

# The NARROW GAUGE

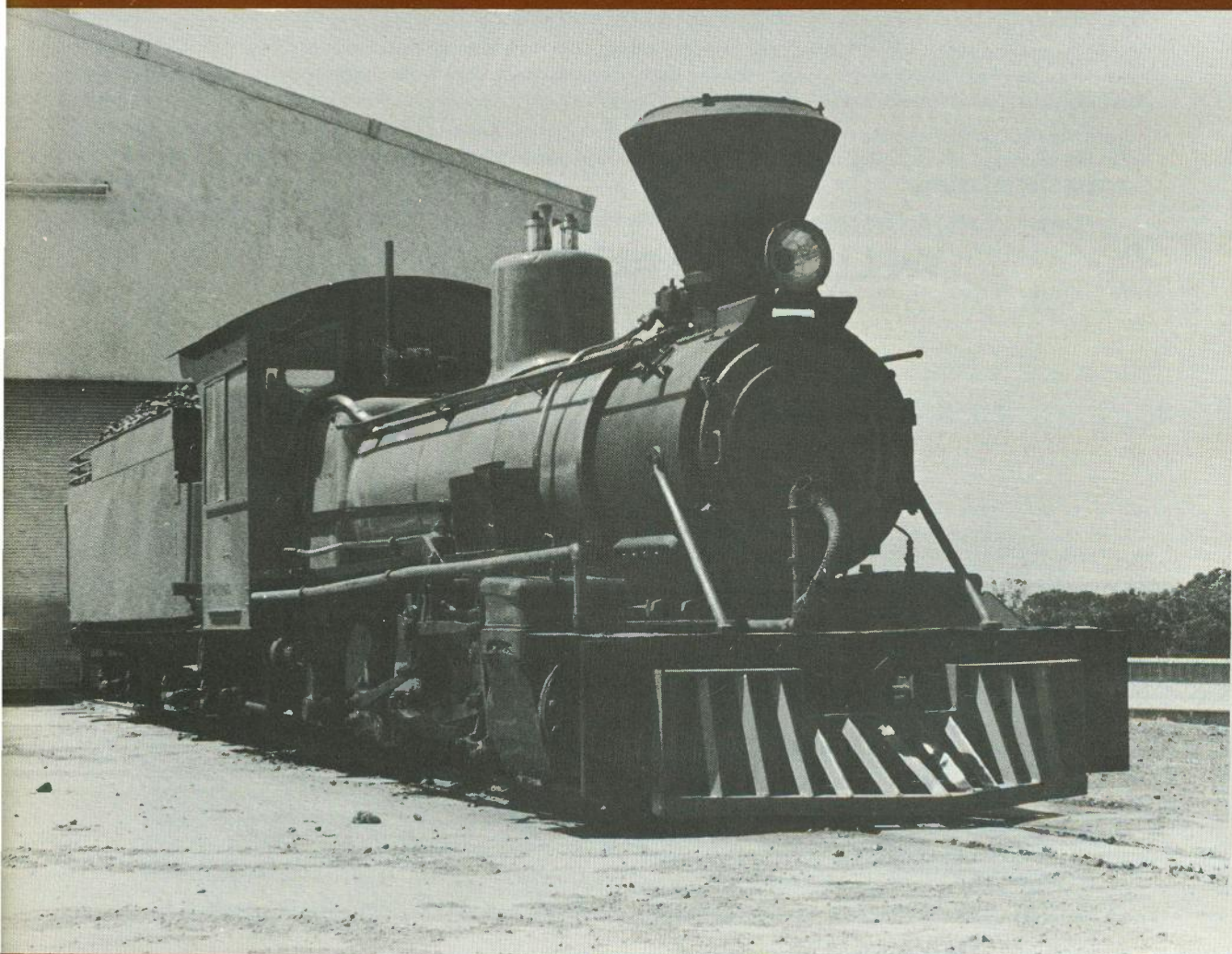


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No. 71

SPRING 1976

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NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY



# NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY

(FOUNDED 1951)



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## EDITORIAL

Judging from the large numbers of letters from members, issue number 70 seems to have been well received, and I am most grateful to all those of you who took the trouble to write, particularly those who either sent or offered articles and photographs. We are gradually building up a stock of articles, but as mentioned before, the provision of suitable illustrations for these articles is still something of a problem and I will be most pleased to hear from anyone who can offer any good, sharp, black and white pictures of any aspect of the narrow gauge.

It is a great pleasure to be able to include in this issue an article from one of our Australian members while two other illustrations in this issue have come from contributors in America and East Germany. I very much hope this will be the start of a trend and I will be receiving many more contributions from those of you living overseas who have access to much material denied to us in Britain.

From the next issue I hope to use this page to comment on various aspects of the narrow gauge scene (but NOT internal Society affairs) and will always be pleased to receive your views for possible inclusion in our correspondence pages.

Cover: *E.P.C. Co. No. 2 Back home in Port Elizabeth in 1971*

*(Ron Redman)*

## WELL, WE'RE ALMOST ON TIME ....



*Bwn 0-4-0PM on active service in France in 1918 with the USATC (Ron Redman collection)*

THE NARROW GAUGE No. 71. SPRING 1976.

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# BALDWIN'S PRESERVED TRIO

Histories of Britain's Three Preserved Baldwin Locomotives by Ivan Stephenson

Although numerous Baldwin built locomotives have operated in these islands only three remain today, preserved to remind us of the range of narrow gauge machines once offered by this famous Philadelphia builder. We shall consider our trio in order of age and date of entry into the country.

## Electric

Our electric loco is BLW 20587, one of two completed in June 1902 and shipped to the Oakbank Oil Company (later the Whinchburgh Shale Oil Co), Niddry Castle, West Lothian, Scotland for use on their new, 2 mile, 2ft 6ins gauge railway between Duddingston No 1 mine and the Niddry Castle processing plant at Whinchburgh.

The loco, OAKBANK No.2, is a 4-wheel OHW machine powered by two 25HP Westinghouse traction motors fed from the 500 volt DC wire via a side mounted trolley pole. As locos go No.2 cannot be described as elegant being merely a cast iron box frame surmounted by "ships railings", trolley pole and control gear, the obvious lack of a cab or any form of weather protection for the driver should be noted! As built the locos were fitted with tram type master controllers, headlights at each end, a standard loco warning bell, hand brakes worked by ratchet handle, and a box seat was provided for the driver. Over the years various items were altered or repositioned, new "Metrovick" control gear was added about 1946, and at some time the headlights were raised, the bell was resited and the driver's seat was removed, at no time were cabs provided!

The frames of these locos were prone to fracture from the top corners of the horn gaps and No.2's frames have 1in thick steel plates bolted below the top edge of each side frame as strengtheners, No.1, BLW 20586, was rebuilt with new plate frames in 1935.

The shale oil railway was operated until February 1961 when it was closed and lifted, No.2 being presented to the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh the following year where it remains in store until space can be found to display it to the public. Our picture shows 20587 in store in 1966.

## Internal Combustion

The oil powered machine is of course MOELWYN or BLW 49604 of 1918, supplied to the French War Department as No. 629, a 45HP 0-4-0 Petrol/Mechanical with a 650RPM, 4 stroke, 4 cylinder (5 1/2 x 7ins) water cooled engine and two speed gear box.

The Festiniog Railway, looking for more economical shunting power, purchased 49604 from E.W. Farrow; Engineers Merchants, of Spalding, Lincs, in 1925 and it eventually became FR Co. No.11. Whilst in service on the old FR it is recorded that it managed to drink between 30 & 40 gallons of fuel per day on shunting duties and was fitted with vacuum brakes in 1928 as part of an abortive scheme to utilise it as a Winter passenger loco over the Welsh Highland line.

Although batches of these locos varied to some degree in details they generally weighed around 14,000 pounds and were 13 feet long, 5ft 2ins wide and 8ft 5ins high, they had 26ins driving wheels and a 4 foot wheelbase. Traction power in low gear was quite good, a figure of 3,000lbs being quoted as the drawbar pull, although this fell to 1,500lb in "top".

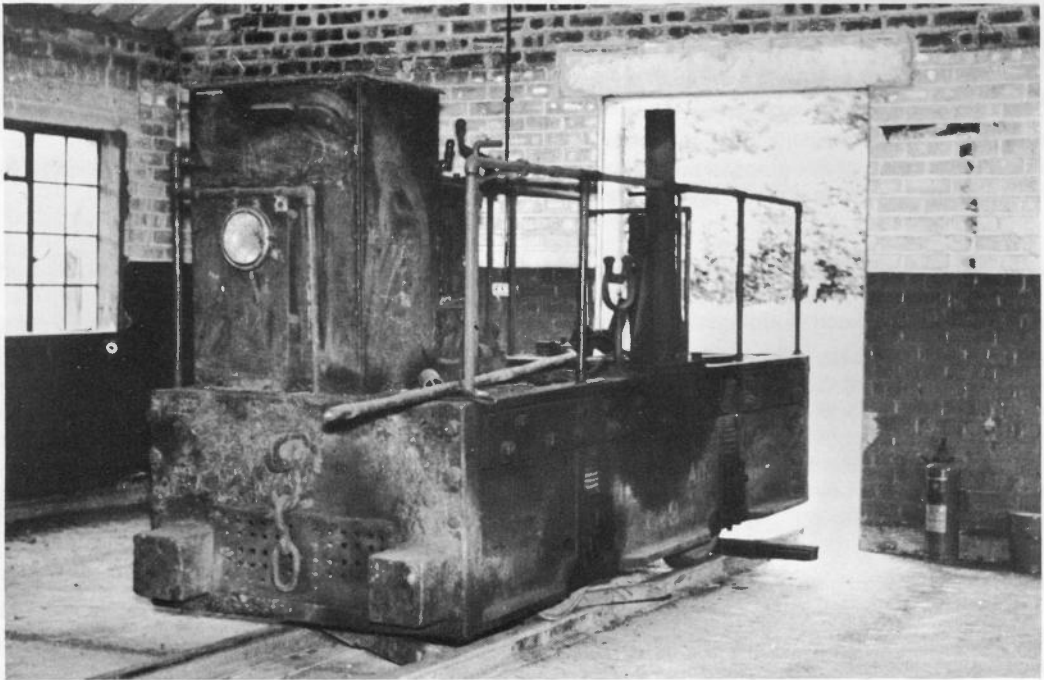
In 1956 the present FR management, mindful of the loco's thirst for petrol, re-engined it with a Gardner 3LW, 3 cylinder diesel engine and bestowed the title of MOELWYN upon it. As the machine's long forward overhand made for unsteady running and excessive side-swing when running forwards, a single axle leading truck was fitted in 1957 thus altering MOELWYN into a 2-4-0D. During this rebuild an additional 4-speed Meadows gearbox was interposed between the original box and the diesel engine, creating a more powerful and more flexible locomotive. Today MOELWYN continues in service, being a valued member of the Festiniog's varied fleet of locomotives.

## Steam

The last member of our trio to arrive is probably the largest and heaviest 2ft gauge locomotive in the country weighing in at 50.65 US Tons, (as built).

Baldwin No 61269 of 3/1930 was built as No.2 for the Eastern Province Cement Co.Ltd. of Port Elizabeth, South Africa and is similar to South African Railways NG10 class, also built by Baldwin in 1916, it's details being as follows:-





*OAKBANK NO. 2 in store, 1966.*

*(Ivan Stephenson)*



*MOELWYN as running in its current form as a 2-4-0D at Boston Lodge, 1959 (Peter Crossley)*

TYPE	4-6-2 Tender.		
CYLINDERS	(2 oc)	13 ½ x 18 ins,	Slide Valves and Walscheart valve gear.
C/WHEELS	36 ins diameter.		
WEIGHTS (ENG)	33 US Tons		
(TEN)	½ ⅞. ¾ ⅝ US Tons ..... as built.		
WT. on DRIVERS	22.5 US Tons.		
BOILER PRESS.	½ ¾ & PSI.		
SUPPLIES	5 tons ..... coal	&	2040 gallons ..... water. As built.

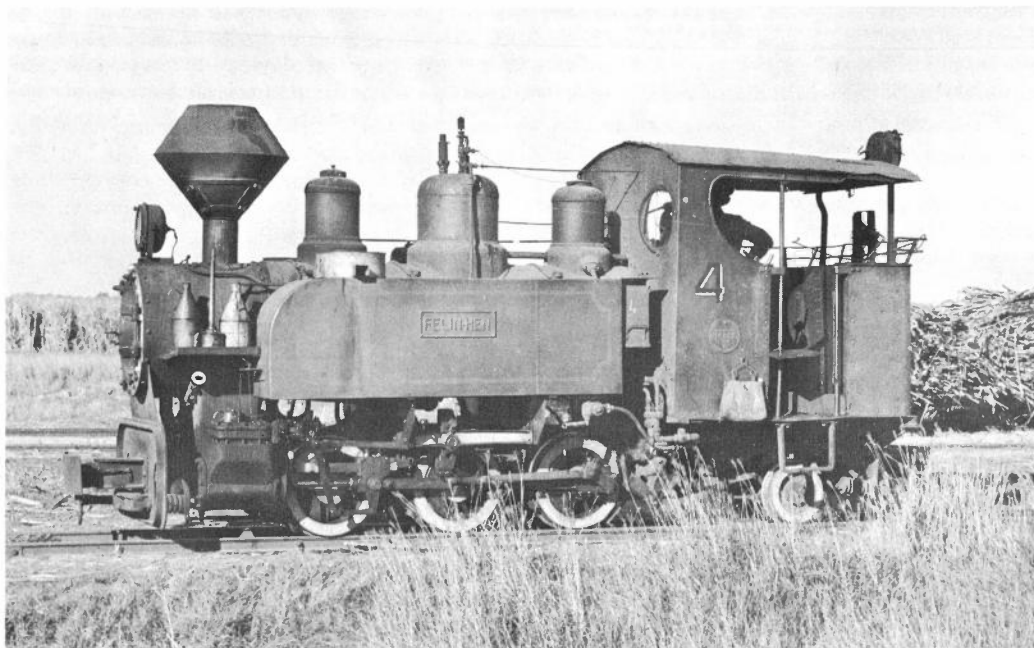
The "Pacific" was shipped fully erected to East London (SA) and entered service on April 1st. 1930 after the EPC Co's track had been overhauled to take its weight, the loco then working regularly until 1949 when it was relegated to spare engine status with the arrival of Hunslet 2-8-2 No 3670, despatched from Leeds on 13th July 1949. The new British built loco was more powerful than the 20 year old Baldwin but soon had a reputation for hard riding and was passed over for diesel traction in later years, our heroine being fully overhauled to be standby to the diesel in 1970 and given a smart red livery at the same time.

The locos recent history starts in 1974 when it was sold to Messrs Hills & Bailey Ltd, Llanberis, North Wales for restoration to its former glory. Upon arrival on 22nd June 1974 the 4-6-2 was stored in the firm's compound beside the Rheilffordd Llyn Llanberis to await attention.

As with all locomotives it has had some alterations done to it at various times, it now (since at least 1960) carrying the Baloon stack of the Hunslet and at some date since 1960 has had the coal bunker sides raised to increase capacity. In June '74 old No.2 exhibited a battered appearance with frame front rails bent down due to a collision and the Hunslet stack rusty and askew, but she shows great potential for the future and in Tony Hill's skilful hands let us hope she will soon become a fine and proud reminder of Baldwin craftsmanship at its best.

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## THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY .....



*Bwn 46828 of 1917 started life with the U.S. Army in France. Acquired by Penrhyn Slate Quarry in 1923, she was withdrawn in 1927 and lay out of use until 1940 when sold to the Fairymead Sugar Mill, Queensland, Australia who removed the front pony truck and added a diamond stack. She is now preserved. (From 'Rails to the Setting Sun', C.S. Small).*

# BORD NA MONA TAE JULY 1975

George Toms

On July 7th, 1975 I was allowed to visit the Bord na Mona bog of Tionnsca Abhainn Einne (The Oweniny River project) which serves the Eire Electricity Supply Board power station at Bellacorick in County Mayo. I arrived about 10.30am and was met by the Assistant Manager who briefed me on the operation of the bog and its 3 foot railway and also arranged transport for me.

The hospitality extended to me was very warm indeed and it was past mid-day before we set out from the offices and into the yard to see the locomotives and rolling stock assembled there. Five weeks of hot weather had produced very unusual weather conditions for this part of the world and it was explained to me that the peat actually being transported to the power station was minimal, although record amounts of peat were being harvested and stored. This meant that a lot of maintenance train work would be in operation on the outer limits of the system leaving the "main line" relatively clear for our trip.

Bord na Mona built railcar C70 and my chauffeur for the day, Michael, were both ready and waiting at about 1pm for the trip. Michael started up the railcars' engine (from a Ford Escort car) and we bounced out of the workshops yard and down the spur to the mainline amid some very tough and wild greenery. We soon arrived at a triangular junction at which we turned right thus observing the traffic flow of the main circuit in the centre regions of the bog. The scenery now started to resemble a brown moonscape with the only grass restricted to the railway, and across it many tractors, machinery and various tracked vehicles moved amid clouds of milled peat dust. This dust was everywhere; indeed it must be recommended as the Irish equivalent of a suntan because everyone I saw was brown, and their clothes too. We carried on our journey to another triangular junction where another spur joined the main line and along which we now passed. We saw alongside the line on a siding bogie peat wagon No.48 which had been sealed and filled with water as an emergency fire prevention. Apparently there are a dozen or so conversions strategically placed around the bog during the summer months.

Soon we arrived at a service point which was a hive of activity with bog machinery coming in for refuelling and radiator replenishment, the ever present peat dust swirling around and generally getting into everything. Service trains No.5 was attending to the needs of the machinery and its motive power sat in the middle, push-pull style. It was Ruston 40DL No. LM 96L, rather battered-looking but nevertheless in good running order. Cheery exchanges of the weather forecast were exchanged before we set back down to the main line again once more resuming our anti-clockwise direction around the main circuit.

We passed several almost overgrown spurs and then descended sharply around a curve into a wide cutting where amid natural greenery a tangle of rusting track and stacks of wood stood Ruston 40DL No. LM 138Q and broken down bogie peat wagon No.101. They were on the temporary track depot siding for that part of the bog and LM 138Q had a curious 4 wheeled bogie conversion coupled to it on which lay welding equipment. We must have startled the driver sitting in the Ruston's cab as he emerged quickly on seeing the railcar arrive. Obviously he had earlier decided upon this quiet dust-free oasis to eat his lunch. Once again the weather forecast was passed on and I had chance to inspect the temporary track being prepared for use on the new bog workings, some of it stacked on four wheel ex-tipper chassis serving as crude bogies.

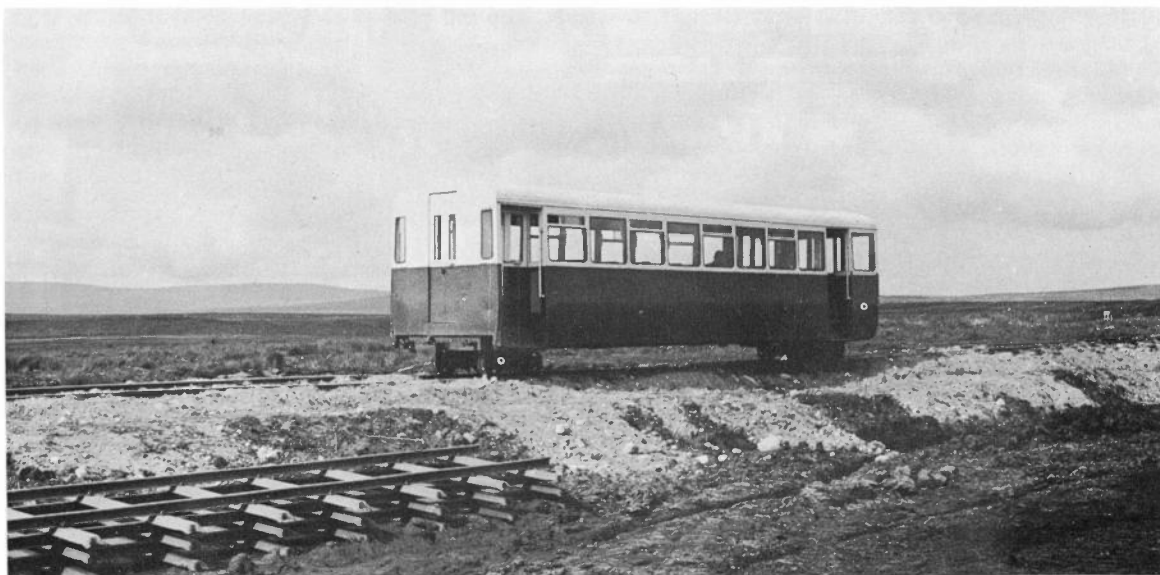
It was after 2pm when we set off again and emerged from the cutting and left the circuit for the double track section leading to the power station spur. Here we met our first Hunslet Wagonmaster of the day, No. LM 272, ex-power station and running light. By this time switching points had become my job for the afternoon and I gave LM 272 an uninterrupted journey. I climbed back into the railcar which jerked into action bringing us to the River Oweniny itself. The scenery now changed again with almost natural surroundings containing a cluster of farm buildings and a road, the sole surviving untouched inhabited area for miles around although the river had been channelled artificially and the banks strengthened with sandbags. The most imposing spectacles were the two bridges, one for bog machinery and one wooden decked steel railway bridge carrying the two tracks. It was quite impressive with a rather awe-inspiring character, there being no railings of any sort present and the sleeper ends themselves constituted the edge of the bridge! Once on the bridge I could look out through the open doorway down to the river 25 to 30 feet below and yet see no bridge because of the railcar's overhang. Thoughts of derailment flashed through my mind.

Next we came to a road overbridge linking the only populated enclave with the main road, the double track was irregularly laid around the central bridge supports. After leaping around these we made for the north western part of the bog about 2.30pm, clearing the power station junction in the meantime. This run was intended to be one of the most devious and remote possible on the bog, but after only 10 minutes running on the single line we met the Electrician's locomotive Ruston 40DL No. LM 130P complete with running board

extension on the right hand side only, and on which was assembled an array of tools, batteries, electric starter motors and other sundries. A chugging noise brought my attention to the arrival of Ruston 48 DL LM 108U behind the electrician's locomotive, hauling a bogie flat loaded with new wooden inserts for the caterpillar tracks of the bog machinery. Almost immediately afterwards followed Ruston 48DL LM 162X hauling diesel tank No.3 and bogie flat loaded with drums of lubricating oil. We were now holding up three service trains so, in the absence of a refuge siding, our return was prematurely due.

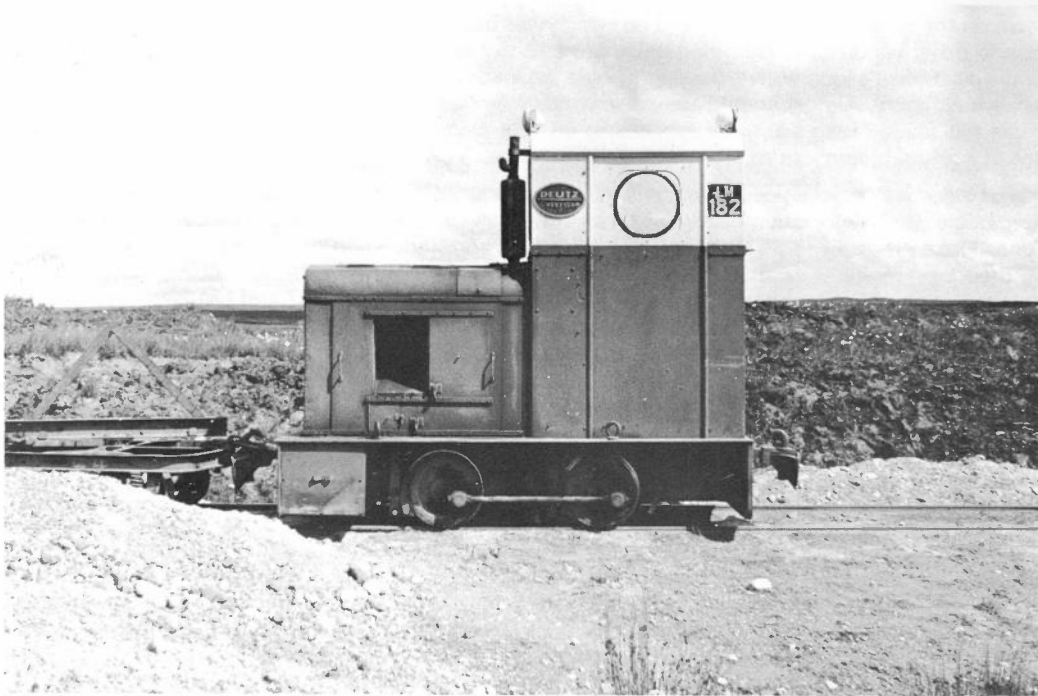
Our next objective was the power station itself and we passed down the centre road of the spur between rakes of loaded bogie peat wagons numbering well over fifty in all, such was the excess peat production. This avenue of wagons looked most unusual as every track distortion and undulation caused some peculiarly rakish angles among their long ranks. Arrival at the rear of the power station at 3pm found a collection of dead Hunslet Wagonmasters all without work or crews: LM 272 , LM 201, LM 202, LM 207 and LM 209 — in all over half of TAE's fleet of Hunslets. Other vehicles there were two curious ex-cabs each mounted on four-wheeled chassis serving as maintenance storage vans and two Allen sand wagons again both four-wheelers. The latter two rusty vehicles served the locomotives here with dry sand supplied from the workshops sand plant. Nearby lay the grounded body of ex-Cavan and Leitrim clerestory bogie coach, newly painted grey with black bitumastic covered roof. This was acquired from CIE during the early 1960's after the closure of the West Clare Railway and has served for many years as the transport office. One end housed a short wave radio receiver/transmitter with an adjoining office, the centre was converted to a water closet and the other end consisted of the drivers' mess room. It has served its various purposes well and no doubt is a haven during mid-winter.

Whilst Michael passed on various messages including the ever important weather forecast I went along to the wagon tippler to have a look round but it was inactive, having stopped operation some time previously. It is capable of semi-automatically dealing with rakes of 12 fully loaded bogie peat wagons, each holding 8 tons, without uncoupling. The couplings are two link with a swivel joint fitted over the centre-buffer. Beyond the tippler was situated a double headshunt, one occupied with empties and the other equipped with a weighbridge to double check from time to time the weighing device which the Electricity Supply Board have fitted to the conveyer below the tippler. This area is generally overgrown by grass to the point where the concrete buffer stops are almost invisible! At 3.25pm we boarded the railcar and left the power station, retraced our journey over the River Oweniny, observing the usual but not obligatory right hand running, and headed for the workshop spur passing en route bogie wagon No.48 standing by, filled with water in case of a bog fire. Along the spur we had to make use of the refuge siding to allow passage of a Ruston 40DL LM 116M hauling EX-West Clare Railway trailer No. 3387 loaded with a fresh incoming shift. When this was complete, entry into the workshop yard came soon afterwards and my final point changing duty of the journey guided C70 into one of the sidings. It was just 3.40pm and the end of a very hot and extremely dusty trip.



*Ex West Clare Rly. railcar trailer at TAE in 1965.*

*(Vic Nutton)*



*0-4-0DM LM 182 (Deutz 57126/60) at TAE in 1965*

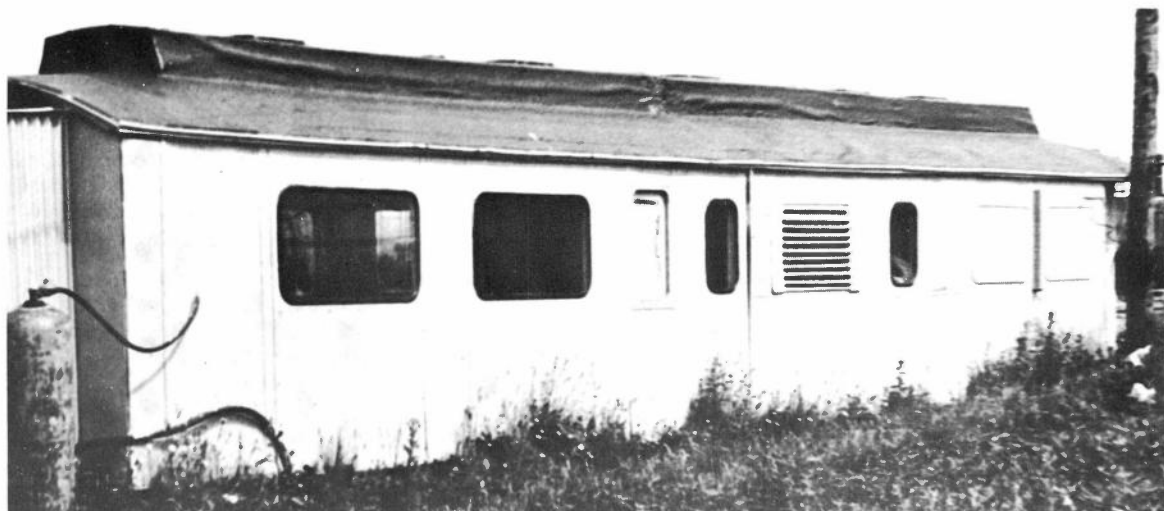
*(Vic Nutton)*



*Hunslet "Wagonmaster" LM 201 (HE 6234/62) at TAE. Due to the prevailing weather conditions none of the Hunslets were in use at the time of the author's visit*

*(G. Toms)*





*Freshly repainted light grey and still assured a future is this ex-Cavan & Leitrim clerestorey coach seen here serving as transport office, to the rear of the Bellacorick power station.*

*(G. Toms)*

My attention now turned to the workshops and I was guided into a most impressive building which, because it was summertime, contained very few items in for repair, but nevertheless sufficient to give an impression of what scope and capacity was possible. One bay was completely held over for road vehicles and bog machinery and the other two for rail vehicles, stores and so on. Loaded bogie peat wagon No. 58 was in for repair to one of its bearings (which had seized and alongside was Ruston 48DL No. LM 119V (which had suffered a gearbox failure) and Deutz 0-4-0D, No. LM 182 undergoing major overhaul. LM 182 was really only a shell mounted upon wooden blocks, being minus wheels, suspension, transmission gearbox and engine. The third locomotive in the works was another Deutz (LM 196) which was freshly overhauled and repainted in the pleasing cream and brown livery of Bord na Mona. Just outside the workshops lay the third Deutz (LM 195) which was waiting to go into the works with a troublesome fuel system, which meant that all TAE's Deutz diesels were out of service. Investigation in the yard revealed Hunslet "Wagonmaster" LM 205 with its left hand side worksplate (Hunslet 6247 of 1963) fitted upside down. On the other side was Hunslet plate 6238, the correct identity of the locomotive. Later LM 214 pulled up alongside sporting the other Hunslet 6247 plate. Obviously the workshops had transposed them at some time or another when both locomotives were in together. Ruston 40DL LM 49F was also parked in the yard having been recently fitted with a new Gardner 4LW engine, a practice now being undertaken as the original engines wear out. Partly dismantled Ruston 48DL LM 18G of 1946 lay near the diesel re-fuelling bay awaiting overdue spare parts needed to complete gearbox repairs, and it was pointed out to me that the engine fitted was an old 4VROL type, No. 236274.

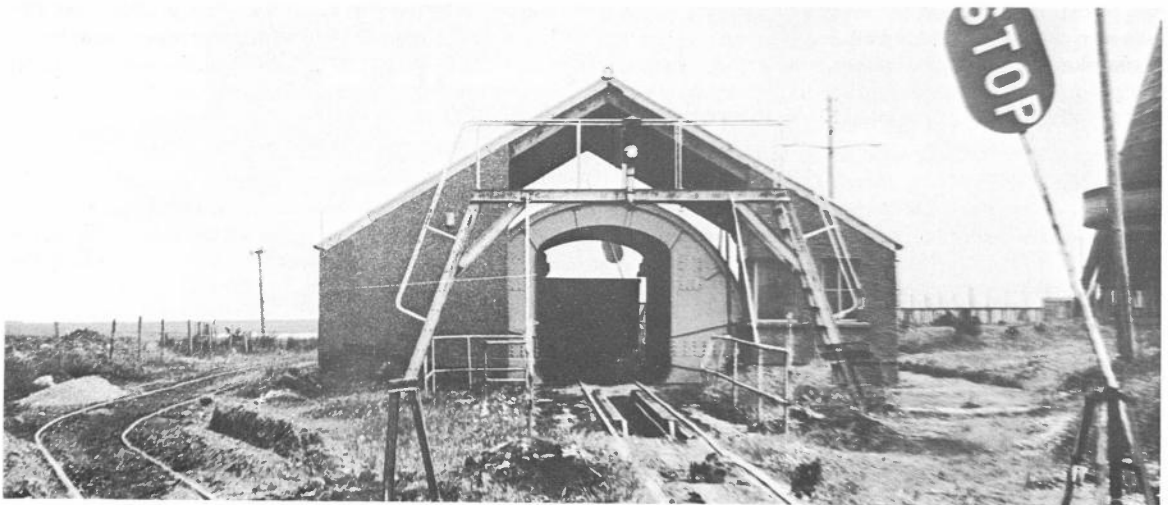
A rake of empty bogie peat wagons awaiting repair lay alongside the permanent way section accompanied by ex-CIE road bus formerly either P336 or P332 in their fleet. This extremely unusual and partly truncated vehicle mounted on an extended bogie flat highlighted the flair and imagination which the workshops have for such conversions. The condition of the bodywork and interior is to say the least, rough, considering the harsh treatment it receives but the workshops are confident that long life remains in the vehicle yet. Beyond the refuelling bay and perched on a steeply inclined spur, I found the other railcar (C 52) out of action and devoid of its Ford Escort engine completely — another gearbox fatality. The sidings here faded into the sand drying plant and a woodyard near the offices, odd wagons of various types being the only occupants, and very conveniently out of the way.

By 6.30pm the end of the working day proper was under way when railcar 3387 arrived and almost at once seemingly disgorged its 40 passengers who promptly headed for the carpark. The service trains started to arrive too and they gradually fell silent after queuing up at the refuelling bay to replenish their depleted tanks.

It seemed to be an opportune moment to end my most enjoyable visit, despite the layers of milled peat which now adhered to me. Thanks must go to the Manager, Mr. L. Concannon, and his assistant Mr. B. Rutledge for their permission to visit the site and for their help during my visit. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Cunningham and his workshop staff, not forgetting Michael O'Donnell, my guide and driver for the day.

# T.A.E. MOTIVE POWER 7-7-75

BnM No.	Type	Notes
LM 18G	48DL	Parked out of use in Workshop yard, awaiting gearbox spares No.236274 RH 4VROL
LM 49F	40DL	EXT.RB/BnM RAD/Re-engined with GARDNER 4LW
LM 96L	40DL	EXT.RB.
LM 104	40DL	
LM 108U	½ + DL	EXT.RB.
LM 116M	40DL	EXT.RB/FAB.E.S., BnM.RAD/
LM 119V	48DL	EXT.RB/FAB.E.S./ In Workshops - repair to gearbox failure
LM 123	48DL	EXT.RB/FAB.E.S.
LM 130P	40DL	EXT.RB./BnM RAD./ Workshop electricians loco.
LM 137Q	40DL	
LM 138Q	40DL	EXT.RB.
LM 162X	48DL	FAB E.S./
LM 174Q	40DL	EXT.R.B./FAB E.S./ Allocated to BANGOR ERRIS bog where observed.
LM 182	DEUTZ	EXT.RB./ In Workshops stripped down for major overhaul.
LM 195	DEUTZ	EXT.RB./ Outside Workshops awaiting repair to fuel system.
LM 196	DEUTZ	EXT.RB./ In Workshops after major overhaul & repaint.
LM 201	WAGONMASTER	
LM 202	"	L.H.S. worksplate & LM plate missing
LM 205	"	(HUNSLET 6238) Inverted worksplate 6247 fitted to L.H. Side!
LM 207	"	
LM 209	"	
LM 212	"	
LM 214	"	L.H. Side worksplate lost to LM205; RHS plate intact.
LM 272	"	Unique LM plates — letters & numbers in line i.e. one row.
C 52	BnM Railcar	FORD ESCORT ENGINE/Engine removed; gearbox failure
C 70	BnM Railcar	FORD ESCORT ENGINE/ In service
EXT.R.B.	EXTENDED R.H.S. RUNNING BOARD.	
FAB.E.S.	FABRICATED ENDSHIELDS, FRONT & REAR.	
BnM.RAD	BORD NA MONA FABRICATED RADIATOR.	



*The tippler, which semi-automatically feeds the conveyor below with wagon loads of milled peat 8 tons at a time. It is remarkable that so large an area of bog should supply such a small installation as this.*  
(G. Toms.)

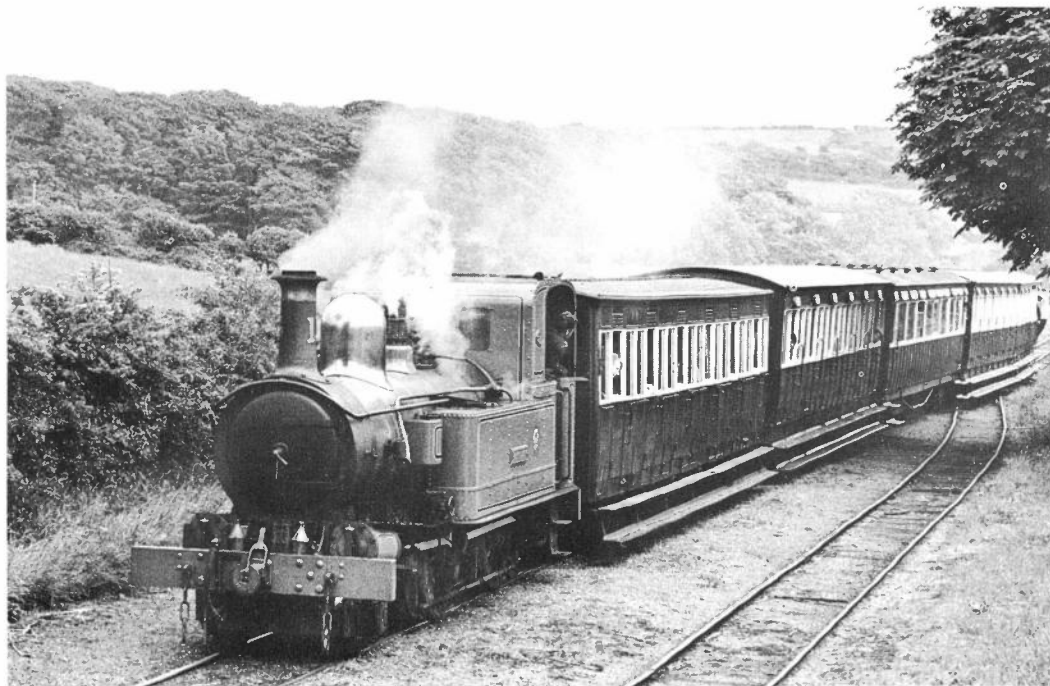
# THE BOYS

Rodney Weaver

Railways and railwaymen are so inseparable that it is sometimes hard to say which has had the greater influence on the other. This was especially noticeable on the rural narrow gauge lines of Ireland and the Isle of Man, where both the railways themselves and the men who worked them belonged so firmly to their immediate surroundings. On my first visit to the Isle of Man in 1959 I experienced one of those happenings which so typified narrow gauge operations of a past age.

The day started quite normally; I boarded the morning train to Ramsey which was headed by FENELLA, then the regular locomotive on the old Manx Northern section, and we ran pretty well to time as far as Ballaugh. It was noticeable that despite steadily deteriorating track the IoMR maintained its standard of running right to the end, and on a later visit I recorded speeds as high as 51 mph only a few months before the railway closed. Such spirited running over relatively poor track takes its toll of springs, however, and when the train stopped rather abruptly about a mile beyond Ballaugh it was not entirely surprising to find that the cause was a broken spring on the driving axle of the locomotive. Unfortunately the IoMR locomotives had compensated springing to the driving axles, so the collapse of one spring allowed both axleboxes to ride up in their horns, throwing the weight largely upon the pony truck on that side of the locomotive, and with the locomotive tilted over to such a degree it was out of the question to continue without carrying out temporary repairs. The locomotive would have to be jacked level and wooden blocks inserted above the axleboxes to support it in the correct attitude so that it could be driven slowly into Ramsey where, hopefully, there would be a spare spring. As the locomotive carried a traversing jack it didn't look as though the train would be delayed very long — but we had reckoned without "the boys".

The train had stopped just short of a level crossing, so while the fireman walked down the train to explain the cause of the delay the driver went to telephone Ramsey. When he returned the fireman was struggling to get the jack off the footplate; "No need to strain yourself" he said "the boys are working at Sulby and they'll be here in a few minutes". Shortly after this two lone cyclists pedalled sedately towards us along the track, one of them carrying an apparently empty sack. "Here come the boys" remarked the driver.



*IOMR No.13 KISSACK with the afternoon train for Port Erin, 19th. June 1971 (L.A. Nixon)*



*IOMR No. 4, LOCH, leaves Castletown with the 15.50 Douglas — Port Erin train, 1st. June 1972. (L.A. Nixon)*



*IOMR No. 13, KISSACK and train near Glen Grenaugh, 19th. June 1971. (L.A. Nixon)*



The arrival of "the boys" did not exactly inspire a rush of activity. The elder of the two propped his bicycle against a telegraph pole and emptied the contents of his sack on the ground: it contained a small hammer and half-a-dozen bits of oil-soaked wood. He then inspected the locomotive and gave a considered opinion. "It's a broken spring. You'll have to put a jack under it".

Driver, fireman and younger "boy" thereupon removed the jack from the footplate and placed it under the front buffer beam. After much searching they managed to find the handle (which was in the cab) and attempted to work it. The ratchet had jammed solid with rust.

"The ratchet's rusted up" observed the elder "boy", leaning against the cab side.

The fireman picked up the hammer and began to hit the offending item.

"Don't hit it with a hammer — put some oil on it" advised the self-appointed foreman.

They oiled the ratchet, but still it did not work.

"Give it a tap with the hammer" said the voice of experience.

This time the jack worked, and in a matter of minutes had been wound up to its full height. The locomotive was still leaning at a crazy angle, however, because they had put the jack on the "ballast" rather than on a sleeper, and the base of the jack was now buried deep in the ground.

"You should have put the jack on a sleeper" said the foreman "Now you'll have to move the locomotive".

The jack was wound down and extricated from the ballast, and the locomotive gently eased forward a couple of feet so that the buffer beam was above a sleeper.

"You've got it over a sleeper now" observed the foreman with his usual eye for detail.

With the weight of the locomotive on the jack it took a lot more effort to wind it up, but eventually the locomotive was levelled off and the crew started to search through the assortment of blocks for a couple that would fit over the axleboxes. While this was going on a bus driver appeared on the scene. "Ah, yes," the driver announced to his audience, "I forgot about that — the boys were going to ring for a bus to pick you up. It's waiting for you at the level crossing." It was quite obvious that the train was not going to move for some time yet, and as I wanted to get to the top of Snaefell in time for lunch I reluctantly joined the other passengers in their trek towards the waiting bus. With the efficiency that one comes to expect from bus companies in general a single double-decker with a maximum capacity of 64 passengers had been sent out to collect the full complement of a four coach train with something like 130 passengers on board, so having fitted about 80 people into his vehicle the driver decided that he would have to phone for reinforcements when he got to Sulby Glen, about a mile down the road. Those unable to get on expressed the hope that the relief bus would get there somewhat quicker than the present one had done as it was over an hour since the driver of the train had first summoned assistance, to which the bus driver replied that he had not been told where the train was and had therefore visited every level crossing between Ballaugh and Ramsey looking for it!

The last act of the pantomime took place at a telephone kiosk in Sulby Glen. The driver dialled the number of Ramsey bus station and waited, then he dialled it again, and waited, with an increasingly puzzled expression on his face. A bewhiskered inhabitant got off his seat outside the nearby hotel and wandered across to him. From the fragment of conversation that I caught through the open window of the bus I suspect he was related to "the boys".

"It doesn't work" he said "It hasn't worked since Coronation night".

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**WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY:** On May 19th, a trial trip was made over the new line from Portmadoc, through the Pass of Aberglaslyn to Rhyd-ddu (or South Snowden) and thence over the metals of the former North Wales Narrow Gauge Ry. to Dinas Junction, a total distance of 21 miles. A "Fairlie" locomotive and three coaches were used. *("The Locomotive", 14th. July, 1923).*

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The *Times of India* states that large quantities of light steel rails, on the portable railway narrow-gauge system, are being forwarded to Quetta, where they will be stored in readiness for any emergency, and also that a number of small locomotives suited to the requirements of a military transport line have been ordered. (*"The Engineer", July 18th, 1884. This equipment was almost certainly supplied by Decauville, for, as recorded in the "Industrial Railway Record" for December 1874, the British Army used 500mm gauge Decauville locos, rolling stock and track in the Afghanistan border war in 1885, the 0-4-0 tender/tank locomotives having to be light enough to be carried by elephants!.*)

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# ON THE PIER —

M. Swift

On the Pier. Southport



*Southport Pier Railway, c 1910*

*(N.G.R.S. Library Collection)*

This card from the Society Library, was posted on the 25th August, 1920, and depicts the electric railway which operated from 1905 to 1950.

The pier was originally opened in 1860 by the Southport Pier Company, the first of many constructed at seaside resorts during the Victorian era. It was 1465 yards long and because of this a manually operated railway was laid down the centre of the pier in 1863. The following year the south side of the pier was widened, and the track fenced off. The new line opened in 1865 with two passenger carriages coupled together, and hauled on a cable driven by a stationary steam engine located at the mid-point of the pier. The new line was 3'6" gauge, and the first cable tramway, preceding the famous San Francisco system by eight years.

On the 3rd April, 1905 electric traction took over. A third rail was laid on the seaward side, supplied with 500V. d.c. from the town generating station. A saloon motor carriage powered by two Westinghouse 30 h.p. motors, one on each bogie, and two open carriages formed the train. The former had a high arched roof clearly visible in the photograph, and small platforms at each end equipped with controllers. The figure wearing the white cap may be the driver at this controller. The open trailer carriages had glass screens around each corner, but were otherwise open above the waist, and also had small platforms at the outer ends equipped with controllers. One can be clearly seen in the photograph. The carriages may have been rebuilt from cable cars supplied in 1893 when the original cable line was modernised.

In 1936 the pier was taken over by Southport Corporation from the former company, and the carriages again rebuilt in the style of the then new Blackpool single deck tramcars. The train still consisted of one motor saloon and two open trailers. New electrical equipment was installed in the motor car during 1939, and the line continued in its modernised form until 1950, when Southport's d.c. generating station closed down. The entire line was therefore dismantled, and replaced by a completely new diesel worked 60 cm. gauge line, severing a lengthy link with the late Victorian period — heyday of a stroll "On the Pier."

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ROMNEY, HYTHE AND DYMCHURCH RY. - For the winter service a Ford motor on bogies and a couple of covered coaches are used. (*"The Locomotive, 15th. March, 1930*).

# DIXON'S IMPROVED SLATEWAGON

TEXT ALAISTAIR PARSONS DRAWING C. G. DOWN.

Edwyn John Jeffrey Dixon was the proprietor of Bryn Hafody Wern slate quarry, Bethesda — owned by the Royal Bangor Slate Co. Ltd. He employed much machinery in his quarry, chiefly in the slate quarry workshops. E. J. J. Dixon was a man of some character and possessed a mind of great inventiveness. Seeing that the wagons commonly in use at quarries in North Wales up to about 1850 had defects, he sought to remedy this state of affairs, and on June 12th 1852 he patented an improved slate wagon (patent no. 14165).

His wagon is noteworthy in that a novel method of oiling the wheels and axlebox journals was employed. The wagon also had no proper underframe, in the usual meaning of the word, but nevertheless was very solidly built. It comprised a flat iron plate  $\frac{1}{2}$ in -  $\frac{3}{8}$ in thick, which formed the floor of the wagon to which two longitudinal bearers  $3\frac{1}{2}$ in x  $5\frac{1}{2}$ in oak sections were bolted direct. To these longitudinal bearers iron sockets were bolted and into these were placed the iron stanchions of the sides, the ends were fitted with iron stanchions and these dropped into sockets on the ends. As drawn the wagon had two sides and one closed end, so evidently Dixon's 3 sided wagon was intended for disposal of waste slate and rubbish. An iron draw hook was bolted direct to the iron floor at one end. The draw hook is an odd design, conventionally the hook is straight but Dixon's one is cranked, cf. drawing. The only reason I can see is that it was because the wagon floor was too high, and it was necessary to bend it downwards to match other wagons.

To the underpart of the longitudinal bearers the 'bushes' for receiving the ends of the wheel axles were fastened by means of strong bolts which passed through the bearers and the metal floor of the wagon. The cast for the brushes was made in one piece, cf drawing, and the wagon was unsprung.

The wheels ran loose on their axles and the axles were free to revolve in their bushes. Oiling was done by squirting oil through the small hole c in B (The breech screwed in the nose of the axle) into the chamber A. The difference in diameter of A and of the hole c in the centre of the breech constitutes a step through the axle arm. Transverse holes d, d, were drilled into a chamber A for the centre of the wheelbox and for the centre of the bush, when the wheel is attached to the wagon. Thus when oil was squirted into A it could only escape via the transverse holes d, d, to oil the bearing surfaces, so avoiding wastage.

This should be clear from the accompanying drawings. It is fairly obvious when one really considers Dixon's 'Improved Slate Wagon' that his wagon had many defects.

The axlebox casting being in one piece meant that any slight fracture rendered the wagon inoperable and required heavy repair bills. Secondly the method of oiling the wheels whilst being ingenious was not very efficient considering that the wagon was to operate over rough tracks that sometimes varied widely in gauge (3in or 4in under or over nominal gauge not being uncommon). As the wagons jolted over the rough tracks they worked on, some of the oil would find its way on to the track rather than the bearings they were supposed to lubricate. Also as the wagon had no underframe proper the fact that only two bearers were joined to the iron floor meant that with usage they would splay outwards, bulge the sides inwards and bend the metal floor. Obviously there was a weakness in design here.

The chief weakness is the flimsy nature of the wagon. The longitudinal bearings being only  $3\frac{1}{2}$ in x  $5\frac{1}{2}$ in meant it was inadequate for the task and required two or three stretchers if the underframe was to be strong enough.

The idea of having removable sides and ends has little advantage, if any, over the conventional 3 sided rubbish wagon commonly in use in slate quarries. The fact that the sides and ends on Dixon's Wagon were removable meant a further weakening of the strength of the body.

It is interesting to note that the wagon was designed to run on round section rails at 24in centres (22  $\frac{1}{4}$ in gauge) in view of the fact that it was not a Penrhyn wagon. Further his patent method of oiling the wheels is similar in principle to that of numerous patents for self oiling colliery tub wheels filed 50 years later. The principle on this wagon is still that of "total loss" i.e. the oil goes to waste after use.

At a much later date than 1900 the wagons used on the Penrhyn Quarry Railway to carry fullersite had removable sides and ends just like those depicted on Dixon's wagon drawing. Indeed it would be very interesting to know if any wagons were constructed to Dixon's Patent Improved Slate Wagon design and used for any considerable period of time.

In the compilation of this article I am chiefly indebted to Mr. C. G. Down for kindly re-drawing Dixon's Wagon from the xerox copy of the Patent supplied by the National Library of Science and Invention (British Patent Off Library). For information on the wagon I am grateful to Messrs. C. R. Weaver and C. G. Down.

DIXON'S IMPROVED SLATE WAGON.

DRAWN BY: C.G.DOWN.

FIG. 1.

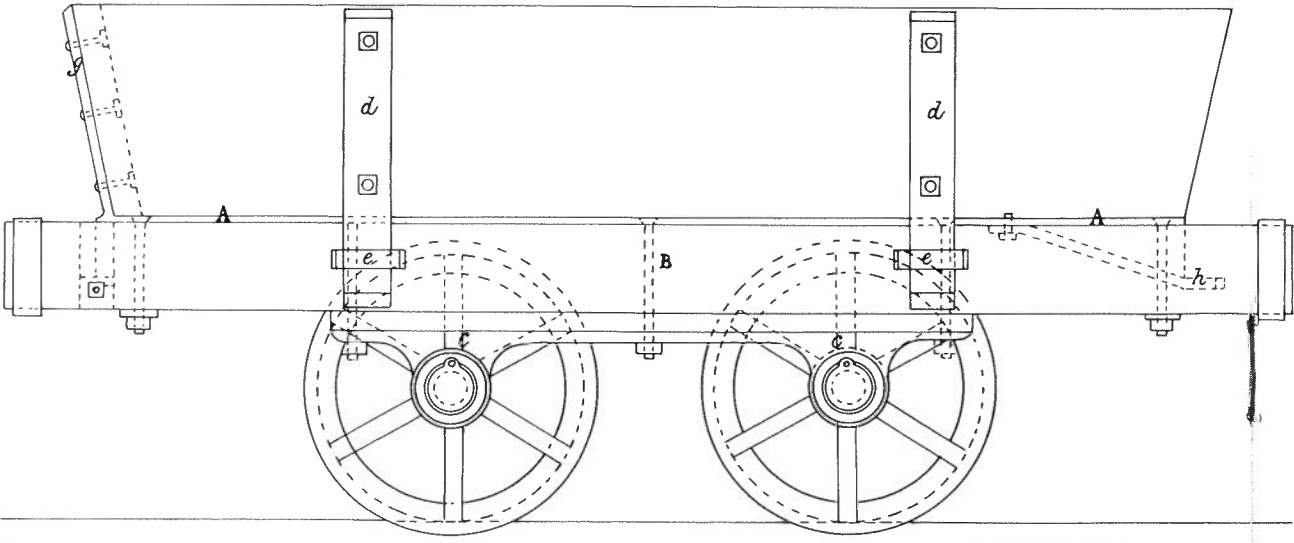


FIG. 2.

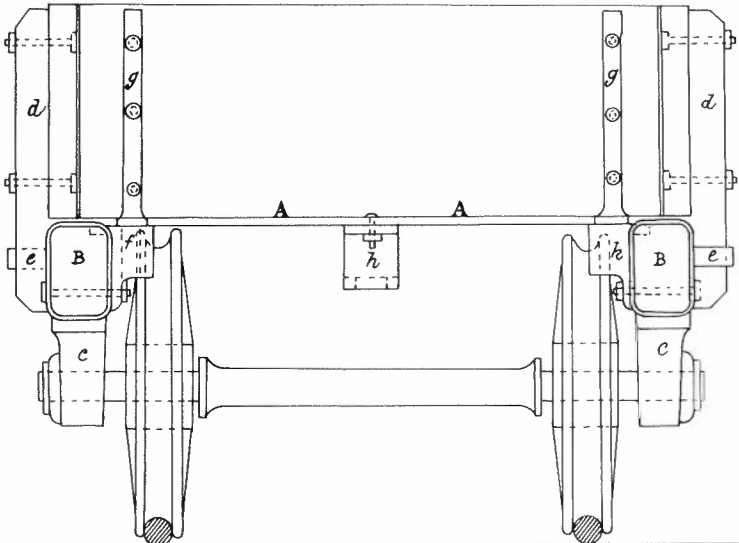


FIG. 3.

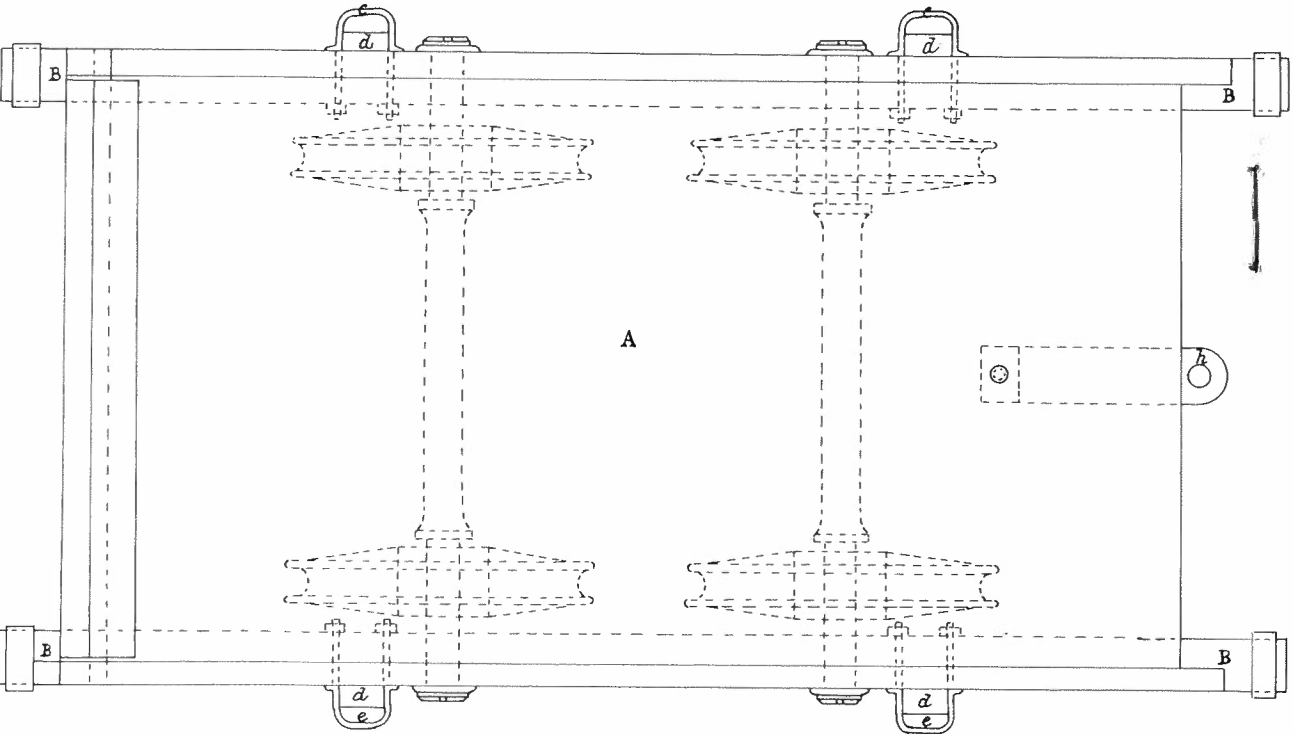


FIG. 4.

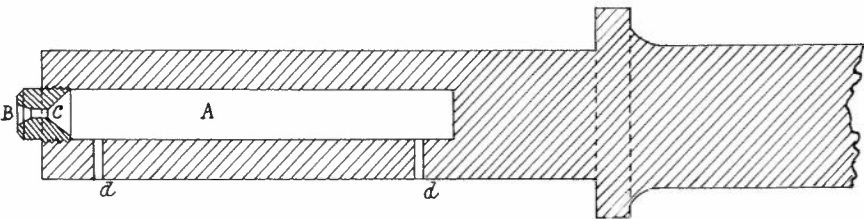


FIG. 5.

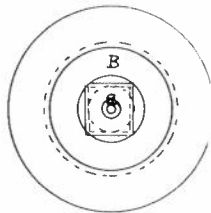
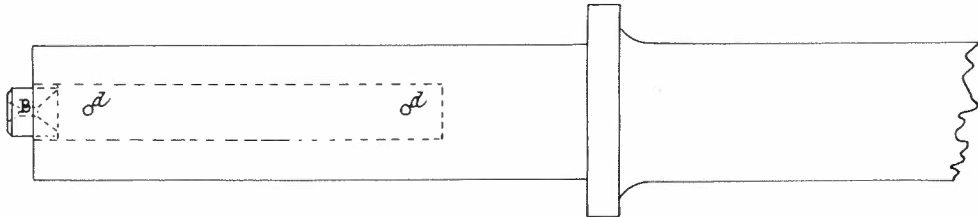


FIG. 6.





# THE AUSTRALIAN LARGE MINIATURE RAILWAY SCENE

A Report by Keith Watson

In Australia at present there is a growing interest in the larger gauges, these include 11in and 12in gauge Commercial Ventures.

There are three main systems, all located in Queensland and New South Wales, these are :-

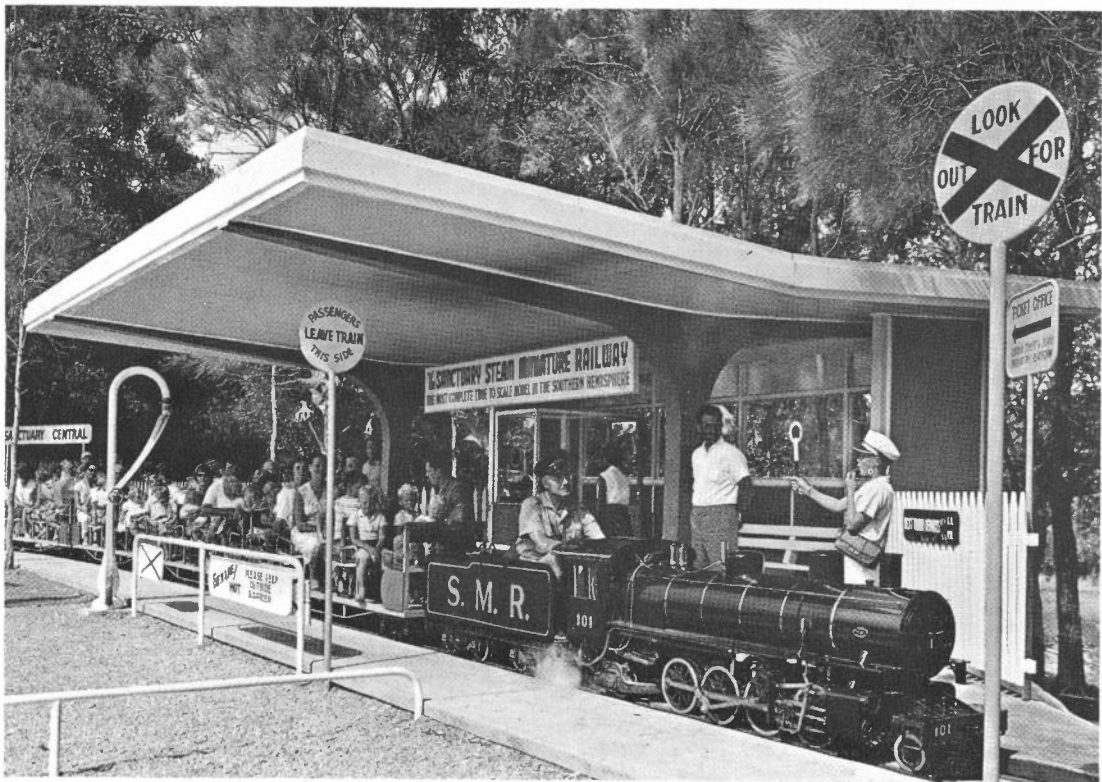
## (1) THE SANCTUARY MINIATURE RAILWAY.

The first railway is 11in gauge and of modest proportion some half mile in circumference. It is located in a Bird Sanctuary at Carrumbin located on Queensland's Gold Coast.

The track is universally 14 lb. rails spiked to hardwood sleepers substantially ballasted. A cantilever station building as shown in the photograph is provided.

Motive power is a modern 2-8-2 Mikado based on American practice with 4in x 5½in Piston Valve Cylinder, 11½in Drivers, Boiler Pressure 125 lbs. psi, Height 35¼in, Width 25in, Length 14 ft 10½in, Weight 38 cwt. Tractive Effort at 85% B.P. 813 lbs., Baker Valve Gear, Boiler 14in OD, 20 — 1in tubes, 5 — 1½in Superheater Flues.

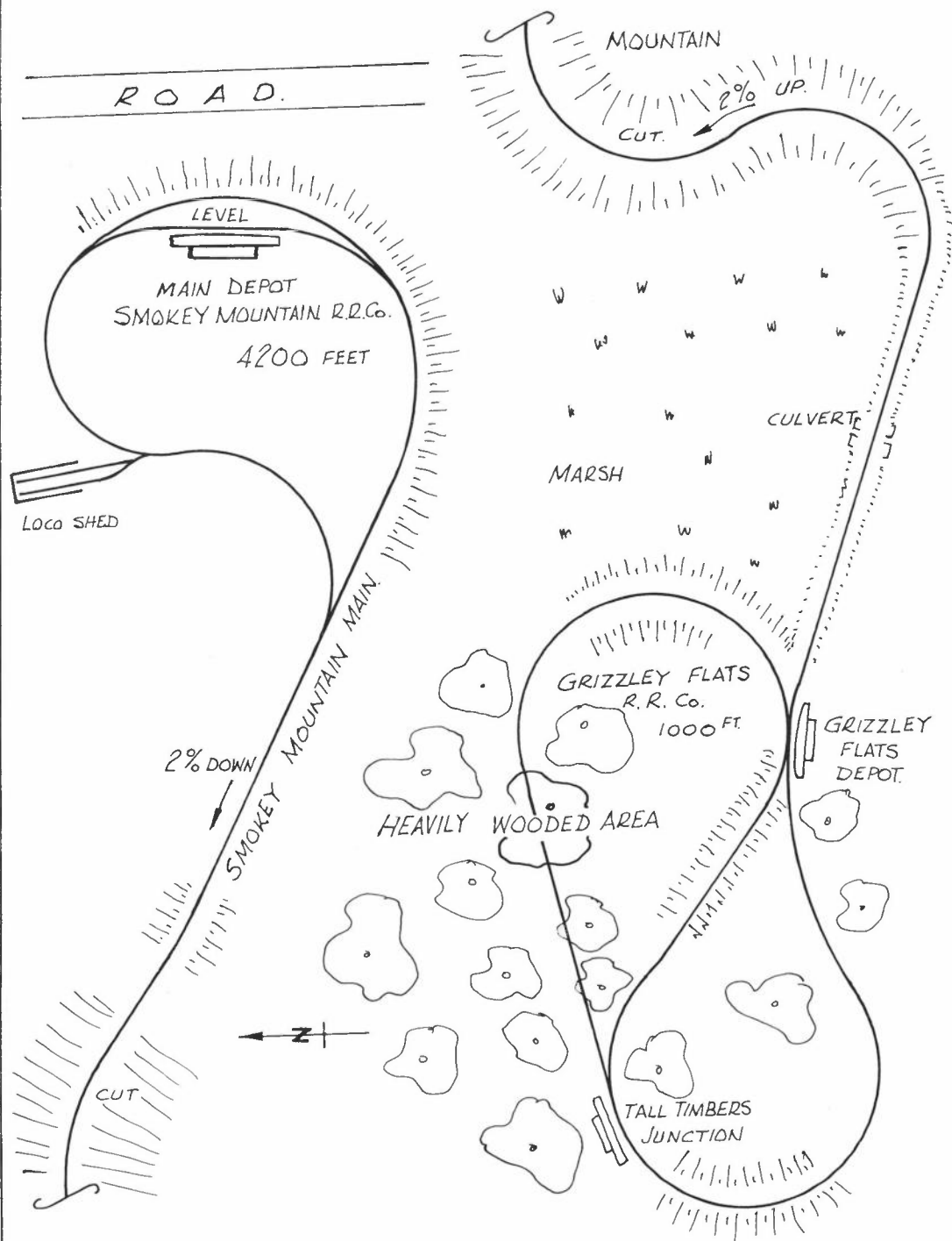
The loco was built by Australia's most prolific loco builder Mr. Jim Jackson of Brisbane. Four passenger cars capable of carrying 48 adults are the complete rolling stock.



*The Sanctuary Miniature Railway.*

*2-8-2 No. 101 basks in the Queensland sunshine prior to departure with another full load of passenger.*

12" GAUGE SMOKEY MOUNTAIN & GRIZZLEY FLATS R.R.



## (2) THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN LINE

This 12in gauge Railway is located in a Reptile Park near Gosford about 60 miles north of Sydney in New South Wales. Outside the park is a huge concrete Dinosaur some 15 ft high and fearsome looking to say the least!

This line operates inside amid a variety of creepy crawley lizards, snakes, crocodiles and many other reptiles and animals — who seem unaffected by the sight of a fine 12in gauge 2-6-2 Prairie locomotive chuffing and whistling round the half mile (shaped track and across the trestle. This line is due for closure shortly and a new venture by its proud owners Arthur Birch and Partners, Ron and Adrian, is already well under construction.

The new railway will be known as the "Smokey Mountain and Grizzley Flats Railroad".

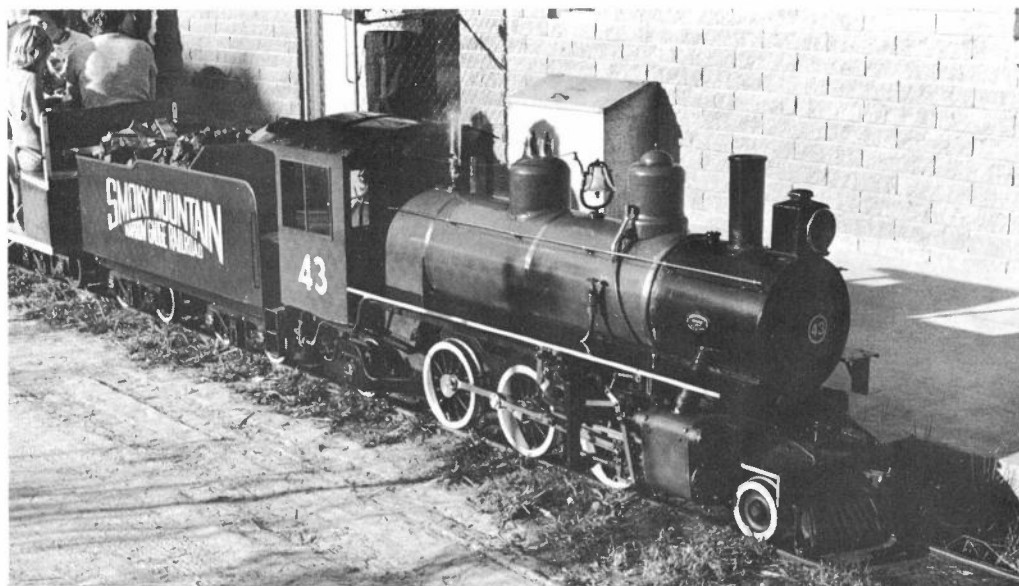
Its location is approximately 15 miles north of the Reptile Park. The drawing shows the extent of the new line and at the time of writing the 12in metals have extended from the main depot and loco shed to the Culvert in the marshland some 3,000 ft.

As will be seen the railroad then enters a heavily wooded area where it meets up with another system, on which a second but smaller loco will operate.

Passengers will leave the main depot and travel down the mountain and across the marshlands to Tall Trees Junction, at this point they change trains and do a couple of circuits around the Grizzley Flatlands, and again board the main line homeward for the main depot.

No. 43 the 2-6-2 Prairie was again built by Jim Jackson along with the four cars.

No. 12 the railroads second loco was built by Arthur himself and is a narrow gauge type 4-4-2 tank loco.



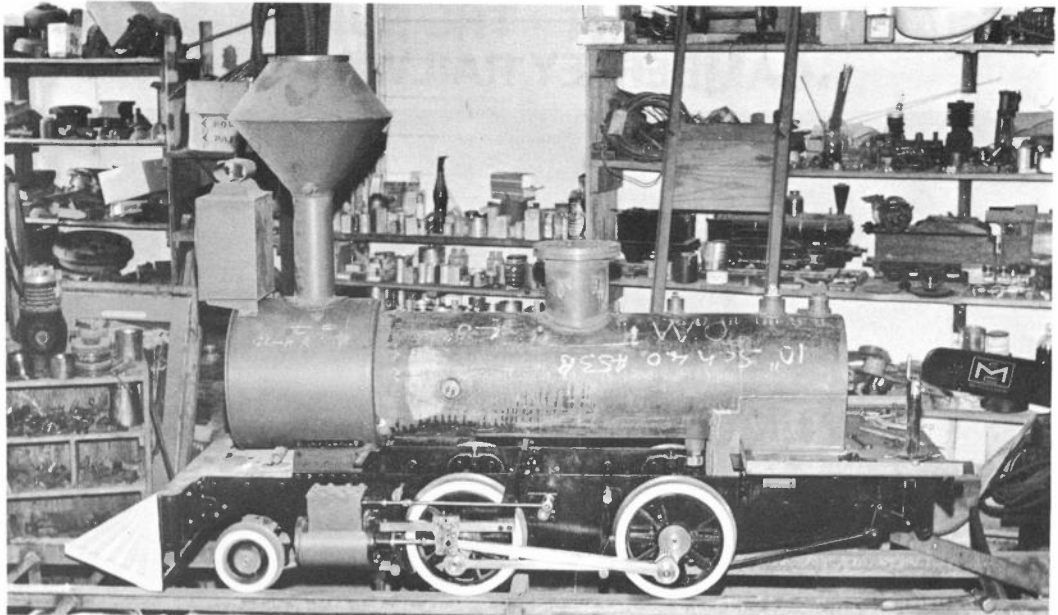
*The Smoky Mountain Railroad's 2-6-2 No.43 Cylinders 4" x 5½" stroke, boiler pressure 125 lbs/squ.in. With driving wheels of 11½" diameter and an overall length of 14'0" this 2¼ ton locomotive will haul no less than 30 tons!*

*(Keith Watson).*

## (3) THE JACKSON'S RAILWAY.

The third little railway in Australia is a new venture being built by Jim Jackson's son, young Jimmy, and is a 12in gauge line on their own property at Warner Road, Strathpine some ten miles or so north of Brisbane.

This line is not intended to be long in length, at present a quarter of a mile of road bed has been constructed alongside a pineapple plantation which has an embankment some 12-15 ft high and the top of which is wide enough to carry a full size tip truck used to construct the bank. Other major work on



*American type 2-4-0 for the Jackson line nears completion in the family workshop.  
(Keith Watson).*

the line comprises the cutting and blasting of a cut through solid rock 10 feet deep and several yards long — a formidable task, enough to deter most of us in itself.

Working of this line will be, starting from the front of this property from a balloon loop, the loco hauls its train up into the cut, as it crosses the ridge, then down into the valley and across the bank, after a short while it enters a terminal station where the loco is turned and runs around the train and hauls the cars back to the loop again.

Motive power for this little line is a 2-4-0 somewhat reminiscent of the Cricket that many Americans knew and grew to love at Tilden Park in California. This is at present under construction somewhat further advanced than the picture shows.

Basic dimensions of this little gem are Cylinders  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in bore  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in stroke, Driving Wheels 12 in dia., Boiler  $10\frac{1}{4}$  in and an overall length of approximately 9 ft including the nobby little 4 wheel tender.

The proportions of this loco are "just perfect" — as our dear friend LBSC's inspector meticulous would have said.

There is another 12 in gauge line which had a 4-4-2 loco running on it in a Lion Park just outside Sydney but I believe the steam loco has been sold elsewhere and the line is dieselised!

In Brisbane another 11 in gauge 0-6-0 is taking shape in the builders workshop of Mr. Eric Evans.

Adelaide in South Australia has a 18 in gauge Juliet! Yes LBSC would be very pleased to see that! It runs around the loco museum at Mile End where they have many full size locos preserved.

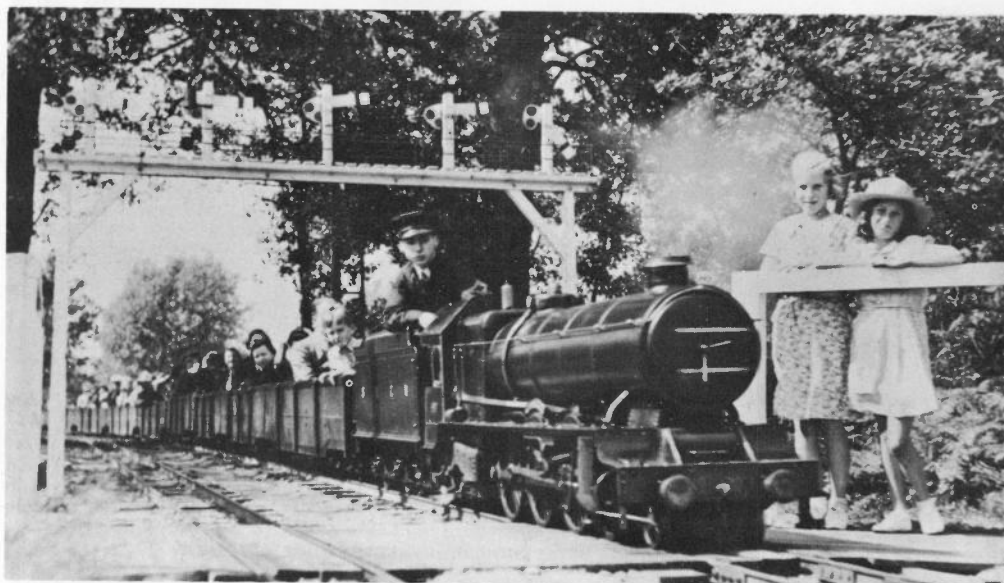
In the past few years I have unearthed facts about quite a few locos that have operated in Australia and I have located a picture of a 15 in Cagney in action in Sydney plus a 12 in gauge 2-2-2 with cylinders derived from a Worthington Pump! A  $10\frac{1}{4}$  in gauge 2-2-2 built in England for Sir Gilbert Claughton the designer of the forerunner to Royal Scot — the prototype of this loco was a McConnel — "Large Bloomer"! A  $10\frac{1}{4}$  in gauge Royal Scot is believed to be working at Coffs Harbour in northern New South Wales.

However, there is one mystery loco nobody seems to know where it is today though many photographs exist of it. It is a  $10\frac{1}{4}$  in gauge excellent model of Gresley's A1 Pacific built for a Doctor Bush in Melbourne in 1935.

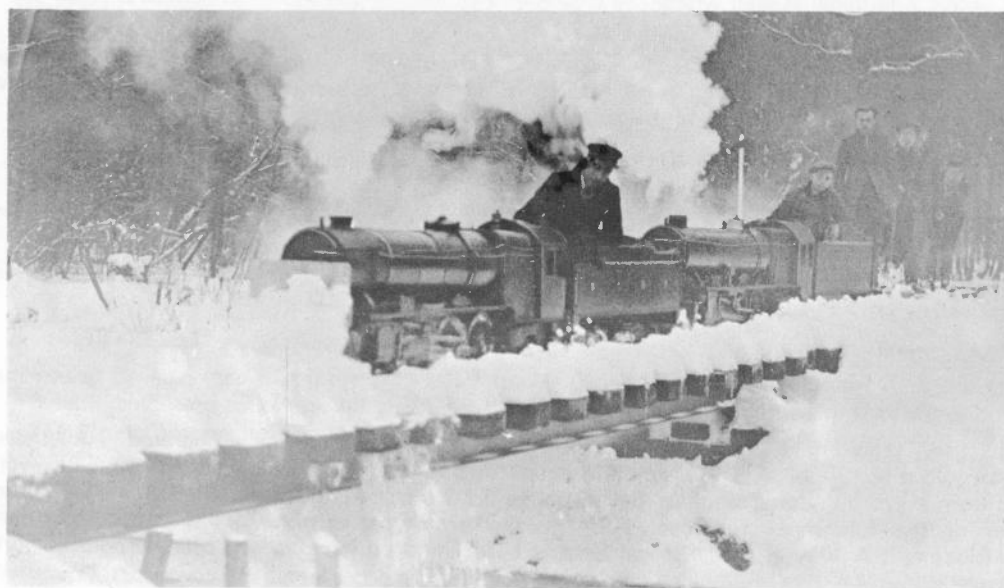
There are several other 12 in gauge locos which have been built and operated in Australia and it seems that this gauge has been quite successful one.



## PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENT - THE SURREY BORDER & CAMBERLEY RAILWAY

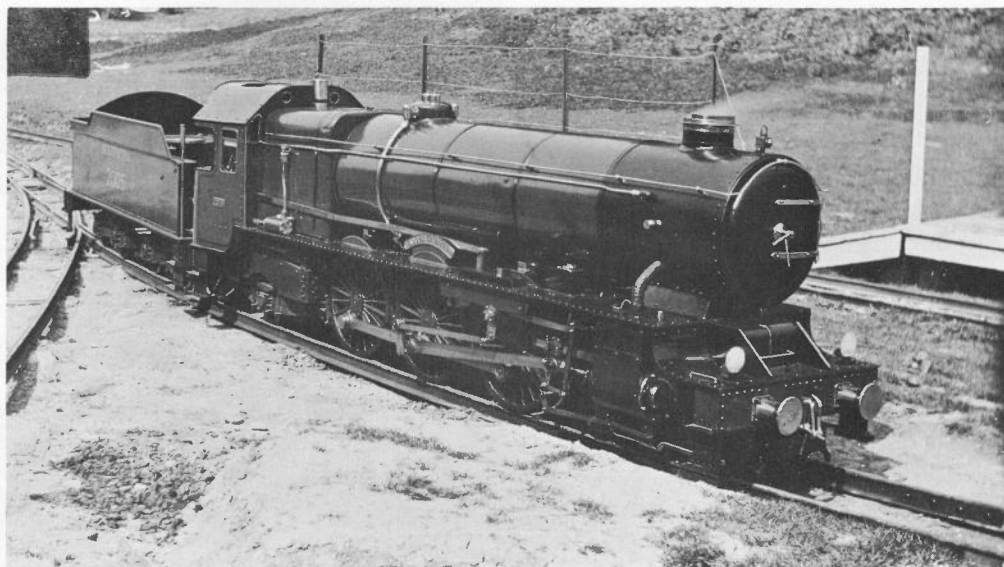


*Two young lady gricers 'watch the train go by ...'*



*Double-headed snow-plough special.*

(Four pre-war views from the collection of Peter Lee)



*A gleaming SILVER JUBILEE stands ready for the day's work.*



*Kitson built Beyer-Garratt and train in a sylvan setting.*

# NARROW GAUGE IN EAST GERMANY

Andrew Neale



*Saxon Meyer 0-4-4-0T 99.1585 prepares to leave Rothenkirchen with the mid-morning train for Schonheide, 1st. September, 1975.*  
(Reiner Scheffler)

Like everywhere else in Europe the narrow gauge in East Germany is dying out but there is still quite a lot to see and one has the compensation that what is left is 100% steam worked. Unfortunately, the lovely Saxon Meyers (compound 0-4-4-0 side tanks articulated on the Meyer principle i.e. similar to MONARCH at Bowater's) are now confined to three lines only and the majority of work on the 750mm gauge lines is done by big 2-10-2T's of the pre-war 99.1731 and post-war 99.1771 series. Freight on the 750mm lines is almost exclusively carried in std. gauge wagons on transporter wagons and this has no doubt contributed to the survival of the narrow gauge as with efficient shunting it is only a few minutes work to tranship a complete train of wagons.

During a Week's visit to East Germany in September 1975 all but two of the surviving n.g. lines were visited and a brief description of each is given below:-

**Rothenkirchen-Schonheide Sud.** 750mm gauge. Last remnant of what was once quite a large network, this Meyer worked line is worked in two sections — from Rothenkirchen to the main station at Schonheide Mit, a very pleasant line through open countryside with some quite spectacular girder bridges en route, and a separate section down to the main line junction at Schonheide Sud, which runs through thickly wooded country far more difficult of access.

**Cranzahl — Kurort Oberwiessenthal.** 750mm gauge. One of the most pleasant of the 2-10-2 worked lines, particularly the southern section which runs within a few yards of the Czech border for most of its length. Both freight and passenger traffic (the latter particularly in the winter as Oberwiesenthal is a popular ski-ing resort).



*Cranzahl-Kurort Unterwiesenthal line. Postwar built 2-10-2T 99.1785 arrives at Hammerwiesenthal with the 13.48 train from Cranzahl, 1st. September, 1975. (Brian Rumary)*



*Saxon Meyer 99.1583 arrives at Schmalzgrube with the 9.36 train from Wolkenstein, 2nd. September 1975. (Brian Rumary)*



**Wolkenstein-Johstadt.** 750mm gauge. Probably the loveliest line left in E. Germany. Worked by Meyers, it follows the river all the way down to Johstadt, constantly crossing and recrossing it. Maybe the fairly considerable summer tourist traffic will provide a reason for it remaining open, but otherwise its life will be short.

**Freital Hainsberg — Kurort Kipsdorf.** 750mm gauge. Worked by the 99.1731 series 2-10-2's the line climbs steeply for most of its length and includes a section of road-side running reminiscent of Spain's Ponferrada — Villablino line. Carries heavy passenger and freight traffic so its future seems reasonable.

**Zittau — Kurort Jonsdorf with branch Bertsdorf — Kurort Oybin.** 750mm gauge. Pleasant scenery and steep gradients (particularly at the top end). Worked by 2-10-2T's, the relatively frequent train service makes this a good line for the enthusiast to visit.



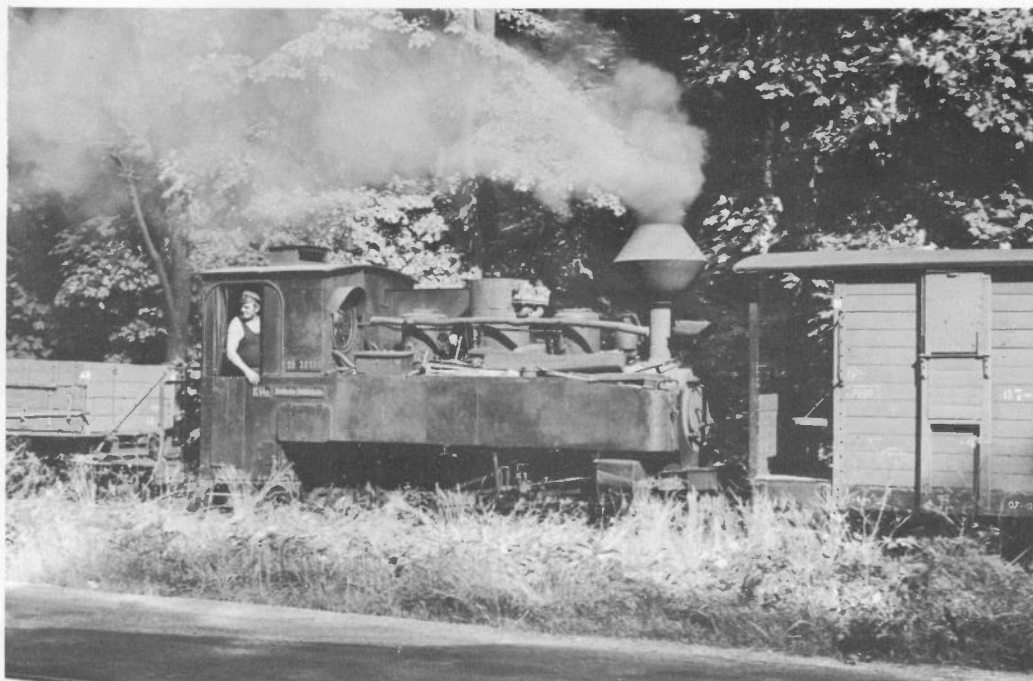
*2-10-2T 99.1760 prepares to leave Zittau with the 8.10 train to Kurort Oybin on 3rd. September, 1975.*  
(Brian Rumary)

**Muskauer Waldeisenbahn.** 600mm gauge. Right out on the Polish border, this was formerly a forestry system. Now worked by the DDR using 'Feldbahn' 0-8-0T's of the 1914-18 war fitted with diamond stack spark arresters. Track mileage has been much reduced recently, and it is due to close at the end of this year. Still well worth a visit but trains work out very early in the morning returning early afternoon. A permit from the local DDR office at Cottbus is essential if you intend visiting this line as much of it is in a military training area.

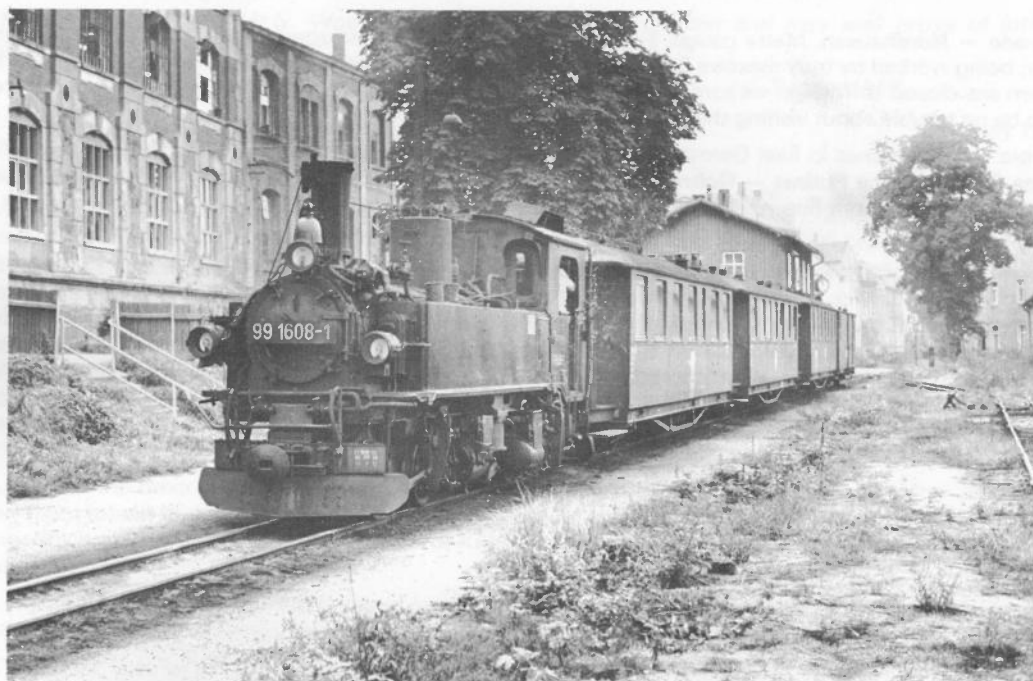
**Radebeul Ost — Radeburg.** 750mm gauge. Another 2-10-2T worked line running through rather dull countryside, it is perhaps unfortunate that this should be the line selected by the DDR as the official museum line and a pre-war 0-10-0T and train of vintage coaches are kept at Radebeul Ost.

**Oschatz — Mugeln.** 750mm gauge. Meyer worked. Again in rather dull scenery the principle interest in this Meyer worked line is that it is the last line left to use the Heberlein brake, an archaic system of cable and drum braking that is positively Emmett-like in appearance. The former line beyond Mugeln to Wermsdorf is still open for several miles for freight traffic to a large works.

**Gernrode — Harzgerode.** Metre gauge. A very pleasant line worked by immaculately kept 0-4-4-0 Mallets. Situated in the beautiful Harz Mountains the line carries a considerable tourist traffic both winter and summer



*East German Feldbahn. Ex-DFB 0-8-0T 99.3313 propels the last freight train of the day back to the main depot at Bad Muskau in the early afternoon of 3rd. September, 1975. (Brian Rumary)*



*Meyer 99.1608 pauses with the early afternoon train to Mugeln at a wayside station on the outskirts of Oschatz on 4th. September 1975. The Heberlein brake can be seen on the loco and coach roofs. (Brian Rumary).*



*Narrow gauge in the Harz Mountains. Metre gauge Mallets 99.5906 and 99.5901 take water at Alexisbad before taking the 11.54 train back to Gernrode on 5th. September, 1975.*

*(Brian Rumary)*

**Wernigerode — Nordhausen.** Metre gauge. Formerly connected to the Harzgerode line, it is very different in character, being worked by truly massive 2-10-2T's working heavy passenger and freight traffic. Certain parts of the system are closed to foreign visitors due to their proximity to the West German border but there would appear to be no trouble about visiting the two ends of the line.

There are two other lines in East Germany that were not visited as they are up in the north away from all the other lines. These are the **Putbus — Gohren** line of 750mm gauge in the island of Rugen, and the **Bad Doberan — Ostseebad Kuhlungsborn** line of 900mm gauge, which apparently includes a section running through the streets.

Since our visit to both the Rothenkirchen and Mugeln lines have closed to passenger traffic although both may retain a freight service for a while and the DDR have recently announced that they only intend to retain seven of their narrow gauge lines, probably the two metre gauge lines and the more prosperous 750mm lines. Even if this is so, East Germany will still remain one of the best countries in Europe for the n.g. enthusiast. In general there are no restrictions on photography provided one acts in a reasonably responsible manner .. With this proviso, the enthusiast who visits East Germany will find himself met with an invariably friendly welcome and will be seeing some of the finest narrow gauge left in Europe.

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## ERRATA

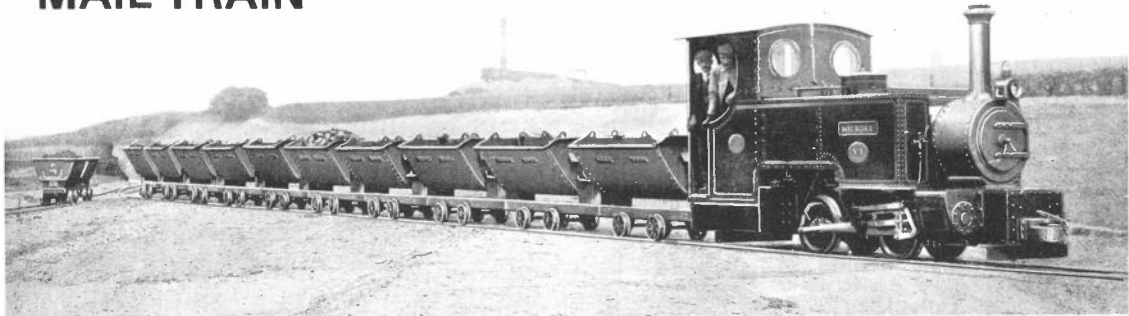
A few errors unfortunately crept into Magazine No. 70:-

P.1 KATTRYN should be KATHRYN. Tegí Cyf should be Tegí Cyf

P.17 Kitson 57 5475 was built in 1936, not 1946

P.24 RH171902 was scrapped in 1964, not 1974.

# MAIL TRAIN



## KENT COLLIERY NARROW GAUGE

Five English Electric flameproofed battery locomotives were used at Betteshanger English Electric Nos. 2029/30/31 of 1954 and 2081/82 of 1955. The locomotives were in fact built by E.E. Baguley Ltd., who provided the mechanical parts for many English Electric and Metropolitan Vickers/A.E.I. battery mining locomotives and in fact undertook much of the design work on these standard locomotives. The Baguley works nos. for the two batches were 3418/19/20 and 3448/49 respectively. One interesting point about the Betteshanger locomotives is that the first three were supplied with interchangeable wheelsets to enable them to work on 2ft. or 2ft. 6in. gauge, presumably because both gauges were in use at the colliery. Other English Electric/Baguley locomotives used in the Kent coalfield were EE 2084/85/86 of 1955 (Bg 3432/33/34) of 2ft. gauge at Tilmanstone and EE 2083 of 1954, 2300/01 of 1956 (Bg 3435/36/37) also of 2ft. gauge at Snowdown.

KENILWORTH, WARWICKS.

RODNEY WEAVER

## SURREY BORDER & CAMBERLEY RAILWAY

*The following letter from Mr.G. Woodcock was sent to Ron Redman and may well prove of interest to members:-*

Twyford Mill,

18th July 1975

Dear Mr. Redman,

With reference to your letter re S.B.& C. locos. As stated in the MIN. STEAM LOCO book, control of Kitsons passed to A.D. Kinloch, the merchant bankers of 118, Old Broad St. London. Kinloch brought the receivership to an end, by the introduction of fresh capital in 1938. The directors of Kinloch's, H.M. Gullard, and A.D. Kinloch himself, also at this time took over the Surrey Border & Camberley 10 1/4 in. line. Using the patterns of H.S. Bullock for such items as wheels, stretchers, buffer sockets, and the like, Kitsons built the two Garratts mentioned. With the outbreak of war, the S.B.&C. was closed and, shortly after, sold piecemeal as follows. One Garratt, the WESTERN QUEEN, and some track to Chas. Lane of the Royal Anchor Hotel, Liphook, Hants. One Garrett and one of the smaller G.W.R. tanks (as 0-4-2) and most of the track, to some Indian Prince whose name I have forgotten. The other G.W.R. tank (0-6-0) to Howey together with a partly built, frames and wheels only, 15in gauge loco by Bullock, and some rolling stock and track.

Lane had the other Garrett at Liphook until his death, the WESTERN QUEEN and another loco purchased later, that I rebuilt for him. I never had anything to do with the Garrett but saw it at Liphook many times. The thing which always struck me was, in view of Kitsons standing as locomotive builders, that both were pretty rough jobs.

I understand it was later sold to Salt and overhauled in the old Cambrian Rly works at Oswestry shortly before steam operation on that section was given up. I have no other, or later data on it.

This, I fear, is as far as I can assist you.

Yours sincerely,

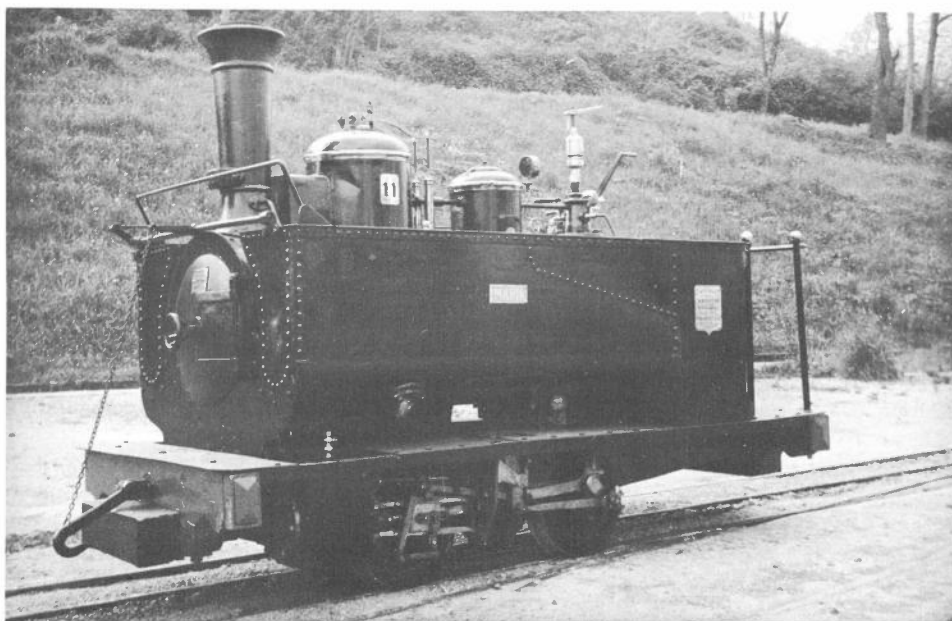
G. WOODCOCK

This must have been a fascinating railway to visit during its brief life, and certainly set a good example for subsequent miniature railways to follow. One slight error occurred in the caption to the photograph at the top of p.10 - the pointwork shown comprises two **single** slips, not a double slip. Those interested in unusual pointwork may care to note that the 7 ¼ in. gauge Echills Wood Rly. at Stoneleigh now feature a single slip over which passenger trains are worked. (We tried hard to find an excuse for making it a double slip!).

KENILWORTH, WARWICKS.

RODNEY WEAVER

## DECAUVILLE AT THE PARIS EXHIBITION



*The beautifully restored 550mm gauge Couillet 0-4-0T (Couillet 1455/c85) at Real Compania Asturiana de Minas, Torrelavega, Northern Spain (Maurice Billington).*

The two locos illustrated in John Townsend's article in magazine no. 65 may have been supplied by Decauville but they were not built by them. All the early Decauville locos were built by outside firms and the two illustrated were actually built by Couillet as comparison with the Couillet 0-4-0T in Maurice Billington's photo will show. The 0-4-4-0 Mallet's referred to will have been built by Tubize. Many of Decauville's locos were built for them but the little Volos Brickworks loco (Magazine No.61) and others of this type were genuine Decauville locos.

LEEDS

'GASPARD'

## NARROW GAUGE AT BLAENAU

In NG 70/27 Andrew has misquoted my report on the latest situation at Maenofferen. In fact the road from Llechwedd to Maenofferen (office level) was completed by December 1975. An entirely separate road is being built from the office level up to the mills to replace the incline. This road was in use in December 1975 for light traffic, but will not be improved for heavy slate lorries until about Easter 1976. No final decisions have been made as to whether Maenofferen and Diphwys Casson will be worked underground or opencast (it is Diphwys Casson, **not** Craig Ddu, where reopening is proposed) but in any case there is liable to be little comfort for the enthusiast, because it is hoped to introduce trackless vehicles underground.

It is also worth pointing out that if the Maenofferen incline closes as expected, there will still be one gravity incline in use, at Manod. Manod is not a mine but a surface quarry: the railway passes through the old Manod mine and emerges in Craig Ddu quarry on the other side of the mountain, from where the slate is obtained.

NEW MALDEN, SURREY

C.G.DOWN



The article on Blaenau was of great interest to me, especially the indexed map of all the quarries and their various connections to the F.R. You mention the interesting private use of the F.R. by W.O. Williams. 'Scrap Will' as he was known in the area was a great friend of mine and also a very good friend to the F.R. He had a most unmercenary attitude about narrow gauge material and gave or sold me material at well below market value. In fact the first Gardner engine that we fitted in MARY ANN, our 1917 Simplex, he sold us I believe for £15....

## MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE

IAN SMART

I was delighted to read the article about Blaenau, having spent many happy days exploring the quarries over the last 23 years. The Groby Granite line between the F.R. and the road is (3/76) being obliterated by a land reclamation scheme.

Whilst Oakeley (mis-spelt Oakley) did indeed close in 1970, it was taken over by the Glyn Williams family who, apart from opening the Gloddfa Ganol Tourist Centre on the site, actually resumed opencast slate quarrying in the main pit, and indeed may still be so working. I don't think they used any rail vehicles however. It was, so I believe, Glyn Williams who borrowed a Ruston from his relative (brother ?), the late W.O. Williams of Harlech (Known throughout the area as "Will Scraps") in 1953, to strip the Moel Ystradau quarry. This machine, RH 210955, was actually used on the F.R. from 6/52 to 1/53 — it had gone by 9/53, and I next found it at the Croft Granit Quarry, Llithfaen, in 7/54. Will Scraps was then using Croft Granite's incline to haul up scrap from a wrecked coaster lying on the shore there, one of three such melancholy storm victims then present in the bay. Further references to the use of RH 210955 on the F.R. will be found in the "Railway Observer and Stephenson Locomotive Society Journal" issues for December 1952. I recall the R.O. did in fact publish a photo of the loco standing at Tanygrisiau, either in the quoted issue or one near to it.

On p. 20, the statement that Llechwedd possessed the last working balanced incline is not true, and indeed reference is made in the article to the incline at Maenofferen and the short one at Manod.

At Maenofferen, the line connecting the first two inclines was worked by Planet loco 1821; I have no recorded observations of a Simplex being used. In 4/54 the "Mineral Extension" loco shed was still standing at the head of the incline up from Maenofferen; it contained RH 223687. In 8/51 Fred Pugh found MR 1904 in this shed. The railway was generally on an uphill gradient, from this shed to Rhiwbach, and in 1954 four of us enjoyed a gravity trip on a wagon except where the grass around the rails slowed us down. Above Bugail the tramway was laid with bridge rails right to the end.

## LLANBERIS, CAERNAVON

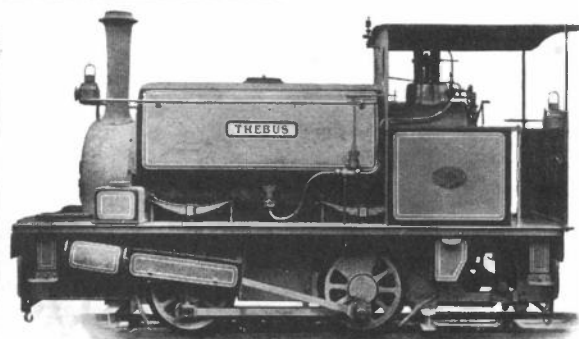
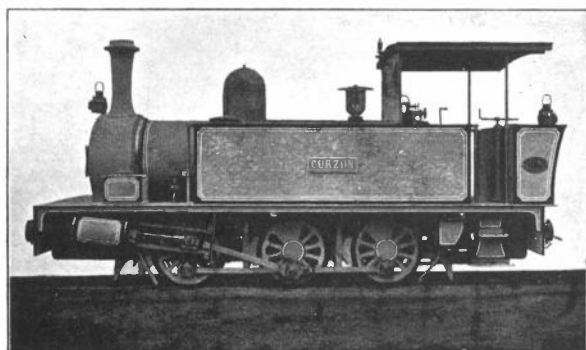
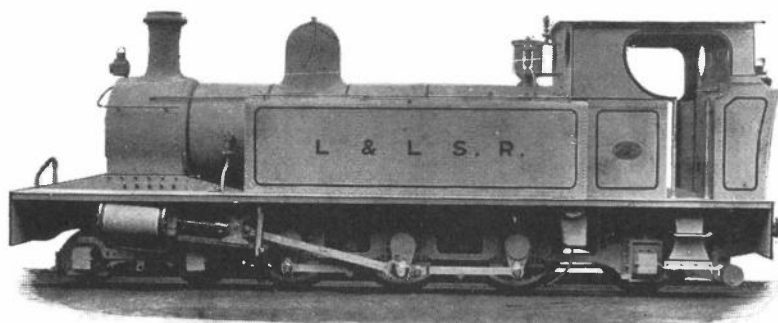
V.J. BRADLEY

*Apart from the letters published above, the article has aroused a great deal of interest amongst members and a few further comments are called for.*

*Several members have commented similarly to Vic Bradley regarding the inclines. I have always assumed, incorrectly it seems, that the two surviving inclines (plus the incline into the mine at Maenofferen) consisted of independently worked tracks. John Crosskeys points out that only two locos, Rustons, 177638 and 200763 were in fact scrapped. The exact identity of the surviving locos is in some doubt as a considerable amount of swapping of parts has taken place. Regarding the Simplex that worked the bottom level at Maenofferen, this would be FH 1821 as Vic Bradley suggests, which was of the 'Planet-Simplex' type. RH 223687 was the loco that went to Cwt-y-Bugail. When I visited Maenofferen in 4/65 two Simplex locos lay out of use in the slate mill. Presuming that the one with bowed frames was FH 1821, would the one with straight frames have been MR 5506, since MR 1904 would have been of the early bow framed type, and the only other Simplex here, MR 20057, was stored in another shed?*

*Peter Excell suggests that the Fordson loco that shunted the G.W. yard (p. 20) may have been built by Muir Hill, not Rhiwbach. This is possible, since Muir Hill locos consisted of a Fordson tractor on a simple railway chassis (see the illustration in Plant & Gotheridge's book on the Ashover). Does any member have a photograph of this loco in use? Peter also points out that the adit at Cwt-y-Bugail is actually a tunnel to open workings, similar to Manod.*

*Shortly before we went to press Ron Redman and I paid a brief visit to Maenofferen. It would appear that the incline is to be retained at least for the moment, while no definite decision has been taken regarding the mine. Only one RH was noted in use, while some parts of a DL type Ruston (presumably from RH 200763) lay in the mill. Presumably one Ruston was in use underground and the spare in the workshops but in view of the appalling weather (it was snowing hard and blowing a gale) we did not stop to find out! — AN.*



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