

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

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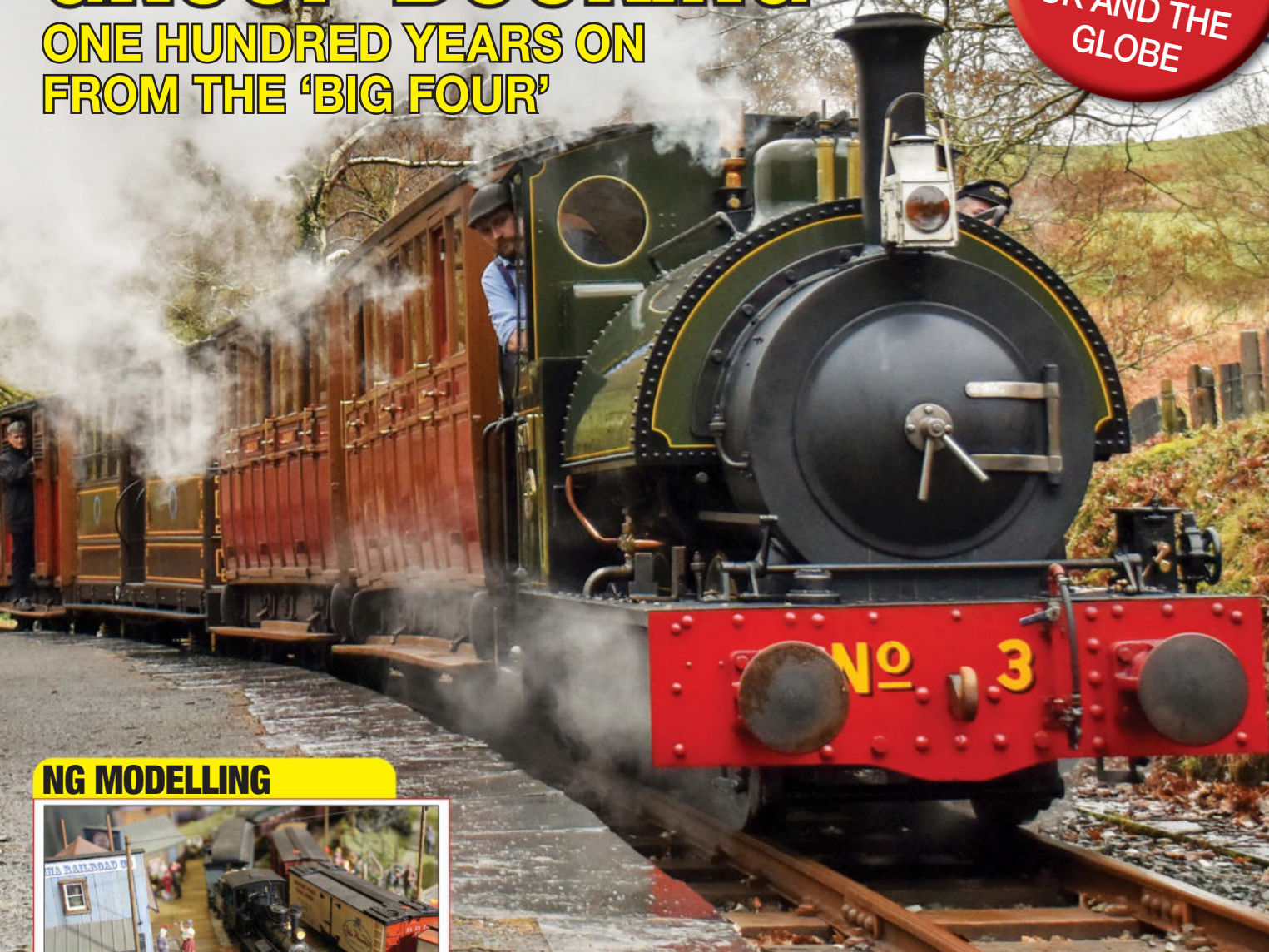


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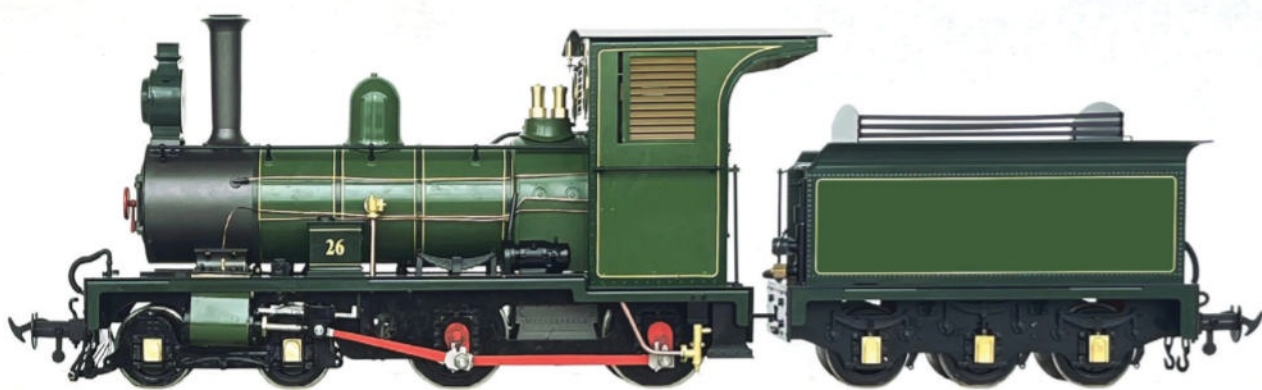
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Cover: Spot what's wrong with this photo! No doubt seasoned Tallyn enthusiasts will get it straight away, former Corris Railway Hughes 0-4-2ST 'Sir Haydn' the 'wrong way round' running towards Tywyn in the TR in 1951... This time it was all part of a photo charter on 20th March, of course attended by *Joey Evans*.

The inset shows Darjeeling-Himalayan Sharp-Stewart 0-4-0ST+T no 19B – see page 09 for news of a vital campaign seeking to ensure this locomotive stays in the UK.

Photo: Andrew Charman

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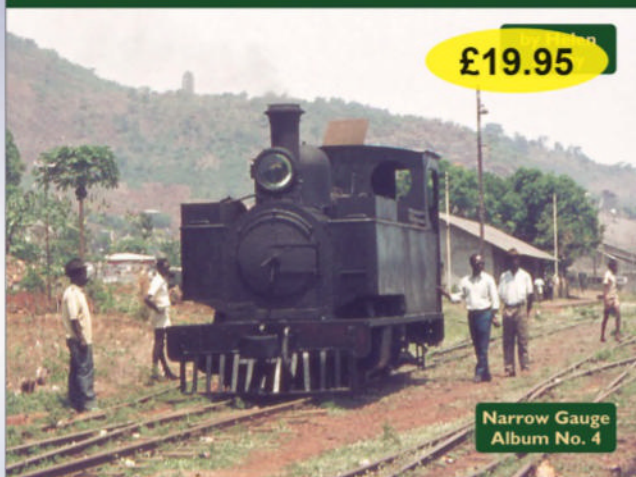
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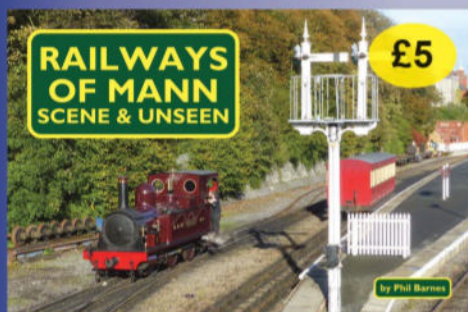
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All stop in Devon?



Above: A visit to Woody Bay, here for the Gala in 2021, is always a pleasure – major achievements such as new-build Baldwin 2-4-2 'Lyn' and the fine carriage stock have done much to recreate the atmosphere of a line none of us ever knew in its heyday. But if the revived Lynton & Barnstaple is ever to be more than a one-mile line, all concerned need to make changes...
Photo: Andrew Charman

Welcome to *NGW*174, as we thankfully begin our summer monthly publishing schedule – so much has happened in the narrow gauge world over the past couple of months I've faced a real challenge fitting everything that needed to be included in the pages of this issue.

Sadly our lead story this month is as disappointing as it is significant. We of course are the greatest advocates for the narrow gauge and I try to avoid at all costs writing negative stories about our railways, but sadly it is very difficult to put a positive spin on the current situation at the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway.

Long have many, including *NGW*, championed the revival project in Devon, dubbing it the last big restoration, the headline project of the early 21st century as the Welsh Highland was the last major project of the 20th century. We've marvelled at the operation at Woody Bay, as new-build proper L&B locos haul beautifully restored carriages into a proper Southern narrow gauge station. Imagine what it will be like when it's more than a mile long, we write on a regular basis.

Sadly at present that prospect seems a long way off. You will read on the next page of the expiry of planning permissions effectively stalling the revival project, which is bad news in itself. But what is very

concerning is the atmosphere we are increasingly seeing amongst those charged with rebuilding the line.

Growing concerns

We can reveal that for some time now a small but significant (and growing) group of worried L&B supporters have been contacting *NGW* to air their concerns over slow progress of the project and a perceived lack of information from those in charge – fears that now appear to have been realised.

Similar concerns have been expressed on various online L&B support groups – forums which in normal times only generate perhaps a couple of messages per week are now seeing multiple posts per day.

The tone of such comments is becoming all the more worrying, typical examples being calls for votes of confidence in the L&B's Trustees and to set up entirely separate restoration bids further south. Not only is there a separate organisation to the Trust, Exmoor Associates, acquiring land for the railway's revival, but more recently a third group has been set up, the Yeo Valley Trust, to advocate restoration of the southern section of the railway. It's a confusing situation and as has been proven more than once in the past, multiple groups restoring bits of the same railway is seldom a good thing.

The one aspect that comes out loud and clear from all this is a lack of communication – a growing number of L&B supporters feeling they are not being sufficiently informed as to what is going on and are not being listened to. As a Trustee of a heritage railway myself I know that there are always some gripes from members feeling the Trustees don't tell them everything, and to be honest we simply cannot. But generally we are trusted to work for the benefit of our railway and if we don't meet members' expectations we expect to be replaced at an AGM. But at the L&B the situation appears to be moving far beyond gripes.

I've no doubt that the L&B Trustees have no hidden agenda and are committed, as chairman Peter Miles has stated on one of the forums, to a single aim, restoration of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. But it is also clear that they are in danger of 'losing the room'. The members need to have their say and as Trustee Chris Duffell has stated, now is surely the time to pause, take stock and have a no-holding back consultation with all the members to ensure that everyone moves forward together with one aim – steam trains running over many miles of the north Devon countryside...

Enjoy your *NGW*...

Andrew Charman



Planning permission expiry stalls Lynton revival project

The restoration of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway has suffered a major setback following the expiry of planning permissions for the next phase of the Devon line's extension.

The permissions expired on 7th March with no work having been done, after the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust was unable to overturn onerous conditions imposed when planning approval was granted by the Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) in 2018.

Dubbed Phase IIA, the plans sought to extend the currently nine tenths of a mile-long line a further 3½ miles southwest from its current limit of operations at

Killington Lane to Blackmoor Gate, where the Trust has recently acquired the former station (see separate story).

The plans, which included a new depot on the opposite side of the A39/A399 junction to Blackmoor Gate, were approved by ENPA in March 2018. These added to approvals already given by North Devon Council in 2016 to reinstate a mile of line outside the national park, running from Blackmoor Gate towards Barnstaple as far as Wistlandpound. These approvals remain in place and some work has been carried out on this section.

Some 144 restrictions were, however, placed on the ENPA approvals, including

what are known as 'Grampian conditions' – promoted by local objectors to the revival scheme, these insist that no work can start on the extension until all land required is in the Trust's ownership, all funding secured and all contractors appointed.

Missing link

The Trust owns most of the land on the section but has so far been unable to acquire a short section at Parracombe. A 'Return to Parracombe' appeal which was launched in July 2022 has so far raised only £700,000 of the estimated £1.6m required to fund the first section of just under a mile from Killington Lane to Parracombe Halt.

In May 2021 the Trust sought legal advice to vary the conditions by means of what is known as a Section 73 application, which would permit staged development of the extension. In a newsletter issued to Trust members in February this year it was stated that various delays, including the effects of Covid, staff shortages and "procrastination by ENPA" saw the S73 application not submitted until May 2022.

The application then faced a legal challenge from local opposition, claiming that the S73 would be illegal. This was refuted by legal advice that was sought by the Trust and an amended S73 proposal was submitted to ENPA in December.

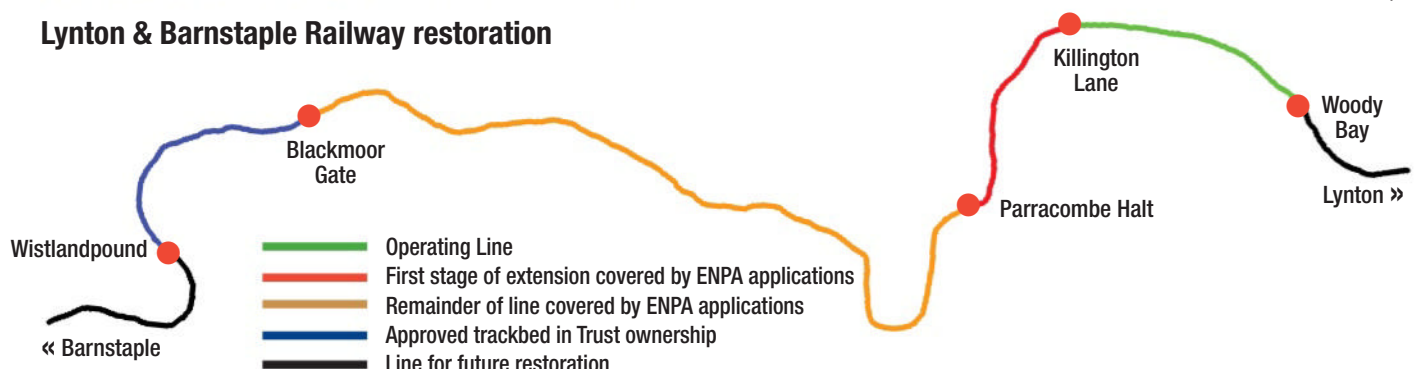
It then became clear, however, that any



Above: Much has been achieved at the Lynton & Barnstaple, as here at the Autumn 2022 Gala, but the next steps now look in serious doubt. *Photo: Stuart Chapman*

Left: The trackbed at Killington Lane, current limit of operations, stretches on invitingly at left but could remain undisturbed for some time yet. *Photo: Andrew Charman*

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway restoration



attempt to decide the S73 in the short period before the planning permissions were due to expire carried a high risk of refusal, which might impede future applications. So on legal advice the S73 was withdrawn, the permissions duly lapsing.

Angry reaction

The news sparked shock and some anger among L&B supporters, allegations made that the true situation had not previously been made clear to Trust members. Some called for replacement of the Trust board and a brief attempt was made to progress a vote of no confidence in the Trustees.

Others advocated changing the revival focus to either extend north from the current L&B headquarters at Woody Bay towards Lynton, or further south. The Trust owns no land north of Woody Bay but between it and Exmoor Associates, set up to acquire land for the revival, many stretches of trackbed to the south have been secured. Meanwhile the more recently established Yeo Valley Trust has been advocating restoration on the southern section of the once 19-mile line.

In March the L&B Trustees sent out a consultation to members, detailing four possible ways forward – abandoning attempts to extend in the National Park and instead extending south from Wistlandpound, heading north from Woody Bay towards Lynton, abandoning working with local authority planning and instead seeking a Transport & Works Order with deemed planning permissions, or progressing staged development of the existing plan initially on the land outside the national park that the Trust already owns and has permission to build on.

All were described as high cost and high risk with the exception of the staged development, which eight of the nine Trustees recommended to members. The ninth, Chris Duffell, who was only elected to the board in 2021 after irregularities in the voting papers forced the election to be postponed, abstained from the decision.

Mr Duffell then took to social media to explain what he described as many reasons for his abstention, including that the consultation document did not detail the costs of each proposal and whether the L&B Trust had the funds required, while the Trustees had shown no hint of contrition for the amount of funding expended on the now defunct permissions.

Chris Duffell added that his prime reason for abstention was that he disagreed with the four proposals in their current form and felt instead that the railway needs to pause and conduct a major review of its revival plans with the membership fully involved – the consultation did not include an option to reject all four proposals.

As *NGW* went to press the discussion and argument amongst L&B supporters over the project showed no sign of abating, with several predicting that matters will come to a head at the L&B Trust's AGM on 13th May.



Blackmoor station inn secured for L&B revival

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust has secured the Old Station House Inn at Blackmoor Gate, regarded as a crucial element in plans for the future reconstruction of the Devon 2ft gauge line.

An announcement on 16th March confirmed that contracts had been exchanged for the sale of the property to the L&B Blackmoor Company PLC, a subsidiary of the Trust, with the purchase set to complete on 17th April.

The pub and restaurant has been trading for many years in the former L&B station building which closed with the rest of the railway in 1935.

The Trust intends eventually to reinstate the building as a station while continuing to operate the current business – the new landlords emphasised that no radical

changes were planned, adding: “(we) assure all regular and occasional visitors to the Inn that it will continue to offer a warm welcome with quality food and drinks.”

A programme of investment is planned while respecting the historic nature of the station building.

Blackmoor Gate has a major status in the next stage of the L&B revival plans, with the railway intending to build a new depot on the opposite side of the A339 road to the station. Work on a new access road to the depot site, which the company owns, has recently begun.

Above: The distinctive Swiss Chalet design style of the Blackmoor Gate station building is still clear even with the later additions in its present guise as a pub and restaurant.

More shelter for Beddgelert passengers

The Welsh Highland Railway's Beddgelert station will soon have a proper building for the first time since the original WHR closed in 1937.

Snowdonia National Park Authority has approved FF&WHR plans for a new facility at the busy intermediate station – replacing a structure demolished when the line closed. Plans were originally approved 10 years ago but after starting work on the foundations funding issues curtailed the project.

The plans have now been re-visited and

modifications made to the design, including improving the environmental aspects and giving the building a lighter, lower visual aspect which fits in with its surroundings.

The new building will include a covered waiting area, staff room and toilets, a ticket office with a small retail area and coffee shop, and external covered seating. The existing covered shelter will be removed.

Below: Artist's impression of the new Beddgelert station.





Bagnall Sinembe arrives at Teifi line

A surprise arrival at the Teifi Valley Railway on 4th April was Bagnall 4-4-0T 'Sinembe' (2287/1926).

Nothing further had been heard of the loco since late 2013 when it was offered for sale in newly restored condition by Graham Walton-Binns, alongside sister loco 'Charles Whytock'. The latter subsequently was sold to a member of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, where it remains to this day.

The two were among 13 similar Bagnalls that worked at the Tongaat Sugar Company in Natal, South Africa – 'Isibutu', now at the Statfold Barn Railway, was another member of the class.

Mr Walton-Binns imported Charles Whytock and Sinembe with a third loco, 'A. Boulle', after they had been plinthed in Natal for some 30 years. From 1994 the first two were displayed at the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway – some work was done on Sinembe but it was then stored on a siding at Pen-y-Mount in

declining condition until in 2005 it was removed to Teeside for restoration.

A TVR spokesperson told *NGW* that basing Sinembe at the south Wales 2ft gauge line had been made possible by a mutually acceptable agreement with Mr Walton-Binns and his son Alex.

The initial agreement is over five years and while there are no confirmed plans at present to steam the loco, the biggest so far at the TVR, "this could change if our finances and volunteer base improve – Sinembe has been pressure tested but not steam tested."

The line plans a carriage shed extension to house carriages displaced by Sinembe. TFR resident steam loco, quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Alan George' (606/1894) is expected back in service next season following the completion of an overhaul.

Above: 'Sinembe' arrives at the Teifi Valley Railway on 4th April. Photo: TVR



Former Thorpe loco heading for Hayling

The Hayling Light Railway is set to welcome a new member to its motive power fleet in the form of a 1984-built Alan Keef diesel, works no 11.

Built for the 'Treasure Island Railway' at the Thorpe Park resort near Chertsey in Surrey, the loco has been donated to the railway by Thorpe Park owner Merlin Enterprises. It worked on the theme park line for more than 20 years, its final role being as a rescue loco on the later 'Canada Creek Railway' which closed in 2011.

The loco is currently in Keef's Ross-on-Wye workshops, undergoing overhaul and modification for its new role. It will be rebuilt with a steam-outline body in similar form to the HLR's existing loco 'Jack' and it is hoped that it will arrive on Hayling Island in time to celebrate the mile-long 2ft gauge line's 20th anniversary in September.

"We would like to give a big thank you to the staff and owners of Thorpe Park Resort, for their help in securing the loco, and in facilitating the recovery by our volunteer gang of track materials from their site," an HLR spokesman said. "This will help us to keep the Hayling Light Railway running for many more decades to come, bringing enjoyment to future generations of Hayling Island residents and visitors."

The HLR Trust is welcoming donations towards what will be an extensive and thorough restoration, but is equally keen to attract new volunteers in roles across the line. More details are on the website at <https://haylinglightrailway.wixsite.com/ehlr>

Above: The former Thorpe Park loco prior to restoration at its builders. It will be rebuilt to something close to the design concept below. Images: HLR



■ The extensive work currently underway at the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge depot has included a major extension to the Carriage Works including a new woodworkshop. The entire complex with its solar-panel roof is visible in this picture taken on 7th March. Great progress is also being made with the line's new Small Locomotive Shed, sited to the right out of picture. The foundations were completed in February with erection of the structure expected to be underway by the time of the Ffestiniog Railway Society AGM on 29th April. Photo: Chris Parry/FFWHR



Trust makes urgent bid to keep Darj loco in UK

Supporters of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway have formed a Trust to try and keep the line's only locomotive outside India in the UK.

Sharp Stewart 0-4-0ST+T no 19B was built in Glasgow in 1899 as one of the original batch of four B-class locos for the DHR. It is due to be auctioned on 21st June along with the entire assets of the Beeches Light Railway, a private 2ft gauge line built around his Oxfordshire home by major rail industry figure Adrian Shooter.

Adrian rescued the locomotive from the USA and had it returned to steam at Tyseley works in Birmingham in 2003, then building the Beeches line to run it on.

Sadly he died on 13th December last year and now his widow is selling off the railway, which includes 19B, two bogie Darjeeling-style carriages built by the Ffestiniog Railway, and even a replica of one of the Indian line's station buildings.

The Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust has been formed by the locomotive's support crew who for many years assisted Adrian at open days held on the Beeches line. Further support has come from members of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society, the very highly regarded UK group that does much good work to aid the DHR, and the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway.

The aim is to raise sufficient funding to allow the Trust to successfully bid for the loco at the auction and to ensure there is no danger of it being bought by a party outside the UK and being exported. There are high hopes that 19B will be offered as a single lot with the two carriages.

Assuming the bid is successful the Trust has secured agreement to base the loco at the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust in Staffordshire. It will operate on Statfold's line and will also have access to the engineering facilities when the loco's overhaul becomes due.

The Trust would also wish to continue

Adrian's programme of taking the loco 'on tour' – 19B has run on several lines in the past including the Launceston Steam Railway, Leighton Buzzard Railway, Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway and at Statfold.

19B has a current boiler certificate, though it is approaching its 10-year overhaul. The loco retains its original Lowmoor iron boiler, described by Trust members as the oldest operational locomotive boiler in the world.

The Trust is seeking to raise the funding required in various ways. These include loans of ideally £10,000 which will be paid back over a five-year period, and standing order covenants of £25 over the same five years to enable repayment of the loans. Donations of any amount will also be welcomed.

Details of the campaign and information on how to contribute can be found on the Trust's newly set up website at www.darjeelingtank.org.uk.

The auction, to be conducted by H J Pugh & Co, will include a wide selection of railway memorabilia. More details are in the advertisement on page 45 of this issue.

Above: Seen here on 13th February on the Beeches Light Railway, 19B's future in the UK may well depend on the fund-raising success of the newly-formed Trust. *Photo: Joey Evans*

Below: It is hoped the two Darjeeling-style carriages will be included in the auction with 19B as a single lot. *Photo: Andrew Charman*



BRIEF LINES

Marchlyn to Bressingham

Statfold-based Avonside 0-4-0T 'Marchlyn' will be the star visitor at one of the first Gala weekends of 2023 at Bressingham Steam Museum on 29th April-1st May. The loco is likely to work slate trains on the Norfolk museum's 2ft gauge line, one of four gauges in action over the weekend which is also likely to feature around 20 road steam locos.

Gala marks Esk centenary

Also enjoying a Spring Gala over the 29th April to 1st May weekend will be the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Davey Paxman 2-8-2 'River Esk'. A centenary exhibition will on display in the Ravenglass Railway Museum while the weekend will also feature all of the Cumbrian 15-inch gauge line's operational locos including museum resident, 0-4-0T 'Katie'.

Sybil closer to return...

Restoration of the West Lancashire Light Railway's former Dinorwic Quarry Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Sybil' passed a milestone on 13th May when the loco's boiler completed a successful steam test.

...as Pixie progresses at FR

Meanwhile the overhaul of 'Pixie', another Bagnall 0-4-0ST formerly owned by the Reverend Teddy Boston, is making good progress at the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge works ready for the loco's return to the Richmond Light Railway. Tickets for the Kent line's annual charity steam fair on 12th August are now on sale at www.ticketsource.co.uk/rfr

Bess back at Ruislip...

The Ruislip Lido Railway's Gala on 13th-14th May is set to feature a visiting steam loco alongside the 12-inch gauge north London line's recently overhauled resident Penrhyn-style Hunslet 'Mad Bess'. More details of the event are at www.ruislipidorailway.org

...and the Doctor at Romney

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Canadian Pacific Railway-style 4-6-2 'Doctor Syn' has returned to action on the Kent 15-inch gauge line this season, having been under overhaul over the last five years. Cracks found around the boiler clacks slowed the overhaul, but the loco hauled its first train on 2nd April.



Narrow gauge projects triumph again in the Heritage 'Oscars'

The annual awards presented by the Heritage Railway Association (HRA) have again produced a clutch of winners among the body's narrow gauge members.

One of the most popular recipient of an award this year, presented at the HRA annual dinner in Birmingham on 11th March, was the Sittingbourne & Kemsley

Light Railway. Among the smaller organisations shortlisted, the S&KLR took the Coiley Award for Steam Locomotive Engineering for its restoration of Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Premier', featured in *NGW* 167.

The Ffestiniog Railway's long-running programme of operating gravity slate trains was recognised with the Peter Manisty Award for exceptional achievements in the heritage railway world.

The programme now extends to more than 200 wagons and has its own bespoke shed at the FR's Minffordd engineering base. "The efforts of this team over more than 30 years are truly outstanding and it is more than overdue that their contribution to railway conservation should come into focus," FF&WHR general manager Paul Lewin commented.

The Morgan Award for rolling stock preservation

saw more success for the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, winning for its restoration of the 1927-built 'Queen Mary Coach' from the Nocton Estates Railway.

The Talylyn Railway was again successful in the Marketing & Communications category, winning for its Covid-inspired venture into video production, while the Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway won the Infrastructure award for its new carriage and maintenance shed, which replaced converted shipping containers on the west London line.

Above: Delight amongst the members of the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway after they received an HRA Award for their restoration of 'Premier'.

Photos: HRA and Andrew Charman

Left: The Ffestiniog Railway gravity trains have long been a major attraction on the line.

Photo: Chris Parry/FFWHR

Below: The 'Queen Mary Coach', seen on the end of this Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway train, was another award winner. *Photo: LCLR*



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Rapid progress on Talyllyn overhauls

Overhauls being carried out on both of the Talyllyn Railway's original steam locomotives have been making good progress in recent weeks.

Reassembly and painting of Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT 'Dolgoch' has been proceeding rapidly despite the discovery of a crack in the left-hand connecting rod leading to a decision to manufacture two new rods. TR engineering manager Chris Smith told *NGW* he did not expect this job to unduly delay completion of the loco's overhaul as the rods could be among the last components fitted to it.

Fletcher Jennings 0-4-2ST 'Talyllyn' has been having its redesigned braking system fitted to the frames in the loco shed at Tywyn Pendre. The cylinders have been remachined and their new liners shrunk in.

Meanwhile Talyllyn's boiler is being retubed at the Mid Hants Railway in Hampshire. Southern-based TRPS members have been assisting with the boiler work.

The TR's former Corris Railway Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Edward Thomas' was set to head to the Vale of Rheidol Railway's workshops at Aberystwyth on 17th April for overhaul. Chris believes that the work is likely not to be extensive, only involving retubing the boiler and reboring of the cylinders. The VoR has previously overhauled Hughes 0-4-2ST 'Sir Haydn' for the TR.

Above: Talyllyn Railway engineering staff take a break from their reassembly of Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT no 2 'Dolgoch'. Photo: TR

Talyllyn's new top team enjoys a strong start

The Talyllyn Railway started its 2023 operating season with February half-term trains and a new team in charge following the departure of General Manager Stuart Williams to take up a new post in the Orkney Islands.

Two of the TR's senior managers, Lorraine Simkiss and Liz Porrett are now sharing the GM role with Lorraine taking responsibility for all income generation and human resource matters for staff and volunteers while Liz oversees operations, engineering and developments.

The two took over the reins after a strong 2022 season for the mid-Wales 2ft 3in gauge line, especially during December and the period between Christmas and New Year which was described as exceptional, with the 'Tinsel and Turkey' trains proving very popular.

"We said farewell to Stuart thanking him for all his hard work and effort and recognising the significant positive impact he had made to the railway in his time here and wishing him all the very best on his new adventure in Orkney," Lorraine said. "For Liz and I (it's) an exciting opportunity to lead and guide the railway amidst uncertain times.

"These changes are undoubtedly the way to keep us progressing as an organisation. When we want to thrive rather than just survive in these times; standing still is never an option."

TR chairman David Ventry added that the line had been delighted to appoint Lorraine and Liz to their new management roles. "They will provide continuity and stability in uncertain times, and we are confident that they will successfully lead the railway forward."



■ Talyllyn Railway engineering manager Chris Smith has praised the line's Young Members Group following a winter wagon painting working party which saw four of the line's heritage wagons repainted to a good standard.

"It was very well attended by the Young Members Group – they did a very good job and even tidied up after themselves!" Chris said, adding; "They enjoyed it and we will be doing it again – I was very impressed with our young members which bodes well for the future."

Photo: TR

Programme announced for Manx 150 celebrations

The Isle of Man Government's Department of Transport has published details of the programme of celebrations that it will stage this year to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the island's steam railway, and the 130th anniversary of the Manx Electric Railway.

Three distinct events will begin on Saturday 1st January, the exact 150th anniversary of the opening of the Dougal to Peel line, first section of the Isle of Man Railway.

Highlights will include the unveiling of an anniversary plaque at Douglas station, a locomotive line-up in the station and a double-headed departure from Douglas.

A week-long festival to be staged between 23rd and 30th July will showcase both the steam and electric lines but the centrepiece of this event is likely to be the display of two locomotives at locations formerly served by the railway.

Locos at closed stations

Former Manx Northern Railway no 4 'Caledonia' will be placed on a track panel at the former Knockaloe internment camp while IMR no 8 'Fenella' will be displayed in similar fashion at the former Peel station on the island's western coast.

A host of other events during the week will include parallel runs, motorman taster sessions and the appearance of special car and trailer line-ups on the Manx Electric Railway, behind-the-scenes visits and bus tours of closed lines, and a cavalcade on the MER, while the island's other lines – the Groudle Glen and Great Laxey Mine railways and the Douglas Horse Tramway, will also host special events.

Then on Sunday 10th September a commemorative day will be held to mark 130 years since the first section of the MER opened on 7th September 1893, between Derby Castle in Douglas and Groudle Glen.

A second plaque unveiling will take place at Laxey, which will also host a Victorian Fayre. Parallel runs and tours will again be part of the day's programme.

Full information on the entire anniversary programme are available in a special leaflet that can be downloaded from the island's transport website at www.rail.im



Rhiw Valley assets go up for sale after line closure

The locomotives, stock and track of the Rhiw Valley Light Railway have been put up for sale following the closure of the private 15-inch gauge mid-Wales line last October.

As reported in *NGW* 171, the line held its final open day on 2nd October and record numbers of visitors attended the event in splendid weather, the final runs being with resident steam locomotives 'Powys' and 'Jack' double-heading in both directions around the 1383-yard long line.

Owner Mike Woodroffe reluctantly decided to sell up following the passing of his mother Helena, widow of the line's founder Jack Woodroffe, who had basically subsidised the railway since Jack's death in 1990. While money was a factor, Mike said that running the railway had not been the same since Helena's passing.

The entire assets of the railway are now for sale, including the 0-6-2T Powys, built by Severn Lamb in 1973, 0-4-0 tender loco Jack, completed by Severn Lamb in 2003, and a petrol shunter, 'Monty'.

Also included are three bogie and two four-wheeled carriages and a four-wheeled guard's van, various wagons and accessories and an amount of engineering equipment and railwayana. But the track is not available, an offer already having been accepted for it.

Full details of the assets are available on the updated website at www.rvlr.co.uk and serious enquirers only can contact Mike on mike.woodroffe@gmail.com

Above: Both of the line's resident steam locomotives, 'Jack' (Left) and 'Powys', are included in the sale. Photo: Andrew Charman



■ The long-term project at the Ffestiniog Railway to restore a Kerr Stuart diesel that worked on the neighbouring Welsh Highland Railway has taken great strides in recent weeks, with work starting on the construction and fitting of the loco's distinctive bodywork.

Kerr Stuart 4415 is a unique loco, the oldest purpose-built diesel in the UK. When first built it underwent trials on the WHR and became the first of a class of locos of which is now the only survivor. The restorers have decided to replace the loco's McLaren engine with a Gardner unit, after restoration of the unit originally sourced for the loco proved too difficult and costly.

KS4415 will be on display at the WHR 100 celebrations on 23rd-25th June.

Photo: KS4415 team



Fairbourne Gala to star Prince & Albert

The Fairbourne Railway's traditional Gala weekend over the Spring Bank Holiday will see the Mid-Wales line's 15-inch gauge rails in action again, hosting one of the historic 'Barnes Atlantics'.

'Prince Edward of Wales', based at the Rhyl Miniature Railway, is one of the original Bassett Lowke class 10 4-4-2 locos – built in 1909 it was the first engine at Rhyl, working the north Wales line until it was replaced in 1920.

The loco later narrowly avoided being scrapped until it was bought by the Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust and returned to the line in 2014. It has since been restored to operation and rebuilt into the form it ran in between 1911 and 1969.



The loco carries the same name as the first engine to run at Fairbourne in 1916. This was a later more powerful version of the Rhyl engine – it was sold on in the 1920s and later severely damaged by fire. All six of what are known as the Barnes Atlantics, after an energetic early manager at Rhyl, have undergone many changes of identity over the years.

Fairbourne management also plan to have a 15-inch gauge Sutton Miniature Railway railcar at the Gala while on the 12¼-inch gauge diesel-electric loco 'Albert' will make a return visit from the Littlehampton Miniature Railway. It is hoped the loco will double-head passenger services with Fairbourne's recently acquired Simplex loco – regauged from 2ft, this has never previously hauled a passenger train.

Full details of the Gala are on the line's website at www.fairbournerrailway.com

Top: 'Prince Edward of Wales' will perform on the Fairbourne's 15-inch gauge line over the Gala weekend, and it will be joined by the distinctive former Sutton Miniature Railway railcar (below).

Left: The Fairbourne's most recent recruit, a regauged Simplex should see its first passenger trains over the weekend.

Photos: FR



Sanders fitted to Corris loco

The Corris Railway's new Hughes 'Falcon' steam loco no 10, which is being built by Alan Keef Ltd and was successfully steam-tested at the South Wales engineers in September, is to be fitted with sanding gear, a feature its inspiration, the three original locos built in 1878, never carried.

Considering the gradients and sharp curves of the original Corris route it is surprising that sanders were never fitted, even under the Great Western Railway's ownership during which surviving original loco no 3 was overhauled in Swindon.

Instead until the line's closure inclement weather would see the loco fireman or guard perched above the front bufferbeam, dropping sand from a box placed in front of the smokebox to the railhead using a watering can.

Such an approach would not be permitted in today's health & safety conscious environment, even if the modern-day Corris wished to carry on this way, so air sanding gear will be fitted to no 10 before it enters traffic.

The new loco's cab, bolted together for the first public steaming, has now been riveted. The upper rear section will retain removable bolts to improve footplate conditions on hot days and allow passengers in the front carriage to watch the crew at work. It will also recreate the look of the Falcon cabs in the early 1900s.

Other outstanding work at the end of February included the fitting of the air braking equipment and the electronics for the train communications system. The boiler and the cylinders need to have their cladding made and fitted.

No 10 is making good progress towards its final testing and entrance into Corris traffic later in 2023 but some funding still needs to be raised.

Donations can be made online at www.corris.co.uk or cheques, payable to Corris Railway, can be sent to Peter Guest, 38 Underwood Close, Callow Hill, Redditch, B97 5YS. Peter is also able to provide standing order payment forms.

Statfold to open five days a week

Enthusiasts who have never managed to visit the Statfold Barn Railway now have more opportunity as from 19th April the Tamworth museum, formerly only accessible on three enthusiasts days a year, began opening from Wednesday to Sunday each week.

At open days trains will be running on the 2ft and new 12¼-inch gauge lines and the Roundhouse museum collection will be open. Details are at www.statfold.com



Bredgar makes progress on Katie overhaul

Considerable progress is being made with the 10-year overhaul of Arn Jung 0-6-0WT 'Katie' (3872/1931) at the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway (*writes Samuel Jones*).

The loco had been a regular operator on the Kent 2ft gauge line before being withdrawn for overhaul at the end of last year. In recent weeks the removal of the chimney, blastpipe and steam turret have been followed by lifting of the cab so that the chassis can be overhauled.

Katie is Bredgar's longest-serving locomotive. It spent its working life in Western Africa before arriving at the Kent line in 1980.

The line has an extended opening programme this year with Wednesday 'diesel days' added to the usual monthly open weekends. The first steam event day will be on 7th May, dubbed 'Bluebells' as the line's woodlands surroundings are full of the flowers at this time of year. More details are at www.bwlr.co.uk

Above: Bredgar Arn Jung Katie makes her last public appearance at the Bredgar & Wormshill Gala in October 2022 before undergoing overhaul. *Photo: BWLR*

Buzzrail records festive record

The Leighton Buzzard Railway began its 2023 operating season on Sunday 12th March having enjoyed a record-breaking Christmas period in which a total of 6316 passengers were carried.

The first train service of 2023, the 10.30 departure from Page's Park was ceremonially flagged away by Leighton Linslade's Deputy Mayor Cllr Sheona Hemmings.

More UK and World news on pages 36-37

Greenway threat to Donegal revival?



Plans for a pedestrian, cycling and riding greenway on the County Donegal Railways trackbed through the scenic Barnesmore Gap could block future plans to re-open part of the route as a heritage railway (*writes Hugh Dougherty*).

Donegal Railway Heritage Centre members and supporters have been among those responding to the public consultation on the proposal for the section, between Ballybofey and Donegal Town.

The centre has been in talks with Donegal County Council about the possibility of including a narrow gauge railway track with the greenway, in similar fashion to Northumberland's Aln Valley Railway between Alnwick and Alnmouth.

The section through the Gap, running on a ledge cut into the hillside, had closed with the rest of the CDR on 21st December 1959 and the track was lifted in 1960. But the bulk of the trackbed has remained intact and distinct while its re-use as a mainline railway has been mooted as part of rail lobby group, Into the West's popular and growing campaign to reconnect Donegal to the Irish national system.

The former South Donegal Railway Restoration Society planned in 1991 to restore just over ten miles of the railway to link the site of the former Meenglas Halt with Barnesmore Halt, including the most scenic part of the line through the Gap.

The plan failed because of a proposed Ballybofey bypass scheme which would have used part of the old railway route past Lough Mourne, while a geological issue at the foot of the Gap and the objections of a resident close to the route sealed its fate.

The successor to the SDRRS, Donegal Railway Restoration CLG which operates the heritage centre, has since reaffirmed its aim of operating heritage CDR stock, with several options, including the Barnesmore Gap route, being actively considered.

Donegal Railway Heritage Centre manager Niall McCaughan has encouraged all our members, supporters and the general public to get involved in the consultation and said that there has been a good response. "It's important that the railway and its place in the Barnesmore Gap is recognised and it may be possible to build the greenway in such a way that it does not rule out a heritage line on the existing CDR trackbed," he said.

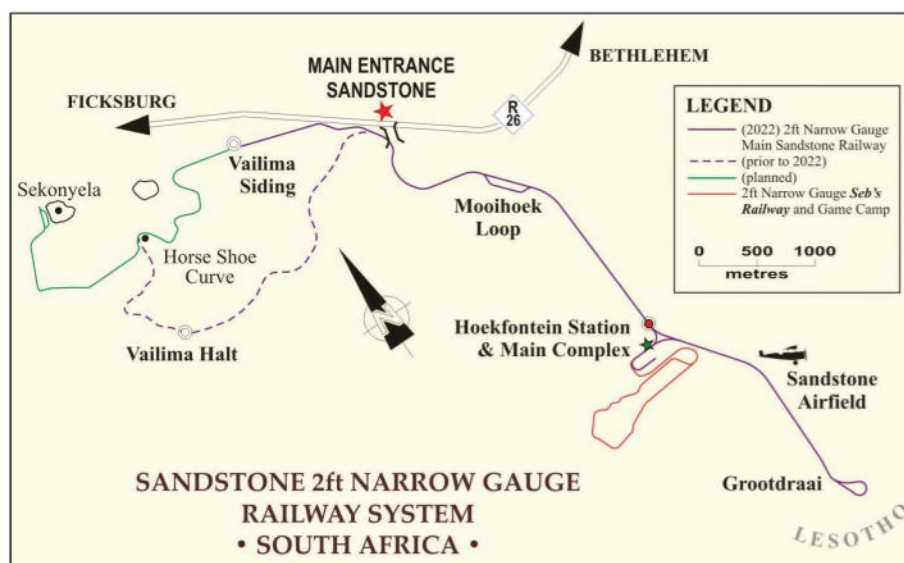
Above: Pictured in Barnesmore Gap on its return to the Donegal Railway Heritage Centre following restoration in October 2021 is CDR 2-6-4T no 5 'Drumboe' – the line of the railway can be seen on the hillside above the loco.

Below: What could be on offer. CDR 2-6-4T no 2 'Blanche' lifts its heavy mixed train through the Barnesmore Gap in May 1956.

Photos: DRHC



Sandstone extension to revive photo favourite



SOUTH AFRICA

The Sandstone Steam Railway near Bethlehem is to add a significant extension to its 2ft gauge running line, replacing a section of line lifted in late 2021 after damage by inclement weather.

The loss of the mountain section was expected to be keenly felt by enthusiasts at 'Stars of Sandstone' steam festivals, photo opportunities of double-headed NGG16 Garratt-hauled trains long a highlight of the events. But the weather damage left the section needing major repairs with no guarantee that similar damage would not re-occur. So it was lifted, the line ending at a point called Vailima Siding.

Picture perfect

Sandstone management decided instead to revive a rail project shelved many years ago – extending to a location called Sekonyela, one of the most photographed landmarks in South Africa and a magnet for steam photographers in the heyday of the Bloemfontein to Bethlehem line when operated by Class 25NC 4-8-4 locos.

Using 2ft gauge track lifted from the mountain section the line is being extended west towards Sekonyela, where it will terminate with a run-round loop in the farm of the same name.

The 4.3km long route follows the remaining piece of the mountain section as far as a sharp left turn called Horse Shoe Curve. The new line will veer slightly to the right halfway around the curve and then swing further right in a northerly direction towards Sekonyela farm.

Tracklaying was set to begin imminently with completion by the end of 2023.

Top: Sekonyela provides a distinctive backdrop during the last year of steam passenger services on the Bloemfontein to Bethlehem line in 1985 – South African Railways Class 25NC 4-8-4 passes Vailima with what is now Sandstone Estates at left. *Photo: R L Bucher*

Above left: Map of the Sandstone Steam Railway – the new extension to Sekonyela is at left in green.

Gales lead to Swiss derailments

High winds in **SWITZERLAND** on 31st March led to two separate derailments on metre-gauge lines, injuring 15 people.

At around 4.30pm one carriage of a train was blown onto its side near Lüscherz station and slid down a small embankment. Three people in the carriage, including the driver, were taken to hospital.

Around 20 minutes later and 40 kilometers from the first incident a train of the Regionalverkehr Bern-Solothurn RBS was derailed in Bürenen. Around 50 people were on the train and 12 were injured, one seriously.

Local authorities stated that weather measuring stations recorded gusts of 136km/h around the time of the incident.





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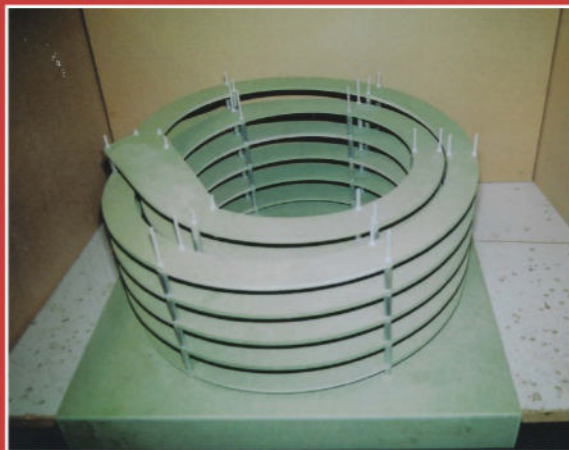


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21-year effort secures Indonesian survivors

Negotiations lasting more than 21 years finally bore fruit for the Stoomtrein Katwijk Leiden in Valkenburg on 29th March when two Dutch-built steam locomotives were loaded in Surabaya, Indonesia, for repatriation to the museum.

The two were both built by Du Croo & Brauns for the Indonesian sugar cane industry. Works no 81 of 1925 is a 90hp 0-8-0 tender loco with Klien-Lindner articulation and last worked at the Sumberhardjo sugar factory in North Java.

The second, no 159 of 1928, is an 80hp Mallet that was originally delivered to the Koenir sugar factory, owned by the Handels Vereeniging company of Amsterdam. Later

NETHERLANDS

the loco moved on to work at the Pesantren Baru sugar factory.

Having first began trying to secure the locos around the turn of the millennium, the museum finally received approval for their repatriation from the Indonesian government in January. A crowdfunding campaign has now been launched, both to pay the estimated transport costs of 60,000 Euros (about £52,000) and to finance construction of a new boiler for one of them, costed at 70,000 Euros.

Also heading to the museum with the locos are four sugar cane wagons and a Dutch-made Simplex rail bike.

Photo: Stoomtrein Katwijk Leiden

New carriages debut on Alishan

The Alishan Forest Railway in TAIWAN has launched a new train set comprising six carriages constructed in cypress wood.

Taking two years and nine months to complete, the vehicles were built with steel frames and bodies of red and Taiwan varieties of cypress – a rare wood that only grows in Japan, the USA and Taiwan.

The red cypress wood is said to be both very uniform in consistency and highly

resistant to decay and insect damage.

The carriages include significantly larger windows than standard Alishan stock, domed ceilings and leather seats. The aroma of the wood is encouraged in the interior and Alishan management hope that passengers travelling in them will appreciate the connection between the 2ft 6in gauge line and its forested mountainous surroundings.

Photo courtesy Tsai Wen-chi, AFR, and AFR



Motor museum loco heads for Somme

The Petit Train de la Haute Somme in has welcomed a new locomotive to its collection following the arrival on 28th February at its headquarters in Froissy, northern FRANCE of a diminutive 0-4-0T built by French maker Weidknecht in 1912.

What is described as a "unique and small 60cm gauge locomotive" weighing only 3.8 tons, was originally employed at Grandes Tuileries de Bourgogne in Burgundy.

In the 1960s the locomotive was bought by Henri Malartre who ran a motoring museum at Rochetaillé-sur-Saône, near Lyon. While the museum is renowned for its superb collection with some of the exhibits displayed in a castle, the locomotive never found a real place and was displayed outside for almost 60 years.

This resulted in the Froissy museum asking if the loco could be placed on loan in order for a cosmetic restoration to be undertaken followed by display in the line's own museum, and the Lyon City Council eventually agreed to the move.

"It's now in our workshop, where we'll have a hard task to overhaul the connecting rods and cylinders to allow it to move on track," Froissy spokesman David Blondin told *NGW*. "It will be on display during our steam event on 28th May 28th and will find a good place in our museum after a complete repaint," he added.



■ The destination of Decauville 0-4-0T 'Edgar', built by North Bay Railway Engineering in 2017 for rail book and model specialist John Sutton and until recently at the Apedale Valley Railway, has been revealed. John has sold the loco to the Tacot Des Lacs, a preserved section of a former 600mm gauge industrial line in Bourron-Marlotte, north-central FRANCE.

Photo: Patrick Mourot/TDL

■ Derelict 2ft 6in gauge stock has been transferred from long-term storage at Dematagoda shed in SRI LANKA to undergo restoration for display in the southern Asian nation's new railway museum in the capital, Colombo. The British-built items moved include Hunslet 0-6-0 P1 class diesel no 530 and one of the three surviving Sentinel steam railcars. Examples of the former system's Hunslet J2 4-6-4T steam loco are already in the new museum.

The UK-based Narrow Gauge Sentinel Railcar Preservation Trust is still pursuing efforts to acquire one of the railcars for restoration in Britain.

Photos: Budhikka Sampath/NGSRPT



West Coast in wilderness to enable track upgrades

Businesses around the West Coast Wilderness Railway in Tasmania have seen tourism hit after the 3ft 6in gauge line was closed to allow major improvements.

The State Government announced a three-month closure over the continent's winter tourism season to allow major upgrades, made possible by \$16 million (equivalent to around £8.5m) of state funding.

The work on the 34.5km long 3ft 6in gauge rack line, a preserved section of the former Mount Lyell Railway, followed a derailment of a diesel loco on 28th February. The incident was minor with no injuries among the 50 passengers, but it sparked an investigation into the condition of the line's infrastructure.

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Michael Ferguson, said the upgrades would improve the reliability and resilience of the line and would be carried out to meet what the State Government predicts will be continued future growth in demand for the WCWR.

"Management have been carefully mapping out and progressively addressing the maintenance and upgrade needs of the railway and locomotives while trying to keep the trains

AUSTRALIA

on the tracks, but the age of the infrastructure and the work that needs to be done calls for a more intensive, programmed work plan during the quieter time of year," the Minister said.

"It means the shutdown will be during the low-patron winter season – nonetheless it was a hard decision to make, but a necessary one and strongly recommended by local tourism representatives to get the best result."

The shut-down has seen all services to the end of the line at Strahan cancelled, and these will not run until the project is completed. Services around the other terminus at Queenstown are set to stop from 5th June.

West Coast Wilderness Railway acting general manager Ian Robertson said the entire railway would be shut for a time, but one end might open before the other.

"By tackling the necessary upgrades head-on and in one go we will add decades to the operational life of the railway and the local economic benefit it brings," he said.

Local tourism operators appreciated the need to make upgrades, but also questioned why the work did not take place during the Covid period when the line was closed.



■ Harzer Schmalspurbahnen GmbH (HSB) 'Brockenlok' 2-10-2 no 99-7232 has returned to the line's base in Wernigerode, GERMANY after extensive repairs in Meiningen, Thuringia. The 1955-built loco was sent to the works after suffering a broken connecting rod in January 2022, and underwent a major inspection. The return trip saw 1897-built Mallet 99-5902 (at left in the picture) heading to Meiningen for overhaul after several years of storage. The intention is that the loco is available for services next year celebrating 125 years of the Harzquerbahn and Brockenbahn. The loco is one of four original Mallets on the Harz, three of which are considered operational.

Photo: Dirk Bahnsen/HSB

BRIEF LINES

Dutch O&K for Maldegem

The steam centre at Maldegem in BELGIUM has announced the programme for this year's Steam Festival on 6th and 7th May with two steam locos working the 2ft-gauge line alongside four on the standard gauge. Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0T no 6900 of 1913, normally resident at the Leemspoor line at Rijsen in Holland, will be the visitor on Maldegem's narrow gauge line. More details are at www.stoomtreinmaldegem.be/en

Golden days at Pichi Pichi

The Pichi Pichi Railway in the Southern Flinders Ranges, South AUSTRALIA will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. The 3ft 6in gauge 24-mile long line, totally run by volunteers, began its milestone season in March with a series of twilight services. On 22nd and 23rd July commemorative trains will run for members.

Darj on the up

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in INDIA has reported impressive traffic figures, up more than 61 per cent on the last pre-Covid year of 2018-19. Earnings over the 2022-23 financial year totalled 19.21 crores (around £1.9 million).

Mixed-gauge model theme

JAPANESE model railway maker Kato, which markets Ffestiniog Railway England 0-4-0s in 009 scale in partnership with UK maker Peco, is reported to be building a new factory with a private theme park attached boasting 762mm and 610mm gauge railways.

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

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Mountaineer and Gowrie



James Waite is impressed with progress in building replicas of 'first' and 'last' locos in the saga of the North Wales narrow gauge.

The Ffestiniog Railway has long been noted for the longevity of the locomotives built for it in the years before preservation. Two out of its four original Double Fairlies have survived, along with one of the two 'Large England' 0-4-0 tank and tender locos and, most remarkably of all, three of the four original 1863 Small England 0-4-0T+Ts.

The Small Englands are some of the earliest narrow gauge locos to have been built anywhere in the world, though they have over the years been substantially reconstructed and altered. The only former Welsh Highland Railway loco to survive is 2-6-2T 'Russell', built for the never-completed Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway and subsequently sold to WHR predecessor the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway.

Early and late

'Mountaineer', the other Small England, was the first steam loco to arrive at Portmadoc and to run on the FR, but it ended its days as early as 1879. At the other end of the timescale the NWNGR's 1908-built Hunslet 0-6-4 Single Fairlie tank 'Gowrie' was the last loco to be constructed for any of these railways before preservation, but was withdrawn after only a few years' service. It was also the last Fairlie of

Above: 'Gowrie' in 5-inch gauge. Marion Allen's beautiful model on display during an open day at Statfold. Photo: Joey Evans

Below: Jonathan Clay's painting gives a good idea how 'Mountaineer' will look when built, although some details such as its colour have yet to be decided.

Photos in this feature by James Waite except where credited

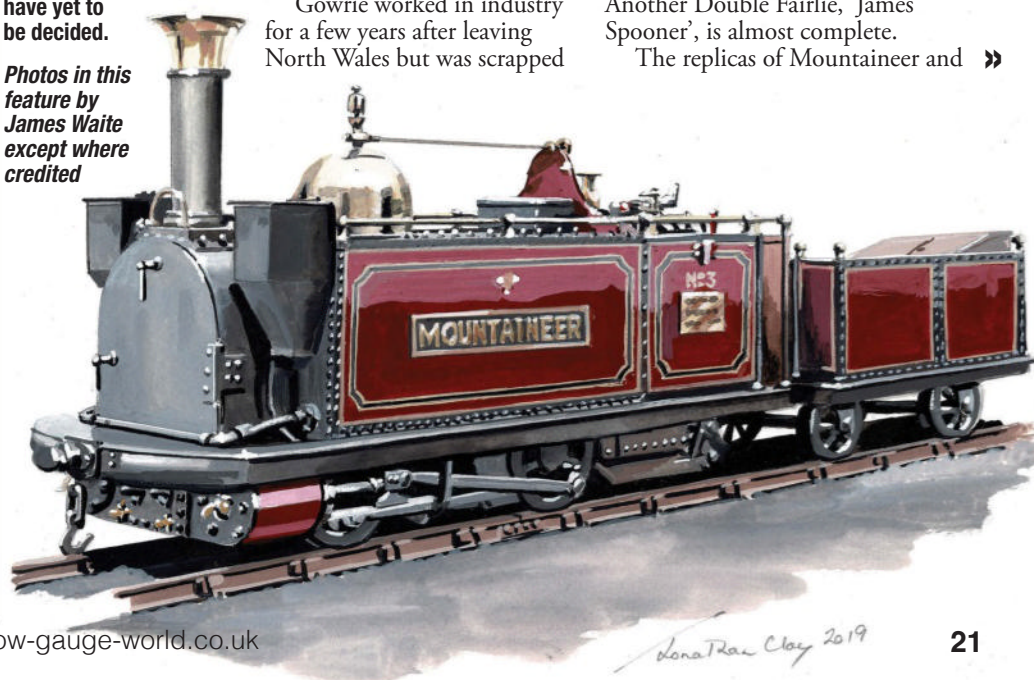
any type built for any railway – with the very considerable exception of the hundreds of Péchet-Bourdon constructed for the French army during the First World War and the single one built as a prototype for the Japanese army soon after it finished. They differed from Fairlie's product in having a single dome and simplified steam and exhaust piping, and Colonel Pécot and Professor Bourdon, their designers, took out their own patent in 1887. But for most people they were still regarded as small Double Fairlies.

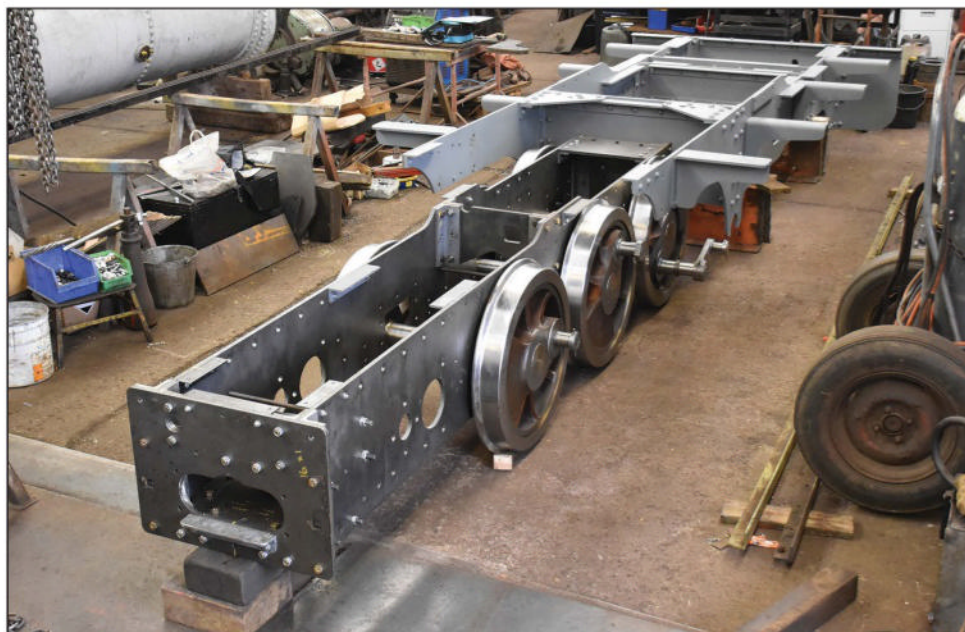
Gowrie worked in industry for a few years after leaving North Wales but was scrapped

by 1931. It's ironic that we will only come to know these first and last locos thanks to the construction of the replicas.

The preserved Ffestiniog has a long record of building new locos of traditional appearance, albeit updated to modern specifications. The new Double Fairlie 'David Lloyd George' entered service as long ago as June 1992. In 1999 it was followed by 'Taliesin', a replica of the 0-4-4 Single Fairlie tank which was withdrawn in 1924, and in 2010 by the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway 2-6-2T 'Lyd'. Another Double Fairlie, 'James Spooner', is almost complete.

The replicas of Mountaineer and »





dereliction that tackling a similar-sized new-build machine hasn't been as much of a leap as one might think.

The launch of the project was followed by well-informed work to establish the most appropriate corporate structure which would both maximise the available income from donations and protect the project's trustees and subscribers. The Gowrie Locomotive Trust, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO, was established and its registration with the Charity Commissioners was completed on 23rd October 2019.

The eight trustees are led by Workshop X founder Martyn Ashworth, its project director, who has been intimately involved with the successful rescue from the USA of seven Penrhyn Quarry locos since 2006. He is also the owner of 'Ogwen', one of two Avonside 0-4-0Ts that were amongst the rescued locos, and its restoration was one of the Workshop X team's previous projects.

Other key trustees include Paul Stock, who had independently been planning to build a Gowrie replica, Joey Evans, whose excellent photos frequently grace the pages of *NGW*, Alan Freebury who has many years' experience of steam restoration and operation and Marion Allen who possesses both financial management skills and hands-on engineering know-how. Marion also owns a superb 5-inch gauge model of 'Gowrie' which she runs at fundraising events. It's a beautiful machine and must have brought in many converts to the cause!

An early assessment estimated a total build cost of £600,000, realistic in view of the size and complexity of the loco. Happily this was later



Above: The driving wheels and carrier frame of Gowrie laid out at Workshop X in approximately their final positions. This will be a big loco! Photo: Joey Evans

Left: Stuart Fletcher, whose experience extends to working with A4 Pacific 'Sir Nigel Gresley' on the main line, works on a vertical drilling machine on 15th February.

Gowrie are now under construction, though by dedicated groups rather than the FR and WHR. This article begins with Gowrie – the first project to be started when it was launched on 28th April 2018.

A large loco

The new Gowrie will be a large beast, with a weight of more than 19 tonnes. It's a most ambitious project for a volunteer group considering that the Ffestiniog's Double Fairlies weigh not much more than 20 tonnes.

The loco is being built at the well-known 'Workshop X' in Derbyshire, in which the volunteers have learned their craft from the restoration of existing 60cm gauge locos. Some of these, notably the Hudswell Clarke Ganges-class 0-6-0T which was rescued from Ghana, and the WDLR Hunslet 4-6-0T no 303, were in such an advanced state of



revised downwards to £450,000, thanks to the availability of generous benefits in kind, notably from the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust Limited, also a charity, and the very kind provision of key parts, materials and skills by professionals and suppliers at costs significantly below commercial prices.

A lucky find

One small saving has come with the recent discovery of the original brass dome cover from one of the three long-lost Hunslet 0-6-0Ts from the 4ft gauge Padarn Railway, probably 'Velinheli'. It has spent the past 50 years or so turned upside down and used as a flower pot at Port Dinorwic, now known as Felinheli, the Welsh version of its former name. The dome is of the same design as the one on Gowrie, and so the loco will now incorporate one original Hunslet part!

The charitable structure confers significant benefits; the Gift Aid regime available to the majority of donors increases the value of donations by some 25 per cent and the VAT exemption available to charities provides a reduction of another 20 per cent on the cost of bought-in materials and services funded by those donations. Donors who are higher-rate taxpayers can benefit personally since their donations are tax-deductible, and of course this benefit can also be passed on to the charity.

It is difficult not to be bowled over by the enthusiasm and skills of the volunteers at Workshop X, as well as what they have achieved. Gowrie is not their only current project, because as regularly reported in *NGW* no fewer than four other locos are in various stages of restoration.

To date more than £155,000 has been raised towards Gowrie – at an increasing pace, more than £100,000 being donated since May 2022. The power bogie frame, a substantial piece of engineering in its own right, has been completed along with the carrier frame and the driving wheels, plus many smaller parts. The cylinders and motion have been costed and the boiler design is being finalised.

Publicity, and the sharing of well-prepared information, are key to the project's fundraising. The Friends of Gowrie is an active supporters group. Their magazine *Gowrie*, published four times a year, is produced to a professional standard and is a model of its kind. There are also more frequent newsletters. The annual subscription is £20 per annum, more than worthwhile just for the magazine. Be aware, though, that it deploys persuasive fund-raising skills and readers will soon find

Bottom far left: Alan Freebury guides the power bogie frame as it is moved to a different part of the workshop.

Bottom left: Two professional riveters – Richard Jeffs and Jon Ballard – called on the day of James's visit. There was a look of sheer joy on Richard's face when the first rivet went in successfully!

Above right: The brass regulator housing of Gowrie and a replica nameplate. These replica plates are among several items available for purchase from the group.

Below: At NBR engineering the completed boiler of Mountaineer waits its chassis. Photo: NBRE



themselves wanting to make additional contributions!

Over the next year or so, large sums will be needed to fund the cylinders, motion and boiler but at the present rate of progress and with the extent of current crowd-funding there is every reason to believe that this will be achieved. The original planned timescale was five years. Covid blew this out of the window and the trustees now envisage that the loco will be completed by 2026 – provided the funds are available. If you can help do please contact them through their website (see below). Every contribution is valued, no matter how small.

Small but delightful

At just eight tonnes Mountaineer was a small machine compared to Gowrie. The company behind construction of the replica was

formed on 18th March 2019 and the project is very much the brainchild of David Wood and Major Brian Smyth. Brian used to serve with the Royal Engineers and has an excellent railway pedigree! David has recently retired from his long-term motorcycle business and can now focus full-time on Mountaineer.

The work is not being carried out by volunteers but has been contracted as a commercial project to NBR Engineering Services at Darlington, incidentally the town where Gowrie may have spent its last years since its final owner was probably J F Wake, a firm of loco dealers there.

The project was launched at the Warley Model Railway Show in November 2019, and progress since then has been remarkable. The boiler plates were ordered from Israel Newton and delivered to Darlington in the same month. The last tube in »



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the completed boiler was expanded on 23rd March 2020, just four months later. But this was the fateful day when the UK's first Covid lockdown began, and the boiler's hydraulic test had to wait until May.

Since then the frame plates have been cut, the driving wheels cast and turned and the axleboxes and hornguides manufactured along with smaller parts. The distinctive motion, with oval-shaped rods and one-piece brass bushes more usually found in marine engines, will be complete before long and fundraising will soon be launched for the eccentrics and inside motion.

The project was held up for part of 2022 when no fewer than five cylinder castings were produced by outside suppliers until a usable pair became available in February 2023. The two cylinders, bolted together, form the frames' front stretcher and so their assembly has only now become possible.

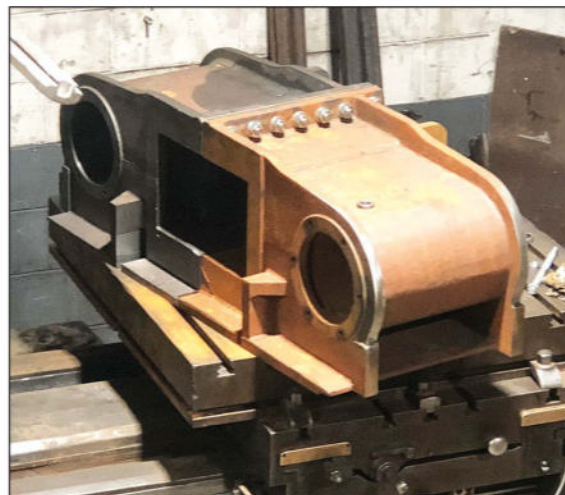
The rolling chassis should be completed this year, but the guiding principle has always been that nothing will be ordered for the loco until it is fully funded and for this

reason there has been no target completion date set.

A significant difference from the Gowrie project is that the company has a commercial for-profit structure and is not a charity – though as with many enthusiast projects it is unlikely that income will exceed the ongoing expenses associated with the loco once it becomes operational. This structure was adopted to enable construction to begin at once – charity formations can be a time-consuming process.

Under the company's rule-book formal decision-making is reserved to the founders in order to protect the project from any unwelcome take-over, but the intention is to consult bona-fide supporters as fully as is reasonably possible.

There is a support group whose members are called 'Mountaineers' and they will be offered the opportunity to purchase non-voting shares and significant benefits regarding access to the loco. It's a shame that Gift Aid isn't available; it was a value judgment and David's and Brian's decision was that it was worth foregoing it in order to start



Above left: The the driving wheels of Mountaineer in store at NBR Engineering at Darlington.

Above: At the fifth time of asking the cylinder blocks were completed to satisfaction. Photo: 1863 Mountaineer Project

Below: Significant progress – the very latest photo from NBRE shows the cylinders mounted on the chassis, which in this picture is upside down on the workbench. Photo: NBRE

work quickly. In this they have been supported by David Humphreys at NBR Engineering, an old friend, and NBR's bills have been considerably lower than might otherwise have been expected.

Just as it was

Mountaineer will be as original as it possibly can be while complying with good modern practice and requirements. It will therefore be a side tank – the original loco did not last long enough to undergo the modifications to the saddle-tank form in which the other three Small Englands have been familiar to all friends of the Ffestiniog for well over 100 years.

There is not a publication equivalent to the Gowrie magazine, but occasional project updates do appear on the company's website (see below) while there is also an active Facebook page.

Those running the project must have worked very hard, just as their colleagues building Gowrie have, and NBR Engineering rightly has a superb reputation for the quality of its products. How long will it be before we might conceivably see the two locos double-heading through the Aberglaslyn Pass? And, once this happens, is it too much to hope that someone will build a replica of one of the NWNCR's original Single Fairlies, and so make good the tragic loss of 'Moel Tryfan' at the start of the Ffestiniog's preservation era? **NGW**

Information & acknowledgements

James wishes to thank Martyn Ashworth and his colleagues at Workshop X, and David Wood of the Mountaineer project and also David Humphreys at NBR Engineering for all their help during the preparation of this article.

Details of the Gowrie Project are at www.gowrielocomotivetrust.com and the Mountaineer project at <http://1863mountaineerloco.co.uk>



Sunny start to a new season

Trains are running again across the UK narrow gauge and *NGW*'s photographers have wasted no time getting out to make the most of the very Spring-like weather...

Above: *Joey Evans* captured this view of Darjeeling 0-4-OST+T 19B in steam on the late Adrian Shooter's Beeches Light Railway on 13th February. All involved sincerely hope the sun isn't setting on 19B's time in the UK and you can help ensure the loco remains with us – see the story on page 9.

Below: During the same photo charter on the Tallylyn Railway that produced our cover picture the line's former Corris Railway Hughes 0-4-2ST 'Sir Haydn' posed for this shot that the black-and-white treatment certainly makes suitably dramatic. It's also novel as Sir Haydn was turned for the occasion and TR locos do not normally emerge from their shed front first...

Photo: Joey Evans

Overleaf: The Brecon Mountain Railway is a line that does not feature often in our pages, especially this location showing Baldwin 2-6-2 'Santa Teresa' approaching Dolygaer on the climb to Torpantau. *Ralph Ward* took this shot on 8th October 2022 but somehow it went astray in our system. When we found it we thought it was too attractive a view to ignore!



**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**







Above: Well that won't do the motion any good... The Tallylyn's other ex-Corris loco, Kerr, Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Edward Thomas' wasn't about to be left out of the photo charter fun and the recently restored Ty Dwr watering point provided a suitable location for a cameo on 20th March. *Photo: Joey Evans*

Below: The UK has a new railway! As reported on page 36, the Mease Valley Light Railway has now opened, adding to the many attractions of Stafford, but opening day was still a while away when this short test train headed out on the 12¼-inch gauge line on 2nd March. *Photo: Joey Evans*



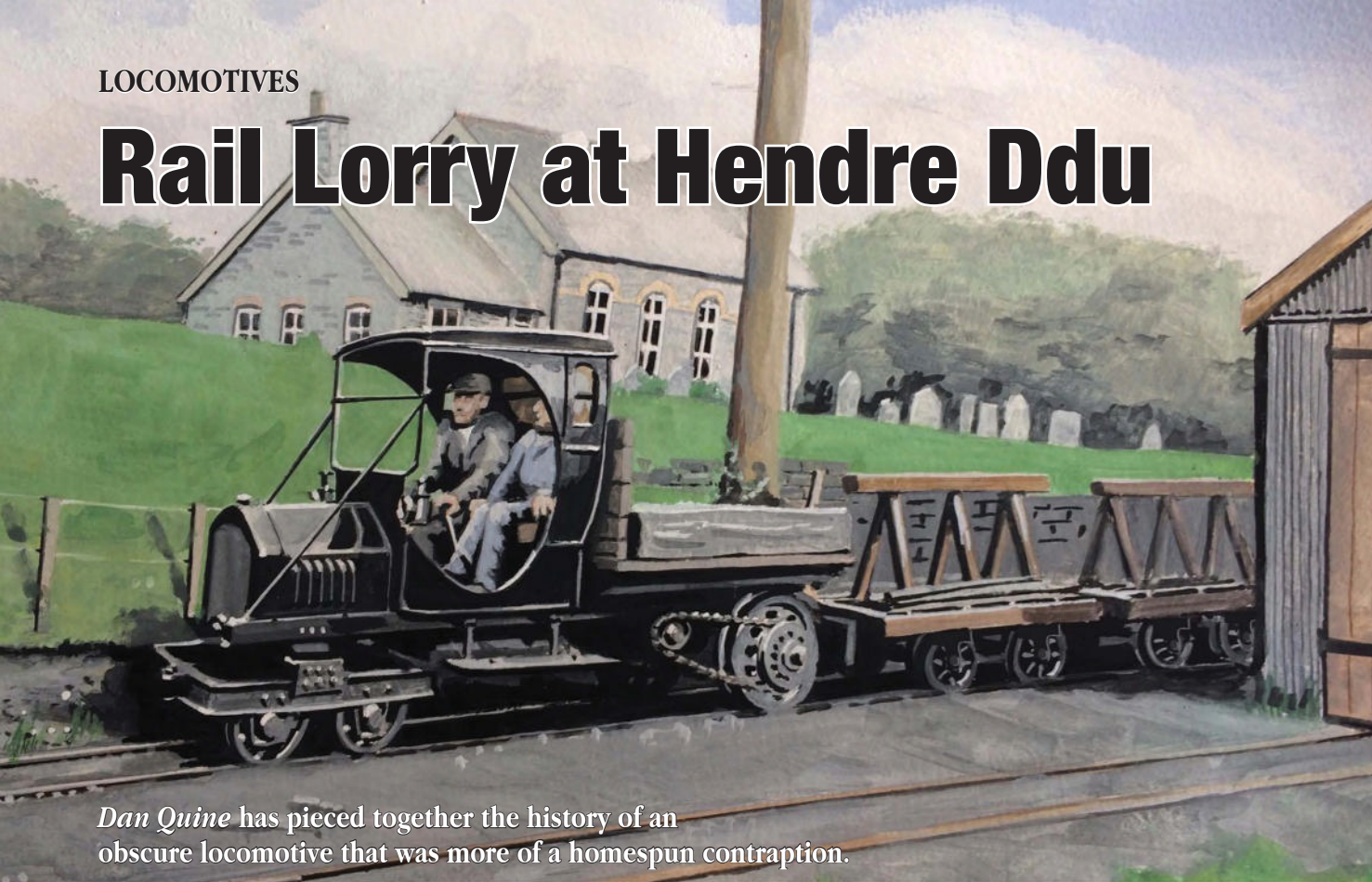


Above: Another narrow gauge railway that doesn't feature that often in our pages – the 2ft 8½in gauge Volks Electric Railway has been traversing the seafront of Brighton for a very long time indeed – *Leslie Kenward* pictured cars 7 and 8 and 6 and 10 crossing at Halfway station on 21st March, on driver-training duties just ahead of the line's 140th season.

Below: And finally, the very end – of the line! *Dave Wilson* caught the South Tynedale Railway's Hunslet 0-4-2T 'Green Dragon' resting at the limit of operations at Slaggyford on 8th April.



Rail Lorry at Hendre Ddu



Dan Quine has pieced together the history of an obscure locomotive that was more of a homespun contraption.

The Hendre Ddu Tramway was a 1ft 11 in gauge line running about four miles west from Aberangell, in Mid Wales. It was privately owned throughout its history, being part of the Hendreddu slate quarry, though it carried a wide variety of goods and passengers.

The line passed through one of the most remote and beautiful valleys in Wales and for most of its existence provided the only transport to the outside world. From its opening in 1874 until the outbreak of the First World War it was worked by horses,

gravity and odd human-powered vehicles known as ceir gwyllt.

My book covering the history of the tramway was published by Lightmoor Press in December 2022. When compiling the book one of the most difficult subjects to pin down was the locomotive converted from a road lorry in the late 1920s. After a great deal of sleuthing, I was able to piece together the history of this oddball engine, and, working with renowned rail artist Jonathan Clay, to illustrate what it looked like. This article describes the locomotive and

Above: Artist's impression of the Willys-Overland loco on the Hendre Ddu Tramway. Image: Jonathan Clay

Below: A 1913 Willys-Overland Utility ¾-ton Truck. The frame, gear train and chain drive are identical to those of the Willys-Overland loco.

presents a scale drawing of it for the first time.

Lorry haulage & loco working

Although quarrying continued during the First World War, the tramway was mainly used to carry pit props from the extensive forests along its route. For every 100 tons of coal mined, two tons of pit props were consumed. German U-boats had choked off overseas timber supplies, so private forests were turned over to the war effort.

The wonderfully-named Henry Sharrock Higginbottom leased the timber rights around Aberangell in 1916. He owned dozens of collieries in the North West of England and along the Welsh borders which he needed to supply with pit timber.

Higginbottom laid miles of new tramway into the woods, connected to the Hendre Ddu Tramway. Hundreds of simple, four-wheeled 'timber bogies' were built to accommodate this traffic and 50 horses were used to haul the empty bogies back to the sawmills.

After the war timber was a profitable business and continued to be a major source of traffic for the Hendre Ddu into the mid 1920s. There are reports that Higginbottom moved one or more coal lorries to Aberangell to haul the timber bogies, and at least one of these stayed in the area after Higginbottom left in disgrace in 1922.

The First World War saw the first successful employment of mass-built



Willys-Overland locomotive

Built by Bill Milns in 1929 for the Hendre Ddu tramway

Drawn by Dan Quine, March 2023

Scale approx 16mm to the foot

“Sied Ddu was the only covered accommodation tall enough to house it. In early 1931 it was left outside overnight and the radiator froze and burst...”

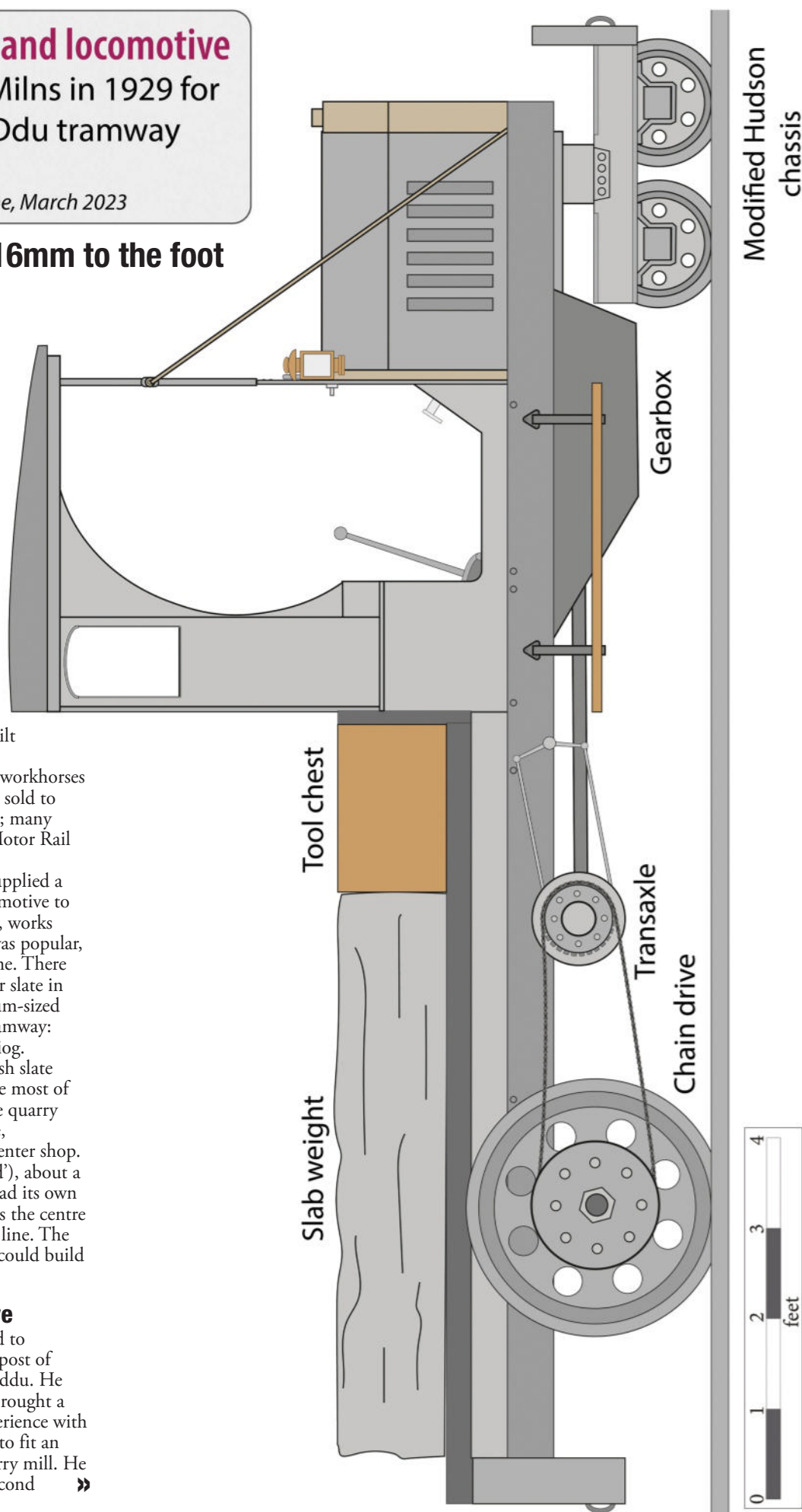
internal combustion locomotives, notably the Simplex petrol tractors built by Motor Rail of Bedford. Hundreds of these robust workhorses survived the war and were sold to railways around the world; many more were produced by Motor Rail in the decades after.

In 1921, Motor Rail supplied a bow-framed Simplex locomotive to the Hendre Ddu tramway, works number 2059. The loco was popular, if somewhat accident-prone. There was a boom in demand for slate in the 1920s, and two medium-sized quarries were using the tramway: Hendreddu and Gartheiniog.

Like many remote Welsh slate quarries, Hendreddu made most of its equipment on-site. The quarry had a fully equipped forge, blacksmith shop and carpenter shop. Sied Ddu (the ‘Black Shed’), about a mile west of Aberangell, had its own forge and in the 1920s was the centre of wagon building for the line. The company soon decided it could build a new locomotive.

The 1929 locomotive

In 1929, Bill Milns moved to Aberangell to take up the post of Chief Engineer at Hendreddu. He was an Englishman who brought a great deal of practical experience with him. His first project was to fit an overhead crane at the quarry mill. He then decided to build a second »





locomotive for the tramway and for this he used the major components of a 1913 vintage Willys-Overland truck, believed to have been the Higginbottom lorry.

The design of the locomotive may have been influenced by the Ford 'rail lorry' built by Colonel Stephens for his light railways. In 1927, the rail lorry was transferred to the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire railway, just 25 miles from Aberangell. It stayed there until 1929, so was running when the Hendre Ddu locomotive was constructed. It is quite possible that Bill Milns travelled over to Llanymynech to see the rail lorry in action. If he did, he appears to have taken its general layout as inspiration.

The new locomotive used the chassis, engine, gearbox, chain drive and bodywork of the lorry. The wheels were replaced with flanged iron wheels set to the tramway's gauge. The wheelbase of the road lorry was 11ft 6in which would have been too long to traverse the curves of the tramway. Therefore a front

bogie was constructed from a Hudson wagon chassis, as the few contemporary descriptions of the locomotive mention.

The glazed cab from the lorry was retained, and driver John Breese preferred the Willys-Overland locomotive for the extra weather protection it had compared to the cableless Simplex. The top of the cab was about 8ft above the rails.

The radiators on the Utility lorries didn't have a fan, which meant they only cooled the engine when running forwards. The tramway was designed for gravity operation, with a continuous downhill gradient from the quarry to Aberangell, so the locomotive ran facing uphill to generate airflow over the radiator when hauling wagons to the quarry. The return trains to Aberangell ran under gravity power, with the locomotive in reverse gear and only providing braking.

The rail lorry had a short working life. It was stabled at Sied Ddu, which was the only covered accommodation on the line tall enough to house it. In

Above: The 'rail lorry' that Colonel Stephens had constructed from a Ford Model T. The locomotive is at Llanymynech on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway and may have influenced Bill Milns.

Below: The winch in 1983, inside the main Gartheiniog pit. On the right is the six-cylinder Overland engine block. The roller chain is attached to the transaxle. The gear gate and lever is set for left-hand drive; the gearbox and the axle from the engine block to the rear transaxle are missing.

Photo: Donald Sills

early 1931 it was left outside overnight and the radiator froze and burst. The locomotive was dismantled and in 1935 the chassis, engine and gear train were used to create a winch at Gartheiniog quarry. This winch hauled wagons filled with waste up a short underground incline and the waste was dumped inside the largest chamber. Other parts of the locomotive were used to build a large gravity passenger car for the tramway.

Physical evidence

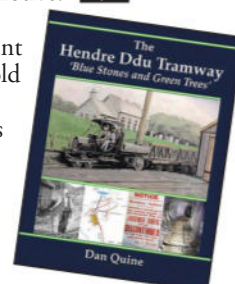
There are unfortunately no surviving photographs of the Willys-Overland locomotive. In 1983, Donald Sills discovered the remains of the winch and photographed them, shortly before they disappeared.

The surviving chassis forming the winch was 6ft 11¼in and formed of pressed steel channels bolted together. It had a six-cylinder Overland side-valve petrol engine with a chrome-nickel molybdenum iron block and the gear gate, which had four gears R, 1, 2 and D. The transaxle from the lorry drove a sprocket on the right side of the chassis. The roller chain was original, and assuming the sprocket from the rear wheels of the road lorry was reused on the locomotive, the approximate size and location of its rear wheels can be established. The radiator was of necessity missing at Gartheiniog. The winch would only have been used in short bursts to power the incline, so it would have run without overheating.

One feature of the locomotive noted in contemporary descriptions was a large slab of slate built into it. The locomotive lacked adhesive weight, with the heavy engine block at the front sitting over the unpowered bogie. The slab was therefore attached to the lorry's flat bed to add weight over the driving wheels. After the Second World War, a Bedford QL lorry was converted for rail use at Dowty Engineering and it had a concrete block chained to its flat bed for the same reason. This standard gauge loco survived into the 1970s.

The arrangement of the rail lorry is not known for certain. The drawing accompanying this piece is necessarily speculative, but gives the most likely appearance of the completed locomotive. **NGW**

■ The initial print of Dan's book sold out very quickly and a reprint has since been made – the book is reviewed on page 44.



The Grouping and the Narrow Gauge...



In the centenary year of the Grouping of Britain's railways, *Philip Williams* contrasts the fortunes of narrow-gauge lines that became part of the 'Big Four'.

A century ago, on the 1st January 1923, the 120 railway companies of the British Isles became four with the 'Grouping' occasioned by the Railways Act of two years earlier. Five narrow gauge railways found themselves absorbed into one or other of the so-called 'Big Four' companies, and another joined them later, these six sharing four different gauges between them. The London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) was the only one of the Big Four not to absorb a narrow gauge concern.

Two for the LMS

The London, Midland & Scottish Railway became the owner of two very dissimilar lines. From its inception in 1904, the eight-mile long, 2ft 6in gauge Leek & Manifold Valley Light Railway had been operated by the North Staffordshire Railway. It became by default part of the LMS at the Grouping, when the North Staffordshire was absorbed.

With no centre of population at either end, and relying mainly on the transport of milk as its one principal traffic, the L&MVR was never a financial success. The LMS appears to have cared little for it, closing it without ceremony in 1935 once the local creamery ceased production.

The LMS did, however, donate the trackbed to the local authorities, enabling it to become what is now a highly popular public right of way (though that of course has worked against a revival initiative ever since).

The LMS's second narrow gauge absorption was the oldest and greatest anomaly of them all. Since 1828 the

Above: The Leek & Manifold Railway did not benefit long from ownership by the LMS, closing in 1935. Photo: Peter Johnson Collection

Right: The Leek & Manifold line lives on in a highly popular trail, with Hulme End station building and loco shed repurposed for walkers. Photo: Andrew Charman

Below: The Nantlle Tramway survived in horse-worked form longer than its owner the LMS did. Photo: Peter Johnson Collection

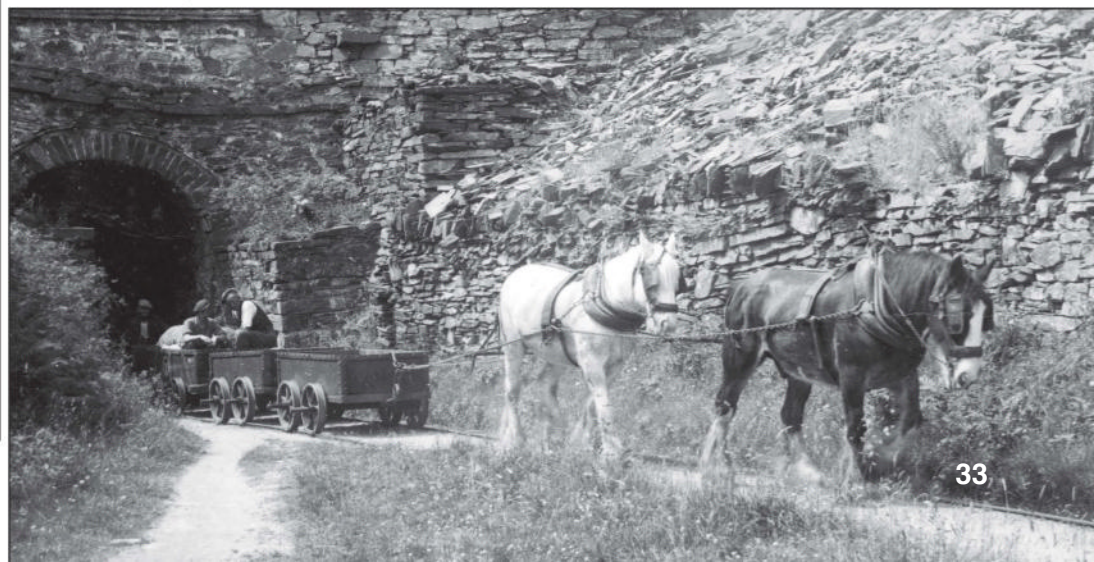
Nantlle Tramway had been carrying slate from quarries to Caernarfon along a 3ft 6in gauge line, originally using horse traction throughout.

As time went on, most of the route was converted to a standard gauge loco-hauled line, as part of the London & North Western Railway, but the two miles nearest the quarries remained as built and worked. Thus when the LNWR became part of the LMS in 1923, so did this short section of narrow gauge. Moreover, it survived in the same condition till

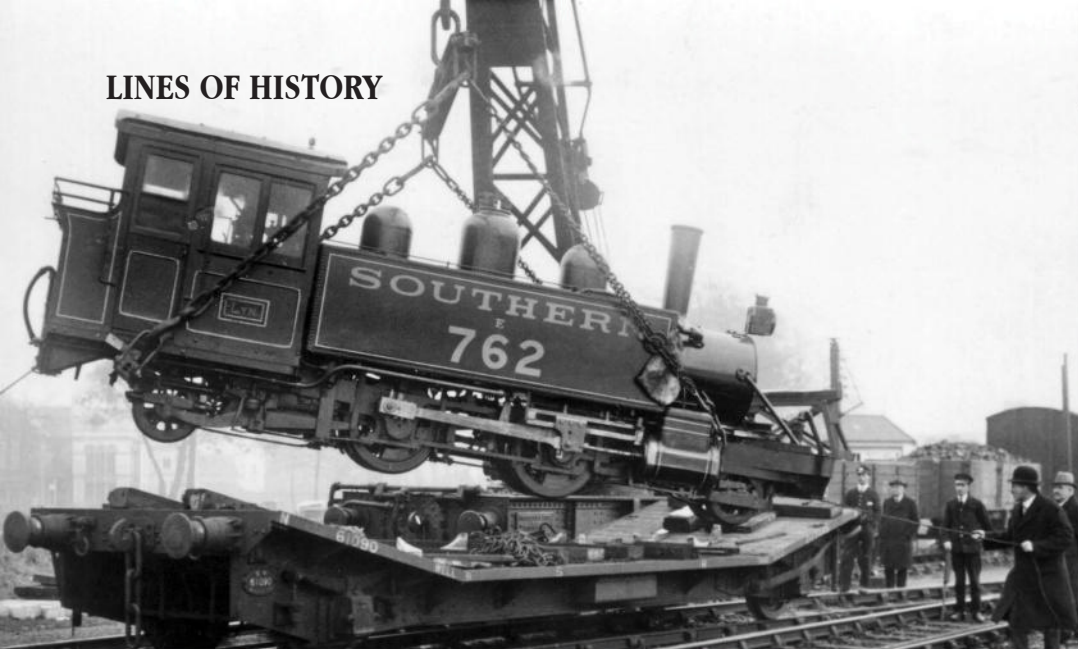
eventual closure in 1963, so for 15 years after Nationalisation in 1948, British Railways was owning and operating a section of narrow gauge, exclusively horse-worked line.

One for the Southern

In the south-west of England, the 21-mile long two-foot gauge Lynton & Barnstaple Railway had operated between those two towns since 1895. With its excellent permanent way and splendid locos and rolling stock, it was almost a main line in miniature. »



LINES OF HISTORY



Like so many other narrow gauge branch lines, however, it had cost too much to build and was impecunious. Traffic had not come up to forecasts, and it was not helped by the distance

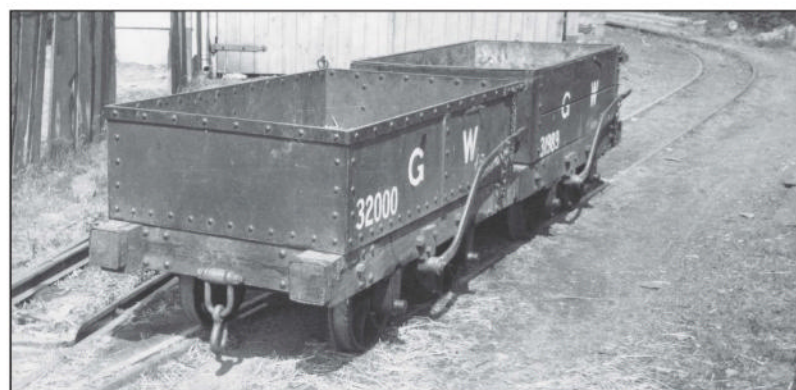
of the Lynton terminus from the twin villages of Lynton and Lynmouth it purported to serve.

By 1922, it was in discussions about a merger with the London &

Above: The Southern invested in the Lynton & Barstaple, adding a new loco and overhauling the others including 'Lyn' here, but the line closed in the same year as the Manifold. Photo: Peter Best/762 Club



Upper left: The GWR updated the Welshpool locos from their original specification seen here, but also ended the line's passenger service. Photo: W&LLR Archive



Left and below: On the Corris Railway the wagons displayed their new owners' initials but the locos never did, remaining as in this recreated scene featuring visiting original loco 'Edward Thomas'. Photos: Peter Johnson Collection and Joey Evans



South Western Railway (whose Barnstaple Town station it shared), but it has never been clear how far negotiations had progressed before the Grouping. In any event the L&B became part of the SR at that point, as of course did the LSWR itself.

The Southern behaved well towards the L&B in the early days. Infrastructure was renewed or improved, an additional locomotive was supplied, and there was also new rolling stock. But none of this altered the disinclination of locals to use the line, and the SR closed it in September 1935 after an unavailing campaign to save it.

As is well known, all the equipment was auctioned off shortly afterwards, with the stations and trackbed sold piecemeal to adjoining landowners. Nearly 70 years then elapsed before preservationists could take any practical steps to begin to restore the railway, even to its current transitional shape at Woody Bay.

Two plus one for the GWR

The Great Western Railway inherited two narrow gauge lines from its Cambrian Railways constituent at the Grouping, and later bought another (allegedly with great reluctance as part of a job lot). All three are operating at least partially today, so will be familiar to readers of *NGW*.

The late arrival was the 2ft 3in gauge Corris Railway, purchased with the Bristol Omnibus Company in 1930 by the GWR, which discontinued the line's passenger traffic in favour of buses in the following year and more or less ignored it thereafter. All the same, it was still operational at Nationalisation, though British Railways closed it almost immediately afterwards, rather than repair a flood-damaged bridge.

The two surviving locomotives were stored under tarpaulins at Machynlleth station, allegedly in an effort by Mr. Campbell Thomas, the stationmaster, to hide them from BR officials who might have intended to scrap them. However, there are so many pictures of them uncovered, that this must have been a futile effort even if true.

This writer's belief is that Mr Thomas knew the situation on the similarly-gauged Talylllyn Railway a few miles away, and took the view that sooner or later one or both of 'his' engines could be needed there – as duly came to pass when the pair were sold by BR to the Talylllyn preservationists in 1951. They have therefore carried the same numbers, 3 and 4, in four separate ownerships. Now, as *NGW* readers will know, an ongoing revival project is well under

way at the Corris, with replicas of both engines extant.

The Great Western's other two, formerly Cambrian, lines had been very different entities from the start, though opening within a year of each other. The 2ft gauge Vale of Rheidol Railway was situated amid a landscape of great scenic beauty and with a sizeable coastal town at one end, so its mineral traffic in the early 1900s was always subsidiary to a tourist passenger market.

The GWR did it proud during its period of ownership, maintaining (and improving) almost everything on the railway to its own high standards, and treating it as an integral revenue-earning constituent of the whole, although mineral traffic was discontinued entirely in 1931.

Only after Nationalisation did the VoR become an embarrassment (or anachronism) to British Railways for various reasons, and only determined efforts to halt a decline in maintenance and services by certain local BR management and staff enabled it to survive for long enough to be sold into private ownership in 1988. It is still among the smartest, if not necessarily the most characterful, of the surviving Welsh narrow gauge railways today.

The 2ft 6in gauge Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway has always been an anomaly. There was never any potential revenue from minerals or slate in Montgomeryshire, now Powys, and it catered only for local passengers sharing its mainly agricultural traffic. The Cambrian Railways operated it from its inception in 1903 until the Grouping, following which the Great Western kept it open until Nationalisation, despite withdrawing passenger traffic in 1931.

As in the case of the Rheidol, but not the Corris, the GWR maintained and repaired the locomotives to a high standard, and indeed improved and 'westernised' them during its period of ownership, to help prolong the railway's life. A basic freight service survived until closure in 1956, when the engines were stored but not scrapped. The line was not lifted (possibly through the good endeavours of the same BR guardian angel who cherished the VoR), as by then the idea of heritage railways run mainly by volunteers was taking root at Tywyn and Porthmadog not far away. As is well known, the W&LLR and the Vale of Rheidol have both since joined the ranks of lines in healthy preservation,

Fortunate survivors

Thus of the six 'grouped' narrow gauge railways discussed above, only



"So many of them are still here, unlike the many other minor railways and branch lines killed off..."

two (both of those inherited by the LMS) appear to be lost forever. After a closure period of 70 years, the Southern's Lynton & Barnstaple has been gradually coming to life again, fulfilling the hope of its 1935 well-wisher; 'Perchance it is not dead but sleepeth'.

All three lines owned by the Great Western at one stage are still extant in preservation, which must say something for their management at the time, as there were and are many

differences between them. One wonders if the politicians and railwaymen who devised the Grouping took much if any notice of the few and apparently insignificant narrow gauge railways which would be caught up in the net. They might be gratified that so many of them are still here, unlike the many other minor railways and branch lines killed off in the period after Nationalisation. Railway enthusiasts are fortunate in what has survived. **NGW**

This page: Today the Vale of Rheidol, Lynton & Barnstaple and Welshpool & Llanfair railways all celebrate their former 'Big Four' owners. Photos: Joey Evans, Trevor Garnham and Andrew Charman





■ The brand-new steam locomotive being built for the 15-inch gauge Perrygrove Railway by North Bay Railway Engineering was nearing completion early in April. The loco was due to be officially launched and named at the Forest of Dean line on 28th April and we will have a report on the event in next month's issue. *Photo: NBRE*

Statfold opens its Mease Valley line

The Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust officially opened the first stage of the latest line at the Tamworth narrow-gauge mecca on 18th March, the 12¼-inch gauge Mease Valley Railway immediately proving very popular with visitors.

The new line heads away from a purpose-built terminus located behind Statfold's recently constructed transport museum and exhibition centre – the station boasting a turntable and an impressive stock shed with raised lines.

The line traverses a level crossing over the entrance to the also-new car park and heads across fields into an area of the Statfold grounds that has not previously seen any railway activity. Currently it ends in a run-round loop by what is known as 'Duck Decoy Wood' but there are apparently plans to continue the line in a large return loop, enabling trains to head back to the main station and their locos then turned ready for the next train.

After a very wet opening day during which the line suffered a minor derailment, the Mease Valley was in operation again at Statfold's Model Railway weekend on 1st-2nd April, when services were shared by Exmoor Steam Railway-built 2-4-2T 'Victoria' – constructed originally for a

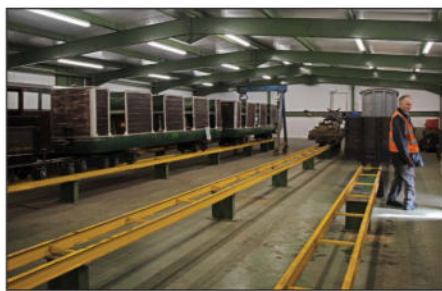
railway project in Tintern, south Wales that never went ahead, and diesel hydraulic loco 'No.73' – this was built by Alan Keef Ltd in 2005 for a private line in Devon which proved to be short-lived.

As reported in *NGW* 173 the passenger stock includes two carriages built for the 'People at Work' exhibition in Germany in 1937 and three constructed for the Liverpool Garden Festival Railway which only ran in 1984.

Above: 'Victoria' heads away from the main terminus with another train on 1st April. The line passes an impressive selection of railway mileposts collected over the years.

Below: The line has impressive facilities.

Photos: Andrew Charman



Seaton carries out £200K bridge work

Seaton Tramway reopened for its new season in February following a winter maintenance programme that included a £200,000 project to refurbish three bridges on the Devon line's route.

The major project this winter was on three of the line's bridges – the 2ft 9in gauge electric line is built on a former standard gauge trackbed with some original railway infrastructure re-used, including some of the beams and girders that make up Bobsworth Bridge.

The work, undertaken by outside contractors, took six weeks to complete and included blasting the current beams, installing new bridge girders and applying a new coating to the entire bridge.

The major works were completed early to allow tram services to resume for the February half-term service and weekends through March.

Work done during the winter also included track realignment north of Colyford, between Tye Lane North and East Devon Bridge.



Two of the three steel-bodied bogie carriages that the Statfold Barn Railway recently bought from the South Tynedale Railway were in use as a shelter at the first enthusiasts day of 2023 on 18th March. The STR sold off the carriages having purchased and regauged six former Vienna tram cars after receiving a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Photo: Peter Johnson

Unusual loop under threat?

NGW reader **Mick Bass** recently rode the 'Reunification Express' sleeper service on the metre-gauge route from Hanoi to Ho Chi Min city in **VIETNAM**, and described it as "quite an experience, perhaps not to everyone's taste but offering a unique glimpse of the Vietnamese people going about their business and very hospitable they are."

Mick reports that the extension north of Hanoi up to Halong Bay remains part-built and can be seen by the roadside on the bus journey – opening has been prevented by an apparent lack of funding.

The Vietnamese Government has been offered a new purpose-built electrified and double track high-speed line, funded by the Chinese as part of the 'belt and road' initiative. "This has been rejected as they have seen how these projects have financially crippled less wary countries, so the ragged selection of diesels continues to wend their way up and down the single track line over 1600km.

"There is plenty of freight traffic hand-loaded into covered vans to be seen in passing loops en route but most stations actively discourage you from lurking on platforms taking photos," Mick adds.

He also reports that one interesting aspect of the Vietnam route, the unique loop out and around the station at Nah Trang which ensures all trains pass through the station without the need to run around, might be on borrowed time.

"There are plans afoot to move the station further out of town and so do away with the experience of leaving the station only to pass through the town's closely packed houses nmd to reappear a few minutes later at the station entrance."



The distinct loop at Nah Trang is under threat (above), but freight on the Vietnam lines appears bouyant (below). **Photo: Mick Bass**



Railmotors boost newly open Queensland line

The Atherton Herberton Historic Railway in northern Queensland, **AUSTRALIA** has recovered two former Queensland Rail railmotors for future use on its now operating heritage line.

The two, transported from the QR facility in Ipswich, are fitted with Rolls-Royce engines and in need of restoration.

The organisation owns 22km of 3ft 6in gauge line and in March began offering steam-hauled rides along part of the route using newly overhauled Peckett 0-4-0ST no 1069, built in 1905.

Preservation of the line began shortly after closure in 1990 but a Government decision to remove rather than raise a rail bridge to allow road coaches to pass under it divided the line and the revival effort – preservation at Atherton continued initially but was then abandoned in 2000.

In 2003 the effort was revived and

following a seven-year long \$170,000 programme to overhaul the Peckett, which last worked at the Mount Isa mine in 1955, and a wooden bogie carriage of 1913, services have begun this season. These run along 3km of the line between Herberton railway station and the town's Historic Village tourist attraction.

Future plans include the restoration of a second Mount Isa Peckett and the two railmotors that are planned to be used on extended services from Herberton to Moomin and eventually from Atherton to Herberton. This will require significant work including the rebuilding of bridges.

More details of the project can be found at www.athrail.com/

Above: The rescued railmotors will need full restoration.

Right: Steam services with the Peckett began in March.

Photos: AHHR



All change at top of the Harz

The Harzer Schmalspurbahnen GmbH (HSB) will have a new managing director from 1st July, Katrin Müller succeeding long-standing MD Matthias Wagener, who is retiring.

Katrin has been with HSB for 12 years and previously headed marketing and sales.

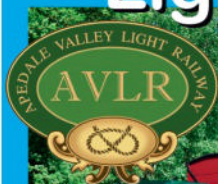
Supervisory Board Chairman Thomas Balcerowski expressed his great gratitude to the retiring MD. "Matthias Wagener took over responsibility for the HSB after the political turnaround and made it an important tourist beacon in the Harz Mountains," Balcerowski said, pointing out that Mr Wagener had initially taken on the role on a temporary basis in May 1997.

Below: All change: Matthias Wagener (left) prepares to hand over to Katrin Müller with HSB Supervisory Board Chairman Thomas Balcerowski.

Photo: Dirk Bahnsen/HSB



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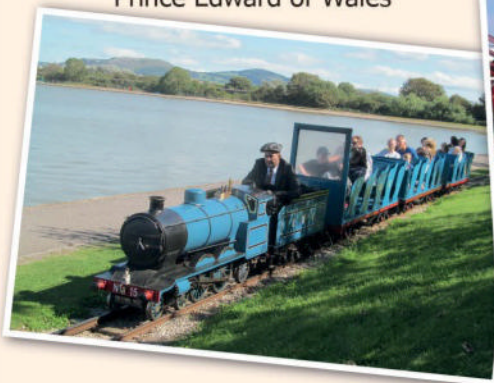
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Not the Last Trek North...

What wasn't eventually a finale for the Narrow Gauge North show was again a big success..

Even the sudden and unwelcome arrival of late winter snow could not stop the latest Narrow Gauge North show in Leeds proving another success on 11th March.

We reported in *NGW*173 that 2023 was expected to see the finale of the long-running show. Peter Kirkby, organiser for many years had handed over duties to his son Andrew who undertook much of the organisation for this year's event, but then sadly died in January – the show went ahead as a tribute to Andrew.

Visitors turned out in numbers, attracted by more than 20 layouts in various scales and a good smattering of traders. And at the end of the day some £2,400 was able to be donated to the Sue Ryder Care-Wheatfields Hospice.

More good news followed too, as Narrow Gauge North will now continue – the date for the next show has already been set on 9th March 2023, at the same venue of the Pudsey Civic Hall.

If any *NGW* reader has a layout that they would like to be considered for the 2023 show, they can email details to admin@narrowgaugenorth.co.uk

No-one will be more pleased that the show is continuing than *NGW* editor Andrew Charman. Having never managed to attend the event, and aware of its connection with the magazine which sponsored the first show in 1994, Andrew was determined to make it this year, only to get snowed in! Living up a hill in mid Wales is lovely, most of the year...

Above: Irish country station theme on the 7mm scale Donegal layout.

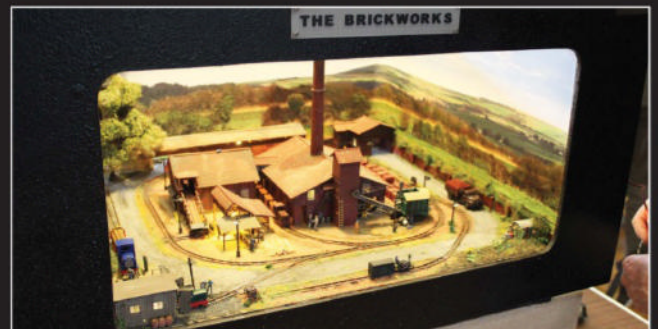
Upper right: Packed hall held plenty for the many visitors to enjoy.

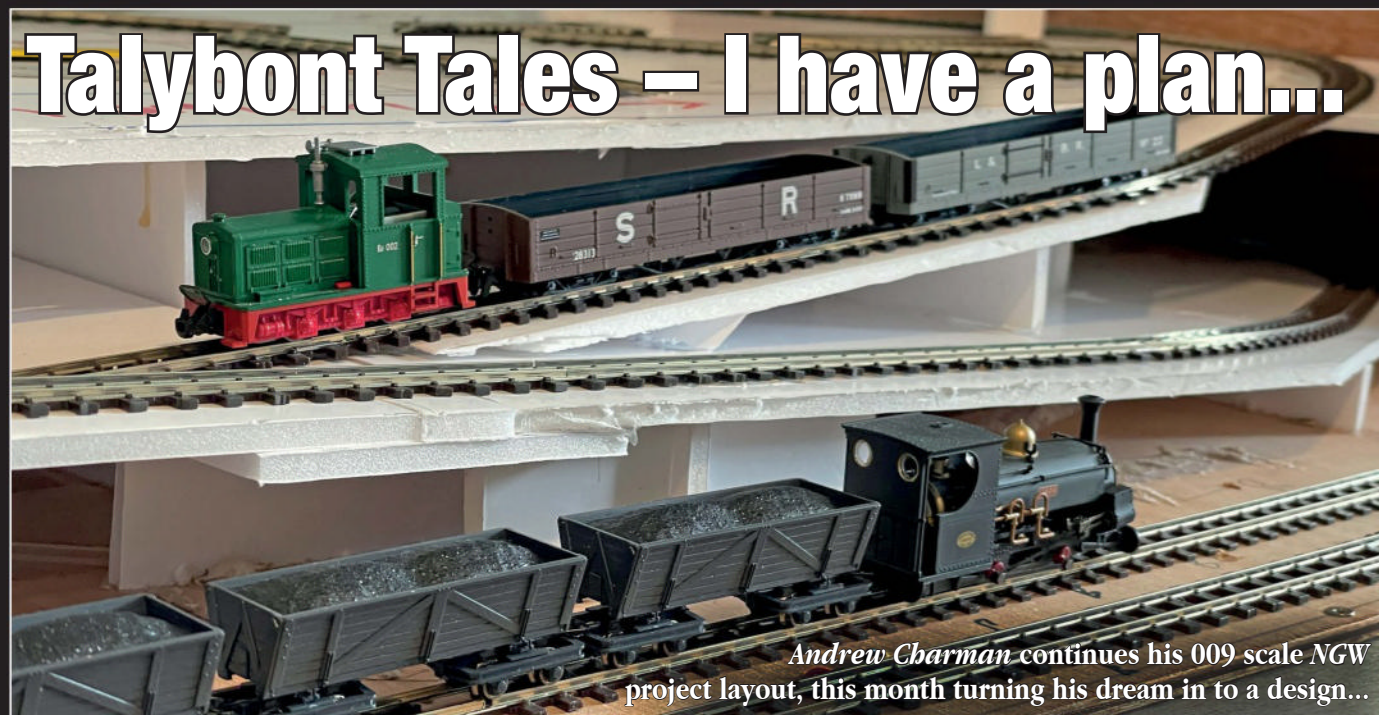
Lower right: Definitely in the small and delightful category, The Brickworks in H09 scale.

Below left: Detail makes all the difference...

Below: Shay action on the American-themed Karolina Falls in On30 scale.

All model photos by Thomas Whitelegg





Andrew Charman continues his 009 scale NGW project layout, this month turning his dream in to a design...

In *NGW* 173 we launched our 009 (4mm to the foot) project layout and built the 4ft x 2½ft baseboard for it. Next it was time to decide what was going on it.

Time spent on design is essential to a successful model railway – get it wrong and the layout will frustrate you and soon be abandoned. As mentioned last time, my design was based first on practical considerations – I needed a test track for review models received at *NGW* Towers. So the basis of the layout would be an oval to provide a continuous run, most of which I decided would be hidden and from which a second oval would climb to an upper level forming the scenic section.

My concept was an intermediate halt on a major narrow-gauge heritage line, the Talybont Railway (see panel for more). A former slate quarry once served by the railway has been taken over by enthusiasts and turned into a railway museum. This would enable me to have stock of various provenance on the model while the idea has some prototype inspiration – in the 1970s there was a plan to turn the former Pen-yr Orsedd slate quarry in Snowdonia into a museum and narrow gauge equipment was gathered there for a while.

First step was to figure out where the bottom-level trackwork, to include a small loop and fiddle yard siding, was going to go

on my board, and I admit I used the tools of my trade here, the same software I employ when designing pages for *NGW*. I created a new 'page', a scaled version of my baseboard dimensions, drew curves which I could move about the page, and downloaded plans of the points I'd be using from the Peco website, scaling them to an equivalent size. Peco is not the only manufacturer of 009 track but it is used by the vast majority of modellers, and helpfully correct-sized images of various bits of pointwork can be downloaded from the website. More on track matters directly...

As a result I soon had a plan for the base level, part of which is reproduced on this page. This would, however, prove to be very much a 'Mk1' plan... Meanwhile I couldn't, at this stage, get my head around planning the upper, scenic levels, and decided that these could wait until I'd built the lower level and then perhaps I'd scheme things out directly onto the board.

Full-size plan

By now you are thinking "I haven't got expensive desktop publishing software..." Well you don't need it – I made for myself an extra complication and could have done just as well by planning from the start using the way I transferred my plan to the board. You either print out the diagrams of the

pointwork full-size, or even better buy a couple of points, and use these to directly plan your layout onto the board...

There are a few essential considerations to make before you break out the felt-tip pens. Firstly, what will your minimum radius be? Sharp curves are of course a part of narrow gauge and an excuse for many modellers to cram quite a lot onto a small board, but it is recommended you don't go less than nine-inch radius, also widely known as 'first radius' in both 009 and N – 2mm scale standard gauge which uses the same 9mm track width.

Most locomotives and stock, including the Bachmann range, will go round nine-inch curves without suffering issues such as locking couplings, but I'm told that larger locomotives, such as the Heljan Lynton locos, can have problems.

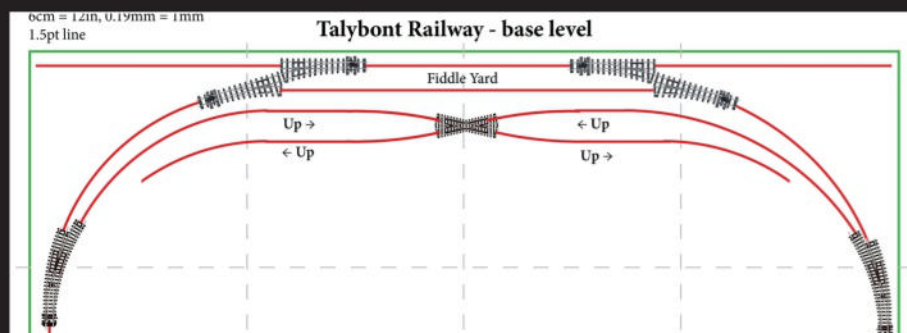
Choose your frog

This also leads into the thorny subject of electrics, which we will look at more closely in a future episode. What you need to know for now is that Peco produces two forms of 009 track and points – the 'Crazy Track' from the early days and a more realistic main-line track. The smallest point, of nine-inch radius, is made in Crazy Track style and is an 'Insulfrog' unit; change it from one direction to another and only the way it is set will receive track power – the other is

Heading: Second version of gradient proved simpler and with far fewer issues.

Left: Part of the original lower-level plan. Note that the hidden track, or that with sleepers covered by ballast, can make use of N-gauge track which has far more choice available. The Insulfrog curved points were eventually rejected due to their long dead frogs.

All photos/diagrams by Andrew Charman

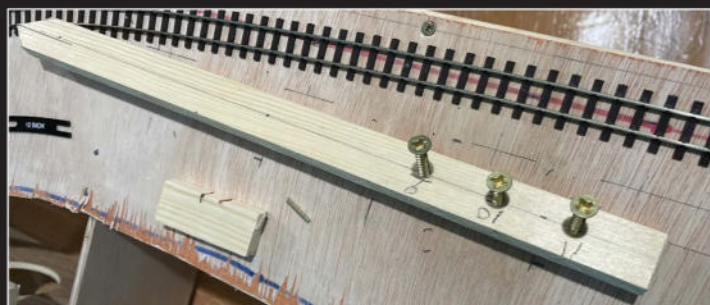


Right: Difference between dead-frog points (left) and live-frog equivalents.

Far right, upper: Tracksettas make creating smooth curves a doddle.

Far left, lower: Simple tool for drawing correct radius curves.

Below left: The first attempt at a gradient was eventually abandoned for the setup shown in the heading photo.



isolated, which on the face of it seems great.

The tightest point in Peco's normal 009 range is of 12-inch radius and there is also a Y-point, both of which are 'Electrofrog' – this means that the 'un-set' direction has its electric polarity changed but not turned off, meaning some extra wiring is needed.

So going for small radius and simple wiring would seem a no-brainer. Except that the Insulfrog points achieve their isolation by the central frogs being plastic – the picture above shows what I mean. In the old days short-wheelbased narrow gauge engines used to come to a dead stop on these plastic frogs, and while such issues are much less common today than they were in the 1970s when I was last working in 009 we also now have *very* short wheelbased locos such as Bachmann's quarry Hunslet...

I decided that I would only have dead-frog points in the fiddle yard, which no-one will see, and where locos were unlikely to go, such as some of the sidings in my quarry. I would take on the extra electrics, which in fact are not as daunting as it may seem, even though I was planning that my layout would be DCC-powered with locos controlled individually – a full explanation to follow in a future episode...

Smoothing the curves

The other useful thing to have when transferring your ideas to your baseboard is a Tracksetta. These inexpensive lengths of metal, made in a range of radii, are designed to fit into flexible track to produce smooth curves when pinning the track down. But they are also useful at the planning stage for marking out where your lines need to go. I also made a simple radius tool, comprising a piece of wood with a pointer cut at one end and holes drilled at nine, 10 and 11 inches from it. I simply screw a self-tapping screw into the hole and then pivot the pointer on it to draw a correct curve. Simple!

Having marked out my lower level, I then cut out the centre section of my baseboard top panel. I did not need this section and removing it would save some weight while providing access to the underside of the scenic boards to sort

electric feeds and such. But on reflection I should have cut four holes in the top board and left a central spine in both directions, as this would have helped with the rigidity of the baseboard as a whole. A lesson learnt, and this demonstrates what I stated last time – even if you have the space and time to build an extensive layout, it's best to start with a small section as you will make plenty of mistakes that will help with later layouts (I haven't told Mrs C yet that layout number two is sketched out in my head...).

I then laid the track on the base level and even ran a train! This will be described in detail next month, but my main reason was so I could plan the upper level and test just how steep a gradient up to it I could get away with...

All modellers will tell you that any gradient should be as shallow as you can manage, and I admit the ones on my layout are pushing the limit... Initially it looked as if I was in trouble. I thought I'd been clever by scheming in a crossover so that I could run the two ascending lines back towards the edge of the baseboard and free up more space on the upper level. But of course you cannot have a crossover that twists in two directions – it had to be level, losing several centimetres of climbing space.

Not only were the gradients either side too steep, the change from climbing to level and then to climbing again resulted in couplings routinely parting. After several days of experiments I eventually bit the bullet and rebuilt the whole section, without a crossover. As I said, you learn from your mistakes...

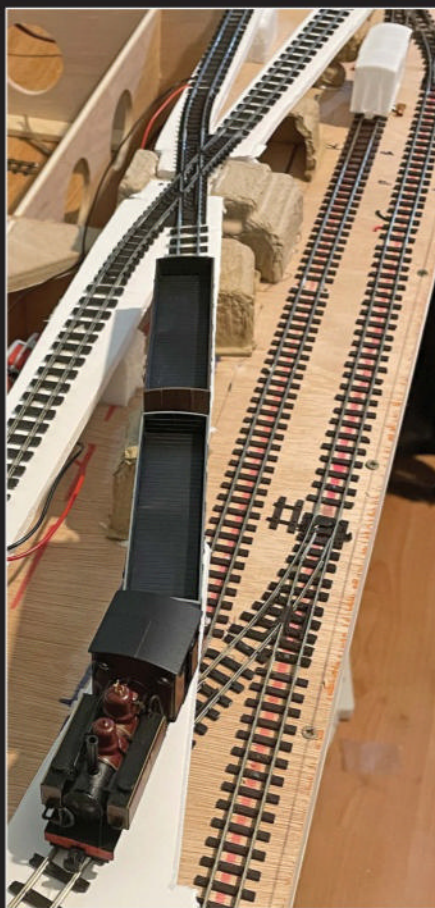
So at the end of all this, I had a working lower section and I could start adding the upper boards and scheming out the scenic upper levels. But before I talk about that, next month I'll go into detail about the unique art, and yes sometimes frustration, of tracklaying in 009 scale... **NGW**

■ Readers wanting to read the first part of this series can order a printed or digital back-number of **NGW173** at <https://www.world-of-railways.co.uk/store/back-issues/narrow-gauge-world>

Why Talybont?

All of my 'indoor' layouts over the years have been versions of a fictional line called the Talybont Railway. As a child on holiday in mid-Wales in the 1970s I saw the name outside a village – it sounded so close to Tallylyn, a railway we visited on most holidays, and suitably Welsh!

In fact the name means 'Tall Bridge' and there are several Talybonts dotted throughout Wales – there is even a tiny one just outside Welshpool close to **NGW** Towers. So Talybont Railway it is, and maybe one day I'll build the complete model line that's been in my head for much of my life!



009 – my part in the story...

As a follow-up to our feature last month, *Paul Towers* describes the formative years of 009, 'from the inside'...

The Editor writes: Our 'brief guide to the rise of 009 scale' in *NGW173* produced a gentle chiding from a good friend to the magazine, veteran railway modeller Paul Towers, that he rated not a mention!

In our defence it was never meant to be an in-depth history – but I have to admit that although I have known Paul for some years, not being a reader of *Model Railway News* when he was editor (I was a *Railway Modeller* man...) I was not aware of his prime role in the formative years of 009 – so I asked him to tell the tale...

Way back In April 1958 a friend and I were strolling around Westminster prior to going to the theatre in the evening. We stumbled across a model railway show and while we had both thought of building a model railway, we had no idea how to go about it. I had been interested in railways for a long time and was fascinated by narrow gauge having seen the Festiniog (as it was spelt then) and the Snowdon Mountain Railway (the latter hardly typical narrow gauge).

We saw a lot of layouts at the Model Railway Club's exhibition but one was a life-changing moment for me. This was the Milwehr and Llenli Railway, a magnificent layout in OOn2 (4mm scale running on 8mm track). Fortunately the *Railway Modeller* had the current issue on its stand featuring this layout.

Searching for NG

I started taking all three model railway magazines published at that time – disappointingly there was little narrow gauge but there were rare articles by P D Hancock on his home-based Craig and Mertonford (then OOn2) and Derek

Naylor's Aire Valley (OOn3 – 12mm gauge). This led me into trying my hand in that gauge as TT3 items were available to adapt. I struggled along with this and a few cast wagons for 8mm gauge for a few years.

In 1963 one of the ladies who worked with me showed me a copy of the *Daily Mirror* in which was a picture of a lady's high-heeled shoe with a circle of track and a diesel loco on it. I got straight on to the *Mirror's* picture department and they told me that it was something that had caught their eye at the Nuremberg Toy Fair.

It was from a firm named Egger and was called Eggerbahn – it was 00 scale on 9mm gauge track. I was on to it in a shot and my previous work was scrapped. I started collecting bits of Eggerbahn and commissioned a scratchbuilt model of a single Fairlie from Bec Models. It cost me all of £30 – a vast amount of money in those days. That model is now with the O09 Society.

I fiddled around with this until May 1965 when I was appointed Editor of *Model Railway News*. Funnily enough, more narrow gauge articles started appearing in the magazine until I took the bull by the horns – from then every month included a section called *Narrow Gauge and Industrial Miscellany*.

'Not proper'

I got a lot of stick as it 'wasn't proper railways' but I took no notice. Then the magazine and its sisters moved to a new company in Hemel Hempstead and, by chance, at the other end of town was a firm called Richard Kohnstam and Co, importers of Eggarbahn. Dickie and I became firm friends and the first new Egger item that came in arrived at my office for review.



In 1966 Jack Shortland, my Assistant Editor, and I took a working holiday in North Wales and one evening we were invited out on a special trip on the Festiniog behind 'Blanche' so that the general manager Alan Garraway could take some publicity photos of her. When we got back to Boston Lodge he took us to see a little loco that they had – the quarry Hunslet 'Britomart'. I was immediately taken by this loco and her sisters.

The next day we went to the head office of the Dinorwic Quarry (as it was then spelt) to get permission to visit their works. This was immediately arranged and we duly arrived at Gilfach Ddu to be shown around by the then Manager. We only went around the workshops but we did see some more Alice-class locos and I was completely captivated. When we got back into the office I was on to Don Townsley and he produced a series of drawings comprising the Alice and Port classes and 'Jerry M'.

One person I got to know during this time was Mike Elvy who was very much involved with the Festiniog Railway. He wanted to sell a kit for a Festiniog loco and we spent a complete evening trying to think of a loco and a commercial chassis to



Above: The first advertising photograph by Egger. Photo by courtesy of the late Bill Luty

Left: Paul and his friend and joint operator Jo Vincent with what he claims will be his final layout in 009 scale, 'Llandyrau'.

go under it. On the way home I thought of the Alco 'Mountaineer' and a chassis to go in it. He contacted George Mellor (of *GEM Models*) and a kit was produced. I won't claim it was the first 009 British outline model but it was pretty well near it.

About this time I had, by chance, met up with a gentleman named David Mander and he wrote a couple of articles for me. This was after he entertained me at his house and introduced me to his magnificent Stronachloch Railway in his loft. This had started as a 00n2 layout but was converted to 009. He was a toolmaker by trade and all the locos were made by him. David died much too young – I was pleased that he left me all his locos and stock and the locos are now in the keeping of the 009 Society.

First effort

My first completed 009 layout was built for me whilst I was Editor of *MRN* by none other than Cyril Birch (of 'Ynys Gwyntog' fame) and was first shown at Hemel Hempstead in 1967. It was a 4x2 oval with a harbour in the front and was called Ecroux. The locos were Hunslets on Egger chassis built by the late Pete Brennand.

In mid 1967 I left *MRN* but continued modelling and started writing articles for Cyril Freezer in the *Railway Modeller*. The most significant was a series on David Mander's Stronachloch. I also wrote about Doreen and Andy Andrews's Torandor Valley Railway which was appearing at exhibitions at that time.

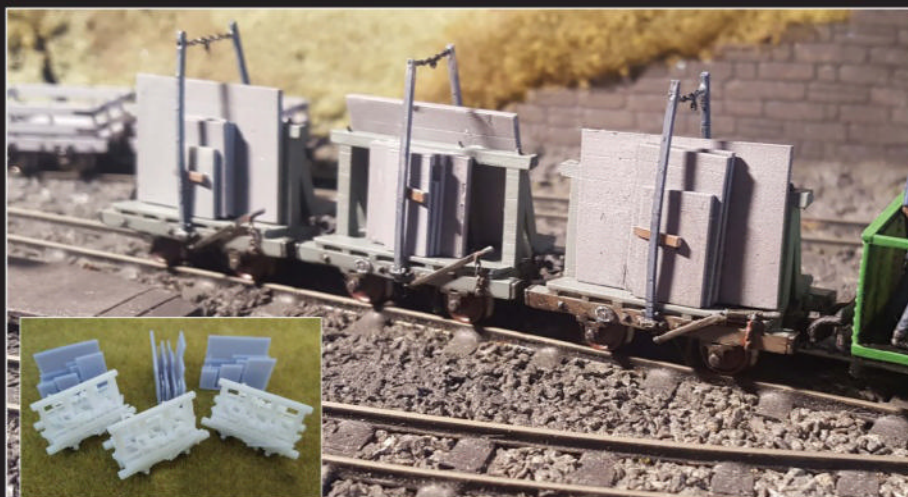
However 009 was by then suffering from many rabbit-warren layouts, an idea that Cyril Freezer devised in the *RM*. The trouble was, that although there were one or two good ones, the majority were jokes built by 'serious' modellers in OO who thought it was funny to have a minute layout with a train chasing its tail in and out of tunnels; layouts that did not bear any resemblance to a narrow gauge line. Two of my many 6ft by 1ft layouts were named Futtocks End and Bumble Hole.

Sometime in the mid 1990s the 009 Society made me an Honorary Life Member, apparently 'In Recognition of Extensive Work in Promoting Interest and Publicising Small Scale Narrow Gauge Railway Modelling'.

Worth waiting for

Now that the commercial side of railway modelling has started realising the market for 009, my dreams of many years have been fulfilled with accurate models of actual locos and stock.

My final 009 layout is 'Llandyrau', now in the care of my friend and joint operator Jo Vincent. It appeared at the Warley National a few years ago and other shows. I have now moved to 09 (7mm scale minimum gauge railways on 9mm gauge) but my next creation will be a small layout for my home use in 7mm standard gauge, modelling the Wantage Tramway – well out of the remit of this magazine! **NGW**



Slab sides from Brooks

In *NGW*172 we detailed the growing range of 009 scale 3D-printed stock available from new manufacturer Brooks 3D and in *NGW*173 we reviewed some of the company's Welshpool & Llanfair vans. Well now Nigel Brooks has been in touch with his latest releases, a set of slab wagons, in this case examples from the Corris Railway.

While a very familiar part of the slate industry scene these wagons can be very tricky to model in 009, so the Brooks kits are welcome. Nigel does add, however, that the kit includes all the individual slate slabs, poles, wedges and various chains, with spares, but these can be fiddly and delicate to add, so the kit is not one for beginners.

The kits cost £19 per set of three or £34 for a set of six – these wagons were seldom used singly. They can be ordered at www.brooks3dmodels.com

Nigel has also alerted us to his probable future releases which include several items 009 modellers will find useful. In likely order of release they include Snailbeach hopper wagons, Penrhyn rubbish wagons which will be able to be optionally ordered with correct double-flanged wheels, Ffestiniog slate wagons in the later London North Western and Great Western design, the iconic open Penrhyn quarryman's carriage, an open carriage from the Leighton Buzzard Railway and a Ruston & Hornsby diesel loco body kit for the 44/48 version that worked at RAF Fauld.

■ Roving model reporter *Phil Parker* recently spotted a couple of interesting creations on his travels. At right the under design Pechot-Bourdon will be the next model from Boot Lane Works (<http://bootlane.org.uk>) – it was due to be launched at the National Garden Railway Show on 15th April. "A bit bigger than their normal models, and I'll admit, quite tempting," Phil says.

Spotted for sale at a recent LGB day at Garden Railway Services in Princes Risborough was the remarkable one-off K27 below, in 3½-inch gauge and described by Phil as "a static, made from wood and junk – it was a stunning model, five feet long, and only £500. It was probably a good thing for me that it was already sold when I got there..."



The Hendre Ddu Tramway – 'Blue Stones and Green Trees' by Dan Quine

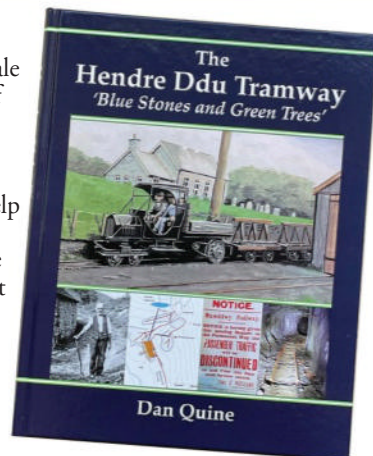
Many books are published on the narrow gauge but without doubt the most interesting are those that throw new light on obscure systems, those that have previously only been mentioned in brief or included in round-ups of more wide-ranging subjects. The authors of such works really have to work hard on their subject, the obscurity making it a much harder task to track down sources of information to produce a full story.

Dan Quine, author of this new work on the tramway that served one of the much lesser-known quarries of the Welsh slate industry, is certainly an author that does his homework. Dan is a regular contributor to *NGW* and indeed a piece based on the research for the book appears in this month's issue. It will give readers a good idea of just how detailed a story is related in this 220-page high quality hardback, the kind we've got used to from this publisher.

No avenue is left unexplored – the book opens with the first quarrying operations in 1865 and chapter by chapter describes the various stages that saw the slate working in the area served by the tramway expand and then inevitably decline, the final act being Forestry Commission tramways worked after 1948. The tramways and their operation are fully described, as is each individual quarry, and there is a chapter on rolling

stock which includes excellent scale drawings, despite the difficulty of figuring out just what the stock used on these lines looked like.

Plenty of top quality period photos and multi-colour maps help create a full picture of the subject in what is a definitive work. Note too that this is a reprint – the first print published last year sold out very quickly. All narrow gauge enthusiasts will find the book of great interest but you should not hang about getting hold of a copy, especially if you are a student of the slate industry... *AC*



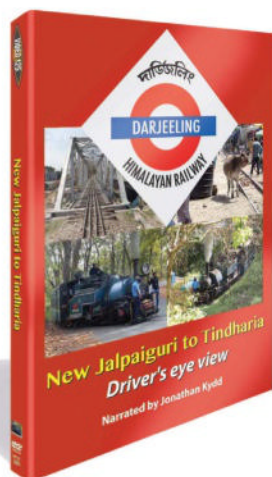
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■ Back in 2020 we reviewed a new and totally absorbing DVD from the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society, which provided exactly as its title suggested – a Driver's Eye View of the upper half of the railway, from Tindharia to Darjeeling, giving viewers a real impression of what it is like to crew a loco on this unique and famous Indian line.

We eagerly awaited the 'other half' and at last it's coming! Unfortunately it's just missed this issue's print deadline but we hope to publish a full review next month. We are assured quality and production are at the same high level as Part 2. Prices have been held at the same level as Part 2 at £25 for the DVD and £30 for the BluRay, with discounts for DHRS members. Details are at the DHRS shop, www.dhrs.org

Festiniog Law by Stephen Murfitt

You thought that just about everything that could be written on the history of the Festiniog Railway had already appeared in print – not at all! This rather different book focuses not on the surveyors or engineers but those who have had to tackle the often highly complex legal requirements that have arisen over the past 150 years or more.

You won't be surprised to hear that the author, Stephen Murfitt, is a lawyer himself, and honorary solicitor to the FR company, having first been introduced to the line when he trained as a volunteer locomotive fireman.

Stephen can write too – while the subject matter will definitely not be for everyone, and could so easily fall into the trap of being very dry and boring, it is actually presented in a very readable and interesting form. We are taken from heavyweight areas such as the creation of the statutory company and how litigation of 1868 added to the common law of Wales, through civil disputes, accidents, compensation cases and more. Of course the infamous battle over the Welsh Highland Railway reopening features as do the efforts to win compensation from the electricity authorities for flooding part of the route, but there is also much more to a title that your reviewer found surprisingly absorbing. *AC*

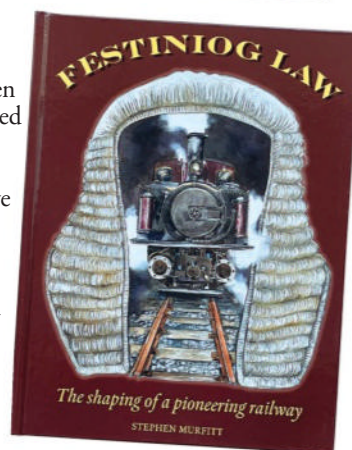
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1



Lots more on the 4ft

James Waite's article on 4ft gauge railways in *NGW* 173 set me trawling my photo collection. The Cambrian Railways' Porthywaen branch shared with its coast line at Portmadoc (now Porthmadog) in having a mixed-gauge crossing, with the 4ft gauge Whitehaven Quarry at the former and the 2ft gauge Welsh Highland Railway at the latter.

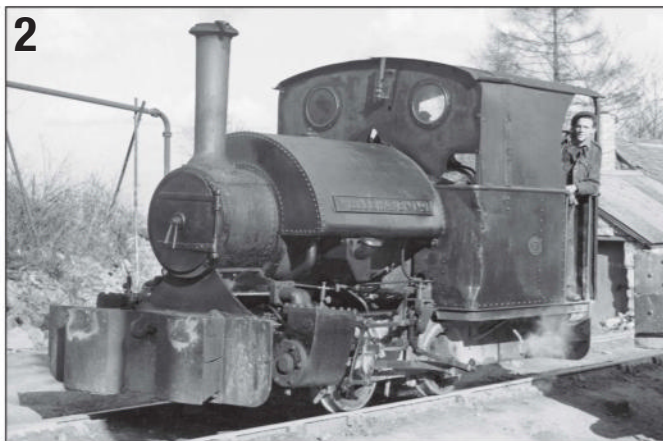
My first photograph (photo 1) shows a standard-gauge train on the crossing and the second (photo 2) one of the quarry's Bagnalls, 'Whitehaven No. 1', this was taken by George Alliez.

Regarding the Assheton-Smith

private railway, known by enthusiasts as the Padarn Railway, between Llanberis and Port Dinorwic (nowadays known as Velinheli) I have enclosed a photograph (Photo 3) of Horlock 0-4-0 'Jenny Lind' in steam at Gilfach Ddu. I think this image has only been previously published in a tightly cropped form and never from an original print.

In her book about the Penrhyn and Dinorwic railways (David & Charles, 1975) Susan Turner said that this was the only photograph of one of the Horlock locomotives in steam but on a lantern slide image of a slate train during shunting operations (Photo 4), the chimney of one of

2



Photos 1-5:
Narrow gauge historian and regular *NGW* contributor **Peter Johnson** has raided his archive to find more examples of 4ft gauge lines. For full details of each photo see Peter's letter.

them can be seen. Another lantern slide (Photo 5) shows two of the velocipedes used by the quarries before they got their own train.

Peter Johnson

Andrew C replies: Fascinating stuff Peter of rare but also fascinating examples of the narrow gauge...

Vivarais diesel conundrum

I was interested to learn from *NGW* 173 that the Brissonneau & Lotz locos which had been amongst the attractions of the Provence system had been obtained by the CF Vivarais but would query the statement that BB403 (or 040-003 if it's regained its original number) had been up until then the only diesel on the Vivarais.

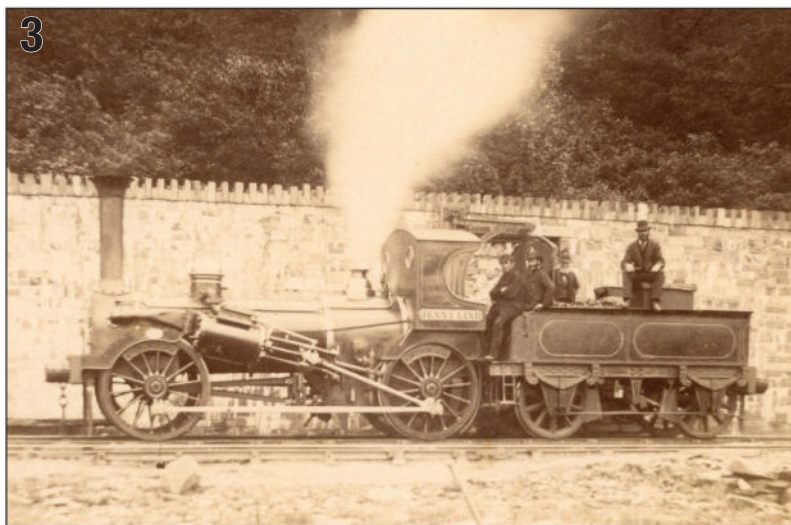
Even leaving aside the indigenous shunters X and Y, I understood from *Voie Etroite* for Feb-March 2012 that the CFC's 405 had been transferred to the Vivarais along with BB404 (as it was then numbered) and the former was certainly at Lamastre in September 2017, albeit in non-operational condition.

While writing, do you know if any of the last three Renault ABH railcars to run on the Provence line survive?

Guy Brigen

Andrew C replies: Your editor freely admits to French internal combustion locos not being his strong point! Can any reader answer Guy's query?

3



Got a point to raise or a question to ask of a narrow gauge nature? Send to editor Andrew Charman at the editorial address on page 3.



5



From a Different age...



Cape Bedfordshire...

Reader **Mick Bass** set us a challenge by claiming “I absolutely bet no-one has sent you a picture of working UK Cape-gauge steam for a while!”

Mick's picture was taken in 1979 November at Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire. Built in 1896 by Sharp Stewart, the former Cape Government Railways 4-8-0 loco owned by wildlife artist David Shepherd and displayed at the zoo on a short length of 3ft 6in gauge track was being steamed, on what Mick describes as “a bit of coal and a whole pile of zoo-chopped trees. Ron Druce was the custodian and it was probably only steamed four or five times as it probably took a bit of persuading to get the boiler passed!”

As reported in *NGW* 169 in 2022 the loco took up residence at the National Railway Museum in York.



■ Finally an example of the ‘seldom seen’. Phil Barnes, another regular in our pages, sent us the shot at right with the following explanation. “Since the beginning of this year, I have been doing a bit of volunteering at Amberley Museum and have found a niche on permanent way work – track inspections which lead to fixing problems with fishplates and rail securing bolts. We also often have a couple of sleepers to change (like you find).

The photo shows the p-way engineering train which is packed with all the gear that you need to maintain the trackwork. This is something that is not normally seen, other than when its ‘services’ are needed.

The rest of the time it lives in a shed – the train that enables everything to happen hidden away...



Unexpected Narrow Gauge...



A find at Hetton

I was recently exploring the remains of the Hetton Colliery Railway near Hetton in County Durham (*writes regular NGW contributor Matt Ditch*). I was aware that the original 1910-built railway waggon repair shop was still standing on an industrial estate within the town.

What was I was not aware of, was that a small section of narrow gauge track is still visible exiting the works. The building the track enters looks to be a later addition to the original structure – at as guess I would say it was for the repair of narrow gauge mining equipment.

The building is currently used by Trackwork, which manufactures track-related components. Sadly in 2021 the company announced that it intended to demolish the building based on its condition, although nearly two years later it does still appear to be in use by them.

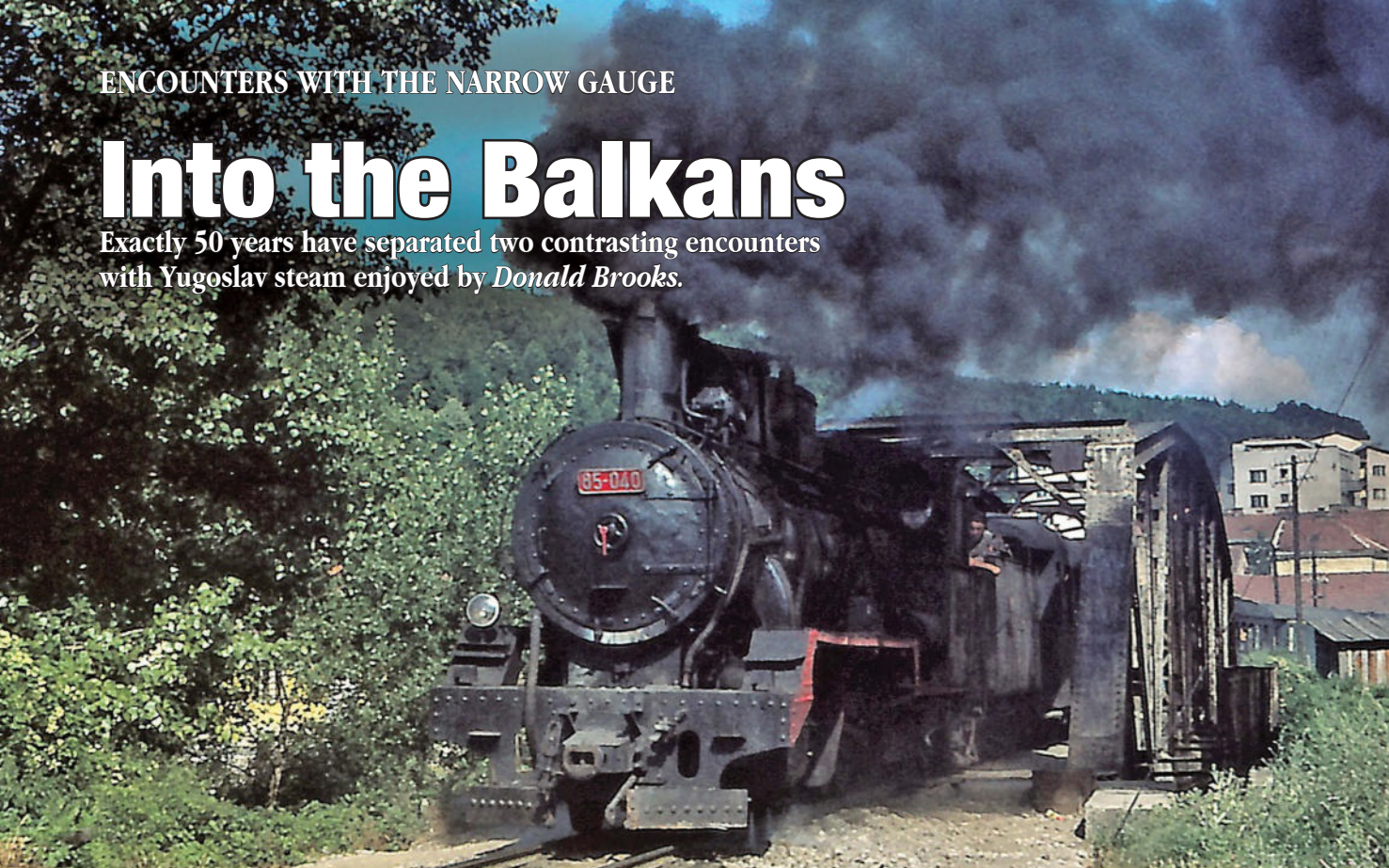
■ If any reader can provide more information please get in touch via the address on page 3.



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Into the Balkans

Exactly 50 years have separated two contrasting encounters with Yugoslav steam enjoyed by *Donald Brooks*.



Above: Yugoslav steam at its finest back in July 1973. 2-8-2 no 85.040, Slavonski Brod 27 of 1940, crosses the River Đetinja immediately after leaving Titovo Užice.

Below: 97-028, Floridsdorf 2149 of 1913, at the head of a train of very ramshackle wagons displayed in the grounds of the Slovenian Railway Museum, Ljubljana, this photo taken in July 2022.

Photos by Donald Brooks

Back in July 1973 a friend and I were travelling around Europe in search of steam. It was the second year of Inter-Rail and we certainly got value for money out of our tickets, seeing locomotives in action from Portugal to Greece and most points in-between. But for both of us the undoubted highlight was the 760mm gauge main line, then worked by a mix of steam and diesel traction, that connected Sarajevo in Bosnia with Titovo Užice in Serbia.

Not that we knew anything about either Bosnia or Serbia at the time. As far as we were concerned it was all simply Yugoslavia – we were blissfully unaware of the complex ethnic, national and religious background that makes the area so volatile.

Nor did we realise that Sarajevo – Užice was in effect two railways, an early 20th century line from Sarajevo to the Serbian border in support of

Austrian Imperial interests and the later Yugoslav connection through to Belgrade. Part of the Serbian section, the celebrated climb over the Šargan mountains, was reconstructed following closure in 1974 and still provides a heritage service today.

We saw a lot in 1973 but there was so much more we could have seen. We did not realise that the end was fast approaching for Yugoslavia's narrow gauge and we should at least have taken the diesel railcar over the spectacular route from Čapljina down to Dubrovnik and on to Nikšić. There was also the Steinbeisbahn main line from Prijedor to Lička Kaldrma, a fascinating journey even behind a class 740 diesel.

We were probably already too late to see one of Yugoslavia's major narrow gauge attractions, the class 97 rack and adhesion 0-6+4 locomotives constructed from the late 19th

century for services over the Ivan and Komar passes. The Ivan pass, well-known in the UK from Pat Whitehouse's book *On the Narrow Gauge*, had closed in 1966, replaced by a new standard gauge line to the Adriatic coast.

Unseen steam

The Komar Pass line, between Travnik and Donji Vakuf north-west of Sarajevo, remained open, though passenger services had been withdrawn the month before our visit. Diesel-worked freight survived for another year, with possible occasional use of the surviving 97s in support, but heading off into rural Bosnia by bus in the hope of seeing one would have been too lengthy and risky an enterprise. Greek steam beckoned and we continued our journey further south.

I finally encountered a 97 in the summer of 2022. On a day off from walking in Slovenia's Julian Alps, my wife and I took the train to Ljubljana to visit the railway museum. While its exhibits are primarily standard gauge, preserved in the open air with three goods wagons is 97-028, Floridsdorf 2149 of 1913, the whole train looking rather the worse for wear.

It's an unlikely location for a locomotive which never worked in Slovenia, a country which never had a rack railway. At least the loco survives, along with several of its sisters, including 97-019 in the even less likely setting of the Deutsches Museum's Lokwelt outpost at Freilassing in Bavaria. **NGW**



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