotive with an easy access cab and low-height floor will serve. The driver/operator can drive the loco from the running board, a practice as old as the hills and reluctantly tolerated by the lady Health & Safety inspector.

Gilltown has always ranked highly with enthusiasts. It once employed the oldest original-condition RH on the entire BnM system – RH 249545 built in 1947. Painted bright yellow and numbered LM 30, it was a much-loved friend to its driver Eddie Lenahan, but one day in 2017 it threw a con rod and that was its end.

LM 69 (RH 259755 built 1948) was hurriedly drafted over from the semi-redundant Ummeras tippler.

Like LM 30 it has a mechanical gearbox, which is »





ideal for shunting at slow speed without jerking.

The current situation sees LM 69 occasionally used on fuel train duty, although it had broken down last April when we called. The gear ring had gone, but by some sheer stroke of luck a brand new spare one was found in the stores at Newbridge and sent over at lightning speed.

With LM 69 out of traffic, the works was forced to use LM 57 (RH 259203 built 1948). This loco was one of a dozen that were substantially rebuilt with very high cabs, Gardner 50hp engines and new Clarke hydraulic transmissions.

Four steps are required to reach the cab, the very high driving position being a bid to assist the horticultural division. It needed a loco that was light enough on the track, while giving a higher degree of driver comfort with good haulage capacity and visibility over the loaded wagons. LM 57 is still used on peat haulage as required; it can regularly be seen banking the big 0-4-0DH LM 240, rebuilt in 2008.

The tippler duty is now in the hands of LM 163 (RH 402178 built in 1956). This loco has led a very

eventful life. One day in 2006, one of the writers received a phone call from the Derrygreenagh works manager: "Andrew, do we have a loco numbered LM 163 and can you tell me where it is?" No kidding – it's not the first time they have contacted us to ask the whereabouts of certain locos or their identity when the LM plate has fallen off.

We had scouts out searching until LM 163 was found miles from anywhere, on some remote bog on the Derrygreenagh system in use as a rail taxi. At some point it had been on rail laying which is why it is armour-plated front and back. Tracklaying is dangerous work and the heavy steel plates are fitted to prevent either the cab or the radiator being punctured.

Surprising survivors

For more than 20 years, LM 62 (RH 259743 of 1948), rebuilt as a diesel-hydraulic at some point, was at Kinnegad in County Meath. We all thought it was done for when the works and bog closed in 2021 but, out of the blue, it was then recorded at Prosperous in July of this year on fuel train duty. The bog at Prosperous



Above left: LM 69 stands at the ready with the Gilltown fuel train on 27th April 2022. Photo: Sean Cain

Above: LM 163 on the Gilltown shunt, 25th April 2022. The loco is armour-plated front and back to prevent damage while tracklaying.

Below: One of a dozen Rustons rebuilt with very high cabs, LM 57 is shunting the Gilltown tippler on 20th April 2022. Both photos: Paul Rafferty

had closed in May, the only task left to lift the track and return the site to nature. It was still hard at work in September and it remains to be seen whether it will move to pastures new.

Gilltown's Ruston LM 57 was also used at Prosperous, but was then swapped with LM 123 (RH 379925 of 1954). This had once been a very long-term resident at Gilltown, where it was the dedicated track loco. Back in 1994, LM 123 was sent far away to the TAE system on the plains of County Mayo. Here in later years it was used for the Bellacorrick Bog tours, wearing the livery once used by the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway buses.

It was one of the band of rebuilt high-cab, Clarke-transmission locos, but now sports a rather different cab. This came about in County Mayo when someone tried to drive it out of the workshop without fully opening the roller shutter door. Hence smash bang, wallop, thud and part of the cab was torn off. In late July LM 123 was sent out to help lift the track at Prosperous, but at the time of writing it is sadly laid up again.

Until recently the oldest Ruston still in active service was LM 41 (252252 built in 1947). It is based at Derrygreenagh Works in County Offaly, where the infamous BnM machinery auctions are taking place. Locomotives and wagons held in the rows of redundant items need to be moved onto hard-standing for each auction. This was being done by LM 41, but it could only be started using two bits of welding wire to link battery and starter. Not surprisingly it has now been replaced by one of the new-build BnM diesel-hydraulic locos.

So, the end is near. Only LM 57, 62, 69, 148 and 163 remain active. The last five Ruston & Hornsby locos working in industry have but a few more months left before the curtain falls on another chapter in the amazing BnM story. **NGW**



Want to model in O scale but don't have the space?
Narrow gauge solves the problem!



The 7mm Narrow Gauge Association provides help and advice,
bi-monthly full colour magazine, discount on all Association
purchases and much more. For more information, go to:

www.7mmnga.org.uk

**DUNDAS
MODELS**

MILLIE STREET KIRKCALDY
FIFE SCOTLAND KY1 2NL
Telephone: 01592 640896
Website: www.dundasmodels.co.uk
Email: sales@dundasmodels.co.uk

Visit our Illustrated Website to see the
complete range of Dundas Models
009 Kits and the products from 40
other 009 and NG Suppliers. A vast
and varied selection of Narrow Gauge
Products, RTR, Kits, Peco Track,
Buildings, Accessories & Books.
All at competitive prices.



DMT12 Talylyn Railway Gunpowder Van

£2.00 for our 009 Catalogue (post free) UK Post & Packing £3.00 per order.
Overseas Postage at cost (VAT deducted from Overseas Orders).



ADVERTISERS' INDEX

APEDALE VALLEY LIGHT RAILWAY	45
AMERTON RAILWAY	17
BERWYN STEEL FABRICATIONS	4
DIGITRAINS	11
DMG TECHNICAL	17
DUNDAS MODELS	39
ISLE OF MAN RAILWAYS	17
JAMES GREEN	51
JONES SPRINGS	17
MAINLINE & MARITIME	2
MERIDIENNE EXHIBITIONS	39
NIGEL WELBOURN	45
RAILS OF SHEFFIELD	52
THE 7MM NARROW GAUGE ASSOCIATION	39
THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY	45

TO ADVERTISE HERE CALL BEV
ON 01778 392055

THE MODEL RAIL SHOW FOR LARGER GAUGES

MIDLANDS GARDEN RAIL SHOW

O GAUGE, G SCALE, GAUGE 1, 16MM & MORE...



Sponsored by
**ENGINEERING
in Miniature** **GARDEN
Rail**

**SATURDAY 11th &
SUNDAY 12th MARCH 2023**

Open 10am – 4pm Daily

**WARWICKSHIRE
EVENT CENTRE**



A Leading Garden Railway Exhibition



Nearly 35 leading suppliers to
help you create your dream
garden railway including
locomotives, rolling stock,
track and accessories.

Admire up to 15 amazing
Layouts and Club Displays.

Full restaurant facilities.
FREE car parking for over 2,000 cars.

www.midlandsgardenrailshow.co.uk

BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW

Tickets can be purchased in advance via our
website to guarantee entry to the show.

We plan to have tickets available to purchase on
the day of your visit also from the ticket office.

TICKET PRICES

£10.00 Adult
£9.50 Senior Citizen (65+ yrs)
£4.50 Child (5-14 yrs)

Meridienne Exhibitions cannot process any
telephone bookings. If you have event specific
enquiries, please call 01926 614101.

Meridienne Exhibitions Ltd will continue to
monitor and act on advice from the Government.
Please make sure you visit our website for the
latest information prior to your visit.

f Meridienne Exhibitions LTD

Inspiration
for planning
your garden
railway - see
live steam,
gas and
coal fired
locomotives.



Back at the National

The return of the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition, and with plenty of small-scale narrow gauge to enjoy, was not a moment too soon for *Andrew Charman*.



There were a lot of 009 Quarry Hunslets on layouts at the show, and by no means all of them Bachmann ones... This was on the delightful 'Woodbury Wharf' by Richard Holder, a layout that started life as a smaller, triangular entry to the Dave Brewer Challenge at the much-missed Expo Narrow Gauge show.

Three years is a long time to go without a signature model railway show, especially one as big as the Warley National, which traditionally takes over Hall 5 of Birmingham's National

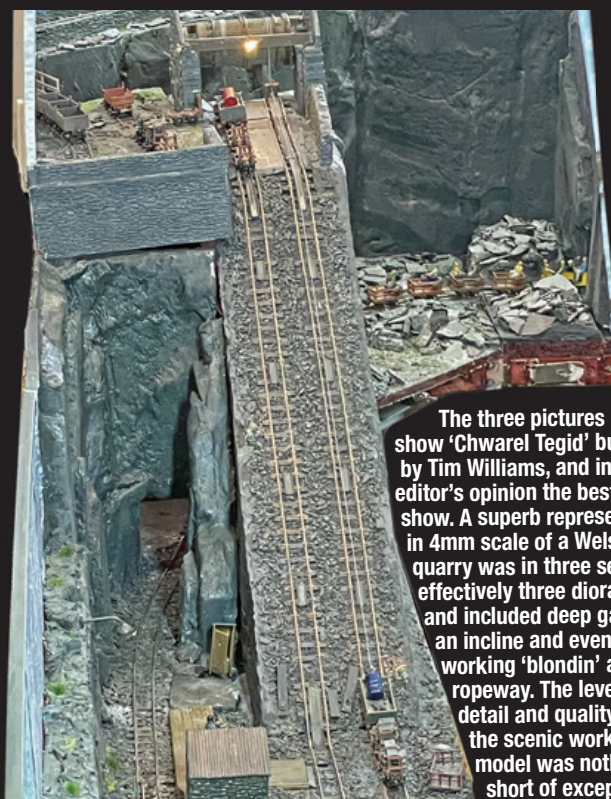
Exhibition Centre to provide one last end-of-year treat for the model enthusiast before all the festive chaos kicks in.

Thankfully after the 2020 and '21 events fell victim to the menace of Covid

and its aftermath, the show returned this year, on the 26th-27th November.

Yes it was a slightly smaller show than we've been used to in previous years with some notable absentees – no large-scale narrow gauge modelling for example, and while there was an impressive full-size centrepiece in the form of under construction new-build British Railways Standard Class 3 loco 82045, there were no narrow gauge locomotives on show too, as there have been in the past – though one could find the 15-inch gauge 'Sutton Belle' on a stand promoting a revival project for the former Midlands miniature line (see the UK News pages for more details).

What there was, however, was the usual narrow gauge modelling enclave in one



The three pictures here show 'Chwarel Tegid' built by Tim Williams, and in our editor's opinion the best in show. A superb representation in 4mm scale of a Welsh slate quarry was in three sections, effectively three dioramas, and included deep galleries, an incline and even a working 'blondin' aerial ropeway. The level of detail and quality of the scenic work on this model was nothing short of exceptional.

Right: Attractive little 009 diorama, part of a series created by the 'Loco Ladies', stars of *The Great Model Railway Challenge* TV series.

Below Right: 'Ridge Lane' by Ben Powell, a 4mm scale layout described as being "an innocuous part of the countryside". Again, the attention to detail was a notable feature of this layout.

Bottom: Seeing double? This novel idea, which saw Jim Finlayson build two layouts in H0m scale of the same scene, but one set in 1913 and the other in 2013, certainly impressed onlookers and earned Jim a Trophy.

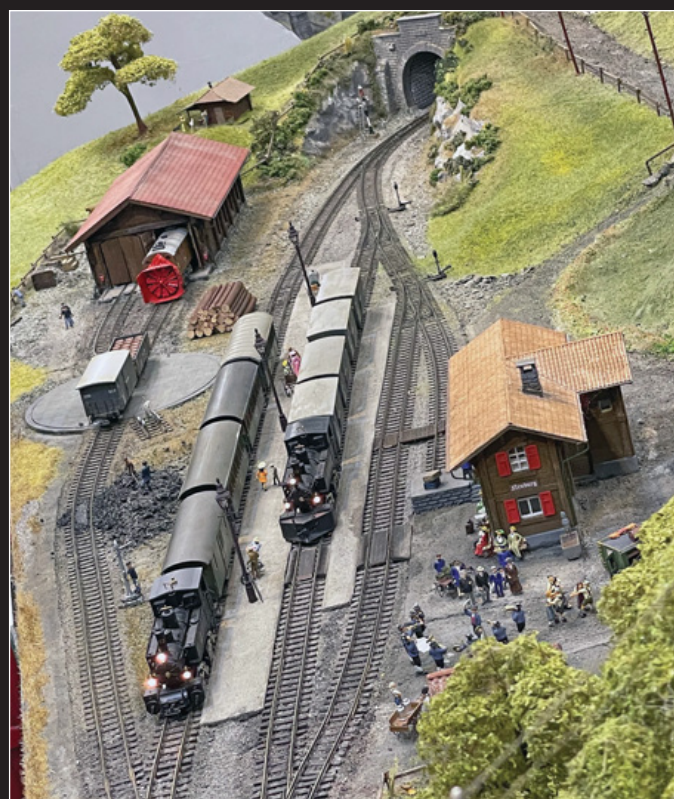
All photos: Andrew Charman

corner of the hall, with we counted around 10 or more very high quality layouts mostly in the popular scales of 009 and 0-16.5, and plenty of Societies and trade suppliers in support.

Growing influence

Wandering elsewhere around the show it was clear that narrow gauge is growing in influence, not least at Bachmann UK's huge stand which not only had the delights we detail on the following pages on show, but also finished examples of the long-awaited Quarry Hunslets – talk about small (well tiny) objects of delight...

On this spread we illustrate a few of the many highlights of a very enjoyable show (especially for our editor, shopping for a *NGW* project layout – more to follow...). In these difficult times we hope the return of the National proved as successful for the organisers and traders as it was enjoyable for the visitors – we need our end-of-season day out and hope to be heading back to Birmingham this time next year... **NGW**



Penrhyn on the Slate

Andrew Charman takes a close look at Bachmann's latest delight for 009 scale, the Penrhyn Hunslet 0-4-0ST.



For a second successive year Bachmann has produced a very significant surprise early Christmas present for those modellers working in 009 – 4mm scale on 9mm gauge track. This time last year we were marvelling at the arrival of a clutch of Ffestiniog Railway double-Fairlie locomotives – this year the Ffestiniog theme continues, well sort of, with two more favourite locos from the line, the Hunslets 'Linda' and 'Blanche'.

Sort of? Yes, because the two are modelled, along with their class-mate 'Charles', in their pre-FR format – as all three were built originally as 0-4-0STs for the railway connecting the giant Penrhyn Quarry to the sea at Port Penrhyn – Charles arrived first in 1882 and Linda and Blanche followed in 1893.

The latter pair were subsequently acquired by the Ffestiniog Railway and have since become core members of the operating fleet – both are now 2-4-0Ts and run with tenders. Charles remains at its original home, displayed in the Penrhyn Castle museum in good condition.

The trio of models are presented at various stages in their Penrhyn career – Blanche is modelled in early lined-black livery with a riveted saddle tank, Charles in the later livery but with the square spectacle glasses that differentiated the loco from its younger sisters, and Linda in an 'aged' livery from towards the end of its Penrhyn life, and with the later welded saddle tank. It was in this form that the

Standard of detail (above and right) from injector pipework to livery is very impressive and the model's performance matches its looks.

Model comes in a trio of versions, the earlier pair shown at facing page, top.



full-size loco first ran on the Ffestiniog in July 1962.

We were going to comment that the instruction sheet includes details of how to remove the pony truck, and an image clearly showing a connection to a tender, so clearly later FR versions are planned. And then just before we went to press we got another press release – see over the page...

Technical details

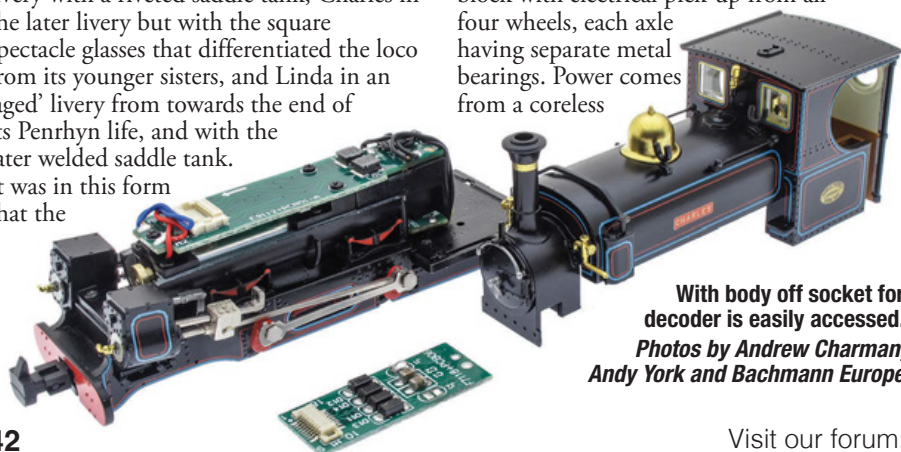
The models feature a diecast metal chassis block with electrical pick-up from all four wheels, each axle having separate metal bearings. Power comes from a coreless

motor with a tiny brass flywheel, and the models are of course DCC ready with a Next 18 decoder socket mounted on top of the circuit board. Each also comes with a pre-fitted sound speaker while versions are also available with sound already fitted.

The locos are designed to traverse curves down to 'first' radius – which is 228.6mm or 9 inches in old money. Standard 009 couplings are fitted while a hook and loop version is also supplied so you can close-couple locos together for double heading.

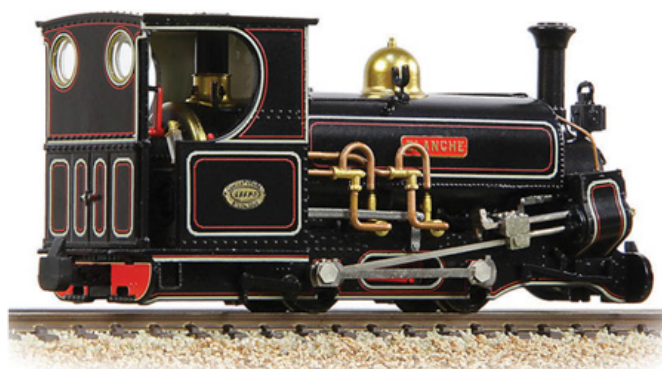
We were pleased that the *NGW* review sample proved to be of Linda in the late, 'well-used' livery and on first opening the box the model looks so 'right' – from an age before the heavily polished gleaming locos we are used to in preservation today. It also looks tiny! The model measures just 67mm from front to rear buffer beams.

All of which makes the level of detail, well nothing short of stunning. All the riveting on the frames, the cab and cylinder blocks; the intricate pipework of the injectors; the excellent paintwork including quite the most realistic brass dome this reviewer has seen; fine printed nameplates



With body off socket for decoder is easily accessed.

Photos by Andrew Charman, Andy York and Bachmann Europe



with etched versions included in the pack.

What levels this detail goes to, however, can only be revealed with a magnifying glass. The lining, on the cylinders especially, is stepped on the corners, because it was on the real thing – we are talking tiny fractions of a millimetre here...

The cab interior is a work of art. One could criticise the slightly thick interior fixing for the rear spectacles, but no-one will ever notice it on a layout, while they will the detail of the controls, and the opening firebox door.

Sorry? Yes you can hinge the firebox door open and the reason becomes clear

once you try the model on a track – it is the first of Bachmann's narrow gauge range to be fitted with firebox lighting, and it looks great, especially in lower light with faint orange and glow flicker visible as the loco moves along.

Smooth and potent

Bachmann mastered running quality some time ago and in operation the model is smooth and silent (unless one has sound fitted of course). The plentiful metal used in its construction adds weight and good pulling power – our first tests displayed plenty of ability to move trains of many vehicles along with, once suitably run-in, excellent slow-speed running – coupled it must be said with the ability to produce a

very not narrow-gauge like turn of speed!

In short, these are superb models, which yet again boost the appeal of 009 that Bachmann especially has done so much to widen already. With plenty of suitable rolling stock – especially slate wagons – already available on both the ready-to-run and kit market, building a Penrhyn or early preservation Ffestiniog-themed layout will be easy. But these locos will also look just as good on any layout... **NGW**

Produced by Bachmann Europe

Tel: 01455 245 577

E-mail: customer.services@bachmann-europe.co.uk

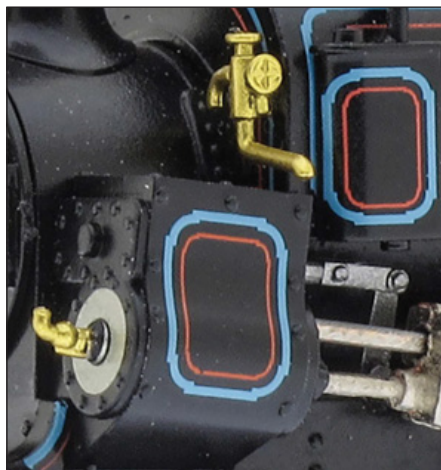
Web: www.bachmann.co.uk

Recommended price £189.95 DCC ready ('Linda' £199.95), £289.95 Sound Fitted



Above: Firebox glow, visible with the hinged firehole door open (!) is a first in the Bachmann narrow gauge range.

Below: Note the prototypically correct step on the corners of the lining – though to see it on the model you will need a magnifying glass...



NGW is building a 009 layout...

■ Eagle-eyed readers will no doubt have spotted that in a couple of the pictures on this spread our review locomotive is displayed on a 009 layout in the early stages of building. Meet the **NGW** project layout!

We are building the layout for two reasons – firstly with the increasing number of excellent ready-to-run model locos and stock arriving for review, we need somewhere in-house to properly test them. We are probably running out of goodwill amongst 009 modelling friends as we turn up with a delightful new release pleading to try it out on the layout they have in some cases spent years of effort building, run the model for an hour or so then take it away again!

Secondly, and more importantly, with the utter explosion of ready-to-run British-outline 009 models in the last few years, it's never been easier to build for oneself a layout that can take not a lot of time to get to an operating state but can also provide potentially years of pleasure.

Therefore we intend to serialise the building of our layout in the pages of **NGW**, showing readers how it can be done (and how not to do it, we will document our mistakes...) and hopefully encouraging you to do the same.

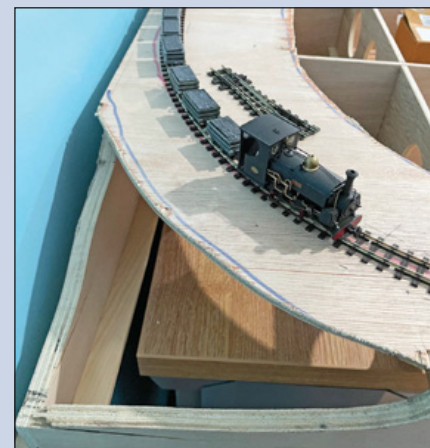
The Ed has form in 009 – before being diverted into garden railways he modelled in the scale very many years ago as a young narrow gauge fan, when the effort

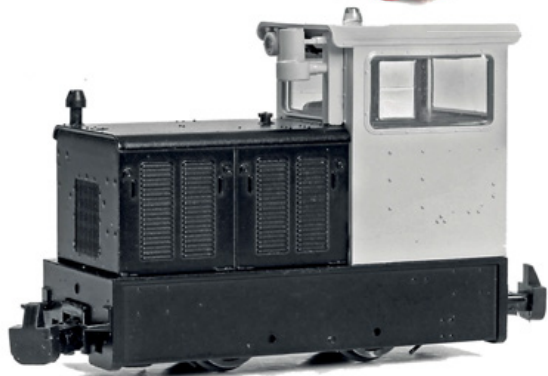
required was very different to today. And he has enthusiastically launched into building our new layout.

More details will be in the first episode of our new series, in the next issue of **NGW**, but in short it will be a two-level layout with the bottom level mainly functioning as a test track, connected to the upper level by a suitably testing gradient. The upper, scenic level will be built to a slate quarry theme, with a twist...

We also intend to control our layout with DCC – so many models are being offered DCC-ready now, we need to be able to test their capabilities properly.

So, come back next time and join us on our model adventure.





■ As soon as Bachmann unveiled its three 009 models of the Penrhyn Quarry Hunslet 0-4-OSTs, reviewed on the previous pages, we all started speculating as to how long it would be before the range was expanded with later, Ffestiniog Railway-era versions of 'Linda' and 'Blanche', and it turns out we didn't have to wait too long... Arriving in shops for Christmas week is this version of Linda as it ran on the Ffestiniog between 1964 and 1970 – with a tender added but before it gained a pony truck converting the loco to the 2-4-0T we all know today.

Mechanically exactly as the Penrhyn versions described in our review, the model has a recommended price of £214.95 in standard format or £314.95 with sound fitted. And as mentioned it was set to arrive in shops just in time to be a Christmas present for some lucky modellers...

So will we get the 2-4-0 version of today's FR? Bachmann hasn't said a definite yes yet, but we reckon it's bound to happen – the Penrhyn instruction sheet includes details of how to remove the pony truck...

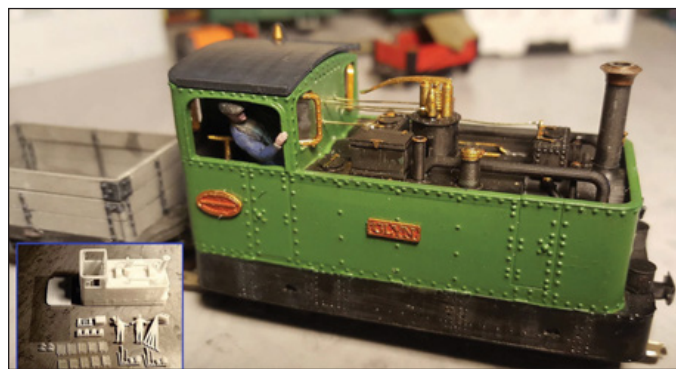
Bachmann's Happy New Year for 009 modellers

We make no apologies for this issue's modelling pages being rather Bachmann-heavy – there is so much good new 009-scale narrow gauge stuff coming out of this firm's Leicestershire works right now.

Visitors to the Warley National Model Railway Show in Birmingham at the end of November were able to see latest progress on the Ashover bogie carriage and selection of RNAD wagons, which we illustrated back in *NGW* 169, as well as the Baguley Drewry diesel, modelled on the examples working today on the Brecon and Vale of Rheidol lines. We reckon both the carriage and the diesel are 'generic' enough to find a home on many a layout.

As if that was not enough, at the same time as the reveal of the Penrhyn Hunslets Bachmann's Scenecraft structure range unveiled ready-built examples of the Ffestiniog Railway's Porthmadog Harbour station. Three separate models are available, of the booking hall, main hall and of the gents and office, and they can be purchased with either red or green doors and windowframes.

What, we hear you ask, of the quarry Hunslets? Well they've finally started arriving in shops! 'Britomart' has appeared first, and early purchasers seem well pleased with what is the tiniest of 009 models. *NGW* has been promised a quarry Hunslet for review in due course so watch this space...



Resin models from Brooks

New on the 009 scene is Brooks 3D Models, offering examples in resin of a number of useful prototypes. A lifelong narrow gauge enthusiast, Nigel Brooks tells us he started offering designs for 3D printed resin models around a year ago.

Initially the range focused on Ffestiniog and Tallyllyn slate wagons but has since expanded to include four locos – the Glyn Valley Tramway Beyer, Peacock 'Glyn', a Bagnall contractor's loco, steam tram and an RNAD Baguley diesel. Most recently Welshpool & Llanfair cattle and goods vans have joined the range.

Nigel supplies suitable chassis to power the locos, as well as dummy chassis options should one want to build a model for static display. Full details of these inexpensive kits are on the website and *NGW* should be reviewing an example in a forthcoming issue.

Produced by Brooks 3D Models Web: www.brooks3dmodels.com



Produced by Bachmann Europe
Tel: 01455 245 577
E-mail: customer.services@bachmann-europe.co.uk
Web: www.bachmann.co.uk

INTERESTED IN NARROW GAUGE AND MINIATURE RAILWAYS?



Join the Narrow Gauge Railway Society today!

- 12 Magazines annually covering the best in all aspects of British and Overseas Narrow Gauge and Miniature Railways including News and Historical, Industrial, Private, and Preservation articles
- Exclusive visits to private railways
- Joining pack with back numbers
- Society library including photo and video sections

For membership and further information please: see our website or contact:

NRGS Membership Secretary,
4 Barnside Way, Moulton,
Cheshire, CW9 8PT
Email: membership@ngrs.org

UK membership £24 per year
Overseas £40 per year

www.ngrs.org



NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY

Serving the narrow gauge world since 1951

Apedale Valley Light Railway



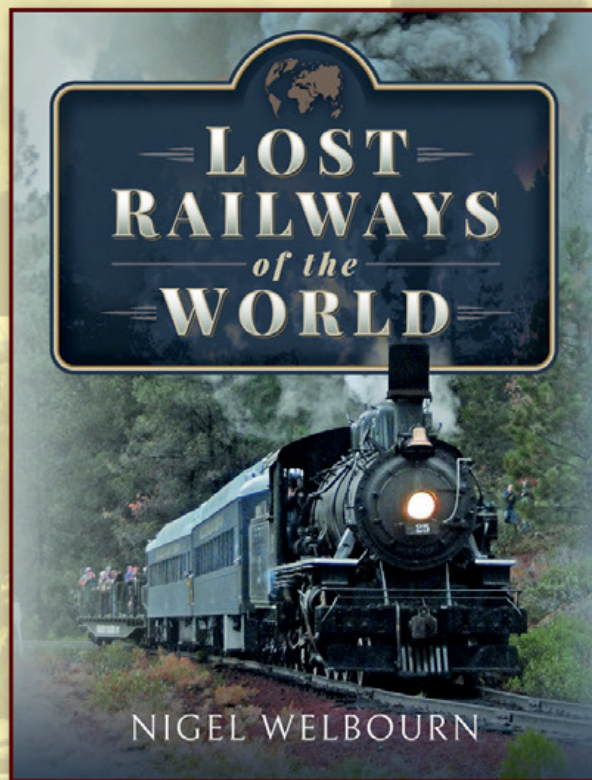
2'0" gauge in North Staffordshire.
Trains from start of April to October.

Events through the year.
New members and volunteers
always welcome!

www.avlr.org.uk



PEN & SWORD BOOKS



To some the book will be an informative source of information, to others it is written in a way that highlights the most amazing lost railways in the world, but either way it is a fascinating and unique book, and includes 300 colour illustrations.

20% DISCOUNT

~~RRP: £40.00~~

NOW: £32.00!

ISBN: 9781399096171 • Hardback

TO ORDER CALL AND QUOTE
CODE **LROTW20** TO RECEIVE
YOUR **20% DISCOUNT**

01226 734222

or order online

www.pen-and-sword.co.uk



PEN & SWORD BOOKS LTD

The Sandstone Steam Railway - the Story Continues

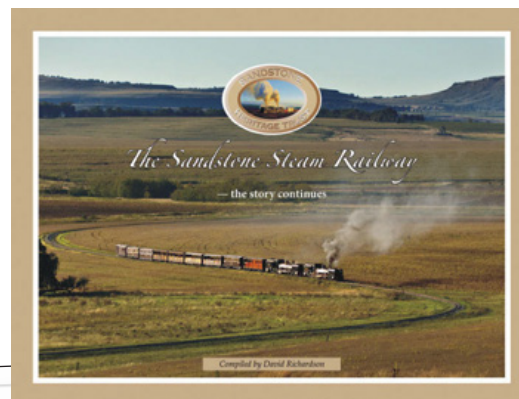
David Richardson

■ The remarkable Sandstone Steam Railway in South Africa has many times featured in *NGW*. Back in 2005 its instigator Wilfred Mole outlined in our pages how in seven years it had built up the world's largest collection of 2ft gauge locomotives totalling 28 steam and 21 diesels, many actively running over 17km of railway.

Your reviewer visited that year, commenting: 'Sandstone is one of the world's premier locations for photographing the 2ft gauge. It has the beguiling combination of a demanding railway, locomotives that are attractively restored without being over-pristine, a magnificent landscape and the exceptional quality of South African light. What more could you want?'

In 2006 a relatively modest book celebrated the railway's achievements, ending with the words that it was 'almost certainly only the first chapter in what is an ongoing story'. It has been a long wait but at last comes this superb large-format hardback with 220 pages and more than 500 colour photos. It embraces each 2ft gauge steam loco – now 39 in total, 29 fully restored – as well as 3ft 6in gauge engines that are statically displayed. Special attention is given to Seb's Railway, created for younger visitors and showcasing smaller engines that had seen limited use on the main line.

In a fast-changing world the point is firmly made that the Sandstone Steam Railway falls within the Heritage Division of a much larger 7500-hectare agricultural estate. As such, it has to be self-sufficient with priority given to paying back the estate for 25 years of funding support. Self-catering cottages and 'old-time' dining cars at the main station are recent developments and there is acceptance that many of the locomotives may now never be restored. Yet overall there is optimism that Sandstone will remain successful as a private operation, unlike the bleak and broader picture for preservation and rail tourism in South Africa. *DJ*



Published by Sandstone Heritage Trust
ISBN 978-0-620-95820-2
Web: www.sandstone-estates.com
£29 inc post

A Year in the Life of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways 2022 (BluRay/DVD)

■ A tradition of this time of year is the arrival at *NGW* Towers of two video productions, firstly the magnum opus that is the round-up of another busy and yes challenging FF&WHR year. Edited as ever by John Wooden, this year's production runs to some 5hrs 20min, on one BluRay or a stack of DVDs!

The programme again combines the year's *Moving Pictures* video newsletters in one place to form a comprehensive document of activities across the two railways. A major appeal of this series is that while all the major events, special trains and such are covered extensively (the October Bygones festival for example getting its own section) you also get all of the behind-the-scenes activities, varying from an in-depth tour of the new heritage wagon shed which makes you realise just how many historic artifacts the railways own, to coal trials on Garratts and a tour of the work being done to restore South African 2-8-2 loco no 134 for the WHR.

You of course get the production quality we are used to, high-definition video, superb sound and crucially skilled choices of angles (including lots of drone footage) by the operators, in what is an excellent comprehensive overview of the FF&WHR year. *AC*



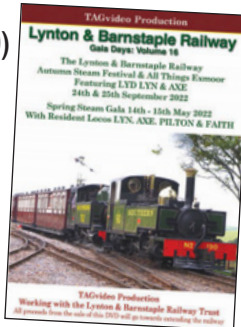
Published by Festiniog & Welsh Highland Railways, Tel: 01766 516034.
Web: www.festrail.co.uk/shop Price £25.00 (DVD or BluRay) including post

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Gala Days Vol 16 (DVD)

■ The other traditional component of the *NGW* festive post is Trevor Garnham's production on the latest Gala at the Lynton & Barnstaple, as ever raising funds for extension of the railway. This year's Autumn Gala featured new-build Manning Wardle 2-6-2T 'Lyd' and Baldwin 2-4-2T 'Lyn' running together and with the four restored and oh-so correct carriages really giving a flavour of how the L&B once was and what it can be in the future.

Regular viewers of Trevor's discs will know what to expect, full coverage of the event from setup day on the Friday to the end of the action on Sunday night, and including everything that went on, right down to the opening of the new 16mm scale garden railway (using some very out-of-scale scissors...).

Adding a nice extra this time are some snippets of black-and-white footage from the 'old days' pre-1935, while the Spring Gala, which did not get its own disc this year, is also covered. As ever it's an enjoyable way to while away a couple of hours. *AC*



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

Czech & Slovak Railways

Keith Fender

■ This compact 98-page softback details the changes that have taken place on the railways of the two Eastern European nations since they emerged from the former Czechoslovakia in 1993.

While the majority of the book focuses on the standard gauge, the narrow gauge gets its own chapter (as well as featuring in the chapter on preservation) focusing on what the author describes as the "mixed fortunes" of a number of lines of equally varying gauges from 2ft up to metre. Of none is this more true than the JHMD, largest narrow gauge system in the Czech Republic, its future described as "uncertain" in the book and as *NGW* has been reporting very recently now under serious threat.

A plus feature of the entire book is the readable but informative text and very many photos, all well reproduced in colour. *AC*



Published by Key Publishing
ISBN 978-1-80282-029-4
Web: www.keypublishing.com Price: £15.99



Earlier electric on the rack

Subsequent research has revealed that I was incorrect to state in my article on the Wendelsteinbahn in *NGW* 171 that the three locomotives delivered in 1911 were the first electric rack locomotives built by Esslingen, since the company had begun supplying the first of 12 six-coupled electric rack and adhesion locomotives to the Usui pass railway in Japan in 1910.

I was also wrong to suggest in the feature that the Esslingen locos built for the Wendelsteinbahn were a departure from their SLM counterparts by being of a rack and adhesion format. SLM had in fact already built a few such electric locos (type HGe) prior to this.

Keith Chester

Artist identified

In response to the letter 'Narrow gauge art' in *NGW* 171, I can confirm that the artist was the late Joe Crowfoot – he passed away some years ago now.

Many of his paintings were reproduced as greetings cards and as postcards. The one on the last issue's *Viewpoint* page, 'Blyth at Blythburgh', is number one of a series of 18 postcards of the Southwold Railway which were available until recently. It appears to show 'Blyth' in the Great Eastern Blue livery which adorns the Trust's replica loco.

*John Ridgway
Southwold Railway Trust*

Memories of the JHMD

News of financial troubles suspending services on the 760mm JHMD in the Czech Republic (*NGW* 171) reminded me of adventures I experienced there a few years ago. Arriving at Jindřichuv Hradec in late October 2017 I was just in time to catch the afternoon service on the line to Obratan. The train meandered through pleasant countryside calling at small towns and villages and becoming progressively more crowded on its return journey.

The next day the weather changed and a blustery morning saw me board the small train heading for Nova Bystrice through woods and fields. I was favoured with an invitation to ride in the cab and 'This is the life' came to mind.

We never made it, however, as the winds blew stronger and the small crew had to climb down and clear the way of fallen branches, making slower and slower progress. The eventual decision to return whence we came was a disappointment.

The storm grew angrily and the trees falling onto the line were bigger.

We were caught between these obstructions and, after an hour or two, were relieved to see the local fire brigade armed with saws clearing the way for us. We limped into Jindřichuv Hradec and heard about the storm damage affecting the south of the country.

My holiday plans forced me to leave by the 'ordinary' train for Brno the next morning. But I was determined to return and the following September stopped off once again at the JHMD station to enjoy an uninterrupted return journey to Nova Bystrice.

I hope others are able to travel on this wonderful railway in the future.

Roger Blackmore

Not so much spud mileage

I regret that there is an error in my article about the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway in *NGW* 171. The total route length of the county's potato railways is generally accepted as being 140 miles, spread amongst 50 locations, and not 400 miles as I wrote in the feature.

The locations are listed in detail in Stewart E Squires's excellent book *The Lincolnshire Potato Railways* published by the Oakwood Press (ISBN 9780853616467). This book is an invaluable source for anyone wishing to learn more about these fascinating lines.

James Waite

Errata...

■ A couple of our learned correspondents making errors this month, as detailed above, does not excuse the editor from his latest slip-ups, both of which fall into the silly variety!

Firstly Steve Lawrence is not the only reader to point out that in issue 171 we describe Alan Keef Ltd, featured in this issue, as being in Ross-on-Wye, mid Wales. "Their workshops are in Lea, a village some five miles to the east of Ross-on Wye,



*"After
an hour
or two
we were
relieved
to see the
local fire
brigade
armed
with saws
clearing
the way
for us..."*

Above right: More details on the enigmatic author of this image, see the letter from John Ridgway.

Below: Well they do look alike these days... our Editor has had some difficulty with identifying W&LLR locos....
Photo: W&LLR

both of which sit proudly in Herefordshire, England, clearly not mid Wales" Steve says.

While the firm's location is often given as Ross-on-Wye, being the nearest town of any significance to Lea, they are indeed both in England, an unforgivable error that the Ed, a mid Wales resident, keeps making...

Even worse is the *faux pas* pointed out by reader and regular correspondent John Organ, who reveals that our Editor cannot tell apart the locos on the line he is a Trustee of!

In issue 170 Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl' is described as sister loco 'The Countess'. In his defence, the editor points out that since The Earl returned from overhaul in Great Western Railway livery the two have looked very similar – while glossing over the fact that 'The Countess' is currently out of service with an expired boiler ticket...

John adds that he delayed pointing out the error because he assumed many others would – actually John, you were the only one! Editor's memo to self – must do better...

Letters on narrow gauge subject matter for potential publication on this page are always welcome – send by email to editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk or by post to 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys SY21 0BD



What happened to the snipers?

A cautionary tale from *Michael Chapman...*

If you are familiar with the internet-based auction site, eBay, you'll likely also be aware of snipers. They can be really irritating; you find the item you want, place your bid, and then you excitedly watch as the clock counts down. Seconds before the auction ends, and you're on the brink of acquiring the item, suddenly someone jumps in at the last minute and 'snipes' – out-bids you...

I am very fortunate to have been to Melbourne in Australia on a number of occasions and to have visited the 2ft 6in gauge Puffing Billy Railway, which is twinned with the Talyllyn Railway and associated with the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, both in Wales.

On my most recent visit to Melbourne, I was 'enjoying' (ahem!) the local wine whilst browsing the narrow-gauge items on the Australian version of eBay. Then I came across something that made me sit up and take notice; a brass plate from the side-tank of an NA class 2-6-2T 'Puffing Billy'.

The description said the plate was 46cm in length, by 27cm wide and 1.2cm thick; made from brass and weighed 8.6kg – so quite heavy.

The plate is a replica of one carried by the NA class locomotive 3A and is mounted on a piece of hardboard 45cm x 62cm. There are two shades of green on the hardboard – the dominant lighter green is thought to be near to the original Baldwin colour, the darker shade is presumed to be for trim with the two, delineated by a thin white line.

The seller said he could not guarantee these were the actual colours; however, the above information was told to him by the original owner of the plate; an elderly Victorian Railways fitter called Mort Clark.

Unplanned victory

So, slightly lubricated by the wine I thought "I'm having that" and a bid was duly placed. Later, and in a more sober state I logged back into eBay. I assumed an Australian railfan would have spotted the plate and would outbid me, or snipe at the last minute. The clock clicked down as the auction drew to a close. Come on, someone outbid me... where are the snipers?

I won and the invoice arrived. Oh!

Communication with the seller commenced about postage and shipping to the UK. The parcel weighed nearly 10kg so would be expensive to send back home.

Options were considered including a trip on the Victorian Metro to see the seller in person and collect the item. In the end, and in a scene reminiscent from *Brief Encounter*, we met at the clock at Southern Cross Station in Melbourne and the deal was done. It turned out the seller was the former Vice President of the Puffing Billy Preservation Society. We could have chatted for ages but we both had our respective trains to catch.

A weighty issue

Back at the digs in Melbourne the enormity and the weight of the purchase became apparent; it filled the suitcase! Items had to be moved to the hand-luggage and bags weighed several times. The case was perilously close to the 30kg allowed by the airline.

Once I was safely back in the UK the next question was – what to do with the 3A plate? It's a bit big for the wall and I'm not sure my wall would take the weight.

As a result the plate has now been placed on loan to Puffing Billy's twin; the Talyllyn Railway and should go on display at the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn very soon.

Let this tale be a warning; don't go on eBay whilst under the influence and you can't always rely on snipers to out-bid you!



Success on a plate – the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum's Keith Theobald receives the Puffing Billy replica plate on loan from Michael Chapman (right).
Photo: TR

From a different age...

■ The intriguing image below was sent in by regular *NGW* correspondent **Michael Farr** from what he describes as his "small collection". It may look to be of a standard gauge line and indeed the Jersey Railway started life on standard gauge, but by the time this photo was taken was in its final years running to 3ft 6in gauge.

Michael tells us; "The photo appeared in a British Railways staff magazine that I had been given on my explorations of station booking offices and signal boxes. I was still at school – I began work in 1955 – so you can imagine I've had the picture a long time. It was published with a reader's letter from, if my memory is correct, a Mr H. Murgatroyd of Liverpool.

"He was obviously impressed with the letter I wrote as a schoolboy and sent me the actual negative which I had made into a slide some time later. I think he reckoned it was taken in 1935."

There were actually two Jersey Railways – this was the western one, not to be confused with the standard-gauge Jersey Eastern Railway that closed in 1929. The western line was built as a 3¾-mile long standard gauge line in 1870, running across the bottom of the island from St. Helier to St. Aubin. It was converted to 3ft 6in in 1883 and incorporated a quarry line linking it to La Corbière, a total length of 7¾ miles.

A significant decline in traffic during the First World War saw the introduction of Sentinel-Cammell railcars such as pictured here, and in 1925 the line was very busy, operating 32 trains in each direction daily and carrying close to 1.1 million passengers. But then like many lines bus and road competition soon hit traffic levels and when a fire in the carriage shed destroyed 16 vehicles in 1936, it signalled the end of the line.

Interestingly German forces occupying Germany in 1940 rebuilt much of the line to metre-gauge, but it was quickly dismantled by liberating Allied troops in 1945. A revival of 3½ miles between St. Aubin and La Corbière was mooted in 2012, with a 2ft gauge steam loco reputedly part of the plans, but nothing came of it.



That was the year that this happened...

A bumper winter episode recalling narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy...

From 60 years ago

Welshpool & Llanfair Railway (2ft 6in gauge)

On January 5th one of the line's steam locomotives is reported to have skidded on hard packed snow, and derailed on one of the level crossings across the line, successfully blocking the road. The job of rerailing the loco was not finally completed until the following evening. (NGN, January 1963)

This was of course in the middle of the 'Big Freeze' that became one of the coldest UK winters on record – just a week before the incident a blizzard had swept across South West England and Wales, with drifts some 20ft deep in places. As the photo below from the W&LLR archive shows, the incident appears to have occurred at Cyfronydd – we think the loco is 'The Earl'. Note the member of the local constabulary no doubt giving the volunteers the benefit of his advice...



Photo: W&LLR Archive

Welsh Highland Railway (2ft gauge)

The WHRPS has received support in principle of their plan to reopen part of the line, starting with the Beddgelert – Nantmor section. The approval is subject to suitable car-parking arrangements being made, and that relaying of the line should not hinder road improvements planned for the area. The Society is reported to be planning to start tracklaying in the summer. (NGN, January 1963)

Major optimism in the depths of a particularly cold winter, but of course it was to be short-lived. Track was stored at Beddgelert but no new tracklaying took place for another four decades...

From 50 years ago

R P Morris, Longfield, Kent (2ft gauge)

The 'remains' of 'Margaret', Bagnall 1445 of 1895, an 0-4-0ST, arrived at Longfield on 2nd January. Consisting of little more than the bare frame and cab surround, this 'locomotive' was transported from J.W. Greaves & Sons, Llechwedd Slate Mines, Merioneth, by Alan Keef. It was accommodated at Cote Farm, Oxon over the Christmas period and was conveyed together with the wooden-sided LNWR Earlstown-built coal wagon, also from Greaves. (NGN, February 1973)

A mystery! Margaret and her sister loco 'Edith' were the famous pair converted by Llechwedd into overhead locos 'The Eclipse' and 'The Coalition' – both survived intact and are today at Statfold Barn. The conversions used the frames of the steam locos, so what was the set of frames that went to Rich Morris? Answers on a postcard to...



Photo: Andrew Charman

Bressingham Steam Museum, Norfolk

A pair of Krauss-built 4-6-2s of 15-inch gauge arrived on December 15th, imported from Dresden, East Germany. These locomotives named 'Manortreu' and 'Rosenkavalier' are two of the three Pacifics built for operation at the Munich Transport Exhibition of 1925. Livery is Prussian Blue with red connecting rods.

They were accompanied by six coaches, with a further 13 to follow. The new 15-inch gauge railway will not now be laid on the site of the former 10¼-inch gauge Lakeside Railway due to the size of this equipment. (NGN, February 1973)

The two Pacifics duly went into service on their new line at Bressingham and our Editor remembers riding behind one of them as a child not many years later. Sadly Rosenkavalier was withdrawn in 2008 after failing with firebox issues just three years into its boiler ticket and has since been displayed in the Bressingham museum, as pictured below by Andrew Charman in 2014. Männertreu (the NGN correspondent clearly struggled with the German name...) last ran in 2011 but is now dismantled and undergoing restoration as time and funds allow.

The 15-inch gauge line still operates, worked by Exmoor Steam Railway-built 2-6-2T 'St Christopher' while the third of the Krauss locos built for the exhibition (which was actually in Dusseldorf, not Munich) has been at the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway since 1976. Named 'Black Prince' it is in operating condition and regularly rostered on passenger trains.



Photo: Andrew Charman

Extracts from *Narrow Gauge News*, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join up (which we at NGW highly recommend), go to www.ngrs.org.uk or see the advert on page 45 of this issue.



Diary & Special Events

■ As is traditional at this time of year our diary and events listings take a break as most railways are on their winter shut-down period and getting in some much-needed maintenance.

Those looking for a new-year narrow gauge experience, however, should check the website of their nearest line as some will be running train services – a few for example opening over the February school half-term period.

Fresh Snow and Green Grass at Brienz

Tony Nicholson experienced striking contrasts on a visit to the famous Swiss line a little over ten years ago in September 2012.



One of the last redoubts of Swiss mountain steam, the Brienz Rothorn Bahn (BRB) celebrated its official opening on 16th June 1892. A visit 120 years later found the 7,500ft summit of the Brienz Rothorn near Interlaken enveloped in almost impenetrable cloud, with fresh snow blanketing the lineside.

When I returned the next day, however, the weather had completely cleared, allowing a repeat trip halfway up the line to Planalp and then a succession of superb photo opportunities on a two-hour stroll back down to the town of Brienz, a mere 2,500ft above sea level.

From the lakeside the 80cm-gauge rack rail twists and turns through deciduous woods and high Alpine meadows before traversing thin mountain soil with outcrops of bare

rock to the summit station at Rothorn Kulm. With a ruling gradient of 1 in 4 the line climbs 5,000ft in only four miles.

Closed during World War One in 1915, the BRB did not reopen until 1931. With costs exceeding income, the company decided in 1958 to replace the railway by cable cars but fortunately the decision was never implemented. Today it is clearly a very popular tourist attraction with frequent packed trains running in good weather (and not quite so frequent but equally packed trains running in bad weather!) operated with smiling Swiss efficiency.

The line opened with four 0-4-2 'kneeling cow' rack tanks with inclined boilers and cabs, built like almost every Swiss locomotive by SLM (Schweizerische Lokomotiv & Maschinen Fabrik) in 1891 and 1892. No 5 was constructed in 1891 for the Wengernalpbahn (also 80cm gauge) that opened two years later

Above: Sunshine was plentiful on 13th September 2012 and veteran no 5 was working hard as it began its climb from Brienz through Alpine meadows.

Below: A day earlier the crew of no 16 had sought shelter by heading for the warm café at the summit station, which was totally enveloped in cloud.

Photos by Tony Nicholson

between Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald via Kleine Scheidegg, the lower terminus of the famous metre-gauge Jungfrau Bahn that climbs inside the mountain to the summit of the Jungfrau.

In 1911, however, no 5 was converted from Riggensbach rack and pinion to the Abt system employed by the BRB and transferred to its new employer. Then two superheated versions of the engine were added to the fleet in the 1930s, no 6 in 1933 and no 7 in 1936.

Faithful to steam

Uniquely in Switzerland the BRB was never electrified and remained exclusively steam-powered until it acquired two diesel 0-4-ORTs in 1975 (and a third in 1987). But the enduring appeal of steam led to the SLM building three oil-fired 0-4-2 rack tanks for the line, no 12 in 1992 and 14 and 15 in 1996 (superstitiously there is not a no 13). A fourth such engine, no 16, was acquired in 2005.

The modern oil-fired engines look very similar to the superheated coal-fired machines (which are all immaculately looked after) but they sound quite different. For the walker – and photographer – the hard-working loco can be heard for several minutes as it thrashes past up the mountainside before peace returns and the chorus of birdsong and swaying cowbells resumes, punctuated occasionally by one of the lake steamers hooting far below. I am longing for another encounter! **NGW**



Paintings By

James Green GRA

Individually signed & numbered limited edition prints

All taken from original paintings by award winning
Guild of Railway Artist James Green.

All prints are supplied with a Certificate of Authenticity &
embossed with a limited edition stamp.

Each comes beautifully presented with a double mount &
hard backing (not just rolled in a tube!)

Or use our framing service & receive your picture ready to hang
in one of our quality below mouldings.



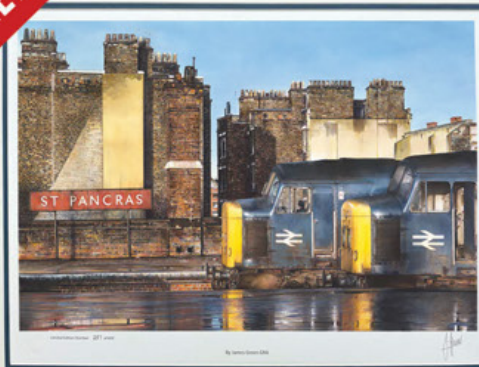
Limited Edition of 850

Black Prince at Stoke-on-Trent



Limited Edition of 850

Deltics at King's Cross



Peaks at St Pancras

Limited Edition of 850



Limited Edition of 850

Duchess at Crewe North

Size and framing options:

Standard Size mounted to 20"x16" £59.95 or framed for £95

Large Size mounted to 27"x21" £89.95 or framed for £155



To order call: **01733 203230**

See full range online

www.jamesgreenart.co.uk

**FREE
POSTAGE**
on all items



**Perfect
Gift Ideas**

Free Postage UK only
overseas orders add £12.50
(framing UK orders only)



**1000 Piece
Jigsaws Puzzles
£29.99 each**



FAMILY
BUSINESS
FRIENDLY
SERVICE



RAILS OF SHEFFIELD



SCAN
ME!

PRE-OWNED & SECOND HAND

WE VALUE **YOUR COLLECTION** VERY HIGHLY

WANTED CASH OR EXCHANGE

BUY · SELL · EXCHANGE · ANY GAUGE · ANY AGE

LOCOS - COACHES - WAGONS - TRACK-WORK - CONTROLLERS - ACCESSORIES
DIE-CAST - LORRIES - BUSES - PLANES - SOLDIERS - RAILWAYANA - AND MORE

DECEASED ESTATES - EX SHOP STOCK A SPECIALITY
FAST SERVICE WITH COMPLETE DISCRETION ASSURED

IMMEDIATE PAYMENT IN 4 EASY STEPS

CONTACT US

get in touch by email,
phone or post with
your list of items



STEP
01



STEP
02

WE MAKE AN OFFER

our friendly, experienced staff
review your list and make an
honest valuation and offer



BRING, SEND OR COLLECT

either visit the shop, send us your
items, or for larger collections we
will arrange collection for you

STEP
03



STEP
04

PAYMENT MADE!

we confirm the offer and make
a fast, secure payment via your
choice of payment method

TOP
GUARANTEED
PRICES
PAID

DON'T DELAY - GET IN TOUCH TODAY!

+44 (0)114 255 1436 ✉ secondhand@railsofsheffield.com

OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND CLICK ON THE  Stuff to Sell? LINK:

www.railsofsheffield.com

Quote Ref:
NARROW22

Corporate Partners of

**RAILWAY
MUSEUM**