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ISSUE 192
MAY 2025



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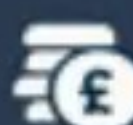
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Cover: The Welsh Highland Heritage Railway's Hunslet 2-6-2T 'Russell' has been playing its full part in pre-season photo charters on its former stomping ground of the Welsh Highland Railway, prior to the loco's withdrawal for overhaul later this year. *Luke Ryan* captured this splendid shot in the Aberglaslyn Pass on 5th April as Russell worked its train of period WHR stock back to Porthmadog.

The inset shows the Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum, a superb tribute to the many locos built for field railways and described in detail this month by *James Waite*.

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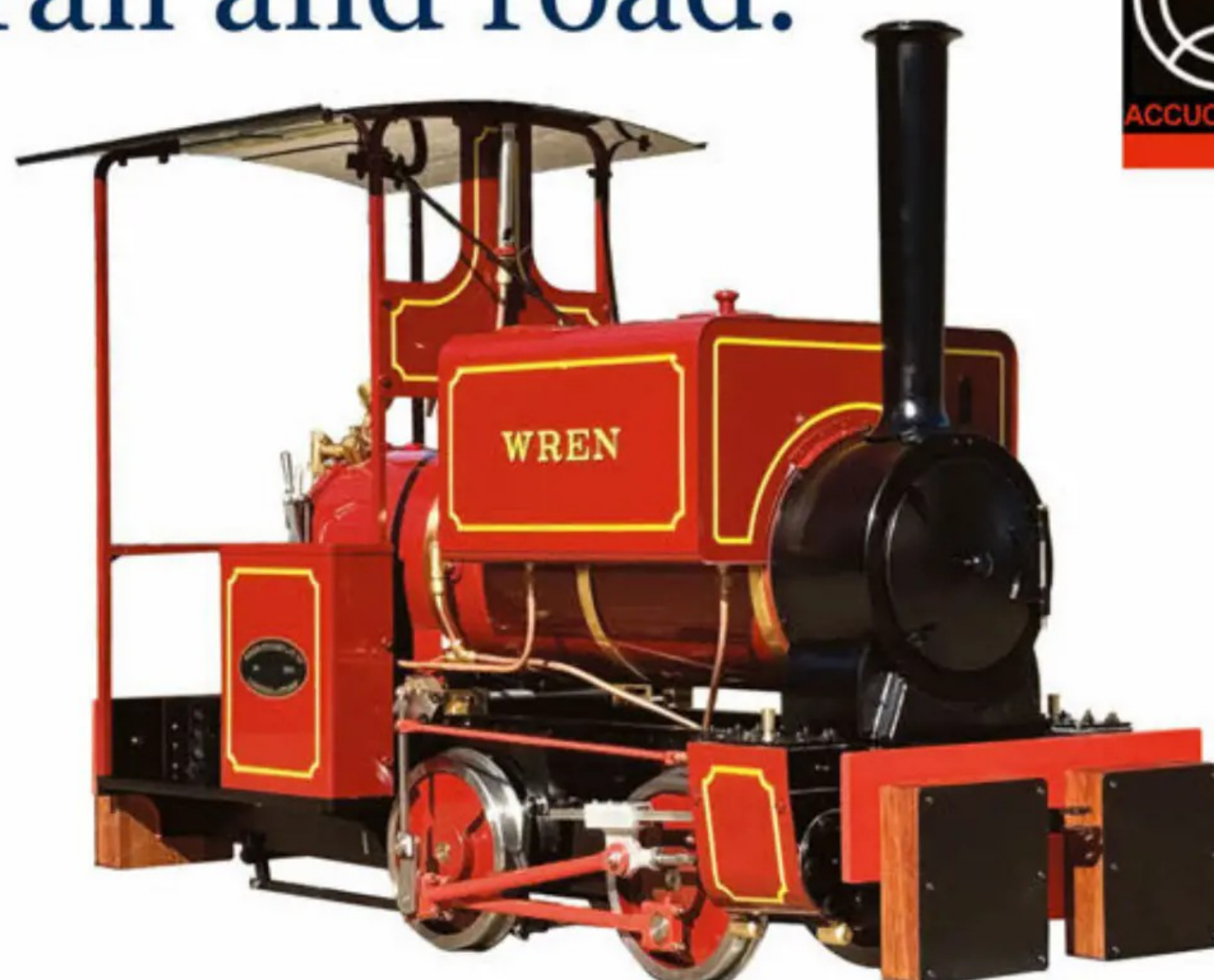
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Playing to the audience...



“Steam locomotives are notoriously attention-demanding, financially draining bits of machinery...”

Photos: Statfold is a narrow gauge wonderland with even the car park fascinating (inset) but it all needs paying for – and characters such as Thomas hold the key to unlocking such revenue. **Photos:** Andrew Charman

Welcome to *NGW*192 as we return to our summer monthly schedule not a moment too soon – there is so much happening on the narrow gauge scene!

Most of the railways get up and running around Easter time but I always think the season really starts with the first of the enthusiast weekends at Statfold, one that I try never to miss – lots of locos and loads of action is the perfect way to awaken from the winter slumbers.

Of course today it's not just Statfold Barn, it's the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust, – the centre near Tamworth has come a long way since my first visit, back in 2012. Then there were just three open days a year aimed firmly at enthusiasts, and such core attractions as the Roundhouse Museum did not exist.

In the period since Statfold has rapidly become the most important narrow gauge collection in the UK, but it has also had to move with the times. The collection may have grown so quickly basically on the largesse of its founder Graham Lee, but it couldn't go on that way – steam locomotives are notoriously attention-demanding, financially draining bits of machinery.

The setting up of the Trust came as a relief to many in the heritage world, safeguarding the future of such a significant collection. But Statfold also had to raise the money needed to maintain its assets, which is why today it is a most weeks of the year operation which has become

much more a family day out, with such attractions as soft-play areas and roller discos.

Taking on Thomas

This was brought home to me on this latest visit when I stood on a brand new platform, opposite the regular one at Oak Tree Halt and wide enough to house an equally new shed – there is always something new to see at Statfold...

“That's where ‘Handy Man’ is going to be housed,” Statfold's Henry Noon told me, referring to the Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0 recently cosmetically restored for the museum (see news pages) before adding that the platform would be used, and the shed provide shelter for, participants on the forthcoming Thomas the Tank Engine weekends.

Yes, Statfold has taken a path well worn by other railways – suddenly the repainting of Bagnall ‘Isaac’ into an admittedly very smart sky blue makes a lot of sense...

The purists will probably be horrified by this move, but I'm all for it. Why? Because Thomas weekends may require a lot of organisation (the copyright owners are pretty strict on what is and isn't allowed for example) but they also make a lot of money, which will keep all those locos operational for us enthusiasts to enjoy at the events Statfold will continue to run for us.

You may not like Thomas events, but you don't have to, because they are not for you – but these and other

family-pitched activities do go a long way to making possible the events that are for you...

I'll be meeting up with Henry Noon soon to talk more about the increasing challenges of keeping such a collection going in today's ever more challenging environment.

X hits the spot

In other news we are delighted to be bringing you pictures of locomotives from the fabled ‘Collection X’. For years the many artefacts collected from around the world by the late Peter Rampton were stored in a farm in Surrey that enthusiasts were never allowed close to, and Rampton heavily criticised as a result.

Time will be kinder to Peter Rampton. As a tribute following his passing in 2019 stated, he had no time for people who looked but did nothing for preservation, and that description applies to a sizable minority of our ilk. We've all seen those who attend galas, never ride the trains, bring their own food and then complain loudly if everything is not exactly arranged for the photos they want to take...

Peter Rampton saved a great many locos that had he not acquired them, would likely have been scrapped. Today those locomotives are emerging into the light, which many could not have done without the efforts of “preservation's man of mystery...” Enjoy your *NGW*...

Andrew Charman

Collection X 'Conqueror' on way to Llanfair



A 2ft 6in gauge locomotive not seen in public for 30 years is to find a new home at the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in mid Wales.

Bagnall 0-6-2T 'Conqueror', built in 1922 (works no 2102) for Lloyd's, later Bowaters paper mill at Kemsley in Kent, is being donated to the line by the Vale of Rheidol Railway, which today oversees the collection of narrow gauge artifacts built up over many years by Peter Rampton under the auspices of the Phillis Rampton Narrow Gauge Railway Trust, and known to many enthusiasts as the fabled 'Collection X'.

Conqueror worked on the Kent industrial line, part of which would later be preserved as the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, for almost half a century – as featured in *NGW* 191 the loco achieved notoriety in 1953 when following heavy flooding part of a dockside gave way and it fell into the void.

At the zoo

In later years the loco was relegated to shunting duties following the arrival of articulated Bagnall loco 'Monarch' and when the Bowaters line was closed in 1969 Conqueror was among four locos bought

by Sir William McAlpine for a new line at Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire. Conqueror pulled the opening train on the circular line in 1972 and worked at Whipsnade until being taken out of service in 1983 and parked alongside the shed.

In 1994 Peter Rampton purchased the Bagnall and added it to his collection stored privately at a Surrey farm, and the loco has not been seen in public since. Rampton, who also owned the Vale of Rheidol Railway, died in 2019 and since then the board of the Vale of Rheidol Railway have been consolidating the PRNGRT items.

Some have already been housed in the VoR's new museum at Aberystwyth while some have gone to new owners in circumstances when the Vale of Rheidol directors considered they could be more useful, and this led to the offer to donate Conqueror to the Welshpool & Llanfair.

"As part of a long-term plan to consolidate and focus the Vale of Rheidol Railway's collection of historic locomotives, the Railway are very pleased to have agreed the gift of Conqueror to the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway Preservation Co. Ltd," said chair of the Vale of Rheidol board Patrick Keef.

"Being of the wrong gauge to run on the VoR, it was felt that it was appropriate that the loco should move to a railway of the correct gauge with a long-term potential for restoration and return to service"

When the loco arrives at the W&LLR later this year it is likely initially at least to go into the display shed at Welshpool Raven Square, where it will be reunited with former Bowaters stablemate Monarch – the first steam locomotive acquired by the preservation company in 1966.

Opportunity taken

Many experienced members of the W&LLR loco department have often said that the railway missed an opportunity when it acquired Monarch, and should also have secured Conqueror, the powerful loco considered to be potentially highly suitable for the challenging route of the line.

"We are very pleased to be able to offer a home to Conqueror as part of our ongoing commitment to the preservation of 2ft 6in gauge vehicles," said W&LLR chairman Steve Clews.

"This locomotive has good connections with the W&L. It worked at Bowaters Paper Mill in Kent, home of our friends at the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway and it joins Monarch, a Bowaters loco that has been with us for decades.

"This is a powerful loco that should be suited to our line. Though there are currently no plans to get her operational the acquisition gives us more alternatives for the future and storage under cover will ensure that she is protected until that day comes."

Above: Bagnall 'Conqueror' in service at Bowaters Paper Mill in Kent in 1957.

Photo: David Hammersley

Left: The loco's first job in preservation was at Whipsnade Zoo, pictured here in 1973.

Photo: David Mitchell



Further locos from collection move to Wales

The Vale of Rheidol Railway has moved two more of the many locomotives that were preserved by the late Peter Rampton at a private location in Surrey to the mid-Wales line, for storage and potential eventual restoration.

The move is part of a relocation from the Surrey facility, which for many years was known to enthusiasts as Collection X as the preserved items were out of public view. An extension has been built at the VoR's Capel Bangor shed to accommodate the collection and the full relocation is expected to be completed by early 2026.

The two latest arrivals are a Bagnall 0-4-2T (2895/1948) no 2 at the Rustenberg Platinum Mines in South Africa, and Borsig 0-6-2T 'Sotillos' (6022/1906), one of eight locomotives from a Spanish industrial line that Peter Rampton saved and brought to the UK in 1969.

The VoR has built a crane wagon on a South African DZ chassis to assist with the loco moves – it will also be employed on ongoing track work.

Work will commence on the overhaul of one of the two Bagnall 4-6-2 Gwalior locos in the collection in the autumn once an overhaul currently underway on the VoR's 2-6-2T no 9 is completed. The work will be completed in memory of Peter Rampton who rescued the loco from India.

The railway's in-house historian, Ioan Lord, has started posting new content on the VOR YouTube channel which will cover



both general railway updates and specific progress on former Collection X items, while a new book telling the story of Peter Rampton and Collection X is currently in production, due for publication in the summer of this year.

Above: Blinking in the sunlight. The Rustenberg Bagnall (top) and Borsig 'Sotillos' emerge from the Surrey facility in which they have been stored, the Borsig for more than 50 years, since being preserved by Peter Rampton.

Photos: VOR

Rheidol completes removal of 100 trees from line

Diligent work by the Vale of Rheidol Railway's track gang saw damage caused by December's Storm Darragh rectified in mid March.

Working with Natural Resources Wales and external contractors the railway finally regained access to its upper terminus at Devil's Bridge, having removed more than 100 trees that had fell across the line.

Aside from the storm recovery work a renewal of the heavily used Glan-yr-Afon level crossing was completed – the original installation, dating back more than 30 years, had been suffering from rail wear and movement. The new installation includes a reinforced concrete pad, new rail, and a tarmac finish.

Before the new passenger operating season began on 5th April the permanent way team also completed re-sleepering and ballast work over a three-quarter mile section of line, using 1500 sleepers and more than 500 tons of ballast. "This marks the final phase of track renewal from Aberystwyth to Aberffraw – a major milestone in our infrastructure investment,"

VoR spokesman Stuart Williams told *NGW*.

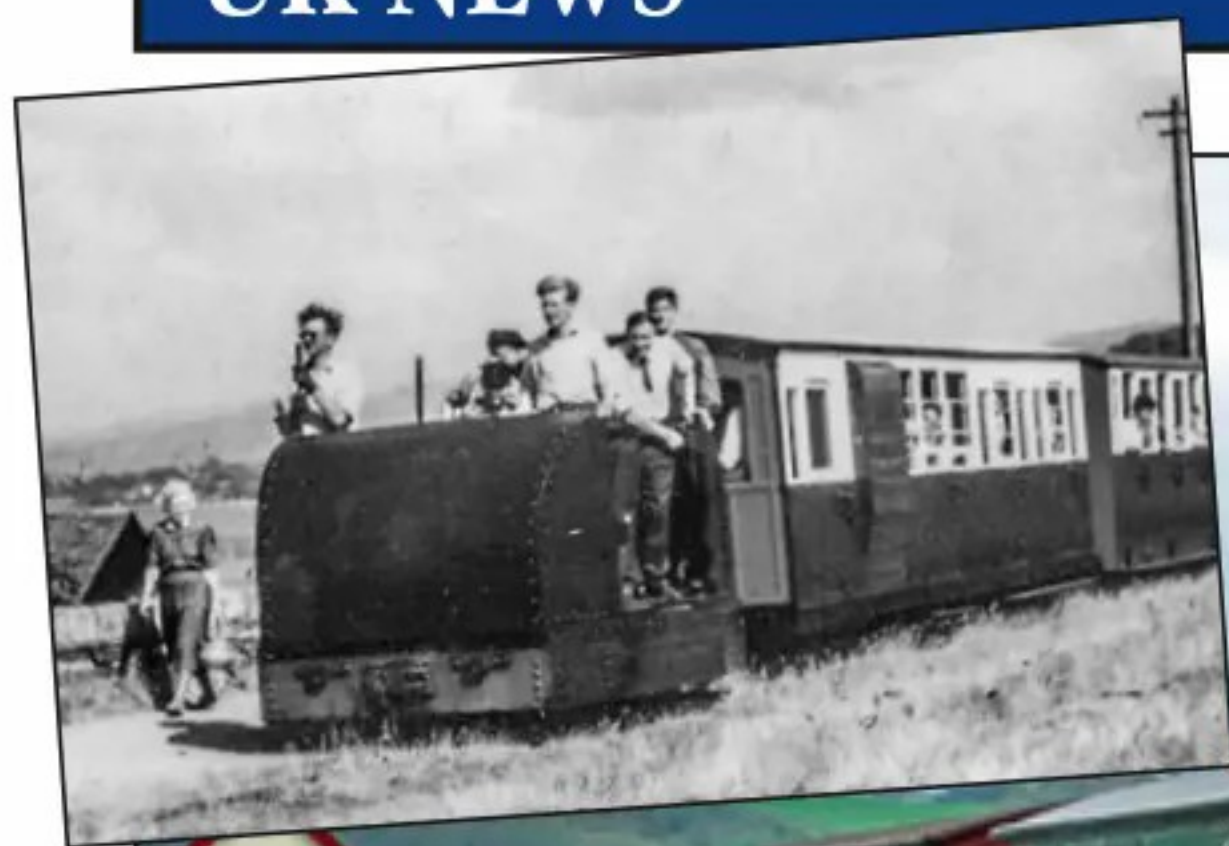
At Devil's Bridge work the time-expired café buildings have been cleared, making way for a major redevelopment of the station site. This will include a new loco stabling shed, new passenger toilets, a modern catering facility, covered shelter and a large outdoor play area for families.

While construction is ongoing, the existing toilet facilities will remain in place, and grab-and-go catering will be available from the shop throughout the 2025 season.

A new café is set to open at Aberystwyth at Easter, serving a selection of hot and cold drinks, light snacks, and options for passengers to take on trains.

Photo: VOR





200 reasons to visit Ffestiniog in June

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways have released more details of the 19th-22nd June event that promises to be the stand-out narrow gauge contribution to the Railway 200 year of celebration, marking the 200th anniversary of the opening of the world's first public railway between Stockton and Darlington.

The FF&WHR event will also mark the platinum jubilee of the first preserved services on the Ffestiniog in 1955 – over the four days trains will recreate different eras of the line's history. The Welsh Highland Railway will play a full role and the line's Boston Lodge Works will be open to visitors, culminating in the '200 Wheels on the Cob' cavalcade on Sunday 22nd June.

The event begins on the evening of Thursday, 19th June when Simplex, 'Mary Ann' will cross the Cob, recreating the day in 1955 when the FR reopened as a heritage line.

On Friday 20th early-bird trains from the late 1970s-early '80s will make a return with a 7am service hauled by diesel 'Upnor Castle', while services during the day will run to Minffordd and Tan y Bwlch recalling earlier days of preservation.

Former Penrhyn Hunslet locos 'Linda' and 'Blanche' will take a 'Ladies Day Out' to Caernarfon while there will also be the chance to take a trip on an infrastructure train or ride an inspection train to Dduallt hauled by Baldwin diesel loco 'Moelwyn'. The day will conclude with an early evening train, hauled by 'Merddin Emrys' and 'Prince', running non-stop between Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Saturday will see a steam-hauled Early Bird train, which will cross a '200 wheel' goods working at Tanygrisiau. Highlights of the day will include careful recreations of the days when trains crossed at Dduallt – recreating 'over and under' photographs on

the spiral, snapped by many an enthusiast on Kodak Instamatics back in the 1970s.

The 'Flying Flea' period train of four-wheel carriages and bogies will run recalling the relief trains of the 1960s, along with two more evening trains.

The final day of the event will feature the '200 Steam Wheels on the Cob' spectacle, a grand cavalcade from Boston Lodge to Porthmadog with locos in order of preservation-era milestone. An auction on the day will see a selection of footplate passes going under the hammer.

Boston Lodge will be open throughout the weekend to ticket holders with exhibits and stalls, locos under restoration, footplate rides and a chance to look at some of the changes that have taken place thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Tickets and full details regarding the weekend will be available on the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's website, www.festrail.co.uk

Above: The wide-ranging celebrations will include recreating the very first preservation workings in 1955.

Photos: FF&WHR



■ The Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway opened its new platform facility at Sittingbourne viaduct on 5th April. The project, undertaken by S&K volunteers with financial assistance from Swale Borough Council, Government grants, builder Ibstock and donations from supporters, includes step-free access to the elevated station.

Photo: Paul Best/S&KLR



Northwest 2ft lines join forces

Three 2ft gauge lines based in the northwest of England have signed a memorandum of understanding to forge closer ties.

The West Lancashire Light Railway and Staffordshire lines the Apedale Valley Light Railway and Amerton Railway hope to foster closer working, the sharing of good practice and knowledge between the three.

The three lines consider they have a lot in common – all are entirely volunteer managed and operated, all rely heavily on steam traction, and all are underpinned by charitable organisations.

West Lancs chair Mike Spall said that in an era of increasing pressures on heritage railways, the lines are better working in cooperation than competition.

"The three organisations have always worked together – and many people are already members of at least two of the railways. Rather than three small organisations, we can now speak and influence with one voice."

He added that all three lines will remain separate and distinct, with their own memberships and associated charities, but the agreement will open up further opportunities for each.

Above: The three lines already co-operate – Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Stanhope', based at Apedale, is seen here working at the West Lancashire Light Railway.

Photo: AVR



■ 'Handy Man', the 3ft gauge Hudswell Clarke 0-4-OST (573) built in 1900 for the Burton Ironstone Company, has taken up residence at the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust following the loco's cosmetic restoration at Workshop X in Killamarsh, Derbyshire.

The loco is now resident in a brand-new shed built for it and to provide shelter for participants in the Trust's new family-themed events including Thomas the Tank Engine weekends – a new platform has been built for these alongside the 2ft gauge running line opposite Oak Tree Halt.

At the Statfold Spectacle of Steam event on 8th-9th March Bagnall 4-4-OT 'Isaac' was running shuttles from this platform, the loco resplendent in its newly applied blue livery.

Photos: Joey Evans and Andrew Charman



Frames next for Water Board loco new-build

The new-build project to recreate a locomotive to the design of the Kerr, Stuart 0-4-2Ts that worked on the Metropolitan Water Board Railway has launched a further appeal for support after successfully completing the wheel sets.

The project, started in 2020 by Webb Locos, aims to build a modern-day 'MWB No 4', replicating the three Kerr, Stuart locos ordered by the Metropolitan Water Board in 1914 to transport coal to the Hampton and Kempton waterworks in Greater London. All three locos, named 'Hampton', 'Kempton' and 'Sunbury' were scrapped in the mid-1940s and no parts of them still exist.

Webb Locos, formed specifically to progress the build project, is using original engineering drawings to build a fourth MWB loco from scratch. Once completed the loco will run on the Hampton Kempton Waterworks Railway, bringing back the sight of a Kerr, Stuart 0-4-2T steaming at the waterworks.

The project team passed a milestone in November when they unveiled the completed wheelsets at their annual members event. They now need to commission the drilling and riveting of the loco's frames, which cannot go ahead without further funds.

A spokesman for the project said that it

relies entirely on donations to progress, and what's needed are supporters to provide one-off or recurring donations to enable commissioning of the work.

Those wanting to support the project can become a member for £30 a year, sponsor a component (prices ranging from £10 to £5000), or set up a direct debit – the latter is particularly helpful as it allows the build team to place orders for work since they have a known monthly income.

Donors receive various rewards depending on the amount given, and those who give £5000 will have their name included on a brass plaque in the loco's cab.

Those wanting more details of the project or to make a donation can email info@webblocos.co.uk or go to www.webblocos.co.uk

Photo: Webb locos



BRIEF LINES

Track down at Bratton

The former Lynton & Barnstaple Railway station at Bratton Fleming has track again after a 600ft length was laid by members of Exmoor Associates (EA), who purchased the station, around seven miles from Barnstaple, in 2019. The 1936-built Ruston diesel 179880, which spent many years on display at Lynton station, will soon be moved to Bratton Fleming – purchased by EA in 2021 (*NGW*160), it has since been restored to operating condition and it set to run at the station with a recently obtained carriage.

Summer car for Brecon

The Brecon Mountain Railway is to add a brand-new wheelchair-accessible 'summer car' to its fleet. Currently under construction in Aberystwyth by sister railway the Vale of Rheidol, the car is designed for open-air travel with improved accessibility. It is expected to arrive in time for the best of the summer weather on the south Wales line.

VoR's Brecon buy moves on

The full purchase of the Brecon Mountain Railway by the Vale of Rheidol Railway is progressing. A Transport & Works Act Order (TWAo) has been submitted and underwent public consultation earlier this year. Final legal matters are being resolved, with a positive outcome expected soon.

Snowdon open for business

The Snowdon Mountain Railway reopened on 29th March for its 129th season, with daily diesel services initially travelling to its early season destination of Clogwyn, three-quarters of the distance up Wales' highest mountain. The summit Hafod Eryri summit visitor centre will reopen on 1st May with steam services resuming on weekdays from 9th June to 12th September.

Volks offers a late show

The Volks Electric Railway Association (VERA) will be running an evening service on the pioneer electric line at Brighton, Sussex on 17th May, 22nd June, 27th July and on 20th September, the last with illuminated trains to celebrate VERA's 30th Anniversary. Normal services run every day until September with details on the VERA Facebook or website page, <http://volkselectricrailway.co.uk>



Work being done on ex-Donnegal railcars

Isle of Man Railways have confirmed that limited work is being carried out on the former County Donegal Railway diesel railcars, 19 and 20, which are stored in partially-restored condition at Douglas (*writes Hugh Dougherty*).

A recent post on the Isle of Man Steam Railway Supporters Association (IoMSRSA) Facebook page claiming that the cars were being worked on, and that one had received a new gearbox, prompted an enquiry by *NGW* to the Isle of Man Government Department of Infrastructure, seeking clarification of the position.

It was widely understood that further restoration has not been carried out since the original scheme was abandoned on cost grounds in 1998.

A departmental spokesman said: "The County Donegal railcars have been subject to a long-term restoration plan for a number of years and this continues at an appropriate pace. There are no immediate plans to return them to service."

Built in 1950 and '51 for the County Donegal Railway in Ireland, the two railcars were stored at Stranorlar following the CDR's closure in 1959, before being sold to the Isle of Man Railway, landing at Douglas in 1961. After overhaul and repainting they were pressed into service on the Manx lines to Peel and Port Erin, proving especially useful on winter trains until the closure of the railway in 1965.

During the brief reopening under Lord Ailsa's management, the railcars ran on the Peel and Ramsey lines. Always operated coupled back-to-back on the Isle of Man, because of a lack of turntables, they were eventually relegated to permanent way duties. They were withdrawn in 1998, work starting on restoration but being stopped in 1999 with the two stored in part-completed condition in Douglas since.

The IoMSRSA supports the restoration of the cars to working order, and carried out an extensive condition survey in 2003. Over the years suggestions for their use has included commuter trains, enthusiast specials (given their historical importance), and light duties.

In 2018 controversy was sparked when the Fintown Railway claimed that IoMR had offered the cars to the Donegal line, but Isle of Man authorities were quick to quash the claim, saying that such an offer was never made and that the railcars must stay on the Isle of Man as examples of Manx heritage, given that they have now spent much longer on the island than in CDR service.

Above: Railcar 19 in store at Douglas.

Photo: Donegal Railway Heritage Centre

Tram loco set to steam again



The steam tram that runs on the Telford Town Tramway, operated as part of the Telford Steam Railway in Shropshire, will return to service this month after five years under overhaul.

The 2ft (610mm) gauge tram was originally commissioned by the Telford Development Corporation in 1979 and ran on a short length of track in the town park. Legal issues saw the tram moved to become part of the steam railway in 1987, and it has operated there since.

The first public steaming on 4th May will be part of the Telford Steam Railway's Open Day with special guest rail enthusiast and music producer Pete Waterman.

Spokesman Joshua Woodford told *NGW* that final overhaul work will continue right up to the event; "While the tram and coach won't necessarily be finished with bodywork and painting still left to complete, it'll be the first time the loco will be on show and is planned to have footplate rides (for a donation) or rides in the coach around a portion of the circuit."

As part of the open day travel on the standard gauge railway will be free, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of flagship loco no 5619 and the rededication of Lawley Village Station.



■ Baldwin 4-6-0T 'no 590' has returned to the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway after successful testing on the Vale of Rheidol Railway. This followed remedial work carried out by the VoR, which completed restoration of the loco for the WHHR in 2023. The original War Department 794 (44699 of 1917) was imported into the UK in 1985 and displayed initially at the Imperial War Museum's Duxford airfield in Cambridgeshire. It has been rebuilt to take on the identity of the original Welsh Highland Railway Baldwin 590, scrapped in 1942.

The VoR's Aberystwyth workshops are currently undertaking overhauls of the line's 2-6-2T 'Prince of Wales' and Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway 4-6-2 'Typhoon'. **Photo: VoR**

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■ Narrow Gauge Railway Society members visiting the North Gloucestershire Railway on 26th March for the final steaming of Hunslet locomotive 'Chakas Kraal No 6' (2075/1940) prior to withdrawal for overhaul, were disappointed when a crew illness prevented the loco being lit up. Chakas Kraal was displayed alongside Arnold Jung 0-4-0WT 'Justine' (939/1906) while passenger services were operated by Simplex 'Bryneglws'. All three are seen here outside the shed at Toddington. *Photo: Stuart Chapman*

Lynton halfway to £60k carriage shed target

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway has raised more than half of the required £60,000 it requires to fund the building of a new 50-metre long carriage shelter at its Woody Bay headquarters.

Planning permission for the shelter was recently granted by the Exmoor National Park Authority and the Devon line is keen to get the building in place as soon as possible, to provide much-needed protection from the elements for the L&B's much-admired heritage carriage fleet.

Storing the vehicles undercover will significantly reduce their maintenance

cycles, allowing the railway to direct funds to other areas as it seeks to extend its current running line further in the direction of Barnstaple.

Donations to the project are being encouraged by BACS bank transfer, by cheque or online via the railway's web shop. The Lynton & Barnstaple Trust is also encouraging supporters to gift-aid their donation which will result in HMRC adding 25p to each £1 donated.

Full details of the project and donation options can be found at www.lynton-rail.co.uk/carriage-shelter-appeal

FF&WHR is best national attraction

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway has been named 'Best Attraction' at the National Tourism Awards for Wales, which were presented during an event at Venue Cymru in Llandudno on 27th March.

Hosted by Visit Wales, the event



celebrated the best of the tourism industry throughout the country – the FF&WHR qualified for the national awards by taking the 'Go Attraction of the Year' accolade at the Regional Go North Wales Tourism Awards in November.

FF&WHR general manager Paul Lewin and visitor experience manager Stephen Greig attended the national awards ceremony and were delighted to pick up the prestigious prize.

"Receiving this award is a huge honour and is testament to the hard work of all our staff and volunteers," said Paul.

"This is a fantastic achievement, and we are very proud that we can display both our 'Go Attraction of the Year' and 'Best Attraction' awards at our stations for our visitors to see," Stephen added.



Legoland loco goes to Old Kiln

The Old Kiln Light Railway in Surrey has been gifted a Motor Rail Simplex loco by the Legoland Windsor resort.

Affectionately known as 'Amey', the loco was built in 1939 as a 6-ton variant of the firm's 32/42HP class. More than 600 of the class were built between 1932 and 1958 – today only 11 are known to survive.

No 7902 worked for Imperial Chemical Industries at Rainham in Essex for just over 30 years before moving in the early 1970s to the Llanberis Lake Railway, working on trains laying cables for the construction of Dinorwig Power Station.

For a brief period in the 1980s, no 7902 was based at the Brecon Mountain Railway, before moving on to Alan Keef Ltd in the early 1990s where it gained a replacement Dorman 3LB engine. As part of Alan Keef's hire fleet its contract work included the Woodhead cable tunnel.

The loco arrived in Windsor for the opening of Legoland in 1996 and was named Amey after the daughter of the then Facilities Manager. Painted pink and employed as a rescue loco, it suffered clutch issues around a decade ago and has been in storage ever since.

The OKLR plans a full rebuild of the loco over several years as volunteer funding and availability allows. Once restored the Simplex will be a working exhibit, with interpretive educational information on the locomotive's history.

According to OKLR Chairman David Knott the loco should become a useful asset, being a rare representation of its class; "With the heavy weights and powerful engine, it should be a solid performer in terms of rail grip and pulling power, making it very suitable for our steeply graded line.

"It will have no trouble acting as a rescue locomotive in case of an in-service failure of our heavier steam locomotives, filling a gap not currently met within the railway's operational capabilities."

Work currently underway at the OKLR includes lengthening the run-round loop at Mills Wood station in order to accommodate larger-capacity trains, and clearing the ground on which is to be built a new carriage shed.

A headshunt has also been installed at the station for the stabling of locomotives on busy operating days.

Rheidol to host Heritage Trust ruby celebration

The Railway Heritage Trust will stage its 40th anniversary exhibition in the Vale of Rheidol Railway's museum and exhibition hall on 7th-16th May, as part of the nationwide Railway 200 celebrations.

The event will mark four decades of the Trust's work in conserving and restoring Britain's railway architecture and historic structures. The exhibition features key restoration success stories – not only of preservation in original locations but also instances where relocation was the only viable way to save iconic buildings.

As such the VoR is a particularly appropriate venue for the exhibition as the new museum provided a perfect new home for the imposing entrance to the former South Eastern Railway offices, which was in danger of being lost when London Bridge station was redeveloped.

The RHT worked with the VoR to save the structure, transport it to Aberystwyth, and rebuild it as the grand new entrance to the railway's Exhibition Hall.

The project was supported by a £105,000 grant from the RHT and now forms a striking gateway into the museum and its growing collection of artefacts.

VoR general manager Llyr ap Iolo said that the line is very proud to have the example of railway heritage at its heart; "It's a great contrast to the narrow-gauge steam locomotives we operate but it's all part of our rich railway history," Llyr added.

Also on show in the museum later this year will be the world record-breaking 208ft long model railway that was built by a team led by rail enthusiast and music producer Pete Waterman.

First revealed at the NEC in Birmingham and officially recognised as a world record in April 2024, the layout will be on show in the museum during the October half-term week. It will be its first public outing since achieving its record-breaking status – and the first time it will be on display in Wales.

The model will be part of a wider programme of family-friendly events throughout the October half term – more details will be released later in the year.

Below: Seen here during installation in 2023, the former London station edifice has found a new home in Wales. Photo: Andrew Charman



Stage 1 done for Threlkeld museum



Threlkeld Museum has launched a new funding appeal after the project to install a new museum building completed its first stage, with contractors William King Construction Ltd getting the building to a wind and weather-tight shell.

Spokesman for the Cumbrian museum Dickon Chaplin-Price told *NGW* that the project had overrun a little on time, but remained on budget. "Thank you to our supporters of this first construction stage including Cumberland Council, Cumbria Waste Environment Trust and UK Mining Conference in Cornwall," he added.

The focus is now on finding the extra funding for Stage 2, which will see the internal fit-out of the building with heating, lighting, plumbing and such.

"The cost of this stage has risen as we now have a better idea of what is required," Dickon added. "This estimate is now around the £130,000 mark."

The museum has secured £25,000 from Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust and £2,500 from Hadfield Trust, followed by most recently a further grant of £5,000 by The Headley Trust, one of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts.

Applications have been submitted for additional funding to the Stobart Sustainability Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund. A further round of 'levelling up' funding is expected and an application will be made in due course.

Subject to funding, the next stage of work should start in August and is expected to be complete by the Christmas period. This would allow time for the installation of exhibits and refreshed interpretation with a proposed opening of April 2026.

The museum will be grateful for any donations to the project, either online at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/preserving-lakelands-industrial-heritage-1 or by cheque made payable to 'Threlkeld Quarry Museum' and posted to Threlkeld Quarry Museum, Threlkeld Quarry, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 4TT.

Meanwhile Ruston 48 DL loco of 1947 has had gearbox repairs completed. Stored since 2019, the loco will re-enter service shortly with a refreshed livery of Light Brunswick Green.

In line with a number of railways marking Railway 200, the Museum will be holding a 'home grown' style Gala on the Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May. The event will mark 15 years of passenger carrying at Threlkeld with all available locomotives in service.

The annual Steam Gala with visiting steam locos will take place as usual over 26th-27th July.

Photos: TQM



■ The Audley End Miniature Railway has put both of its remaining steam locomotives up for sale. The sale of the two David Curwen-built engines, 2-6-2 no 24 'Lord Baybrooke' (pictured above) built in 1991 and based on a Sandy River & Rangely Lakes Railroad loco, and no 489 'Sara Lucy' built in 1977 will end a history of steam haulage on the 1.5-mile long 10¼-inch gauge Essex line which has operated since 1964 in the ownership of the Baybrooke Family. **Photo: Stuart Chapman**



Half a century on, Rusty the Ruston's engine runs again

The railway team at Amberley Museum in Sussex achieved a small milestone on 5th March when the engine of Ruston & Hornsby 16hp diesel 'Rusty' was fired up for the first time in 55 years.

Built in 1933 for the Colne Valley Water Company (works no 166024) the loco worked at Eastbury pumping station near Watford until the system closed in 1967, and then was preserved at Brockham Museum in Surrey.

The Ruston was operated at Brockham and is thought to have last been used in around 1970. It transferred to Amberley with the rest of the Brockham collection in

1981 and was dismantled for overhaul. The engine was stripped to block level and the parts stored in various sheds, the chassis in the 'Lone Strike' tunnel.

Only in 2019 was the loco pulled out (*NGW*159) and restoration restarted with the chassis being patched. Now the engine has been completely rebuilt by former Lister apprentice Chris Hollis.

The engine was only run for around five minutes, but buoyed by this success the team are now pressing on with the restoration of the loco – *NGW* will continue to report on progress.

Photo: Phil Barnes

Darj trust orders 19B's new boiler

Following the success of the fundraising appeal reported in *NGW*191 the Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust has now ordered a new boiler for the late Adrian Shooter's Darjeeling 0-4-0 no 19B. This followed obtaining formal safety approval for the new welded design by the team at the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge works, who designed the replacement boiler.

The build contract has been awarded to Boston Lodge – project engineering lead Will Smith commented that the design and certification process had made clear the level of professionalism in the UK able to build high-quality new boilers for the heritage railway sector; "Of all those, though, the Ff&WHR stood out for us with the combination of the timescale offered and a competitive price."

DTLT treasurer Peter 'Fuzz' Jordan sanctioned the contract, happy that there was sufficient funding to pay for the boiler. He has, however, appealed for more donations; "The boiler will probably take a year to build and test and we need to

raise the final £20,000 to re-erect and test the locomotive and achieve the boiler's mandatory safety certification."

The DTLT hopes the loco will return in 2026, starting a new boiler ticket within three years from being purchased at auction following the death of Adrian Shooter.

Donations to the fund can be made through the Trust website at www.darjeelingtank.org.uk

Below: The Trust expects that its new boiler will be rather better than this example, that was spotted on a recent visit to the Indian line's Tindharia works.

Photo: DTLT



'Eigau' heading back to Norfolk

Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0T 'Eigau' will make a return for one weekend only to Bressingham on 3rd to 5th May for the Norfolk museum's annual Gala.

The 1912-built loco, initially used by Cheshire contractor C. L. Warren before working at Penrhyn Quarry between 1922 and 1963, is today preserved at the Bredgar and Wormshill Light Railway in Kent, but between 1973 and 1995 was resident at Bressingham. This year marks 30 since Eigau left Bressingham museum and 20 years since the museum's founder Alan Bloom passed away.

Eigau will be one of the locos working an intensive service on the museum's 2ft gauge Fen Railway, which will be running passenger, double-headed and demonstration freights, including a train of slate wagons during specific times throughout the day.

Former stablemates from the home fleet will also be in action including quarry Hunslets 'Gwynedd' and 'George Sholto', while the railway will also host diesel Simplex Locomotive 'Bicknor', also from Bredgar and sister to Bressingham's recently acquired former Beeches Light Railway loco 'Sir Gerald Scott'. The pair are expected to head trains of skip wagons and the occasional passenger turn.

Bressingham will have all four railways open and steam operated during the gala including the standard gauge line on which Brighton Terrier 'Martello' will be offering brake van rides – the loco celebrating its 150th anniversary and final gala prior to withdrawal for 10-year overhaul.

Further steam entertainment will be provided by a wide range of visiting steam rollers, traction engines and portables taking part in agricultural demonstrations, road rolling and stone crushing. The museum's diverse collection will be on show, including the North Norfolk Railway's 9F locomotive 'Black Prince'. The Bressingham Gallopers will be operating and the gardens will be open.

Over the Gala event the museum opens from 10.30am to 5pm with trains operating from 11am.

Photo: Andrew Charman





■ For the start of its operating season over the weekend of 29th-30th March the Parkeisenbahn Wuhlheide (Wuhlheide Park Railway) in Berlin, GERMANY ran to a special afternoon timetable with both of its operational steam locomotives 0-8-0T no 10 'Merapi' and 0-4-0T no 44 'Klaus'. Merapi ran over a complicated route utilising all three circuits of the line to a total length of 6.3km including passing the loco shed and workshops – a section of line not usually used by public trains. Klaus worked over the shortest circuit but included the 0.6km branch to the interchange station at S-Bahnhof Wuhlheide where the engine runs round.

The photos show Merapi and train (left) leaving Hauptbahnhof and Klaus and its train arriving back at the station.

Report and photos: Dominic Emery

Sibiu revival crosses the road

Members of the Sibiu-Agnita Railway's UK-based support group SAR UK celebrated a small milestone on 2nd April (reports **David Rowbotham**) when they succeeded in taking a locomotive across the level crossing on the line's Vurpar branch at Cornatel station.

For the last ten years the approach to the Vurpar branch has been redeployed as a loading ramp for locomotive and rolling stock deliveries to the railway by road transporters. Built simply of reclaimed and softwood sleepers the ramp had become unsafe, so during their autumn visit in 2024 the SARUK group dismantled the ramp and relaid the rails on the level with the best of the recovered sleepers.

The intent was to just replace the missing fishplates and reconnect the branch, but it quickly became clear that the road transport had damaged the next two track panels considerably and the rails were no longer to gauge or attached to the sleepers hidden in the grass. So the old

ROMANIA

Vurpar branch, which closed to traffic in 1996 was left disconnected.

This spring, for their project on their latest working visit to the line the SARUK group decided to lift and refurbish the remaining track panels up to the road crossing, and if possible take a locomotive back across the level crossing for the first time in nearly 30 years. One of the group had helped get a draisine across the crossing ten years ago, before the line was severed to build the loading ramp and that had taken a lot of digging out.

Right: Success for SARUK as a loco runs onto the crossing at Cornatel.

Below: for several years the approach was used as an unloading ramp.
Photos: David Rowbotham

Whilst not a contribution to the maintenance of the current operational section between Cornatel and Hosman, or the refurbishment of the Cornatel to Cașolt section which is being progressed by the local volunteer group, reconnecting the Vurpar branch has been a statement of intent to eventually restore the whole of the Sibiu Agnita Railway, including the Vurpar Branch and one day to reinstate the original line to Sighisoara which was closed beyond Agnita in 1965.

The crossing project has received much attention, including seeing the presence of the level crossing being added to local maps on driving apps.





■ Correspondent **Dominic Emery** has been in touch to let us know that when we ran his story in NGW191 about the Schöneicher-Rüdersdorfer Straßenbahn GmbH (SRS), a metre-gauge community owned line in Schöneiche, GERMANY, using the serviceable parts of GT6 tram no 47 (A) and tram no 48 (B) to produce one serviceable vehicle, we unfortunately printed a photo of the wrong vehicle. So to put things right at left is a photo of the 'new' tram 48 on its way to Jäger Str. Schöneiche. Apologies for the error.

Maine 2ft build funds closing on target

The Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway is closing in on its goal of raising \$60,000 to help fund the construction of a new-build version of Forney 2-4-4T no 7, built for the 2ft gauge line in Maine, USA in 1907 and scrapped in 1937 after being damaged in a roundhouse fire.

The railway has been promised by an anonymous donor that if it hits the fundraising target in 2025 they will match it, producing total funds of \$120,000 for the build project.

As **NGW** went to press the funding total

had reached £54,000. A WW&F spokesman described the target as; "a big ask for sure but with the locomotive taking shape, we're confident that our members, friends and volunteers will be up for the challenge."

Frames for the loco, which when complete will take no 11 in the line's operational fleet, have been completed and the cylinders mounted. Latest work includes completing and mounting the front pony truck.

Details of the fundraising campaign can be found at <https://wwfry.org/build-11>

BRIEF LINES

Harz closure for season

A section of the Selketalbahn, on the metre-gauge Harz network in GERMANY, is to be closed for much of 2025 to allow construction work. The route between Alexisbad and Harzgerode will not operate any service from 25th April to the end of November. No rail replacement bus service has been set up with passengers advised to use the scheduled buses of the Harzer Verkehrsbetriebe.

Sweep made for artefact

Enthusiasts in BELARUS have managed to rescue the body of a rare snow-sweeping machine built in around 1946 – reported in the latest edition of the *Eastern Star* newsletter of the New European Railway Heritage Trust, the sweeper is considered to be the oldest surviving item of 'big' narrow gauge rolling stock in the country. The sweeper, which used a car engine and lorry gearbox to power a broom suspended under the body, has joined the collection of the Belarus Narrow Gauge Foundation in Ditva.

Track progress to crossing

A tracklaying blitz by members of the Museum of FRENCH Steam Tramways and Secondary Railways (MTVS) in February saw the extension of the running line at Crèvecœur-le-Grand to within metres of a road crossing. A diesel later became the first train on the stretch of line since 1990.

Calling World correspondents

A surfeit of UK news and to be honest a shortage of World News forced the curtailment of this section for this issue – if you are involved with, or have news from, narrow gauge railways around the globe we want to hear from you. Contact details are on page 3.

Uwe Bergmann

The name of Uwe Bergmann, who recently passed away shortly after his 84th birthday, will have caught the eye of attentive readers of **NGW** over many years.

From his home in Hamburg, Uwe travelled the world in search of steam locomotives. He not only photographed them, but also assembled an enormous collection of photos of the beast nearest our hearts. This grew to such proportions that it filled every nook and cranny of his flat, and then some more. Uwe was very catholic in his tastes and there was no country in the world that was not represented.

He was very generous in sharing his collection and **NGW** was far from alone in using the 'Uwe Bergmann collection' byline. It seemed that there was almost no railway or steam locomotive type, however obscure, that he didn't have a photo of.

His greatest passion was for the narrow gauge sugar cane railways of Indonesia. He was extremely knowledgeable on the subject and published two books on them: *Sweet Steam* (1980) and *Die Dampflokomotiven der Indonesischen Werkbahnen* (2017). The latter, his big green book, is the definitive work on the steam locomotives of these amazing narrow gauge lines – 512 pages long, it will stand as his monument.

Uwe had suffered from poor health in recent years and his final contribution to **NGW** appeared in issue 119 in 2017; it was, needless to say, about narrow gauge industrial railways in Indonesia. Uwe had a sardonic wit and take on life.

He was one of the good guys and will be much missed. **Keith Chester**

Below: Uwe Bergmann travels in characteristic pose on a Romanian forset railway.



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Golden Days at the Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum



James Waite highly recommends a visit to a German museum that celebrates its half century at the end of May.

The word 'Feldbahn' translates as 'field railway', and came to mean any small non-public line, often an industrial one. The Germans adopted the concept with enthusiasm, especially after Paul Decauville's pioneering demonstration of small narrow gauge rail transport in Paris in 1878. The German army recognised the military potential early on and assembled large reserves of locos, rolling stock and equipment which could be rapidly transported and put into use, as they were during the First World War.

A visitor to Paris in 1878 was Arthur Koppel from Berlin; he and

his partner Benno Orenstein had started a light railway equipment business two years previously. It flourished in this new market, though the Orenstein & Koppel company didn't build locos until 1892.

While other firms produced similar machines, O&K became the country's pre-eminent suppliers of feldbahn locos throughout the steam age. The firm's small standard locos, with a ruggedly-constructed chassis incorporating a well tank, outside valve gear and a drumhead smokebox, were both competitively priced and technically superior to their predecessors' offerings.

Above: Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0T no 18 passes the allotments at dusk. In midwinter they look much bleaker than they do in the summer!

Below: The museum yard can prove ideal for night photography. From left to right are nos 13, 6, 18, 16 and 2.

The highly-respected Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum dates back to 1975, when a group of local enthusiasts looked around for a place to keep a newly-acquired 600mm gauge industrial steam loco. They were offered the use of a splendid 15-road roundhouse at Mainflingen, east of Frankfurt, which had housed the recently-closed 600mm gauge Bong'schen Mahlwerke's many locos.

After only four years the site was redeveloped. The group moved on to a former railway repair shop at Nied, in Frankfurt's western outskirts, but it was demolished just two years later.

The city council offered



temporary accommodation at Bockenheim, followed by a longer-term base in 1985 close to the large Rebstockpark, with the opportunity to build a line in the park itself. Within two years the first workshop, running shed and exhibition hall was completed. They have been there ever since and the lease was recently extended until 2080.

The museum's collection grew rapidly and currently includes 21 steam locomotives, of which 11 are in working order. There are many more diesel, petrol, electric and battery ones, including some most interesting historic machines, plus numerous items of rolling stock. Two more sheds were built in 1999 and 2007, and most of the exhibits are now kept safely under cover.

The museum railway runs through allotments on its way to the park, though they wouldn't be recognised as such by the UK's veggie-growing allotment-holders; these are places of leisure, with lawns, summerhouses and, in summer, fine displays of flowers everywhere. The line through the park has gradually been extended, and the total run is now more than 1.5km long.

Trains on open days include troop transport vehicles from World War I and a pair of German-built carriages repatriated from Bulgaria's narrow gauge lines. When circumstances permit there are also demonstration trains of freight wagons.

The steam locomotives

Beginning in numerical sequence, the very pretty 0-4-0T No. 1 'Besigheim' (Heilbronn 393/1900) was built as a 720mm gauge loco for salt works at Friedrichshall, on the River Neckar near Heilbronn. It was later moved



Above: Heilbronn 0-4-0T no 1 heads one of the First World War carriages through the Rebstockpark on 13th June 2009. Sadly the loco has been awaiting boiler work since 2018.

Right: This Henschel 0-4-0T heading a train of WW1 carriages through the Rebstockpark on the same day was then the museum no 6 and one of two Fabia-class locos there. In 2018 it moved to the highly scenic Stumpfwaldbahn near Mannheim.

Photos by James Waite on 7th December 2019 except where stated.



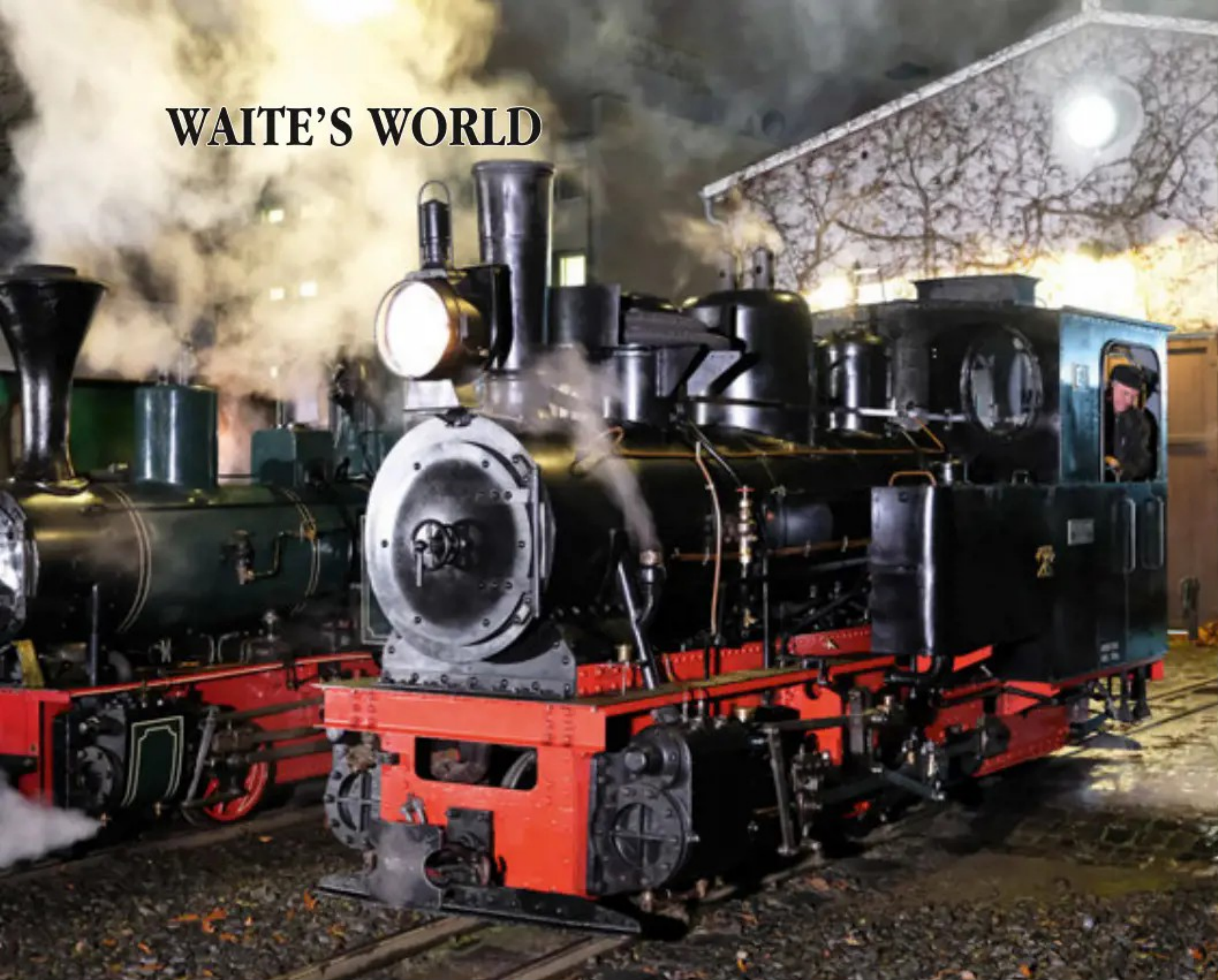
downstream to a cement factory at Lauffen am Neckar and was converted to 600mm gauge.

The 0-4-0Ts nos 2 (Henschel 20517/1925), 4 (O&K 2053/1906), 5 (Jung 9295/1941), 6 (Henschel 22826/1935), 12 (Henschel 28024/1948), 15 (Henschel 25180/1942), 17 (Krauss 7656/1921) and 18 (O&K 9244/1925) are all typical feldbahn locos although they have very different histories. Some are similar to locos at the Stoomtrein Katwijk-Leiden which we visited in

NGW191, and many others exist across Europe and further afield. The 0-4-2T no 21 'Gazengo' (Jung 847/1905), from the Bom Jesus sugar estates in Angola, is a more distant relative with its side tanks, scanty cab and trailing truck.

Rated at just 5hp, 0-4-0WT no 3 (Jung 255/1896) is possibly the tiniest 600mm loco ever, and with its disproportionately large cab it would perhaps feel more at home on the 7¼in gauge! It was built for the Ferrocarril de Tacubaya, a pleasure railway in Mexico City about 1.6km »





long. But it proved to be too small despite the line's undemanding requirements, and in the following year the 20hp 4-4-0 'Susana' (Baldwin 15241/1897) took over most workings. Although four times more powerful, Susana was still Baldwin's smallest commercial loco.

The railway was rebuilt as a part of the city's tramway system in 1910, and the Jung loco continued to be stored under cover, unbeknown to the outside world. It was discovered in 2023 by a team from Frankfurt and brought to its new home. Mechanically it's still virtually in as-new condition.

Decauville's 8-tonne type 17 Progrès class 0-6-0Ts were built from 1911, specifically to compete with German feldbahn designs. The French army's preferred locos were the Péchot-Bourdon 0-4-4-0Ts dating from 1887, but only 61 had been built by the start of WW1, and none later than 1906. The Army urgently required many more, and as well as more Péchots, Baldwin 0-6-0STs and later i/c machines, they bought 147 type 17s and 70 Kerr Stuart Joffrés, close copies of the Decauvilles, between 1914 and 1917. These orders included no 7 (Decauville

1593/1915) which later worked in Greece. Many were sold after the war, mostly into industry, and several survived to be preserved.

German military service

As the German army's principal feldbahn loco, 2,573 Brigadelok 0-8-0T+Ts, with Klien-Lindner articulation, were built between 1903 and 1919. No HF312 (Borsig 8836/1914), the museum's no 8, is the oldest of 101 to be preserved. From 1921 it worked on the Waldeisenbahn Muskau, which was run by Deutsche Reichsbahn between 1951 and closure in 1977 and is now a flourishing heritage railway. No 8's tender came from no HF426 and was recovered from Bulgaria.

The 0-4-0T+T no 9 (Henschel 16047/1918) is one of 114 locos built between 1916 and 1918 for the German army to work on temporary 600mm lines through the mountains of southern Turkey, filling in gaps in the uncompleted but strategically important Istanbul-Baghdad railway. Some that were unfinished at the end of the war were delivered instead to the Spanish military, including this loco which went first to Spanish Morocco. It later worked at the

Cuatro Vientos army railway base near Madrid, and in 1962 was sold to Utrillas colliery near Zaragoza. Initially preserved at the South Tynedale Railway, it moved to Frankfurt in 2018.

Also resident at Frankfurt since 2018 is the pretty 0-6-0T no 10 (Henschel 13070/1917). It's the only survivor of four prototypes built for the German army to try out. An O&K type was chosen instead, but the Austrian army later took on Henschel's design as its R111c class. Originally allocated number 478, this locomotive spent many years after 1925 in industrial service at Ecaussines in Belgium.

The 0-6-0T no 11 (Jung 10137/1952) is one of two similar locos imported from the Dalmia cement factory in Orissa, India, in 1988 where it was no 2. They are examples of the German army's Second World War HF110C design. These locos were mostly built for service in the USSR, principally in eastern Ukraine which the Germans intended should become a breadbasket for Germany proper, and where many 600mm gauge railways were built to transport produce to mainline railheads. The Germans realised this was not a viable long-term project after their defeat in 1943 at the Battle of Kursk (then, as now, a contested district) and these two engines may have remained on their builders' hands after the war until eventually sold.

The 0-4-4-0T 30hp Mallet no 13 (O&K 3902/1909) was one of many of these little locos built for the Dutch East Indies. It spent its working life at the Gending sugar factory in eastern Java, and its acquisition for the museum was negotiated by Dr Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, while visiting Indonesia in 1996. It first ran at Frankfurt ten years later.

Not a feldbahn machine, 0-6-2T no 14 (Jung 989/1906) was no 1

Above left: O&K 0-10-0T no 16, with Lüttermoller articulation, in the museum yard.

Above: Seen in January 2024, The 5hp Jung 0-4-0WT no 3 is from the Ferrocarril de Tacubaya. Photo: Ruediger Fach

Below: Jung 0-6-2T+T no 14 and Decauville 0-6-0T no 7, the Progrès class loco, stand outside the 1970s building on 13th June 2009.



'Jacobi', the first of seven similar locos built for the Mecklenburg Pommersche Schmalspurbahn, a public system more than 200km long in northern Germany which closed in stages until 1969.

Four of the seven were taken by the USSR after WW2. Jacobi was preserved in the USA after 1970 and moved to Frankfurt in 1998. No 4 is preserved at Friedland, the railway's old operating centre, and no 7 'Graf Schwerin – Lowitz' is at the Vale of Rheidol's museum at Aberystwyth after working for many years on the Brecon Mountain Railway.

To supplement the Brigadeloks from 1917 O&K built 34 0-10-0Ts for the German army, the first locos to use the new geared articulation system designed by Gustav Lüttermoller, the firm's chief engineer. A further 31 followed in 1921 and 1925 for the Japanese army, of which three were later sold to the Seibu Tetsudō (Japanese for 'railway') to work at its ballast quarry at Ahina. No 16 (O&K 11073/1925), Japanese army no E103, is one of two to have survived, and first entered service at Frankfurt in 2014. Its sister no E18 is preserved at the Feldbahnhaus at Shin-Egota, Tōkyō, home to an enthusiast publishing business specialising in German and Austrian railways.

The 0-8-0T no 19 (Hanomag 10194/1923) came from a batch of 15 engines constructed for Poland while the country's new loco-building industry was becoming established. It was PKP no Tx4-559, and awaits restoration. Sister no Tx4-564 is preserved at Wenecja museum in central Poland.

Star attraction

The Péchot-Bourdon 0-4-4-0T no 20 (probably Baldwin 43367 and French army no 215) is a real gem. These robust and well-designed machines, similar to the Double Fairlie though with just one centrally mounted dome, were designed by Prosper Péchot, an inventive army captain, and Charles-Alexandre Bourdon, a Decauville engineer.

In addition to the 61 pre-war machines, 100 were built by Baldwin and 13 by North British in 1915, and a further 180 by Baldwin in the following year. The US manufacturer built just one more in 1921 for the Japanese army. The only others were two built in Russia by Maltsov 1899 for the Kovno fortress in Lithuania.

Probably more than 69 worked for the French military in north Africa and Syria after WW1, and a few were sold for service in Brazil, Yugoslavia, Poland and India. At least 78 remained in France, notably at the



Above: Lucky survivor – the Péchot-Bourdon 0-4-4-0T no 20 outside its shed at the museum.

Below: Henschel 0-4-0T no 6, bought in 1969 by the late Edgar T Mead, the well-known US enthusiast and rescuer of narrow gauge locos, was due to be unveiled to the public at Frankfurt on 8th December 2019. James was allowed a sneak peek on the previous evening.

Maginot Line forts built after 1929. Many of them were removed by the Germans after the defeat of France in 1940, and were mostly sent to eastern Europe, including the USSR, where one was still active in 1953.

Two ended up at Kostolac colliery in Serbia. One of these, no 101, has also survived and is now at the Požega museum. The Germans scrapped others to recover the copper from their fireboxes, and probably few, if any, remained in France after the war.

No 215 was at Dessau in 1944, and in 1945 worked on the trümmerbahn (rubble-clearing railway) at Magdeburg in the then East Germany. Later at Chemnitz, it was restored for the Verkehrsmuseum Dresden in 1958 and arrived on loan at Frankfurt in 2019.

Many French enthusiasts would dearly love to see one of the Péchots come back home in view of their significance to France's railway history. Looted railway engines were supposed to be returned to their countries of origin under post-war accords, but these were ignored behind the iron curtain and claims are time-barred now. Maybe a sharing arrangement could be reached!

No 215 is missing significant

components including the upper parts of its chimneys and its whistle, klaxons, toolboxes and number and works plates. There are photos of it working on the Maginot line under the Germans, and some of its plates were missing even then. There is at present no plan to restore it to working order.

Many of the museum's locos belong to individual supporters, and inevitably there has been considerable turnover. Departed machines especially missed include 'Demetrias', a Decauville 0-4-0T from the Volos-Milies railway in Thessaly, which in 2023 became the Richmond Light Railway's 'Lily' in Kent, Maffei 0-8-0T no 1M from the Victorias sugar factory in the Philippines, and Henschel 0-4-0T 24011/1939, at Frankfurt since 1981 and now at the Stumpfwaldbahn, near Mannheim.

The museum will hold its 50th anniversary gala on 31st May and 1st June 2025; it promises to be a truly exceptional event and well worth an expedition to visit. **NGW**

More Information

Details of the museum and its opening times can be found at www.feldbahn-ffm.de





Worth waiting for...

The Bure Valley Railway doesn't hold a Gala for any old reason – but the Norfolk line's 35th birthday is seeing a special celebration – and a reunion...

One glance at this month's diary pages will make clear that May is very much a month for special events on the UK's narrow gauge lines, but it's an event right at the start of the following month that will be a little different to the rest.

The Bure Valley Light Railway is holding a Gala on 7th-8th June, celebrating the Norfolk 15-inch gauge line's 35th anniversary. Now the BVR is not normally one for staging enthusiast events – conceived for tourists such traffic has always been the line's bread and butter. But general manager Andrew Barnes, who is very much an enthusiast, allowed himself to be persuaded by volunteers at both his own line and the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway in Kent that a 35th birthday was a good point to mark, especially as it allowed the righting of a disappointment – the line intended to celebrate its 30th birthday but that was in 2020, when readers will recall a certain pandemic stopped any efforts at having fun. Oh and why the Romney? Read on...

The BVR, like several other tourist lines, is built on a standard-gauge

trackbed. The railway from Wroxham to Aylsham was opened on 1st January 1880 by the East Norfolk Railway Company, which promptly went bankrupt and ceded the route to the Great Eastern Railway.

The line was never profitable and the GER considered closing it, but the First World War gave it a stay of execution when under government control it carried timber for pit props and trenching, grain and people.

The grouping of 1923 placed the route in the London & North Eastern Railway and under further threat of closure, but this time the Air Ministry came to the rescue with the opening of a new air base midway along the line at Coltishall – RAF Coltishall remained an active fighter base until closure in 2006.

Government control came again during World War 2 followed by nationalisation in 1948. British Rail was keen to cut costs and close the line, but services survived until two years after the end of petrol rationing in 1950 – the opening of Corroton and Fawley Oil refineries in 1952 made petrol freely available and road

"The RH&DR was persuaded to allow its locomotives to remain in Norfolk..."

Heading: Tourist favourite: original Bure Valley Railway ZB Class loco 'Spitfire' being turned at Wroxham in May 2015. Photo: Andrew Charman

Facing page, below: Opening day in 1990, with hired-in Romney locos 'Samson' and 'Winston Churchill' doing the honours.

Photo: BVR

transport more viable. The local bus service to Norwich resumed and the last passenger train from Aylsham ran on 15th September 1952.

Freight traffic continued over the route until 1982, after which the line was mothballed and the track finally lifted in 1984-5. Many thought this was the end of the route as a railway.

Path to change

At this time Norfolk County Council had a policy of acquiring closed railway lines and converting them into long-distance traffic-free paths. The section from Aylsham to Wroxham was taken on by Broadland District Council but the line was by now overgrown and even conversion to a footpath would be costly.

Luckily, several of the council's elected members and officers were rail enthusiasts and the idea emerged of a public private partnership to construct a narrow gauge line along the route. Building to narrow gauge would leave room for a footpath alongside and 15-inch gauge was chosen, drawing inspiration from the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch and Ravenglass & Eskdale lines.

The Council intended to provide officer time and advice, but a private company was sought to build and operate the railway. A tender process was won by John Edwards and John Hudson, who operated the railways in the Pleasurewood Hills Theme park near Lowestoft. They, however, fell short of the capital required to build the new railway and the Park owners, agreed to fund the shortfall.

The project was launched on site at Aylsham Station on 8th May 1989 by enthusiast and TV personality Fred Dibnah – he was supposed to use his traction engine to start the demolition of the old granary in the



station yard, but in truth the engine was not quite up to it and a little hidden help was provided by a JCB hidden inside the building...

Construction progressed rapidly and the railway was formally opened on 10th July 1990 by another TV personality, Miles Kington, a mere 14 months after construction had begun.

The company had built a fleet of 20 very well appointed fully enclosed carriages and two guards vans, but construction costs had escalated and no funds remained to construct any locomotives for the new line. At which point the Romney connection appears – to fill the gap, locos were hired from the RH&DR, with 4-6-2 ‘Winston Churchill’ and 4-8-2 ‘Samson’ duly arriving at Aylsham.

Finance issues

Then, however, history repeated itself – in the same year the new BVR’s parent company, which was involved in property development, was hit by high interest rates and failed. The railway was run by Administrators until a buyer could be found – luckily the RH&DR was persuaded to allow its locomotives to remain in Norfolk with suitable assurances in place.

Salvation came in the following year in the form of the Hart family – led by Mike Hart, then chairman of the Ffestiniog Railway, they stepped in and took over the BVR company.

At this point the Romney locos returned to Kent. An assortment of unsuitable but essential engines was pulled together in the form of ‘Sian’, ‘Sandy River No.24’ and ‘Tracey Jo’ – all ex-Fairbourne railway and rendered redundant by that line’s conversion to 12¼-inch gauge. Tracey Jo, at that time an internal combustion loco, was converted to steam by Winson Engineering and renamed ‘Wroxham Broad’.

In 1993 the railway was sold again, this time to Robert Baker of Sudbury in Suffolk. He saw the need for more suitable motive power and the first of what would become the BVR’s signature ZB class was ordered,



“At this point the company was £987,000 in debt and turning over £432,000...”

Above: Winston Churchill on the turntable at Aylsham during that first season of 1990.

Photo: BVR

Below: Winston Churchill, seen here on its home stamping ground in Kent, will be returning to Norfolk for the anniversary Gala.

Photo: Steve Town

becoming ‘Blickling Hall’. At the same time another order was placed by a private individual for a sister loco, to become ‘Spitfire’. Both were delivered at Easter 1994 and while far from ideal at the time, they provided more power than the existing fleet.

Robert quickly decided, however, that running a railway was an onerous task and the line was soon up for sale again. A consortium came together to acquire it in 1995 but the group was not harmonious and financial worries and disputes persisted. A winding up petition was filed in 1999, but was challenged and set aside.

Business head

Finally in 2001 and after lengthy negotiations, the controlling interest in the BVR was acquired by Andrew Barnes, a railway enthusiast but from a business background who saw the potential for the railway. At this point the company was £987,000 in debt and turning over £432,000.

A 10-year plan was put in place to clear the debt and improve the facilities both for passengers and for maintenance. In the period since the BVR has made solid progress despite major challenges on the way, not least the Covid pandemic in 2020 which resulted in a high-profile fight to have an insurance claim honoured. But the line’s firm foundations were clearly

demonstrated with the delivery on 12th November 2024 of an additional locomotive (NGW190), described by Andrew as the first new design-and-build battery-electric loco designed for passenger haulage on a UK regulated railway of any gauge.

So having missed that big anniversary in 2020, the BVR is grabbing the opportunity to celebrate this year, and to revive the original plans to bring Romney locos Samson and Winston Churchill back to Norfolk. Both have previously visited the line individually but this will be the first time they have run on the BVR together since that first season.

The line also intends to have its entire resident steam fleet in action, with overhauls well advanced on locos Wroxham Broad and ‘John of Gaunt’ and expected to be finished in time. An intensive timetable is set to operate over both days of the Gala, the highlight likely to be a double-headed working of Winston Churchill and Samson to recreate the opening day train. A proper way to celebrate the success of one of the UK’s less headline-making lines. **NGW**

More Information

Details of the Bure Valley Railway Gala, and general services on the line, can be found at www.bvrw.co.uk or by calling 01263 733858.



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From the 2023 Manx Heritage Transport Festival, 'Sea Lion' leads 'Brown Bear' on the Groudle Glen Railway.
Photo: Phil Parker in Narrow Gauge World September 2023.



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The Photographers' Charter...

This year's pre-season on the UK narrow gauge has seen a couple of big photo charters, and some highly innovative work by the photographers attending them...



Above: For many a new season begins with the first enthusiast weekend at the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust, and the double track that leads to the reverse loop on the running lines presents many a photo opportunity. Above, *Andrew Charman* captured the parallel-running Bagnall 'Isibutu' and Hudswell Clarke 'Fiji' on 9th March (not racing at all of course...) while below, *James Kindred* caught the newly blue-liveried Bagnall 'Isaac' patiently waiting for the double-headed train with Peckett 'Liassic' and Corpet-Louvet 'Minas de Aller No. 2' in charge.



Overleaf: Without doubt one of the most spectacular additions to the charter participants this year – Welsh Highland Railway NG15 2-8-2 no 134, brilliantly captured here by *Andrew Simmonds* on 7th March.

**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**







Above: The moment we saw this shot by *Joey Evans* on the Ffestiniog Railway on 30th March, we were reminded of a certain painting by the renowned railway artist Terence Cuneo... But we are disappointed Joey didn't remember to include a mouse in his shot...

Below: Out in the wild... Quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Hugh Napier' and its train of skips passes through the former Archer Dam, one of the earliest infrastructure relics of the Ffestiniog Railway, pre-dating the Moelwyn Tunnel that replaced it. *Photo: Joey Evans*



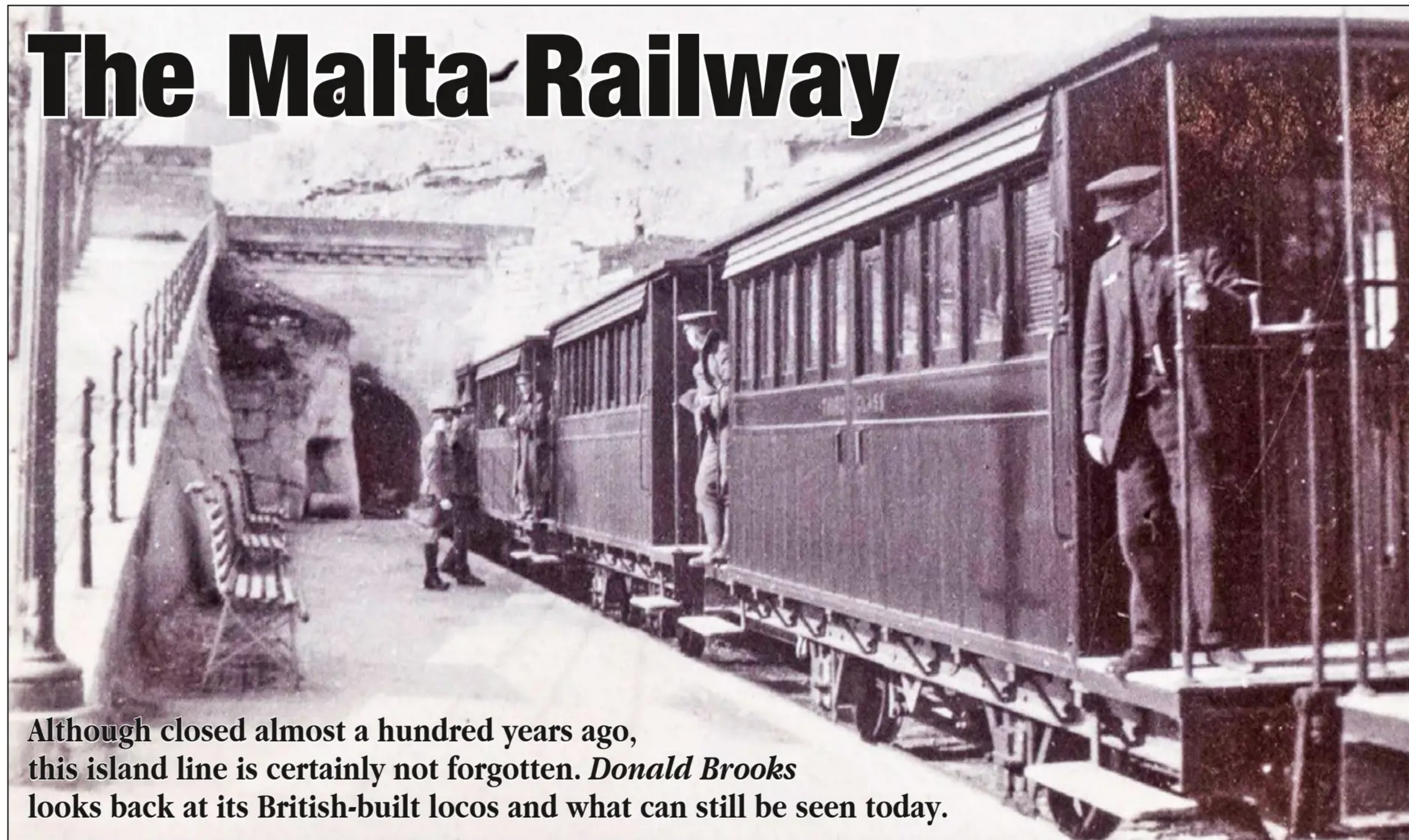


Above: Photo charters that include some after-dark work always produce spectacular images – *Luke Ryan* pictured Talyllyn Railway no 1 'Talyllyn' and no 4 'Edward Thomas' outside Pendre shed during a David Williams charter on 10th March.

Below: And finally... Some excellent thought by *Andrew Simmonds* on the same charter event. No 1 'Talyllyn' is framed by an increasingly derelict piece of metal that has been resident on the lineside for many decades – the loco's old saddle tank...



The Malta Railway



Although closed almost a hundred years ago, this island line is certainly not forgotten. *Donald Brooks* looks back at its British-built locos and what can still be seen today.

At many locations on the island of Malta, and most notably at the site south of Rabat whimsically dubbed Clapham Junction by the British military, can be seen the remains of ancient rut ways, including what appear to be points, cut into the limestone pavements.

There are many theories about the age, construction and use of these tracks and the truth will probably never be definitively known. If they did have any transport function as primitive railways it is good to know that they were all narrow gauge, though in some cases only just.

Despite these remains from railway prehistory, Malta was a late starter when it came to operating conventional steam-powered lines. Between 1813 and 1964 the country was under British rule so it is unsurprising that when a narrow gauge route was finally built the result was in many respects a typically British line, with everything imported from Great Britain.

In the 19th century Malta was,

away from Valletta, an island of small towns and villages, a far cry from the urban sprawl that surrounds the capital today. With a population of approximately 150,000 in 1875, the island, only 27km long and 14.5km wide, did not present particularly promising territory for railway construction. Nonetheless from 1870 onwards several schemes for developing a line – and potentially a network – were examined.

The result was a 10.2km long metre gauge route, built in the early 1880s, connecting Valletta with a station called Notabile, the Italian name for the ancient fortified city of Mdina that was once the island's capital. Notabile station also served the adjacent and much larger community of Rabat, one of Malta's most attractive towns. The line opened on 28th February 1883 and

Above: Three third class carriages at The Malta Railway's Notabile station in 1916 on what appears to be a troop train. MR stock came from several builders with different styles of bodywork but were all four-wheelers with open balconies.

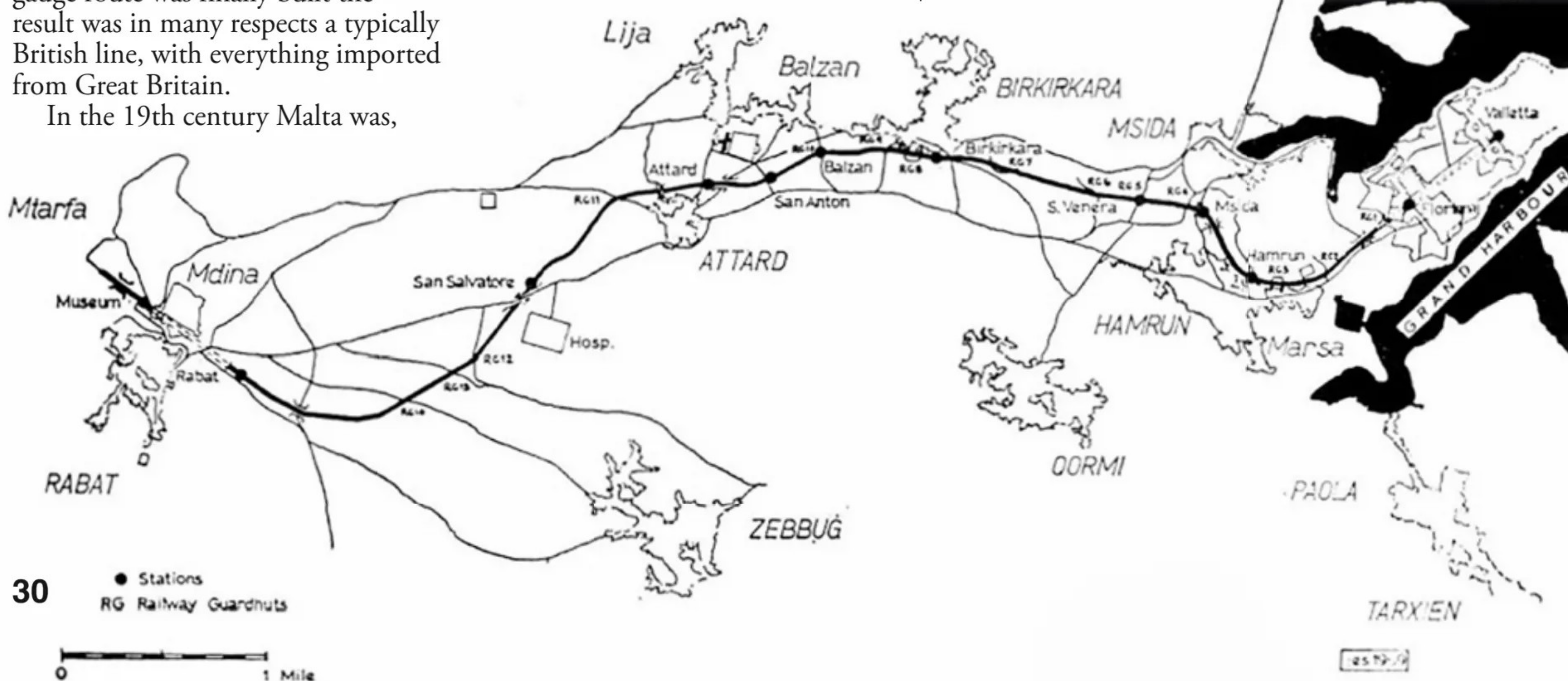
Below: Map of the line at its fullest. The original western terminus, usually known as Notabile, is the penultimate station marked as Rabat.

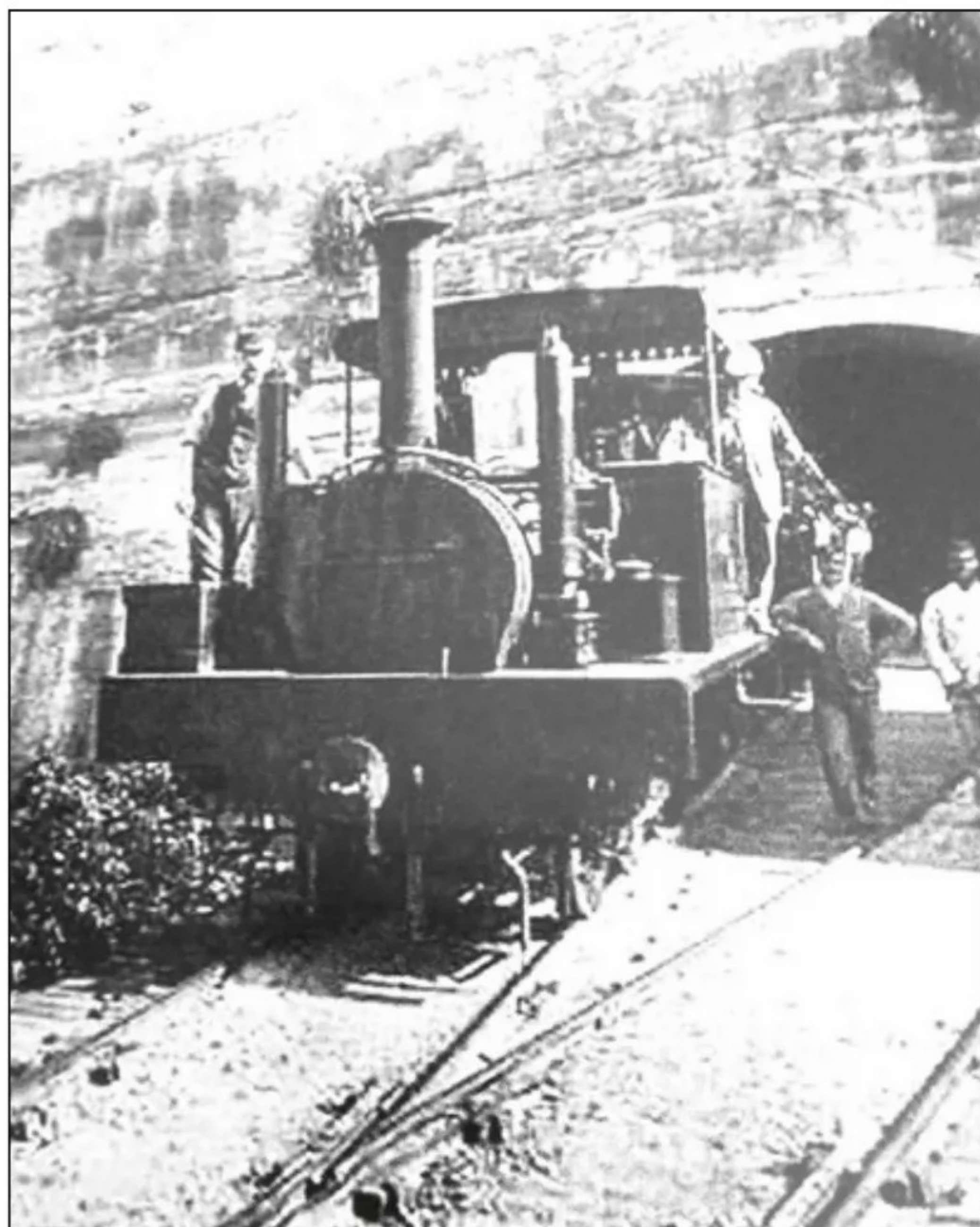
included gradients of up to 1 in 40 at its western end as well as many significant engineering works.

Although more than 500,000 passengers were carried in the first year, traffic failed to live up to expectations, leading to ever-growing financial problems. After just seven years the Malta Railway (MR) closed in April 1890 and, under the terms of the Company's original concession, ownership passed to the Maltese Government later that year.

Self-sufficient

Fortunately this was not the end for the MR. The new owners saw a future for their acquisition and over the next couple of years a substantial amount of upgrading was undertaken. The basic facilities for locomotive storage at Hamrun, the





first major station out of Valletta, were transformed into a shed and works complex that made the MR basically self-sufficient for its engineering needs. In January 1892 the rebuilt railway reopened, much to the delight of its former passengers.

For a few years all went well and the MR was even extended, albeit for just under a kilometre, at its outer end. Notabile station was in a deep cutting and the extension involved continuing the line north-westwards in a tunnel beneath Mdina to a new terminus known as Museum, after the Roman Villa Museum just uphill from the station.

Museum station was little more convenient for either Mdina or Rabat than Notabile, which remained open, but it did take the line nearer to the British barracks at Mtarfa, which were built during the last decade of the 19th century and stand prominently on the hillside directly beyond the end of the line.

The extension continued slightly beyond Museum station to provide stabling for military trains and this long headshunt included the fine stone Gheriexem Bridge, still used today by a road that follows the railway trackbed.

The new station building was typical of the MR, a neat single-storey structure with a platform canopy built in a style reminiscent of nearby Italy or maybe even further east in the Mediterranean. Museum station was equipped with a run-round loop, while all major intermediate stations except Attard had passing loops on the otherwise single-track line.

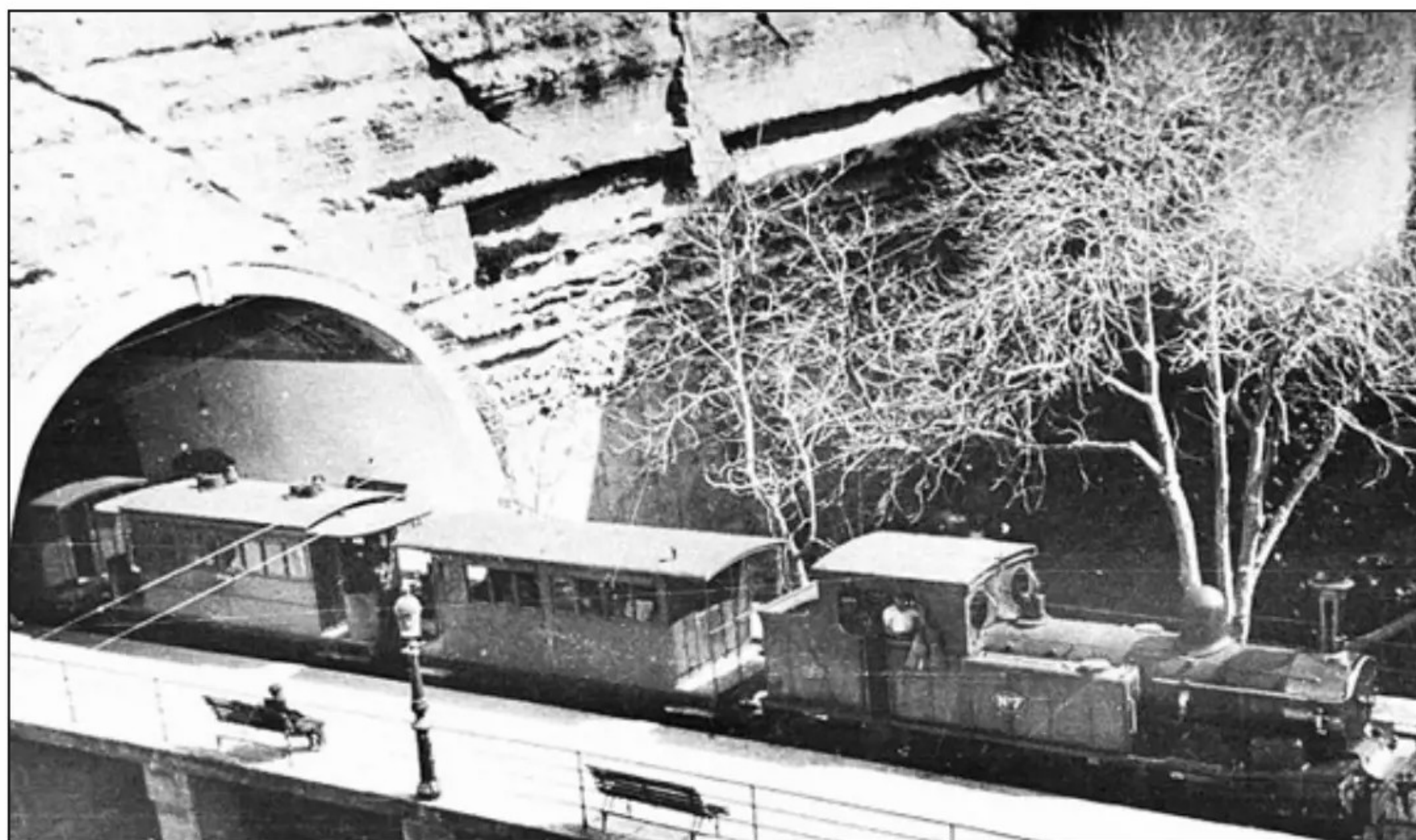
The Valletta terminus was of a

Above: Pre-1890 view of one of the three Manning Wardle 0-6-0Ts on the original wooden viaduct across the defensive ditch outside Valletta station. At this time the platforms were inside the tunnel.

Top right: After the government takeover Valletta was transformed. Beyer Peacock no 7 stands on the rebuilt stone viaduct, with two tracks and a wide platform across it.

Above right: A century on and Valletta station viaduct looks much the same today. The tunnel is now glazed off while the steps to the left lead to the linear park underneath the viaduct. Photo: Donald Brooks, 10th March 2023

Right: No 4, a Black Hawthorn 0-6-0ST rebuilt as a side tank loco, stands at Birkirkara in the early years of the 20th century.



very different layout, a two-platform underground station directly adjacent to Porto Reale, the only entrance to the city by land. The station was tunnelled into the rock and plans show it terminating in a turntable, though this is now thought more likely to have been a sector plate as no other turning facilities were available on the MR, locos working chimney first towards Museum. There were substantial buildings at ground level and the platforms projected beyond the tunnel end onto a bridge that spanned a defensive ditch.

The military had been less than enthusiastic about railway construction that might compromise the city's defences and the bridge was initially built of wood so that it could easily be destroyed by Valletta's defenders in the event of an attack – it was subsequently rebuilt in stone. Beyond the ditch the railway plunged into the 835-metre Floriana Tunnel, cut by hand through the rock and including a single-platform underground station to serve Floriana. Once out of the tunnel, the line was only momentarily in the open air before entering a very short »





tunnel through a final defensive bastion, crossing a bridge over a last defensive ditch and finally reaching what was, during the railway's existence, open countryside.

Once the Museum extension had opened there was talk of developing the railway further, but nothing happened and the MR settled down into operating a relatively frequent service over its single route. Problems started to arise in 1905 with the completion of a three-route tramway system, also of metre gauge, operating from near Valletta station and with one line duplicating the railway as far as Birkirkara.

The trams undercut the trains and traffic was inevitably lost, leading to financial losses for the MR. In the end, though, it was the arrival of the motor bus, initially using surplus World War 1 vehicles, that led to the demise of both trams and trains, with the tramway succumbing first in

1929. The railway struggled on for a further two years, but with continuing losses and ever-declining passenger numbers closure came on 31st March 1931. This time it really was the end.

Locomotives and stock

During the course of its life the MR owned a total of ten locomotives and just over 30 four-wheeled carriages, along with semi-open workmen's vehicles and ballast wagons. There were no goods services on the line.

The first three locomotives were relatively small 0-6-0Ts from Manning Wardle, built in 1882-83. A fretted canopy over the footplate, presumably to protect from the summer heat as well as the winter rain, gave them a distinctly colonial appearance. They were followed in 1884 by the last engine ordered by the original MR company, this time an 0-6-0ST from Black Hawthorn.

Above: Maltese stations were renowned for their lush, immaculately tended gardens. One of the Beyer Peacock locos is at Birkirkra with a train for Museum. The passengers awaiting the westbound train look dressed for a good day out.

Below: One of the Beyer Peacocks on a short train at Museum, the gardening skills of the railway staff again evident. On the hill behind stands the ancient city of Mdina, which the train has just passed beneath in tunnel.



Although more powerful, no 4 proved less satisfactory than her three predecessors and once the Government had taken the line over it was rebuilt in the new Hamrun works as an 0-6-0T, greatly improving its appearance as well as its popularity with the crews.

The Government introduced a 'large engine' policy for its longer and heavier trains, in 1891 acquiring no 5, a 2-6-2T, and in 1892 no 6, a 2-6-4T, both from Manning Wardle. The change in wheel arrangement for no 6 was to try to improve the weight distribution as no 5 had been causing damage to the track. At the same time as no 6 was delivered, Manning Wardle supplied a trailing bogie for no 5, which was fitted at Hamrun.

For its last locomotives the MR transferred its affections to the other side of the Pennines. Nos 7 to 10 were again 2-6-4Ts but this time came from Beyer, Peacock, one arriving in each of 1895, 1896, 1899 and 1905. With inclined cylinders, copper-capped chimney and large brass dome, the locomotives' front end at least showed a marked family resemblance to their Manx cousins. Their livery was olive green and their fate after closure remains unknown though they are assumed to have been sold to Italy for scrap.

Malta Railway today

The only item of MR stock to survive to the present day is a carriage body, initially saved by being bought for use as a private tennis pavilion. The railway's 33 carriages were constructed by several British builders, with detail differences between batches though the general pattern of accommodation, with longitudinal seating accessed from end balconies, remained the same. Three classes of accommodation were offered, though second class quickly disappeared and workmen had their own trains at fares even lower than the remarkably cheap prices charged for standard trains.

The precise identity and original class designation of the surviving carriage are unknown though different sources suggest Oldbury or Swansea as possible builder, with the former perhaps the more likely. Today it is preserved in the attractive public gardens on the trackbed of Birkirkara station, home to the Malta Railway Museum, which keeps the memory of the MR alive.

The carriage, housed in a glass enclosure, can be seen from the outside at any time but visiting during museum opening hours allows access to its interior as well as to the fascinating collection of models and small exhibits displayed inside the

station building. As noted in *NGW*191, a model of this carriage or one like it has recently become available from Brandbright for 16mm scale garden railways.

Museum station also survives as does the Hamrun complex, where the station was fully restored in 2024 while the works are currently occupied by Benna Malta Dairy Products. At Attard the station was destroyed in the Second World War, but was rebuilt in 2023, reopening in 2024 as a library and education centre. Its most striking feature is a full-size model of loco no 7, built in 2016 from two tonnes of cardboard. Improbable though it sounds, the result is remarkably effective and is housed in a glass structure similar to the one at Birkirkara.

At Valletta the situation today is slightly more complex, with the surface station buildings destroyed in a WW2 air raid. The underground platform area survives, having been used as a garage for many years. Crossing the high-level pedestrian bridge which connects Valletta bus station to the new minimalist Porto Reale, there is an excellent view down to the railway bridge connecting the station to the Floriana Tunnel, with both tunnel and station entrances screened off. Access to the station is not possible as a new Parliament building, designed by Renzo Piano, opened directly above it in 2015, though any budding Maltese Guy Fawkes would probably be thwarted by the depth of rock between station and Parliament.

The defensive ditch crossed by the railway bridge has been landscaped as a linear park, so the bridge can be viewed from below as well as above. At the other end of the Floriana Tunnel, which can be visited on annual heritage open days, the bridge over the final defensive ditch survives, just by the Bombi bus stop. Other buildings and sections of the trackbed also survive, but the Notabile cutting was filled in, burying the station at platform level.

Today, if the roads are clear, the fastest bus takes half an hour from Valletta to Rabat, very much the same time as the narrow gauge steam train a century earlier. With all the development – some might say overdevelopment – around Valletta and the resultant traffic-choked ring roads, there is on occasion talk of some form of metro or railway to serve the island. This usually takes place immediately before a general election, after which it is dismissed on cost and complexity grounds and duly forgotten again. The Malta Railway may well have been an idea before its time.



Above: The end of the line. Seen from the walls of Mdina, a train stands in Museum station, waiting to return to Valletta. Plans to continue the line beyond this point to Mellieha and the Gozo ferry came to nothing.

Centre right: After the railway's closure a second storey was added to Birkirkara station. Today the ground floor houses the excellent displays of the Malta Railway Museum. Photo: Donald Brooks, 26th November 2024

Right: The road frontage of Museum station today, seen from the road up to Rabat. Now used as a restaurant, the station's appearance has changed little since it was built. Photo: Donald Brooks, 12th March 2023

Except where indicated, map and all photos courtesy of the Malta Railway Foundation.

It is now almost a hundred years since Malta was a destination for a railway holiday, but for anyone on the island it is certainly well worth exploring the surprisingly extensive railway remains and fitting in a trip to the Malta Railway Foundation's excellent Birkirkara museum. Opening hours are very limited, so it is worth checking the Foundation's

Facebook page and making contact if necessary before making a visit. **NGW**

More Information

Donald is very grateful to Paul Galea, Founder and Chairman of the Malta Railway Foundation, and his fellow volunteers for their very generous help with historic illustrations and additional information.



Lost Hope in the Isle of Man



Adrian Garner found lots of locomotives but little traffic during a 1968 Whitsun weekend a few months before all services were withdrawn.

Those long in the tooth may recall the name Don Boreham, a pioneer narrow gauge modeller. Don started building narrow gauge models in the early 1950s and his book *Narrow Gauge Railway Modelling*, first published in 1962, did much to promote the hobby. His models of the Isle of Man Railway in 4mm scale on 12mm gauge track, then called TT, ran each year on the Model Railway Club's layout at its Easter exhibition at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

Don, however, had never been to the Isle of Man and by the time he and I were in a position to visit the railway was in serious financial difficulties. Luckily it was temporarily resuscitated in the late 1960s and we

were able to grab a quick trip. It was the last chance to see the line before it was seriously curtailed.

The Isle of Man Railway had been very buoyant in the early 1950s with more than one million passenger journeys each year. Unfortunately this declined rapidly over that decade as individuals became more wealthy and began to travel to hotter climates. The Sunday service on the railway, which had been introduced as a temporary measure after the Second World War until enough buses had been delivered, had ceased on all lines by 1957.

The decline in passenger numbers then led to the cessation of both the evening and Saturday-only trains.

Above: Ex County Donegal Railways railcars 19 and 20 pass Ronaldsway Halt at Whitsun in 1968 with a mere six passengers on board. A gap in the fence led to the halt, a gravelled area with a painted name board.

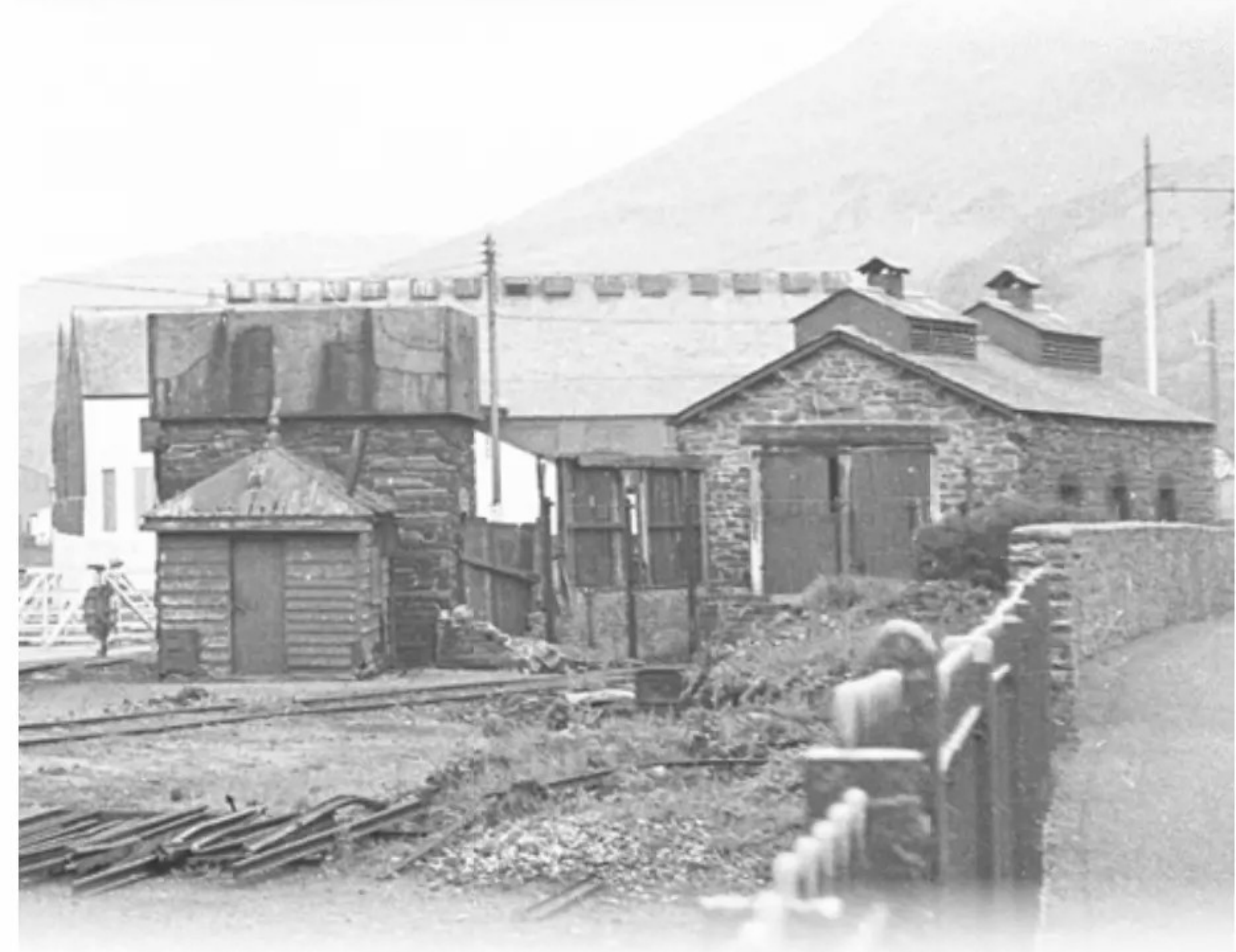
Below: Douglas Station, Saturday 1st June 1968. At left is the Peel train and at right for Port Erin. The sleepers have long been lost from view.

Designed to reduce the amount spent on staff overtime payments, these cuts proved insufficient so the winter service was dramatically pruned and the summer service reduced to the working day from 9.30 to 18.30.

By the early 1960s the situation was more desperate. The line from Douglas to Peel was closed beyond St. John's for the winter of 1960-1961. In the following winter, 1961-1962, the line from Douglas to Peel was kept open with a once-a-day service but the more sparsely populated line from St. John's to Ramsey was closed, while the winter service to Port Erin was just twice a day. This was repeated the following year (1962-1963) except that the service to Port Erin was further reduced to just one train a day.

The winter of 1963-1964 saw the same closures but the service to Port





Erin was improved to twice a day by the use of the ex-County Donegal Railway railcars nos 19 and 20 which had arrived in 1962.

After the summer season of 1965 it was clear to the directors that the enforced economies were still insufficient and had resulted in the permanent way now being in need of urgent and expensive repair. The decision was made to close the whole railway on 13th November 1965 and the company laid off its staff. It remained closed during 1966.

Brief revival

Fortuitously the railway gained a reprieve from a group of businessmen led by the Marquess of Ailsa as chairman, who believed it might still be viable to operate in the summer and they took over the line in April 1967. They immediately recruited back the original staff (where possible) to rebuild the sections of the line desperately needing attention and the locomotives and stations were spruced up with paint.

A ceremonial reopening occurred»

Top: No 11 'Maitland' heads out with a train to Peel on Sunday 2nd June.

Above left: The far end of Peel station. No locomotive or carriages but a scene full of character for modelling – water tower, locomotive shed and crossing gates plus general narrow gauge clutter.

Above right: Whit Sunday 2nd June 1968. No 8 'Fenella' hauls Isle of Man Railway no 15 'Caledonia' out of the shed at Douglas. Still retaining '15' on the chimney it had been repainted to represent its original owner's numbering, Manx Northern Railway no 4.

Below: The train headed by Caledonia stopped just short of Union Mills station to allow those on board to walk along the line for a photo shot. Ah for those days!





on 3rd June 1967 with the lines from Douglas to Peel and Douglas to Ramsey. The line to Port Erin was only reopened as far as Castletown as a gas pipe was being laid alongside the rail track.

With the lines now reopened Don and I were determined to make a visit. Don needed to take holiday time from his position as Registrar at Caxton Hall whilst I needed to find a slot between university examinations. The weekend of Whitsun 1968 was deemed perfect.

We flew out on Friday 31st May from Heathrow to Ronaldsway Airport on a now historic BEA Viscount aircraft with its vibrating four propellers. In true enthusiast style we walked across from the airport to the newly opened Ronaldsway Halt where we flagged down the train from Port Erin to Douglas. Somehow we had arranged for our arrival at Ronaldsway to correspond to meeting a train!

On the Saturday we travelled the line from Douglas to Peel. Much

Above: The special at St John's. The first carriage F75 – a combination of early four-wheelers A12 and C9 – is now displayed in the railway museum at Port Erin.

Below: Looking back towards Douglas, Caledonia has just taken water. No 4 seemed to be leaking steam everywhere on the journey.

Below right: No 12 'Hutchinson' prepares to haul the special extended afternoon train to Port Erin.

Photos by Adrian Garner, 31st May to 2nd June 1968

effort had been made to tidy the line. The new management had been helped by the Manx Steam Railway Society but it was clear that Peel station was a sad reflection of its former self. It was also clear that despite being a holiday weekend the passenger numbers were still low – essentially just a few other enthusiasts.

The season for 1968 had started on 29th April with a twice daily train on both the Douglas to Peel and Douglas to Port Erin lines. There was also a once-weekly train on a Wednesday to Ramsey.

Summer special

Whit Sunday (2nd June), however, was a special day – from that Sunday the timetable was boosted for the summer season and the Marquess of Ailsa was marketing the line with the new title 'Isle of Man Steam Railway Ltd'. To celebrate a special train ran from Douglas to St. John's headed by Manx Northern Railway No. 4 'Caledonia' smartly repainted in red. The trip included photo stops and

many of the engines had been hauled out to St. John's to celebrate the day.

With the extra services Don and I were able to return to Douglas in time to board the afternoon train to Port Erin, which too was a special. The seven-carriage train was too heavy for the climb outside Douglas and so was banked up the incline. The banking loco at the rear was not coupled and I still have the 8mm cine film showing it falling back from the train having done its work.

We explored the Manx Electric and Snaefell lines on the Monday. Sadly, we had to fly back on the Tuesday – if only we had been able to take an extra day to travel on the line from Douglas to Ramsey.

Definitely more sad was that the passenger traffic was so clearly light. By July, just a few weeks after our visit, the Marquess of Ailsa was having misgivings about the railway's future. On the 27th September all services were withdrawn. Only the line from Douglas to Port Erin was ever to reopen to passengers. **NGW**





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The Covid lockdown encouraged Jennifer Houghton to build something on which to run a roster of Austrian narrow gauge models built up over several years.

Back in 2020 when the country was locked down by Covid many born-again railway modellers used the pandemic as the impetus to start building a model railway, and I was among their number, constructing my first layout since childhood. Utilising a large quantity of uncommitted leisure time, some helpful friends on social media and the plethora of videos available on Youtube, I made a start on something I admit I had been putting off for years. It wasn't a marathon, I just approached it task-by-task at my own pace, figuring out how to do each stage as they arose with a lot of patience and some classical music for company.

I have been interested in modelling the narrow gauge ever since I first read P D Hancock's *Narrow Gauge Adventure* (my signed copy is well loved), but the amount of scratch building that had been required in the past for modelling in 009 4mm to the foot scale had scared me off. Then around 15 years ago, I discovered that there were Austrian narrow gauge vehicles

available, if I was patient enough to seek them out, ready-to-run in HOe scale (effectively the continental version of 009, specifically 3.5mm to the foot but so close that many modellers mix and match – Ed).

Themed collecting

I began slowly collecting Austrian items wherever I found them for sale, while it was also a bonus that after a quarter of a

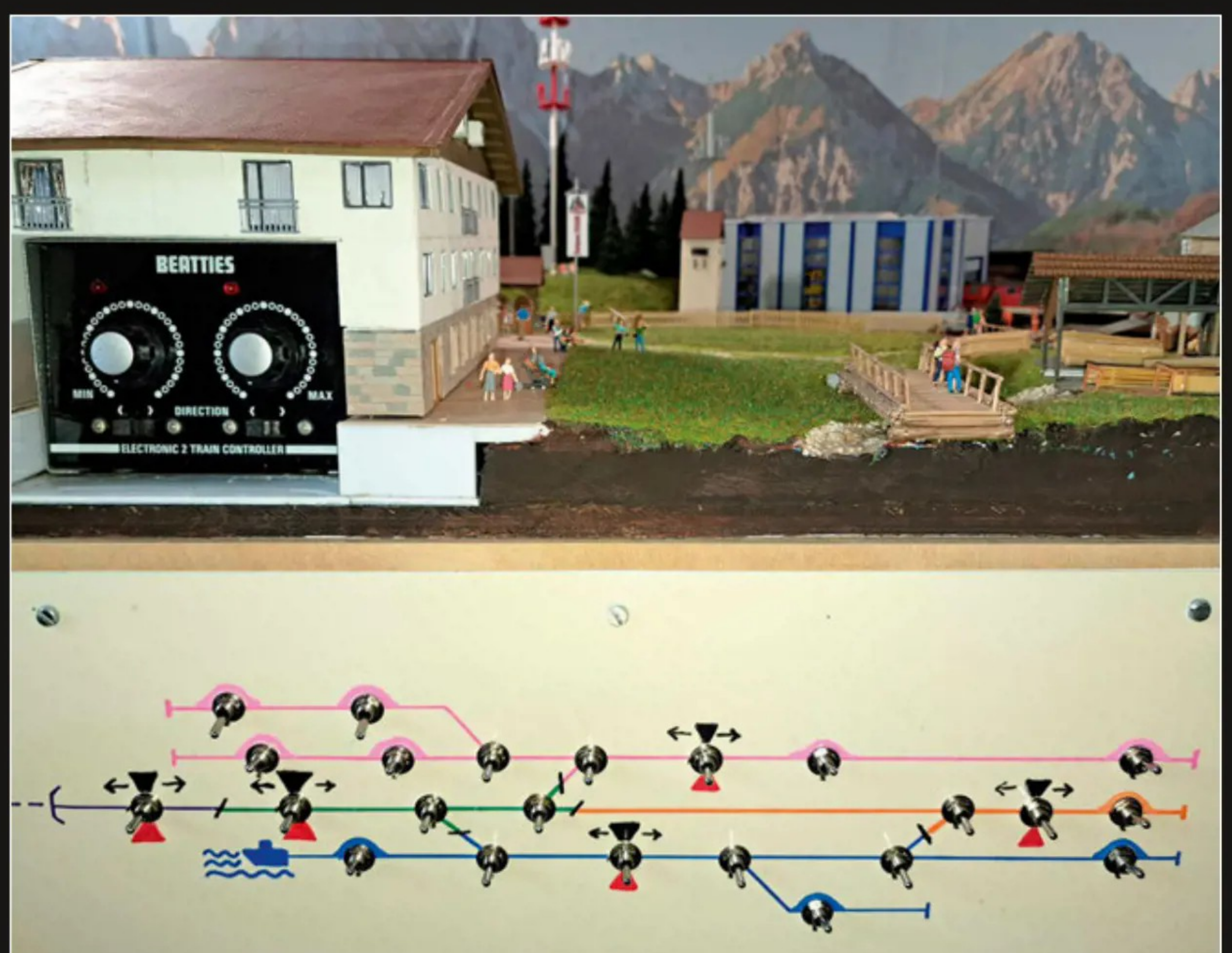
century of working with Austrian vehicles as a volunteer on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway (the mid-Wales line having both a locomotive and several items of carriage stock from Austria in its fleet) and regular visits to the country through my work, that I have fallen in love with the Austrian narrow gauge scene.

The only disadvantage of modelling this subject is that most Austrian prototype »

Heading picture: Class 2095 class diesel (Roco) and matching stock in ÖBB 'Jaffa Cake' livery await departure from Lanersbach – the layout certainly exudes Austrian atmosphere with even the road vehicles suitably liveried.

Right: The control panel and 30-year-old DC controller (disguised by a scratchbuilt hotel), shows the track layout.

All photos by Jennifer Houghton





Above: Photographers on the platform are treated to the arrival of Engarth 0-8+4 Mh6 with the Mariazellerbahn Oskabar set whilst sister ÖBB Engarth 0-8+4 399.03 awaits departure (both locos by Roco). A Klose 0-6+2T from Saxony (Bemo) a loco type sadly now extinct, waits with timber wagons

Left and below: Two views of the train ferry 'Franziska', adapted from a Faller kit. A brigadelok 0-8-0T (Minitrains) is propelling a van onto the ferry while a Motordraisine railcar and trailer (Liliput) passes by the scene with a track maintenance crew.

Below right: A wedding party pose for photographs – a host of little cameos such as this add greatly to the layout.

Facing page, top: Liliput U-Classes Zillertalbahnhof no 2 'Zillertal' (nearest camera) and no 1 'Raimund' rest beside the small wood yard. Note the 6.5mm gauge diesel, an Auhagen kit.



stations follow a formulaic appearance, requiring large open spaces with bland platform loops; the lines were engineered to a very high standard with a good deal of standardisation that was imposed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is not ideal for the modeller seeking quaint prototype locations with lots of shunting potential and only having space for an 8ft x 2ft 6in scenic area.

Reasonable compromise

I believe my resultant layout is a reasonable compromise between Austrian authenticity and operational interest – it represents a fictitious modern narrow gauge terminus set in around 2005 that generally follows ÖBB and Zillertalbahnhof practices. I wanted alpine chalet buildings, an onion-dome church, a lake and mountainous backscene.

The yard required plenty of shunting potential with multiple sources of freight traffic, a modern motive power depot and a small train ferry (inspired by the Swiss Bodensee operation).

It is based, in name alone, on the Tyrolean village of Lanersbach. This was in the Tuxertal valley that rises from the terminus of the Zillertalbahnhof at Mayrhofen up to the Hintertux glacier. Lanersbach disappeared from modern maps when it was renamed Tux a few years ago and has no lake, however the local magnesium mines were once connected to the Zillertalbahnhof by an aerial ropeway as an extension to the railway was geographically impracticable. Together with the train ferry and the timber business, a temporary cement terminal also keeps the yard busy with freight traffic.

The track is by Peco and powered by my 30-year-old DC controller. I was impressed that as a novice I was able to wire up the layout with motorised points, kick-back sidings and a comprehensive control panel by following the guidance in C J Freezer's *PSL Book of Model Railway Wiring* – for those who are not yet ready for DCC it remains the definitive resource for wiring DC layouts. I was subsequently very grateful that I had split the small layout up electrically into five sections as this has helped me when fault-finding.

The buildings are a selection from the ranges of Faller, Kilbri, Voller, Wathers and Auhagen with some kit-bashing and



repurposing as required. The large lakeside hotel building (that also hides the controller) was mostly scratchbuilt.

The scenic areas were built up using contoured extruded polystyrene insulation sheets that were covered in Sculptamold modelling compound. I created the lake using Woodland Scenics products and elsewhere have liberally applied WW Scenics static grass to represent the bright green alpine meadows.

Devil in the detail

A much-commented on feature is the non-functional narrow gauge system in the timber yard, with a scale track gauge of around 18 inches – this is a surprisingly little known kit produced by Auhagen and intended for dioramas. I have had a great deal of fun creating small, detailed scenes – a detailed workshop interior, a group of radio-control aircraft modelers, railway photographers, a wedding party, an LGBT+ Pride party and I even have one of those infamous Tyrolean ‘oompagh’ bands that often appear from nowhere whenever a narrow gauge steam locomotive halts, to the annoyance of photographers!

Most of the time the layout is operated as a shunting puzzle. In this scenario I flood the layout with 27 uniquely numbered four-wheeled carriages represented by 27 index cards – these are selected at random to determine the order



that I must arrange the vehicles whilst adding some extra operational rules to make things more challenging when my mood takes it. I found it to be a useful way to relax when I needed to clear my mind.

My vehicle fleet is largely from Liliput, Roco, Bemo, Minitrains and Halling and of varying ages. It is challenging to find specific items for sale in the UK but with

some perseverance I have managed to assemble a large collection of mostly Zillertalbahn and ÖBB prototypes. I also have a Bachman 009 Double-Fairlie that sneaks out when nobody is looking...

Finally, I would like to thank Sarah Goodwin, Michelle Moorhead and my father for their advice during the construction of the layout. **NGW**

From Penrhyn to Tywyn...

We reviewed the first of Peco's new 7mm scale laser-cut wood wagon kits in *NGW*190 and now **Phil Parker** of our sister magazine *British Railway Modelling* has got his hands on the latest and likely much-desired release, for the archetypal Penrhyn quarryman's carriage.

Some 13 of these open-top vehicles ran in the slate quarries of Bethesda, and while the kit can be built in this form, also supplied are parts for the simple roof that was added to two of the vehicles after they were acquired by the then recently preserved Talylllyn Railway in 1954. As such these vehicles could likely find use on a wide range of layouts.

As with the previous wagon kits the components are held in the wooden fret with very tiny nibs, which cut easily with a sharp knife. Heavy wheels are supplied to provide useful low-down weight, and these are correct pattern curly-spoke items. The open Penrhyn version had brakes but these were removed by the Talylllyn, and Peco supplies two different chassis sides for the modeller to choose their variant.

Phil described assembly of the kit as slightly fiddly, due to a lot of parts, but added that everything fits together perfectly. Taking one's time and paying attention to the excellent exploded diagrams in the instructions pays dividends to ensure such aspects as brake hangers are at the same place as the brake handle on the sides.

Phil also reported some confusion over the coupling options – Peco supplies parts for Bemo couplings, fitted into NEM 355 pockets, or tension locks housed in 362 pockets. These are a very tight fit, you need to be a bit brutal to locate them, which can damage the bar that retains the coupling hooks.

Phil also chose to add a piece of suitably-sized Plasticard for the carriage roof rather than following the suggestion in the instructions to use a section of the kit packaging card.

Phil summed the carriage up as a very nice little kit, and a welcome addition to the NG7 world. We concur – it's excellent to see manufacturers such as Peco getting firmly behind NG7.

Produced by Peco Tel: 01297 626204

E-mail: info@peco.co Web: www.peco-uk.com

Price: £16.95



Bole Laser Craft offers Old Kiln Ruston



In *NGW* 191 we suggested that large-scale narrow gauge railways in the garden don't have to be massively expensive, and the latest battery locomotive in 16mm scale from Bole Laser Craft proves the point – for between £130 and £300 you can quite easily have the motive power for a nice little industrial line carting your tomatoes from your flower beds, or whatever takes your fancy...

The latest release is a new version of BLC's Ruston 20 DL SM32/45 kit. The full-size inspiration, 'Susan' was produced in 1941 by Ruston & Hornsby and delivered to the War Department at the Easttriggs ammunition dump.

The locomotive worked at various MOD locations until 1989 and was then sold into private ownership. Today it is at the Old Kiln Light Railway where it has been extensively rebuilt and is now in regular service again.

Susan was a very early example of the 20DL locomotive and was built with the 1930s-style straight-sided bonnet rather than the slope sided bonnet most of the class displayed.

The new kit features BLC's new steel-wheeled chassis together with a through-the-floor mounting for a rechargeable PP3 battery. These can be recharged by plugging in a standard micro USB lead and charger.

Fine print

The kit is now completely 3D printed – the four main body components are now SLA-printed in resin. These components have a much finer resolution than the previous filament printers with no visible layer lines. BLC tells us that the bottom edges do need a little light sanding to remove the remains of the printing supports, but the resin is very easy to sand and only needs a few strokes of the supplied emery board to leave a nice flat surface.

The various detail components come 3D printed in a charcoal black engineering grade nylon. The main components of the loco are bolted together with M2 captive

nuts and bolts to allow easy painting of the model and maintenance.

Measuring some 15cm long, the loco can be purchased as a kit for 32mm or 45mm gauge, the kit including a pre-built and tested working chassis with no soldering required, and a battery clip for a PP3 battery.

The loco can also be ordered as a ready-to-run item, this version having a simple manual control via a forward-stop-backwards switch. A PP3 Lipo battery and USB charger come supplied with the loco

and delivery is between four and eight weeks with a range of liveries available.

Orders can also be taken for a version with full radio control – this has a Micron MR603 controller and is supplied with a matching 'centre off' transmitter. Again delivery is between four and eight weeks.

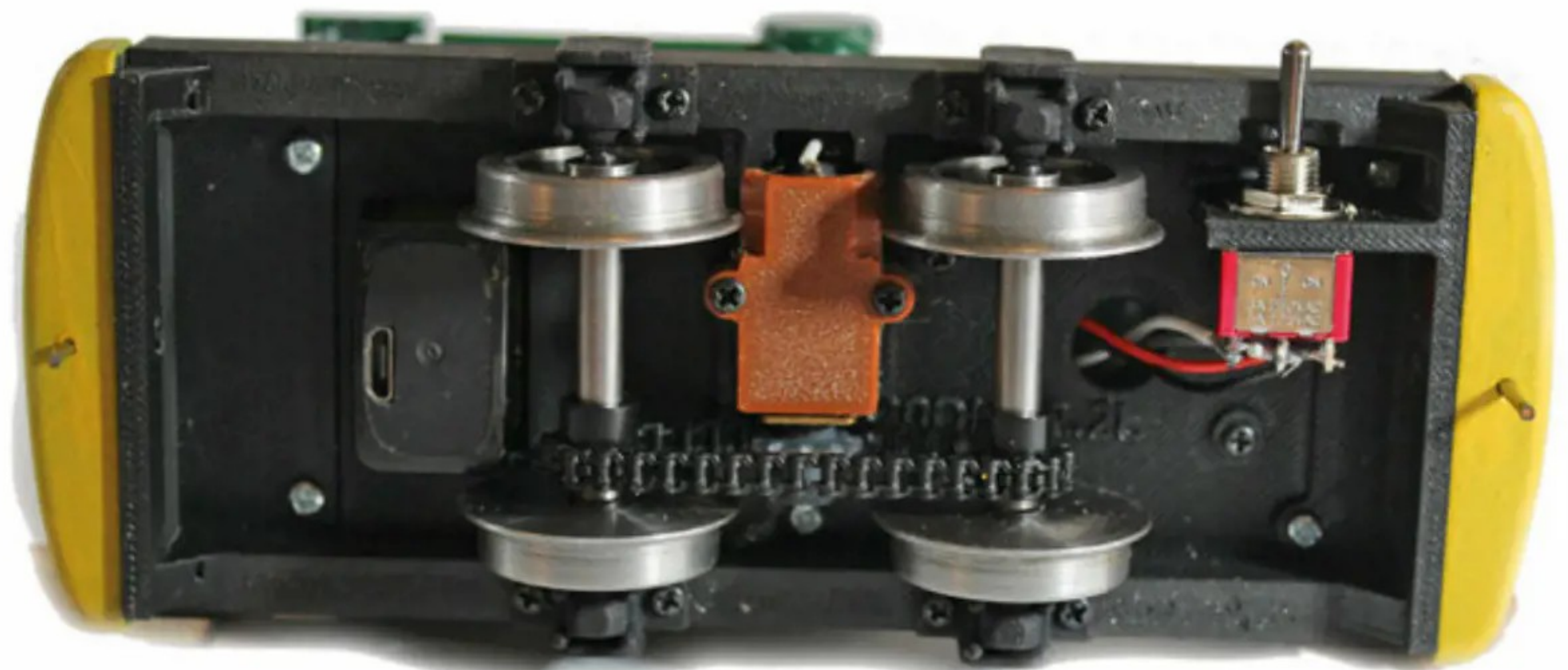
Produced by Bole Laser Craft

Tel: 07900 995164

E-mail: info@bolelascraft.com

Web: <https://bolelascraft.com>

Price: Kit £130, ready-to-run manual £190, ready-to-run radio control £300



Welsh Highland wagon kit

To give your Ruston something to pull, Bole Laser Craft has just released a kit for one of the four-ton mineral wagons originally owned by the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway and later employed on the Welsh Highland Railway.

The kit follows the usual BLC practice combining laser-cut plywood and laser-safe MDF together with many 3D printed nylon components. The body straps and hinge plates glue into recesses engraved in the body sides to ease alignment of these parts. The interior of the wagon also has engraved planking and rivets.

Available for 32mm gauge only, the kit includes everything that is needed to

complete the model except tools, glue, paint and transfers.

Produced by Bole Laser Craft (see above)

Price £49 plus £4 UK post and packaging.





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Peter Gray's Travels – Vol 2: Austria Narrow Gauge & Industry Compiled by Andrew Fox

■ Peter Gray was a railway enthusiast who was renowned for his excellent colour photography, shot on Kodachrome slide film. Between 1958 and 1973 he made several visits to Austria and this new book is a companion volume to an earlier published title on the Austrian standard gauge.

In turn the book documents the well-known 760mm gauge lines, the rack lines, the Government operated Steiermärkische Landesbahnen, and finally the independent lines including the one most *NGW* readers will know, the Zillertalbahn.

The pictures are of excellent quality, and benefit from mostly being used singly across an entire A4 landscape format page, and accompanied by an informative caption. However it's not just the technical quality that makes the book stand out, it's the excellent eye for content – the views are well thought out and include some unusual scenes, such as inside a workshop with an upturned boiler being worked on.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway fans will spot images of two familiar locos working in their home environment – the line's Franco-Belge 0-8-0T 699.01 'Sir Drefaldwyn' and the original Zillertalbahn 0-6-2T 'Zillertal', which has recently ended a loan period in mid Wales.

The Austrian narrow gauge has many a fan and readers among their number will certainly want this inexpensive album in their collection. *AC*

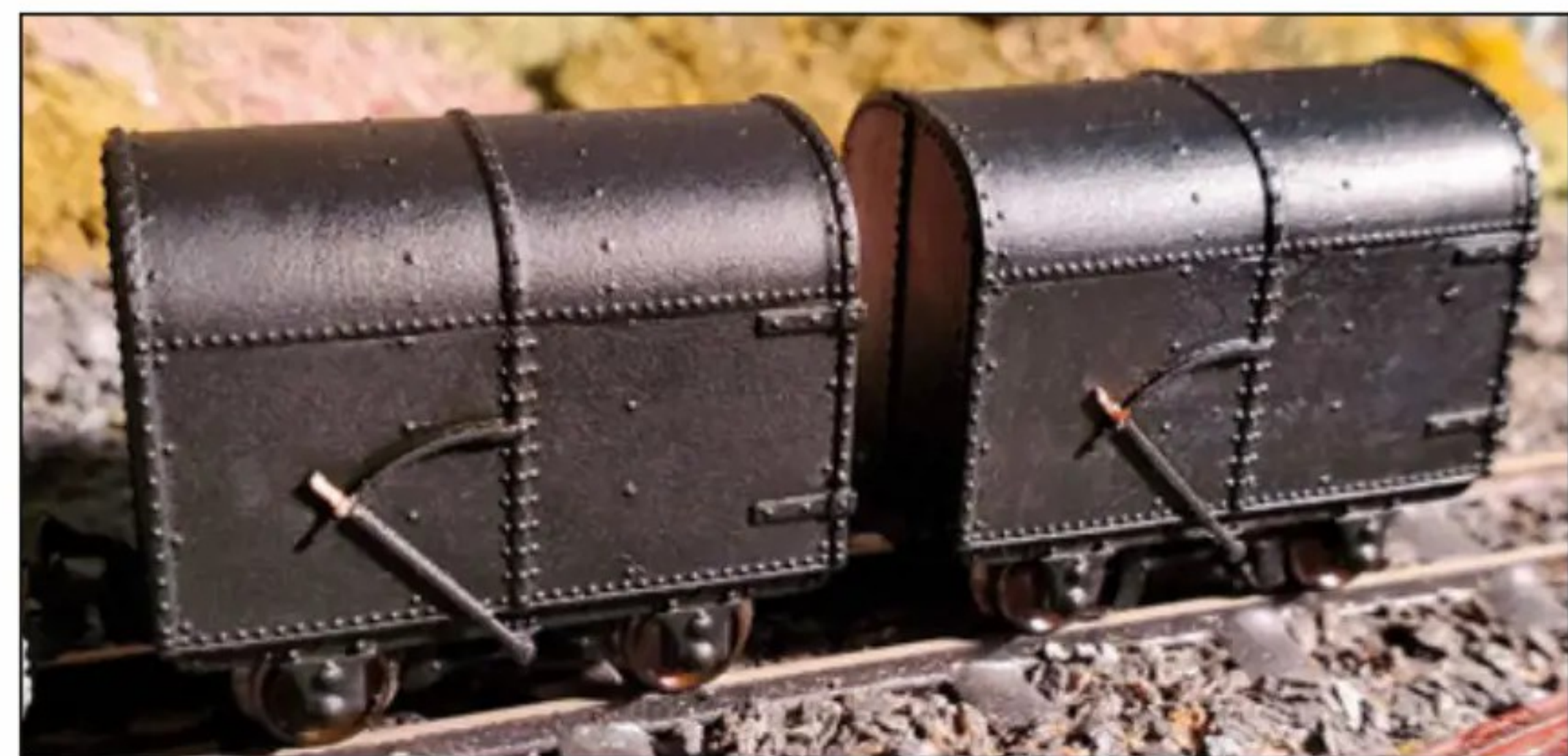
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Web: <https://tppublishing.co.uk> Price: £17.50 plus £3 postage



Keeping the powder dry...

■ Next to come from 009 kit maker Brooks 3D will be the recognisably-shaped Oakley Quarry gunpowder wagon that ran on the Ffestiniog Railway.

Prices for the kit have yet to be announced but will no doubt follow the Brooks pattern of inexpensive additions to one's fleet – this maker already offers a wide range of slate wagons to run with it. More details should be posted at www.brooks3dmodels.com by the time you read this.



The Last Steam in China (DVD)

■ The latest video presentation from Michael Field is a tribute to Tony Hollins, who Michael describes as a good neighbour and friend for more than 50 years, who was eventually persuaded to join a trip in search of steam in Germany.

He was immediately hooked and became part of the regular MFVP camera team, initially in Germany and Poland.

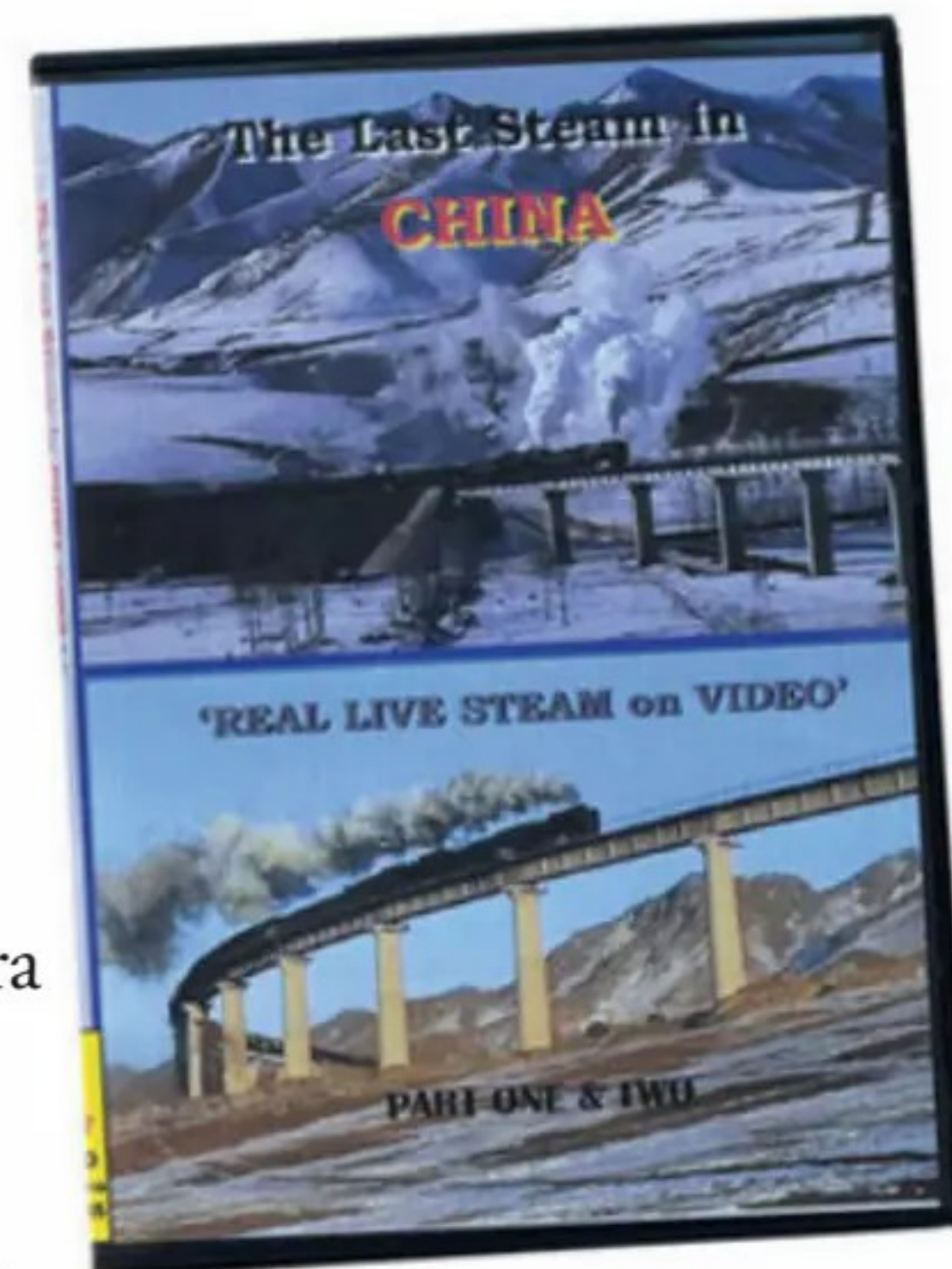
"He then started to venture to the last pockets of real steam... Syria, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Burma, Jordan, India and of course China – from 1999 to 2009 Tony spent upwards of two months most years in various parts of China," Michael tells us.

The pair started working on a presentation of this footage around four years ago but sadly Tony passed away last year – Michael has since finished the task and admits there may be some location errors as Tony's filming was rather better than his note-taking.

To be honest, such things matter little on this occasion – filmed in 2000 this is an excellent portrait of an environment that almost seems lost to history, locomotives working hard on their daily routine in often bleak surroundings.

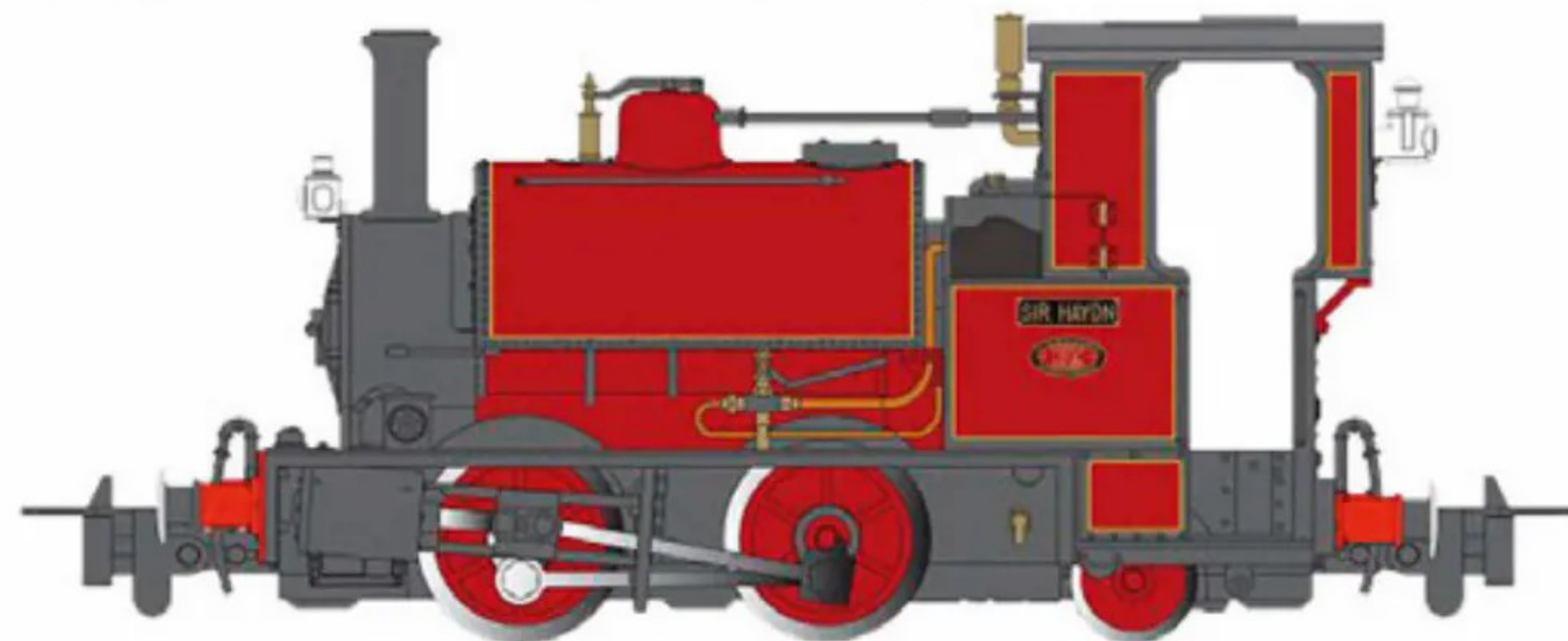
There is a substantial amount of standard gauge in this two-disc set running to 130 minutes, but it's equally fascinating and narrow gauge is well covered, especially around Dahuichang. If you like working steam a world away from the pristine image of much in the heritage world, this is definitely for you. *AC*

Produced by MFVP, The Rowans, Bishop Kinkell, Conon Bridge, Ross-shire IV7 8AW Tel: 01349 861129
E-mail: m.fieldvideo@googlemail.com
Price £17.95 plus £2.50 UK post and packing



■ Bachmann's US operation continues to press ahead with its 009 models of Tallyllyn products and has recently shown tooling samples of its forthcoming model of Hughes Falcon 0-4-2ST 'Sir Haydn'. The model will be marketed in both the red of the Corris Railway, the loco's original home, and the Tallyllyn green for which it is well known today. It will certainly look the part alongside Fletcher-Jennings 0-4-2ST 'Tallyllyn' which Bachmann USA already offers.

Also coming soon from Bachmann USA is a Ffestiniog Railway five-plank coal wagon. For more details go to <https://shop.bachmanntrains.com>



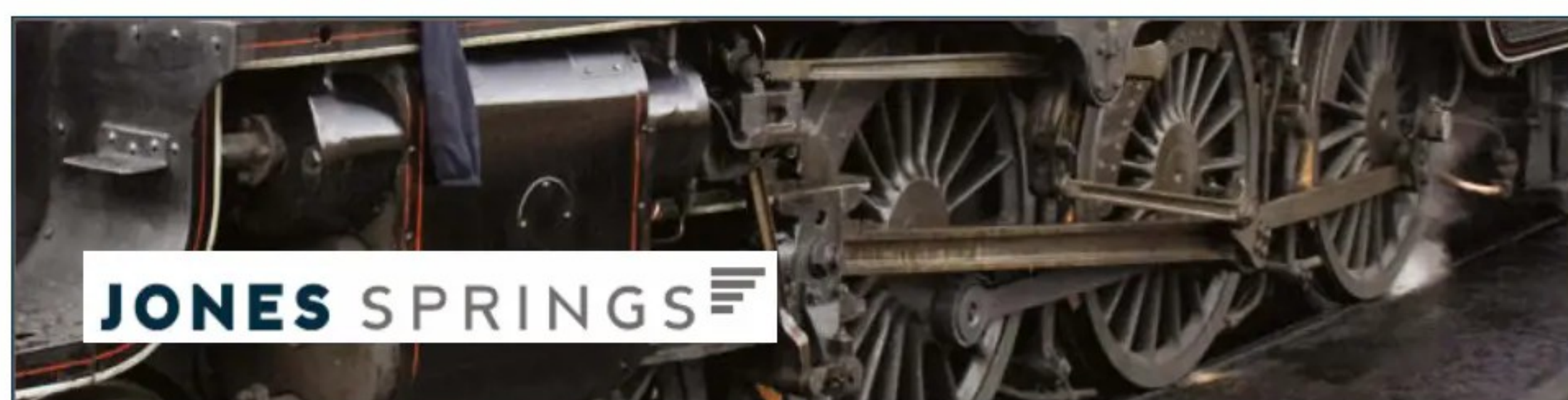
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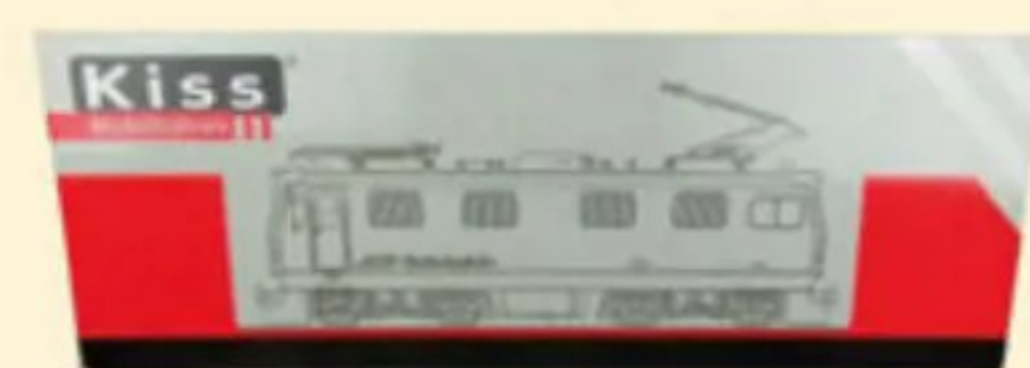
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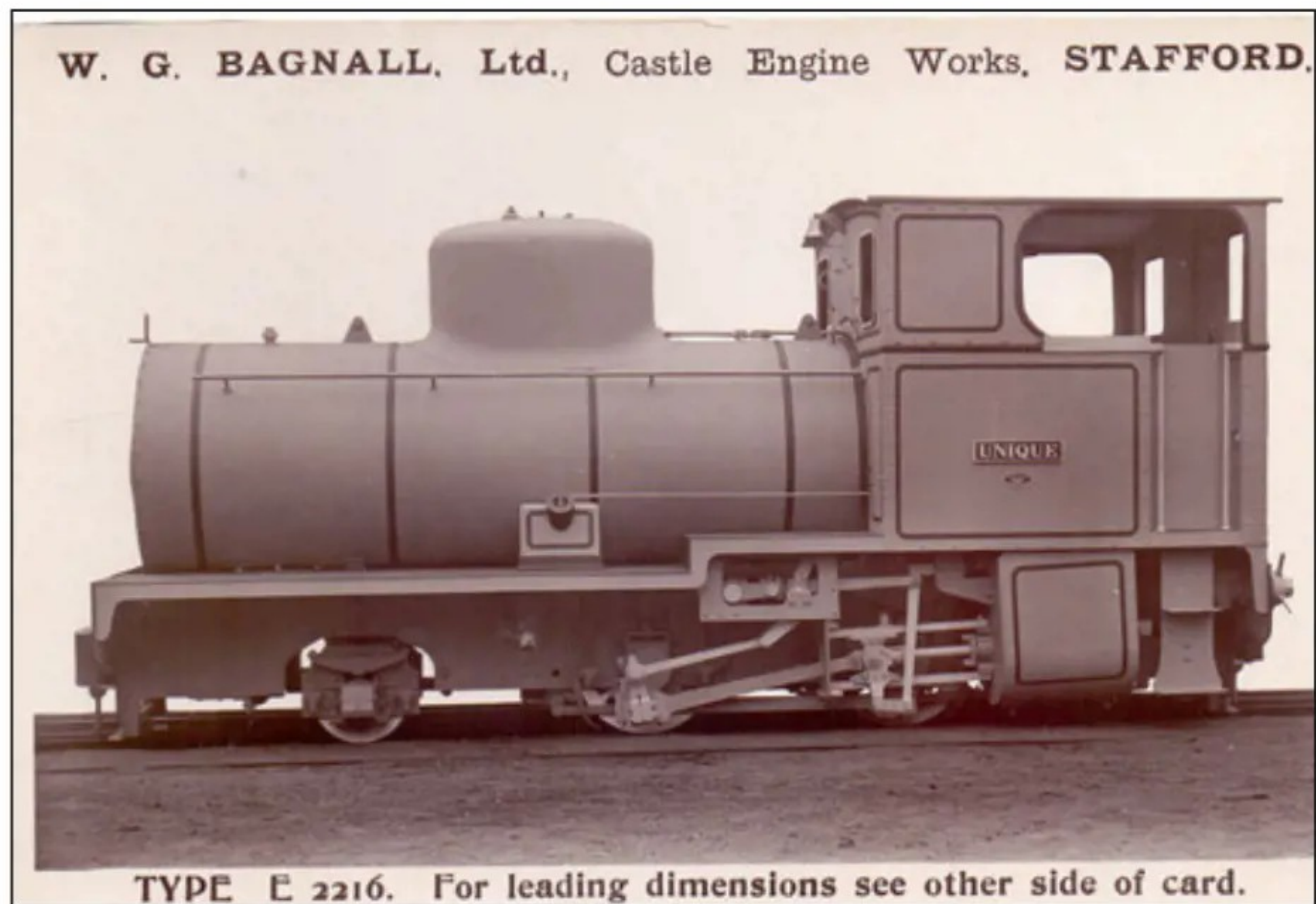
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Financial can of worms?

We need a vote of thanks to Angela F Baker (*Viewpoint*, NGW191) for opening the subject of strange happenings in the narrow gauge financial world.

I have always thought that the business model should be based on the footfall and overall costs to provide the expected ticket revenue. Cafe and merchandise profits should not come into the equation to provide a buffer, until circumstances force a poor year by unusual weather or natural disaster.

The figures from the Isle of Man (reported in the NGW190 news pages and referred to by Angela Baker in her letter – Ed) are very worrying – is there a mistake, or is there a deliberate situation being sought?

Brian Catt

Andrew C replies: It's a perennially difficult situation and many railways do rely on their catering profits to provide vital extra funds, as I know from being at the sharp end of one of them. Perhaps someone suitably financially knowledgeable would like to provide some more detail?

Postcard memories

I was interested to see the article in NGW191 on the loco 'Conqueror' built for Bowaters in Kent. Recently I purchased some more of the 'promotional trade cards' produced by Bagnall, one of fireless 'Unique' and another of a further 0-6-2T, named 'Alpha'.

The shot of Alpha is actually unique among the 40 or so cards I bought, in that it shows the loco in service, presumably at Kemsley (a 'Hall and Co' coal wagon lurks in the background) and has not been retouched to remove the background.

The last image is of a similar design but listed in the specifications on the back for 1ft 11½in gauge not 2ft 6in. The loco is named 'Burnside'. Did this go to South Africa, like the 4-4-0T now on the Lynton and

Barnstaple? Where are these locos now, if any survive? **Bob Brown**

Andrew C replies: Both Unique and Alpha are at Sittingbourne, the former on static display and the latter awaiting restoration. Burnside did indeed go to Natal in South Africa and I am reasonably confident that sadly it did not survive – perhaps another reader would like to confirm?

Plastic fantastic

I read and smiled at the Welshpool & Llanfair permanent way crew with dustpan and brush (NG Extra, NGW191). Some 17 or so years ago when I started to plan my garden railway (Gauge 1 and 16mm on 45mm gauge) I decided I wanted to run trains, not maintain a railway.

So I chose the reconstituted wood and plastic compound for the supports and track bed. 'Guaranteed 20 years' it said! This will do for me, then the thought "if the material is guaranteed for 20 years then so is the sawdust/cuttings!" Next on the shopping list was a shop vacuum that connected to my circular saw to collect up the vast majority of the cuttings produced.

Now coming close to that 20 years there is no change in the material, just a little fading in the sun. The yearly maintenance is a power wash, nothing else, no preservatives, no 'oiling', no replacing wood, no replacing road bed felt, just a power wash.

When a friend was talking about a G1 railway he chose the same stuff. A choice I would do again if I ever built another railway. **Alan Macfarlane**

Andrew C replies: When I started to build my 16mm garden line I wanted to 'be realistic' with proper wood sleepers. As a result it's never yet run a train because it was too much work. If I ever get back to building it I'll use Peco plastic track because now with the full-size lines using recycled plastic sleepers it is still a case of model reflecting full-size...



"I decided I wanted to run trains, not maintain a railway..."

Above: Bagnall very much went in for promotional postcards of its products – see the letter from Bob Brown.

Right: A railway draisine, which Keith Chester photographed in Bosnia – see Keith's letter on this page.

Of Draisines and pictures...

I was interested to read in NGW191 James Waite's account of Valkenburg ('New Era for Dutch Steam Trams'), always well worth a visit. His remarks about the draisines preserved there caught my eye.

My understanding is that the French-sounding word derives from the name of the German Karl von Drais, to whom is generally attributed the invention in 1817 of a machine with one wheel directly ahead of the other and capable of human propulsion. Known in Britain as the hobby-horse, this was the forerunner of the bicycle.

The railway draisine, as we know it, was designed by the Austrian Franz Alois Bernard in 1837. For many decades these light vehicles were man or pedal-powered but by the first decade of the 20th century, more



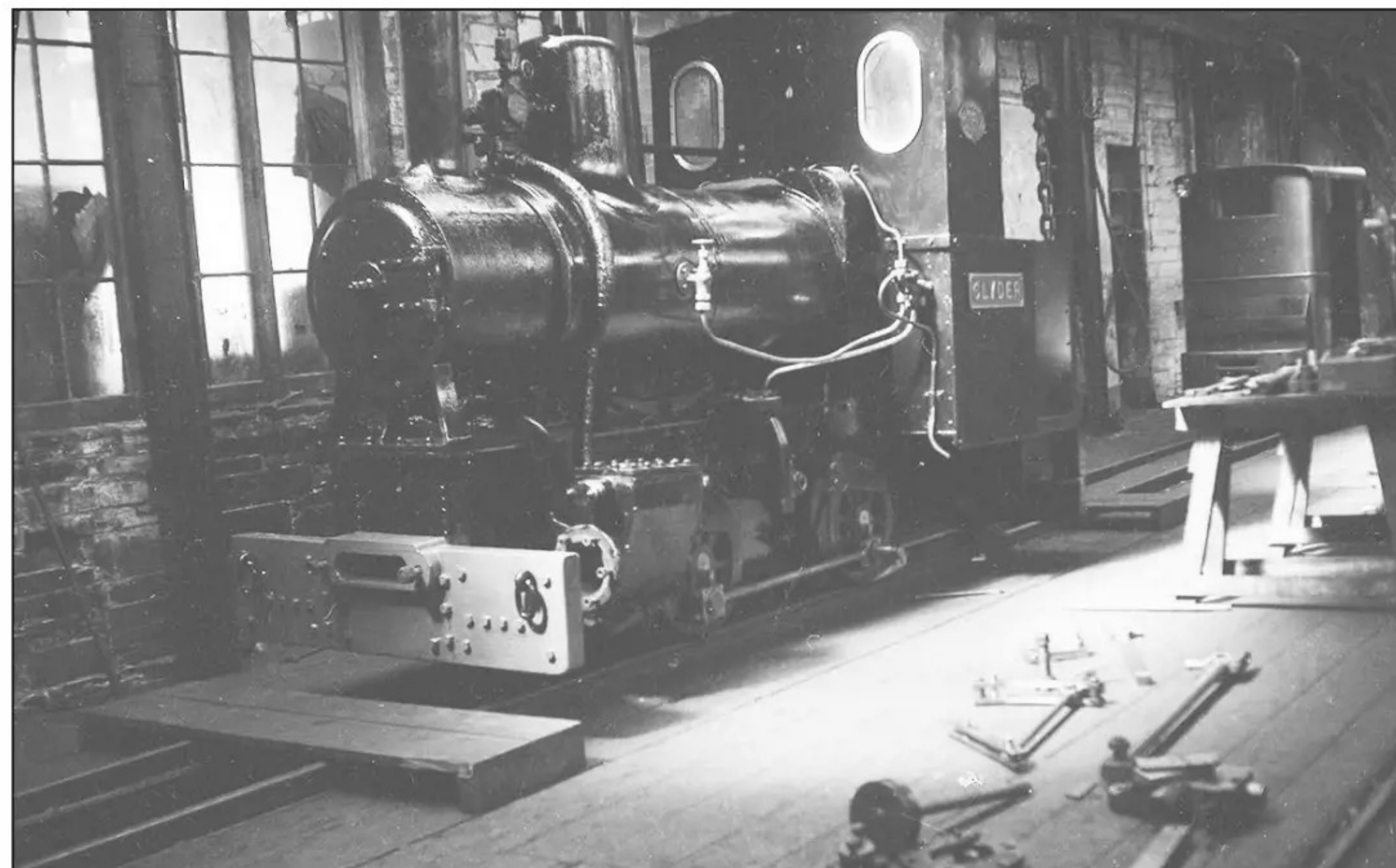
sophisticated motorised draisines were being manufactured.

Robert Day should not be too surprised at the relative abundance of photos from the old DDR (*Viewpoint, NGW191*). Our hobby was well established there. The *Modelleisenbahner* magazine, founded in 1952, catered to railway modellers and enthusiasts alike whilst official bodies organised visits and such.

Less easy were individual tours and photography: the doyen of East German narrow gauge, Klaus Kieper, once told me of the difficulties he had experienced in the mid-1960s trying to record the remaining lines before they closed.

By the early 1970s the authorities had finally grasped that railway enthusiasts were mostly harmless and that much needed foreign exchange could be earned from those from the West. By the mid-1970s when I first visited the DDR, railway

Right: The account in NGW191 of a 1964 visit to Penrhyn and the view of locos 'Gyllder' and Nesta' in the workshop "looking not so attractive as expected under their rushed paint job," had Michael Bishop scouring his archive – here is Glylder, captured by Michael in July that year. He told NGW, "I succeeded in cutting the chimneys off – I didn't know they were for sale and it seemed odd that a quarry nearly finished with its railway would overhaul them."



photography was almost universally tolerated unless you had the misfortune of bumping into an overzealous or officious policeman.

It was, however, only after 1989 that we learned that many of the

'friendly' East Germans who approached us and started chatting about their interest in railways were in fact Stasi employees keeping a watchful eye on foreigners!

Keith Chester

Who what where?

We were not in the least bit surprised to receive plenty of answers to the query posed in *NGW191* by Steve Holland, regarding the potential fate of a diesel loco he spotted working at the Ford foundry in Leamington Spa in 1980 – *NGW* has a highly knowledgeable readership and we thank in particular John Tennent and Simon Lomax for their contributions.

As a result we can inform Steve, and other interested readers, that the loco was indeed of 2ft gauge and a Hibberd product, the company's type OPF delivered in 1959 and not surprisingly fitted with a Ford engine – three were built and two worked at Leamington Spa.

No 3915 was scrapped in 1976 but 3916 was working when Simon Lomax visited in

1986, and so was no doubt the loco seen by Steve six years earlier.

Simon added that the line at the foundry was extremely simple; "it was a single length of track running a couple of hundred yards between the Nodular Melt building and the Grey Iron Charge make-up building. There was a point leading to a second track at the Nodular Melt, but the second track didn't seem to have been used for many years.

"The loco shuttled back and forth with two wagons; each wagon was a flat, carrying a large metal skip. Cranes at each end lifted the skips to and from the wagons."

Apparently despite this simplicity the site also had at one time three Hunslet diesels and four home-built electric locos.

The final bit of good news? The loco

survived the end of rail operation at the foundry to be preserved – it moved to the West Lancashire Light Railway at Hesketh Bank during the winter of 1989 into 1990 and remains there today.



Brief lives...

The history of UK narrow gauge preservation is littered with tales of short-lived lines, built by enthusiasts who had obtained one or more of the many sold-off industrial locos and wanted to run them somewhere – such lines usually disappeared soon after being built and in this new occasional series *NGW* is going to highlight some of them – we encourage readers to add to our memories!

Kicking the series off courtesy of *Peter Johnson*, we have a line built by Graham J Mullis, who had bought Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT 'Eigiau' from Penrhyn Quarries in 1963 and moved it to his home at Salwarpe in Worcestershire, where it was joined by Kerr, Stuart '0-4-0T' Diana and Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Una' from Pen yr Orsedd in 1964 and 1965 respectively.

Graham moved to Colley Pits Farm, Wychbold, in August 1965 and built a railway there, adding two Ruston diesel

locos and a Peckett 0-6-0ST to his fleet. There appears to have been just one public steaming of Eigiau before the steam locos were sold to Hills & Bailey at Llanberis in 1970, where Diana was seen surrounded by parts of Una (*right*). The last Ruston was sold in 1972 and the line was dismantled.

The efforts of these enthusiasts can be appreciated in the fact that today these locos are all very much with us.



That was the year that...

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

From 50 years ago

Welsh Highland Railway (1964) Ltd, 2ft and 2ft 6in gauges Orenstein (& Koppel) 10808 of 1924, 0-6-0Wt 'Pedemoura' has been acquired from Pleasurail Ltd at Knebworth, Herts in exchange for a diesel! The swap has been made for Fowler 4160004 of 1951, the 2ft 6in gauge 0-6-0 which will be rejoining its former stablemate 4160005 at Whipsnade Zoo, Bedfordshire. Pleasurail previously attempted to acquire this loco in early 1971. 'Victor', 4160005, is now finished in black and orange livery. (NGN, Apr-May 1975)

A short piece that demonstrates how locos move about... Both Fowler diesels were built in 1951 for a groundnuts scheme in Africa but when this failed they went instead to Portland Cement in Glamorgan. 4160005 was sold in 1968 to the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway and named 'Wynnstay' after the favourite Llanfair pub of the line's volunteers, but proved unsuitable for the line and went to Whipsnade in 1972 where it acquired the name Victor. On arrival at the zoo 4160004 was given the name 'Hector'.

'Pedemoura' never worked on the Welsh Highland 64 'Co's short line at Porthmadog, though it appeared to for a BBC TV programme, burning rags placed in the smokebox and a diesel pushing it out of shot... After some years on display in Dolgellau it was sold to a consortium of Leighton Buzzard Railway members in 2005, finally entering service on the Bedfordshire line in 2016.

From 40 years ago

Imports from India

Two World War 1 Baldwin 4-6-0 2ft gauge tanks and a Fowler 0-6-0WT, also 2ft gauge, arrived at Felixstowe aboard MV 'Vishva Parijat' on 9th March. BLW 44699/17 'Lion' has moved to the Chalk Pits Museum at Amberley, West Sussex, arriving on 19th March. Baldwin 44656/16 'Tiger' has gone to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford Aerodrome, and JF

15991/23 'Cheetal' to Leeds Industrial Museum.

A third Baldwin was due to come, but the customer was unable to complete the purchase and the sad decision to leave it behind had to be taken in a hurry. The Chalk Pits Museum was also asked to bring to the UK one of the Matheran Hill Railway O&K 0-6-0Ts as part of the 'package' but a last-minute snag with paperwork prevented export. However it is still intended to bring it to the UK in due course.

(NGN, Apr-May 1985)

'Tiger' eventually became the first of the Baldwins to steam in the UK, restored and since based at the Leighton Buzzard Railway in the care of the Greensand Museum Trust. 'Lion' has been restored much more recently, by the Vale of Rhedol Railway for the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway, taking on the identity of 590, the WHR Baldwin scrapped following the line's closure before the Second World War.

As for 'Cheetal', this loco is still in the ownership of Leeds museums, but can be found today stored on the West Lancashire Light Railway while plans are formed for an eventual restoration to steam.

Extracts from **Narrow Gauge News**, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join up, go to www.ngrs.org.uk or see the advert on page 37.



Diary & Special Events

No responsibility is accepted for dates on these pages – if planning a visit for a ride or to an event the line's website and/or social media should be checked for latest update before travelling. Not all trains operate over full lines.

Special Events in May

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

- **03-05 May, Groudle Glen Railway Diesel & Electric Day;** Battery-electric 'Polar Bear' and three diesels on services.
- **03-05 May, Bressingham Steam Gala;** Intensive timetable, visiting engine 'Eigau' from Statfold and traction engines.
- **10-11 May, Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Rly Railway 200 Gala;** Visiting locos 'Katie' and 'Badger' from Kirklees, triple-headers etc.
- **10-11 May, Statfold Steam in Miniature Weekend;** Miniature and model steam engines, 2ft and 12½in lines operating.
- **10-11 May, Talyllyn Railway Rev W Awdry Railway Series Weekend;** Celebrating 80 years of the children's engine stories.
- **10-11 May, Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Vintage Train Weekend;** GWR and Austrian train sets operating, shunting.
- **11 May, Groudle Glen Railway Diesel & Electric Day;** Battery-electric 'Polar Bear' and three diesels on services.
- **17 May, Volks Electric Railway Late Running;** from 5pm as part of Rail 200 celebrations. Details: volkselectricrailway@gmail.com
- **17-18 May, Ffestiniog Railway Model Railway Workshop;** Based at Y Ganolfan, Porthmadog. Layouts, demos and traders.
- **18 May, Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway Behind the Scenes Day;** see how volunteers operate railway, inside workshops etc.
- **24 May, Corris Railway Gala;** intensive service with less-used locos, gravity train rides for members, workshop tours.
- **24-26 May, Fairbourne Railway Sian & Katie Gala;** 15-inch sisters returning home, Statfold 'Victoria', other attractions.
- **26 May, Gartell Light Railway Open Day;** 2ft Somerset line, frequent timetable. 01963 370752, <http://newglr.weebly.com>
- **26 May Threlkeld Museum Home-Grown Gala;** Celebrating 15 years of rail operation, as many locos running as possible.
- **31 May-1 Jun, Leighton Buzzard Railway Diesel Gala;** intensive operation of internal combustion locos.

Tramways

- **Douglas Bay Horse Tramway** www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/ Open daily except Tues 6, 13, 20.
- **Great Orme Tramway:** Conwy 01492 577877, www.greatormetramway.co.uk Open daily, 10am to 6pm
- **Manx Electric Railway, Snaefell Mountain Railway:** Isle of Man, 01624 662525, www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/ Daily services
- **Seaton Tramway:** Devon 01297 20375, www.tram.co.uk Daily services from 10am

Miniature Railways

- **Audley End Railway** (10.25in): Essex 01799 541354, www.audley-end-railway.co.uk Daily services
- **Beer Heights Light Railway** (7.25in): Devon 01297 21542, www.pecorama.co.uk Daily services except Mon and Sun.
- **Lappa Valley Railway** (15, 10.25, 7.25in): Cornwall 01872 510317, www.lappavalley.co.uk Open daily.
- **Littlehampton Miniature Railway** (12.25in): Sussex www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com Weekends, 5th, 26th-31st
- **Moors Valley Railway** (7.25in): Hants 01425 471415, www.moorsvalleyrailway.co.uk Wknds, 5th May, Daily from 24th
- **North Bay Railway, Scarborough** (20in): Yorks 01723 368791, www.nbr.org.uk, Daily services
- **Rhyl Miniature Railway** (15in): Clwyd 01352 759109, www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk 1st-5th then weekends, 26th-31st
- **South Downs Light Railway** (10.25in): Sussex 07518 753784, www.south-downs-railway.com Weekends and Bank Holidays

Visit our forum: <http://www.narrow-gauge-forum.co.uk>

What's On	Thu 1st	Fri 2nd	Sat 3rd	Sun 4th	Mon 5th	Tue 6th	Wed 7th	Thu 8th	Fri 9th	Sat 10th	Sun 11th	Mon 12th	Tue 13th	Wed 14th	Thu 15th	Fri 16th	Sat 17th	Sun 18th	Mon 19th	Tue 20th	Wed 21st	Thu 22nd	Fri 23rd	Sat 24th	Sun 25th	Mon 26th	Tue 27th	Wed 28th	Thu 29th	Fri 30th	Sat 31st
Alford Valley Community Railway: www.avcr.org.uk																															
Amberley Museum: 01798 831370 www.amberleymuseum.co.uk																															
Amerton Railway: 01785 850965 www.amertonrailway.co.uk	Open but services tba at press time, check website – likely to be weekends																														
Apedale Valley Rly: 0845 094 1953 www.avlr.org.uk																															
Bala Lake Railway: 01678 540666 www.bala-lake-railway.co.uk																															
Brecon Mountain Rly: 01685 722988 www.bmr.wales																															
Bressingham: 01379 686900 www.bressingham.co.uk																															
Bure Valley Railway: 01263 733858 www.bvrw.co.uk																															
Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway 01472 604657 www.cclr.co.uk																															
Corris Railway: 01654 761303, www.corris.co.uk																															
Evesham Light Rly: 01386 422282 www.valleyrailwayadventure.co.uk																															
Exbury Gardens Railway: 023 80891203 www.exbury.co.uk																															
Fairbourne Railway: 01341 250362 www.fairbournerrailway.com																															
Ffestiniog Railway: 01766 516000 www.festrail.co.uk																															
Great Laxey Mine Railway: 01624 624007 www.laxeyminerailway.im/																															
Golden Valley Light Railway: 01773 747674 www.gvlr.org.uk/																															
Great Whipsnade Rly: 0844 225 1826 www.zsl.org/zsl-whipsnade-zoo																															
Groudle Glen Railway: 01624 670453 www.ggr.org.uk																															
Hampton Kempn Rly: 07583 560167 www.hamptonkemptonrailway.org.uk																															
Hayling Light Railway: 07902 446340 haylinglightrailway.wixsite.com/ehlr																															
Heatherslaw Light Rly: 01890 820317 www.heatherslawlightrailway.co.uk																															
Isle of Man Steam Rly: 01624 663366 www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/																															
Kirklees Light Rly: 01484 865727 www.whistlestopvalley.co.uk																															
Launceston Stm Rly: 01566 775 665 www.launcestonr.co.uk																															
Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway www.leadhillsrailway.co.uk																															
Leek & Rudyard Railway: 01538 306704 www.rlsr.org																															
Leighton Buzzard Railway 01525 373888 www.buzzrail.uk																															
Llanberis Lake Rly: 01286 870549 www.lake-railway.co.uk																															
Lynton & Barnstaple Railway: 01598 763487 www.lynton-rail.co.uk																															
North Gloucestershire Railway: www.toddington-narrow-gauge.co.uk																															
Old Kiln Light Rly: 01252 795571 www.oldkilnlightrailway.co.uk																															
Perrygrove Railway: 01594 834991 www.perrygrove.co.uk																															
Ravenglass & Eskdale Rly: 01229 717171 www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk																															
Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Rly 01797 362353, www.rhdr.org.uk																															
Ruislip Lido Railway: 01895 622595 www.ruisliplidorailway.org																															
Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway: 01795 424899, www.sklr.net																															
Snowdon Mountain Rly: 0870 450 0033 www.snowdonrailway.co.uk																															
South Tynedale Rly: 01434 381696 www.south-tyndale-railway.org.uk																															
Steeple Grange Lt Rly: 01629 55123 www.steeplegrange.co.uk																															
Talyllyn Railway: 01654 710472 www.talyllyn.co.uk																															
Teifi Valley Railway: 01559 371077 www.teifivalleyrailway.wales																															
Threlkeld Msm: 01768 779747, www.threlkeldquarryandminingmuseum.co.uk																															
Vale of Rheidol Rly: 01970 625819 www.rheidolrailway.co.uk																															
Waterworks Railway: 020 8568 4757 www.waterandsteam.org.uk																															
Wells Walsingham Rly: 01328 711630 www.wwlr.co.uk																															
Welsh Highland Railway 01766 516000, www.festrail.co.uk																															
Welsh Highland Heritage Railway 01766 513402, www.whr.co.uk																															
Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway 01938 810441, www.wllr.org.uk																															
West Lancashire Light Railway 01772 815881, www.westlancs.org																															
KEY Trains (steam or diesel), Special events, No trains	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Enduring Engerths



Keith Chester recalls student travel in Spain in 1974.

For almost 20 years I commuted up and down Engerthstraße, a nondescript street in Vienna's 20th district named after the engineer Wilhelm von Engerth (1814–84). Employed by the Südbahn, he designed an 0-6+4 locomotive for its sinuous and steep railway over the Semmering opened in 1854.

The frame of the rear truck carrying the loco's tender surrounded the firebox and rested on the main frame. This provided articulation and enabled the weight of the tender and its fuel to increase the adhesive load on the driving wheels. The novel type found favour and large numbers were built for standard gauge railways throughout Europe. By the 1860s, however, its star was waning.

The Engerth principle was played with over the years, generally not satisfactorily. A brief revival came at the turn of the century with the Stutz modification, the tender carried

Above: Awaiting its next turn at Villablino on 10th July 1974, no 16 (Macosa 151/1956) was the last Engerth to be built, 103 years after the first.

Below: The evening correo departs from Ponferrada on 8th July 1974. Maffei 3530 no 31, built in 1913 for the FC Pamplona a San Sebastián, was the oldest of the ten Engerths to run on the PV and the regular loco rostered for passenger trains.

Photos: Keith Chester

on the bogie, rotating on a pivot directly behind the rear driving wheel. This produced two notable narrow gauge designs built by Krauss and Maffei: eight 760mm gauge 0-8+4s for the NÖLB in Upper Austria and 35 2-6+4s for the metre gauge railways running across northern Spain (see *NGW*185).

Six of the Austrian locos survived in regular service into the 1990s but in Spain dieselisation and line closures saw the demise of nearly all the Krauss and Maffei Engerths save for six on the 62km-long Ponferrada–Villablino railway, opened in 1919 primarily to transport coal.

Last survivors

Originally operated by a fleet of Baldwin 2-6-2Ts, the line acquired the first of its secondhand Engerths in about 1948 and added four new ones from local builder Macosa in the 1950s. By the mid-1970s it was the only all-steam railway left in Spain, its 10 Engerths all kept busy.

Ten days after completing my university finals in June 1974 I was on a ferry across the Channel

and on my way to Spain and Portugal. The last leg of my trip was from Portugal back into northern Spain to seek out some of the industrial steam remaining there.

By now I was rapidly running out of cash (no cards back then) and this part of the bash had to be drastically curtailed. However, I managed just over two days on the Ponferrada–Villablino, spending one night in my sleeping bag on the platform at the former and one at the latter.

Travel between the two was on the twice-daily correo hauled by the most famous of the PV's Engerths, no 31, which had been built by Maffei in 1913. Progress in the wooden carriages was slow and hot, but nobody cared, least of all me – the train belonged to a different world.

The idyll was disturbed only by a pair of Guardia Civil in their absurd tricorne hats, who strutted up and down the train, demanding papers from passengers at will. Fascist dictator Franco died the following year and with him authoritarian Spain. Steam operations at Ponferrada lasted well into the 1980s but by then I had discovered Asia... **NGW**



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