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PUBLISHER  
**Steve Cole**  
stevec@warnersgroup.co.uk

MANAGING EDITOR  
**Andy McVittie**  
andy.mcvittie@warnersgroup.co.uk

EDITOR  
**Andrew Charman**  
12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys,  
SY21 0BD. Tel: 01938 810592  
Email: andrew.charman@warnersgroup.co.uk

FEATURES EDITOR  
**David Joy**  
Email: dawjoy1@gmail.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION  
**Andrew Charman**

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

SALES EXECUTIVE  
**Allison Mould**  
Tel: 01778 395002  
Allison.mould@warnersgroup.co.uk

AD PRODUCTION  
**Pat Price**  
Tel: 01778 391115  
Email: patp@warnersgroup.co.uk

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel: (0) 1778 392469 (UK & Overseas)  
Fax: (0) 1778 421706  
Email: subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

UK: \$40.50; Rest of Europe: \$52.00; Outside Europe: \$60.00  
Binders: UK \$9.50 - Overseas \$11.00

DISTRIBUTION  
**News trade**  
Warners Distribution  
Tel: 01778 392417

**Model Trade**  
Warners Trade Sales  
Tel: 01778 392404

**Overseas Agents**  
JAPAN: Eriei Co, Ltd, 1-1-12  
Toyotama-kita, Nerima-ku, Tokyo 176

Printed by: Warners Midlands Plc  
Lincolnshire

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PUBLICATIONS PLC 2017  
ISSN: 1466-0180

Cover: Veteran driver Robert Longo earns his nickname 'Bullet Bob' on the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway, featured in this issue. The inset shows the line-up at the Threlkeld Gala, always a highlight of July.

Photos: Stephen Hussar/Matt Ditch

NARROW GAUGE WORLD is published nine times per year.

This issue published 25th August 2017  
Next issue on sale 29th September 2017



www.warnersgroup.co.uk

# Issue No 124 September 2017

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## CONTENTS

**05 First Lines**  
A mixed month

**06 Headline News**  
Snaefell brake failure sparks anger

**07 UK News**  
£250K grant for Rheidol

**14 World News**  
More progress in Romania



**16 In the Works**  
Busy times in Abersytwthy

**18 The Big Event**  
Romney turns 90 in style

**20 Lost Lines**  
Romanian forestry railways recalled

**24 Modern Narrow Gauge**  
Big spending on Irish peat lines

**27 News Gallery**  
Threlkeld event delivers again

**31 Industrial lines**  
The other Glasgow underground

**32 American Lines**  
Progress of a Maine two-footer



**36 Waite's World**  
Swedish steam survey concluded

**40 From Then to Now**  
Changing NG scene - or not

**41 NG Modelling**  
Rheidol Garratt in model form

**44 NG Modelling**  
Downscaling for practicality

**46 On the Shelf**  
A new 7mm scale Peckett

**48 Viewpoint**  
Much ado about private owners



**50 Narrow Gauge Extra**  
Superb pics on paper theme

**53 Diary**  
Still plenty of steam to see

**54 Forgotten Narrow Gauge**  
Hopes dashed in the Dales

NEXT ISSUE – OCTOBER 2017  
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# Trouble in Paradise...



**NGW Editor  
Andrew  
Charman  
muses on  
more dramas  
on the Isle  
of Man**

The recent runaway puts Isle of Man railways in the wrong sort of spotlight. The authorities running the lines know how to put on a superb show, as seen here during the recent Transport Festival with such highlights as flag-adorned locomotives recalling the reopening of the steam line in 1967, and period liveries on Manx tramway cars. Photos: Phil Parker

Welcome to *Narrow Gauge World*, and in the few weeks since I last wrote there has been plenty happening, as you'll see by turning to the news pages.

Much of the news is good – the South Tynedale Railway has opened its extension and immediately started looking at the next one, the Bala Lake is making progress on its plans to go to town, we could have a completely new narrow gauge line, and grants and awards appear to be getting dished out all over the place.

Our headline page is dominated this month, however, by an incident that was not good news at all, apart from the fact that it could have been a lot worse.

Thankfully we don't have to write about runaways very often. To be reporting on two on the same railway in less than 18 months is highly concerning. They happened in what is perhaps the most concentrated, fascinating narrow gauge environment of all within easy reach, the Isle of Man. The first resulted in the destruction of an 1895 tram car, in the second, thankfully the driver regained control in an incident that could have resulted in a disaster.

We who are actively involved in the heritage railway movement soon get used to family and friends using the phrase 'playing trains' – but while we are enjoying a hobby, we are by no means playing. Safety is the first aspect of every training session carried out on our railways

– our locos and rolling stock may be smaller, but out of control they can cause a lot of damage, injury or worse. We know we have to conduct ourselves properly, and we also know the authorities are there to ensure our railways remain safe.

Every heritage line is subject to the same official requirements as High Speed Trains on the mainline network. When something goes wrong, one of the earliest phone calls made must be to the Rail Accident Investigation Branch. If the RAIB decides to investigate an incident, it is a thorough investigation, and the final report is made public so everyone can learn from it. Anyone can sign up to receive such reports at [www.gov.uk/raib-reports](http://www.gov.uk/raib-reports), and many working in the heritage rail industry are actively advised to read them.

## Not public

The Isle of Man is not officially part of the UK and not therefore subject to RAIB investigations. The island's Health & Safety Executive probes incidents, and the reports tend not to be made public. So we don't know the full story behind the runaway and destruction of an empty Snaefell tram in March last year, and we don't know whether any lessons have been learnt.

Equally we probably won't find the full scenario behind the second runaway on 4th August. This time the incident was dismissed as nothing very alarming by the Manx Department of Infrastructure. But there are likely very few heritage

railway members who did not react with total incredulity to transport minister Ian Longworth's assertion that brake failures happen from time to time and it was "business as usual," for the crew.

The severity of the incident soon came out, however, as passengers on the tram described their terror as it rolled down the mountain. Now many are calling for independent enquiries, and with good reason. In the interests of safety, the Manx transport authorities have serious questions to answer, and a worried, sceptical public to reassure. It's time to stop hiding, and start talking...

## Next generation

To end on a much brighter note. The other day I accompanied my daughter to the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge works. Megan is chairman of the Welshpool line's fledgling Young Members Group, and we were at the FR to benefit from seeing the line's highly successful young person's training week in action.

What an inspiring day! The works was full of young people, carrying out a whole host of building and maintenance tasks, benefiting the railway but just as importantly clearly enjoying themselves. Programmes such as this are essential to ensure the railways we enjoy today are still here tomorrow, run by a new generation of custodians – all involved at the FR should be congratulated.

*Andrew Charman*



# Passengers round on 'business as usual' claim after Snaefell runaway

Safety standards on the 3ft 6in gauge Snaefell Mountain Railway are again in the spotlight after a car suffered brake failure while descending from the Summit station on 4th August.

The island's Department of Transport told local media that 1895-built tram no 2 suffered a 'momentary failure' of its electric braking system and ran for 'six pole lengths,' about 200 metres. It crossed the island's mountain road at Bungalow, before the driver regained control using the Fell braking system, which dates from the tramway's construction in 1895.

The incident follows the destruction of SMR car no 3 in March 2016 after it ran away from the Summit station and crashed, thankfully with no-one aboard. The report of a subsequent investigation into that accident has not been made public.

Government Director of Transport Services Ian Longworth insisted no-one had been hurt in the latest incident, and that a replacement tram was summoned to take passengers back down to Laxey. However he sparked derision after he commented that the tram's reostatic braking system "does from time to time cut out such as when the bow collector loses contact with the overhead wire." Mr Longworth was quoted by the BBC as saying "it might have been exciting for the passengers but it was business as usual for the crew."

## Frantic efforts

Media reports of the incident, however, sparked an angry response from passengers who were on the tram, and who flatly contradicted Mr Longworth's version of events. Holidaymaker Karen McLean from London told *IOM Today* that it was clear from very soon after the tram left the Summit station that it was going too fast and out of control. The guard and a passenger travelling with him were "frantically" trying to apply the Fell brake as the tram "thundered" across the road.

"It was like being in a plane going down, it was terrifying – the tram was out of control and we thought we would come off the rails and down the mountainside," Karen said, adding that the tram crew were clearly shaken by the incident.

Other passengers reported the tram "squealing and bucking" around bends and the "look of terror" on the driver's face as he tried to stay on his feet.



The island's Health & Safety executive launched an investigation into the incident while on the following day the tramway operated a significantly reduced service using a single car.

In the days following the crash the Manx Electric Railway Society joined the calls for a public and independent investigation into safety standards on the island's trams. The MERS issued a hard-hitting press release saluting the 'heroism' of the tram crew but condemning the Manx Department of Infrastructure "for allowing a state of affairs to arise in which one priceless and irreplaceable vintage tram has been utterly destroyed and another very nearly wrecked with all hands in the space of 18 months."

The MERS release detailed how in the 1970s the electro-mechanical (rheostatic) braking system was installed on all of the Mountain trams, having been bought secondhand. "This braking system relies upon the generation by the motors of electric current from power delivered from the wheels. For technical reasons this system can fail and the trams retain the original mechanical 1895 Fell braking system as a back up."

## Multiple failures

The MERS claimed that the need to employ the 1895 brake has increased in recent years but due to the secrecy of the Isle of Man Government that runs the line the reason why remains unknown. The Society also claimed that there have been a number of occasions when the Fell brake has had to be employed in an emergency.

"Between 1895 when the line was built and 1976 the Fell brake was the primary braking system and worked well as a safe



Above: Tram 2 was pictured by Phil Parker on 25th July, 10 days before it suffered brake failure. The Fell Rail can be seen in the centre of the track.

Left: Manx media highlighted passenger anger at the official version of the incident.

system, only a single major incident being recorded which does not appear to have been the result of a braking fault," the release stated, calling for "a full and open debate" on the situation.

"In the meantime instead of those in charge simply congratulating themselves for a 'near miss' we call for a police investigation of what has happened in the recent incident. Had a loaded bus suffered a catastrophic brake failure... there would have been a police investigation. Had this tram left the rails and tragedy occurred there would have been a police manslaughter investigation.

"This tram crossed the Mountain Road at speed, at right angles to the traffic (we know from survivors accounts there was traffic on the road). This was a dangerous incident in which the lives of the travelling public were threatened and people were put in terror."



The 1895-fitted Fell brake saved the tram after its electric braking system failed.



# Derailment suspends WHR trains

Welsh Highland Railway services were disrupted on 31st July after a Porthmadog-bound train suffered a derailment on a remote section of the line near Rhyd Ddu.

**NGW** understands that the leading bogie of pullman car 'Bodysgallen' derailed on the right-hand curve just before the Rhyd Ddu fixed distant signal. Passengers from the Pullman and its adjacent service car were transferred to the remainder of the train which proceeded to Porthmadog.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch was immediately informed but decided it was not necessary to attend the site.

WHR trains over the rest of the day were cancelled while the Pullman and service car were recovered by a diesel, arriving at Boston Lodge later that evening. The line reopened to traffic on Tuesday 1st August after all engineering checks and repairs were completed, but the Pullman car remained out of use for several days while it was thoroughly checked.

The WHR told **NGW** that no passengers were injured during what it described as a minor incident, and that a detailed technical investigation is ongoing. General manager Paul Lewin commented; "I am very grateful to all of the FFWHR team who pulled together to do everything necessary to resume services for all of our passengers at this busy period."

**NGW** has heard that a side effect of the incident was the unusual sight of three Garratt locomotives together at Boston Lodge, but sadly no photographic evidence of this has arrived at the editorial office.



## Rheidol wins £250K grant for restorations and new apprentices

Restoration of four carriages and the creation of two new apprentice positions will result from new funding of £250,000 that has been awarded to the Vale of Rheidol Railway.

The grant is the second made to the line by the Coastal Communities Fund. Described by VoR CEO Robert Gambrill as "one of the most important awards we have ever received," it will fund a new project, dubbed 'Views for all, accessing new markets, our past is their future.'

Four bogie passenger carriages will be restored to service, including the observation 'Vista Car', which has not run for 25 years and is currently derelict. A priority will be improving access for wheelchair users.

The two new apprentice positions will expand the programme of young person

training on the VoR and among in-house programmes they will work on to improve their skill bases will be an increase in first-class passenger accommodation on the line.

"It will see the long-term investment in young people continuing on the skills which are so vital to our survival," said Rob.

"Add to this the achievement of our long-term ambition of seeing access for all on our trains and this funding offers us a really strong sustainable future," he added.

The award comes as the Rheidol's recently built workshops at Aberystwyth are becoming very busy with a number of restorations and contracts underway – see our special photo feature on page 16.

**Above:** The Rheidol line's Vista Car will be a beneficiary of the new grant. **Photo:** VoR

## Mystery remains over Penrhyn closure

A month on from the sudden closure of the Penrhyn Quarry Railway, the reasons behind it have not been revealed.

As reported in **NGW**123, on 14th July the Penrhyn team left the Felin Fawr site at Bethesda in North Wales, home of the original line's Coed Y Parc workshops.

Rumours suggested that engineering business PQR and the railway had been given notice to quit by the landlord at Felin Fawr. However a statement issued by the railway said that it was not being evicted, but "could not continue at Felin Fawr due to circumstances beyond our control."

The PQR said that a further statement would be issued once all supporters had been informed as to the situation, but at the time of going to press no further information had been released. Reports suggest all railway stock has been removed

from Felin Fawr, mostly going to the Bala Lake Railway and the Ffestiniog Railway.

At the time of the closure the PQR was restoring Manning Wardle 0-4-0ST 'Jubilee 1897', transferred to the line by the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust at Tywyn. The Trust, which is custodian of Jubilee 1897 on behalf of its owners the Welsh Slate Co, has since reached agreement to move the partially dismantled locomotive to the Vale of Rheidol Railway workshops in Aberystwyth. Here it will be stored while decisions are made as to its future.

"Our Trustees appreciate the concerns expressed by the many of the railway preservation community, and remain committed to restoration of the locomotive as a long-term objective," said NGRMT chairman Keith Theobald. But he added that this would depend on funding.



**Components of 'Jubilee 1897' are now in the Aberystwyth workshop of the Vale of Rheidol Railway. The loco has been partly reassembled and will shortly be transferred to storage in the line's shed at Capel Bangor station. Photo: VoR**





# Mail Rail ready for September opening

A section of the former underground postal railway in London will reopen on 4th September as 'Mail Rail' – a ride for visitors to the newly opened Postal Museum heritage attraction.

The opening of the museum marks the end of an ambitious year and a half project, which commenced on 4th February 2016, to convert a disused Clerkenwell printing factory into the new museum site, and to bring the disused Post Office Railway tunnels back to life.

The 2ft gauge Post Office Railway operated between 1927 and 2003, driverless trains carrying mail along a 6.5-mile route between Paddington and Whitechapel, calling at eight stations on route. Largest of these was at Mount Pleasant sorting office, where the line's depot was located, and this is the basis of the new museum ride.

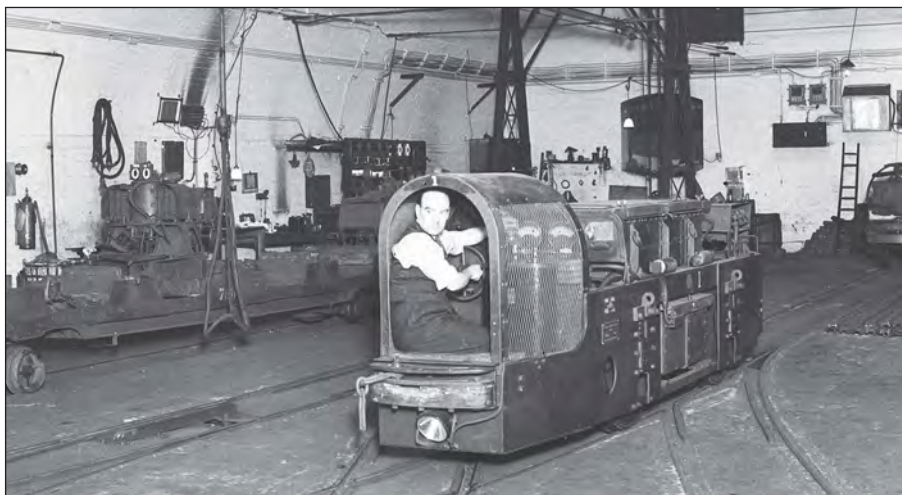
Visitors will descend into the former engineering depot and board one of the

original trains that have been modified to carry passengers. The 20-minute ride will stop at the original and largely unchanged station platforms where audio visual displays will give an insight into how the railway worked.

After the ride, visitors will be free to wander through the depot which has been turned into an exhibition space. The displays include a standard gauge Travelling Post Office, and the remains of a Victorian pneumatic rail car – an 1860s predecessor to Mail Rail.

Tickets for The Postal Museum and Mail Rail will be pre-bookable through the website at <http://postalmuseum.org> ■ NGW has been promised a preview of Mail Rail – our feature on the system and its history will be in a forthcoming issue.

**Above: The new Mail Rail cars await their first passengers, who will gain an insight into the system's heyday (below). Photos: Mail Rail**



# New route to extend mining line?

Britain could gain a new narrow gauge railway if plans by a Northumberland group come to fruition.

The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway Association (ABTRA) wants to reopen an industrial standard gauge line, the 'Butterwell Branch', north of Ashington. This runs north then west to eventually join the East Coast main line.

ABTRA eventually hopes to reopen the entire route and as part of its plans proposes to build a 2ft gauge line from New Moor station on the branch, to connect with an existing railway at the Woodhorn mining museum.

The Woodhorn line was built in 1994 and refurbished and reopened in 2008. Passengers are taken on a 20-minute trip recreating train travel for miners, stock comprising three mine locos – two Hunslets and a Schoma – and colliery manriders.

ABTRA believes that connecting to the museum line will benefit all concerned, boosting visitors both to its standard gauge heritage railway and the museum.

The group, has, however insisted that proposals are at an early stage, ideas for the 'Woodhorn Link' still being developed.

# Bala gains more extension land

The Bala Lake Railway has secured a second vital piece of land for its planned extension into the centre of the north Wales town.

Contracts have been exchanged for the derelict Plassey Garage, adjacent to Heol Aran (Aran Street). Together with the first purchase completed in February, the purchase gives the Trust a substantial piece of land that will eventually be the site of the new Bala town station building.

Bala Lake Railway Trust chairman Julian Birley described the acquisition as a huge step towards the Trust's ambition of extending the railway. "It means that we have now secured the site for the new station building, which crucially is next to a large public park," he said.

"The purchase has been made possible thanks to an incredibly generous single donation from a supporter of the Trust who sees the tremendous potential and value in the project," Julian added.

The land will now be registered and planning consent obtained to demolish the derelict garage. The site can then be cleared, levelled and landscaped, ready for when the rest of the trackbed has been acquired and construction can begin.





# Tynedale sets sight on trebling its line length

The South Tynedale Railway opened its extension to Slaggyford on 24th July, and announced its intention to carry on to the end of the former standard gauge branch it is built on, almost trebling the length of the line.

The 1¼-mile extension from the previous terminus at Lintley to Slaggyford, which last saw trains in 1976, takes the STR to a length of 4½ miles. Now it is setting its sights on

another nine miles to where the Haltwhistle to Alston branch joined the original Newcastle and Carlisle Railway at Haltwhistle.

A project scheme is being drawn up and is likely to cost in the region of £30 million. Challenges to overcome will include crossing the Haltwhistle road bypass.

The opening celebrations saw Prince Richard the Duke of Gloucester open the

extension and new facilities at the line's Alston base. The latter include a train shed stretching over both platforms and a refurbished workshop with a raised public viewing gallery.

The Duke also presented the railway with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, while on arrival at Slaggyford the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland Kathryn Tickell officially opened the restored station.

Some work on the extension still remained to be finished, notably the run-round loop at Slaggyford, requiring initial trains to be top and tailed. The STR expects to complete this work by the end of August.

**Top: Among the wide programme of improvements carried out by the STR is this new train shed at Alston.**

**Thomas Green 0-6-OST 'Barber' is dwarfed by its train as guests check out the new facilities at Slaggyford.**

**First departure for Alston from Slaggyford, with Statfold Barn Peckett 0-6-OST 'Harrogate' at the head and Barber at the other end.**

*All photos: Dave Hewitt*

## Visitors line up for Kirklees Gala

The Kirklees Light Railway's 'Giants on the Line' Steam and Diesel Gala on 9th-10th September will welcome Romney Hythe & Dymchurch 4-6-2 Pacifics 'Hurricane' and 'Winston Churchill'.

Also present will be Greenly/Bassett Lowke 'Little Giant' locos 'Prince Edward of Wales' from the Rhyl Miniature Railway and 'Synolda' from the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway.

New to the event will be a miniature beer festival at Clayton West, while the weekend will conclude with the traditional 'Shelley or Bust' Sunday evening train employing as many locos as possible.

Tickets will be available online at [www.kirklees.vticket.co.uk](http://www.kirklees.vticket.co.uk) or by phone at 01484 865727.

## BRIEF LINES

### Snowdon visitor off for now

Plans for a rack locomotive from the Brienz Rothorn Bahn in Switzerland to visit and operate on the Snowdon Mountain Railway this September (*NGW*118) have been put on hold. The SMR told local media that the plan was too complex to achieve this year, but added that it had not totally abandoned revisiting the idea at a future date.

### Llanfair shed reroofed

Members of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's mechanical engineering department regained access to the Llanfair Caereinion workshops before the end of July following the completion of asbestos remediation. The work has seen both the workshop and machine shop completely cleared and the panels forming the walls and roof of the former replaced.

### Lilla goes floral

Ffestiniog Railway Hunslet 0-4-OST 'Lilla' was in operation at the Shrewsbury Flower Show on 11th-12th August, giving rides on temporary track. The railway has run trains at the show since 2013.

### Rheidol wheels the cliff

The latest contract secured by the Vale of Rheidol Railway's growing engineering works recently saw the line manufacturing four new wheel sets on axles for the cars running on the standard gauge Aberystwyth Cliff Railway at Constitution Hill. *In the Works – page 16*







■ Inclement weather on the Welsh coast on 3rd August forced the Fairbourne Railway to abandon its normal service after the first two trains as gusts of wind reached 40mph. At lunch time it was decided to form a train with open coaches and locos at both ends. The train is pictured returning to Fairbourne through Golf Halt with 'Yeo' leading and 'Russell' at the rear. *Photo: Malcolm Flynn*



## Stuart takes up Talylllyn GM role

The Talylllyn Railway has announced the appointment of Stuart Williams as its new general manager.

Replacing Tracey Parkinson, who has taken up a similar role on the standard gauge East Lancashire Railway, Stuart comes to the TR as managing director and founding partner of a marquee hire firm, which he has helped develop from a two-person operation to a highly successful business. He also has experience in sales and distribution management.

His heritage railway experience includes 11 years volunteering on the Dean Forest Railway, including acting as the railway's sales and marketing director and becoming board chairman in 2016.

Talylllyn chairman David Ventry said that Stuart stood out in a strong field of candidates. "(He) brings to the railway a range of highly relevant skills and abilities, as well as considerable experience in the wider business world," David added.

■ The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway has advertised in national newspaper *The Guardian* for a new general manager. The successful candidate will replace Trevor Stockton, who is approaching retirement after 40 years with the Cumbrian 15-inch gauge line.

## Hook gets its plates back

Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0T 'Townsend Hook' has regained brass maker's plates thanks to the efforts of the leader of the team that secured the loco for preservation.

The loco, built in 1880 for service on the 3ft 2¼in gauge line at the Betchworth Quarry in Surrey, lost its original plates while in the ownership of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, when they were sold by auction to unknown purchasers.

Townsend Hook subsequently went to Amberley Museum in West Sussex and over a five-year period has been cosmetically restored to its original condition by a small team of volunteers led by museum member, Mike Bone.

With the brass plates no longer available wooden replicas have had to be a poor substitute, while the loco also lacked one of its number plates, stolen from a display in early preservation days.

Now, new replica brass plates have been sponsored by John Townsend, who led the group that originally purchased Townsend Hook for preservation in 1960.

Steve Sparrow of Steamplates, makers of replica nameplates and signs, skillfully recreated both the maker's and number plate. He was aided by Keith Theobald of the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust,

who enabled scans and measurements to be taken of the plates on identical sister engine 'William Finlay', now on display at the museum in Tywyn.

Steve transferred the information to CAD and then CNC-milled replica plates that John describes as "perfect replicas, almost indistinguishable from the originals."

The replica plates were handed over to Amberley's rail group at an informal ceremony at the Museum on 15th July.

**John Townsend hands over the new plates to 'Townsend Hook' restoration team leader Mike Bone and John Stanton, joint head of the museum's rail group.**



## Seaton wins lottery £45K

The Seaton Tramway has won a £45,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which will help the 2ft 9in gauge electric line progress a bid for eventual funding of £420,000.

The tramway begins building a new terminus at Seaton this winter, and once this is complete, due for Spring 2018, it plans to launch a 'Travels through Heritage and The Axe Valley' interpretation feature. It is this that it hopes the Lottery will help fund.

"National Lottery funding will enable us together with our partners to provide in-depth engagement with visitors, staff, volunteers and new audiences through an ambitious programme of new interpretation, facilities, training, learning, events and long-term activities," said tramway chief executive Jenny Nunn.

**Time is running out for the current Seaton terminus, seen here in May.**

*Photo: Andrew Charman*



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# Fintown looks to positive future

Prospects for the 3ft gauge Fintown Railway in County Donegal are looking brighter with plans to increase services, writes **Hugh Dougherty**.

Cumann Traenach na Gaeltachta Lair, which operates the three-mile long line says that Halloween and Santa trains are to be restored – these had been dropped for some years because of insurance issues.

Preserved and restored County Donegal Railways railcar 18 is now in service for seven days per week until mid-September, following a £900 brake overhaul. Railway director, Seamus McElwee, says that the 77-year-old diesel is in fine fettle and is the mainstay of the railway.

"We've had the railcar on loan from the North West of Ireland Railway society since 2003, and there's no doubt that she's the major attraction for the 4,000 passengers we carried last season," Seamus said.

"This year we want to increase that number and, with the effects of the

**Railcar 18 arrives at Fintown Station, passing the water tower whose tank was rescued from the Lough Swilly Railway's Gweedore Station. Photo: Hugh Dougherty**

recession starting to tail off in Donegal, there's no reason why we can't do that. We're especially keen to welcome visiting railway enthusiasts to our unique railway."

However plans to extend the line by nine miles over the existing CDR trackbed of the Stranorlar to Glenties line to Glenties Station have had to be put on hold. And the aim of bringing steam back to the line remains long term. "Our immediate priority is to build a tearoom at

Fintown to improve our facilities as we know that heritage railways benefit from such an amenity which offers a greater reason for visitors to stop.

"But we haven't abandoned our long-term plans and we will raise them again with Joe McHugh TD, the newly-appointed minister for the Gaeltacht, who is... very sympathetic to our railway which provides nine seasonal jobs locally and boosts the tourist trade in and around Fintown."



■ **Former gasworks 0-4-0 'Jack' took the Leadhills and Wanlockhead Railway's 1498-foot-high Hillend Summit by storm, writes Hugh Dougherty, when the 1903 Barclay-built locomotive took over operations during the line's steam weekend on 29th-30th July.**

Owner Nick Williams brought the 0-4-0 to Leadhills from its base at the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway on a 1972-vintage, Atkinson tractor and trailer unit, owned and driven by Graham Morris. The loco covered 35 faultless miles on the 2ft gauge railway over the weekend.

"I and my support crew were delighted to bring 'Jack' up to Leadhills as this is a line that really exercises the locomotive as well as helping the railway," Nick said.

The railway also laid on a free bus service to the Museum of Lead Mining at Wanlockhead, using a preserved David Macbrayne 1960-built Bedford Duple coach. This was a curtain raiser to providing the service by rail, as soon as the recently-authorised extension into Wanlockhead itself is opened.



The Hayling Seaside Railway in Sussex opened its new depot over the weekend of 5th-6th August. The £100,000 project, built at the Eastoke Corner terminus on the Hayling Island seafront, provides the railway with permanent facilities and is said to have secured its future. As well as a spacious storage depot and workshop, the building also includes station facilities and a platform along its side.

Bagnall 0-4-OST 'Wendy', on loan from the Hampshire Narrow Gauge Society, hauled trains throughout the weekend – normal Hayling trains are diesel hauled.

**Photos: HSR**







■ Little and large. The slate tips of Blaenau Ffestiniog dominate the skyline as the Ffestiniog Railway's double Fairlie 'Earl of Merioneth' meets 'Royal Scot' 4-6-0 no 6115 'Scots Guardsman' during the 'Welsh Mountaineer' railtour on 25th July. Photo: Keith Bide

## People power at Dromod

The Cavan & Leitrim Railway has added two new items of 3ft gauge rolling stock to its collection.

A replica Wickham pump trolley arrived on 24th June, having been built off site by CLR director Paul Gunning. "We believe this is the only pump trolley of any gauge in Ireland today, sadly nobody saw fit to save one and they were all cut up many years ago," member Philip Bedford told *NGW*.

The trolley is a replica of Wickham works no 3959 supplied to Bord na Mona (the Irish turf board) in 1945. It was built from Wickham drawings and is fitted with Wickham pressed steel wheels. These were originally on a long-dismantled Wickham 4S/BB petrol railcar delivered to Bord na Mona as C56 in 1957.

On 1st July enthusiast Andrew Wilson delivered surviving components of three Swedish rail tricycles, among a batch of the unusual vehicles supplied to Bord na Mona by Bergbolagen of Stockholm in 1957.

The parts had been brought to England in the 1970s with the hope of putting

together a complete tricycle. While much work was done over the years, many problems were encountered due to missing parts and worn out/damaged components.

Rapid progress at the CLR saw a complete frame and outrigger assembled by 16th July and all three wheels fitted. Much work still remains to be done – some components are being made from scratch and a 1950s saddle has been purchased from eBay to replace the 1970s version currently fitted.

Meanwhile much progress has been made in fundraising towards completing restoration of 'Nancy', the 1908 Avonside 0-6-0T which has been at Alan Keef Ltd at Ross on Wye for many years. Members have sold both their own projects and vintage vehicles to raise funds and the new boiler built by Israel Newton at Matlock in Derbyshire is now at Ross on Wye. "If we can keep the pressure up we hope to have Nancy back at Dromod within 18 months, this locomotive was last steamed at Eastwell in 1959," Philip said.



Photo: Steve Doughty/LBR

## Buzzrail receives volunteer award

Volunteers at the Leighton Buzzard Railway received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service from Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis, on Friday 28th July.

Equivalent to the Queen's Award for Export Achievement, for Technology or, for an individual, the MBE, the award was accepted by one of the railway's longest serving members, Peter Hodges, and one of its youngest, Jamie Randall.

The award citation was made for 'Fifty years of conserving England's industrial railway heritage, in Bedfordshire'.

In a speech the Lord-Lieutenant praised the railway's all-volunteer status and its example of how volunteering can make an impact on the lives of people – many young LBR volunteers have taken the skills passed on from older members into their workplace, including two loco crew, driver and steam engineer Ian Cliff and trainee fireman Jon Hopper (pictured above), who are both train crew with the 'other railway' serving the town, London Midland.

The Lord-Lieutenant also presented a gift to Mervyn Leah, who has recently stepped down from the railway's marketing manager role after 20 years. Mervyn continues to act as a duty manager and as a guard, having given 48 years to the line.



Velocipedes line up at Dromod, from the front the replica Wickham trolley, the Swedish rail tricycle and a 1920s two-seat rail inspection bicycle completed in 1916. Photo: Phillip Bedford/CLR



# Day return to Sibiu

**Alasdair Stewart** of the UK-based friends of the Sibiu-Agnita Railway provides a very personal account of the line's August open day.

Not having managed to get out to Romania since September last year, I had an itch that needed a scratch and the prospect of trains running on the Sibiu-Agnita railway from Cornatel was the incentive I needed. I couldn't spare much time, and the initially planned three-day operation being truncated at short notice to the 7th only, I thought it might not be possible to attend. But low-cost carrier Wizz Air had seats available on the Sunday evening flight from Luton and another on a return flight the following evening; volunteers from the local supporters association, the 'Friends of the Mocăniță' provided a lift from the airport and a bed for the night in their apartment; the only catch being a 6.30am start next day...

The much advertised heatwave broke with thunder, lightning and heavy rain within an hour of my arrival. Typically, I was accused of bringing it with me from England. Equally typically, I was left rueing my decision to leave my 'Impermeabile pantaloni' back in the UK, having thought this wasn't north Wales in August.

After breakfast, my host Radu Tompa drove us the short distance to collect another stalwart volunteer, Andreea Stanchi, before we left Sibiu and drove into the Hărtibaciu Valley, along which the railway line runs. Compared to some other European lines, the scenery is not as immediately dramatic but it does vary and the stretch between Sibiu and Cornatel includes a section reminiscent of the Manifold valley in England.

Arriving at Cornatel around seven, we met other volunteers already on site. Old sleepers that have been replaced were being cut ready for the firebox, a tent and tables were set up for sales and displays, and the now traditional gallery of high quality



photos were pinned to the walls of the weighbridge for display to visitors. Some of these had recently been exhibited in Sibiu and they tell a story of volunteering activity, fun, friendships and railway operations over the last few years. They are accompanied by text panels in Romanian and English giving an overview of the history of the line and aspirations for securing its future.

Whilst steam was being raised in the loco parked on the back of a flatbed lorry, the two carriages were hand shunted by volunteers. Complications with couplings required marshalling in a specific order; something not initially understood by all of those providing the motive power!

More volunteers arrived, the Romanian Tricolour flag was unfurled and hung from the front of the station building. As a lady set up a wonderful display of jars of local honey, I briefly regretted only coming with hand luggage. 'Who comes all the way to Romania with no luggage?' she asked incredulously. Another stall had concentrate fruit syrups; the elderflower is delicious and a perfect example of a local organic product with virtually no 'food miles.'

## Value for money

In real life, the station mistress is an IT professional developing 'self-driving' car technology, but on gala days Lili looks after souvenir sales as high school teacher Gloria sells tickets. An adult return was 20 Lei; about £4 for an hour of narrow gauge

delight in an idyllic setting with the distant backdrop of the Carpathian Mountains.

The time for the first advertised departure came and went at 10am, but the handful of prospective passengers were untroubled by the delay; nobody had connections to make and the engine could be seen in the distance enveloped in clouds of wood smoke and hissing wisps of steam.

Having been oiled round, just before 11 the black 0-8-0 Budapest loco brought its train to the watering point. Cornatel has become the base of operations of the Association Preteini Mocanita (APM) for several reasons; primarily its proximity to Sibiu for ease of access for volunteers and visitors, an ideal existing track layout for short to medium-term operational needs, and, vitally, a water supply for steam locos – a large diameter concrete well, several metres deep, adjacent to the water tower.

## Filling the tanks

A portable petrol pump is used to lift the water directly into the balanced tanks of the engine. During a previous event the water level had dropped such that the atmospheric pressure was only just enough for it to work; on another occasion the inlet pipe became detached from the pump when a jubilee clip failed and it slithered out of reach in, seemingly, a fraction of a second, to lie coiled serpentine like beneath the water, prompting an unorthodox fishing expedition... the Island of Sodor no doubt having witnessed such things before.

Tanks filled, the train was positioned in front of the station building for passengers to embark as soon as the rainwater could be wiped off the seats. The weather started to co-operate and before long a hint of blue appeared through the clouds. The first train departed at about 11.15 and was filled with passengers; including a band, complete with horns, clarinets, trumpets and drums. Upon their return to Cornatel they followed the speeches with moving renditions of the Romanian and then German national anthems that reminded visitors of the long traditional links between the two countries.

Bernd Fabritius, MP of the German



**Top: Steam services are coming back to life despite challenging conditions on the Sibiu-Agnita line.**

**Left: Enthusiasm for the project remains high amongst both Romanian and British supporters.**

**All photos: Alasdair Stewart**





Bundestag and born in Agnita, announced the launch of a fundraising campaign to raise €160,000 for the railway project. APM president Mihai Blotor reported that the funds would be allocated on the basis of "One steam loco worth €100k, one diesel loco worth €20k, two carriages worth €10k each and a depot at Cornatel or Hosman for the remainder of the total."

This announcement and donations from visiting Saxons and locals were some consolation for the otherwise low public attendance on the day. The second train allowed many of the volunteers to enjoy the fruits of their recent labours as it ventured further towards Hosman than any train since the line was closed to traffic by state operator CFR in 2001. Speed was deliberately kept low as eagle eyes were trained on the track in an attempt to spot part of the right-side cylinder drain-cock linkage which had mysteriously disappeared at some point during the first trip...

### Looking further

The limited resources of the APM and the hellishly hot recent weather conspired to frustrate ambitions to run all the way to Hosman this time. About 90 metres of track have been found with no fixings and very few effective sleepers to support the 40kg/m rail; beyond that stretch, the line is in much better condition for most of the remaining distance – overgrown, but present amongst the weeds.

'Destination Hosman' remains the target during the weekend of 16th-17th September and Sibiu Agnita Railway UK (SARUK) supporters and volunteers will be undertaking work ahead of that weekend.

The late afternoon return portion of my journey from Sibiu to Luton was uneventful – passport control took less than 15 minutes in both directions, unlike reports from some more popular European holiday destinations. Low-cost airlines offer opportunities for visiting and even volunteering on some interesting railways for similar costs, and journey durations, as travelling from London to north Wales and, although I proved it possible, I would recommend staying longer than one day if circumstances permit – and I'll try not to forget my waterproof trousers next time.

For more details of joining SARUK working parties on the Sibiu line, email [stewart\\_alasdair@hotmail.com](mailto:stewart_alasdair@hotmail.com)



■ Following many years of sterling service on the Chemin de fer du Vivarais (CFV) in FRANCE, the 80-year-old Billard railcars are being replaced on the onerous duties of towing the rakes of Velorail cars back to the upper termini of the velorail operation (*reports John Organ*). They have been replaced by two CFD 480hp railcars, nos 5001 and 5002 acquired from Corsica in 2016.

The four Billards, A150D nos 213 and 214 (pictured above with Velorails in June 2015) and the smaller A80D nos 314 and 316 will still be retained for less taxing duties such as the Tuesday service to Lamastre market.

John also reports that the FACS-owned former CF Charantes Cail 2-6-0T no 77 of 1895, which has resided in the museum at Pithiviers for many years, has recently been transferred to the Voies Ferrees du Velay (VfV) at Tence. The VfV hopes to restore this historic locomotive to working order, which is very good news as the loco is the only surviving example of the numerous Cail and Fives-Lille metre gauge 2-6-0Ts supplied to the CFD in its formative years.



## Darjeeling line remains closed by unrest

The situation in Darjeeling remains depressing

### INDIA

at the time of going to press, (*reports Peter Jordan of the UK-based Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Scoeity*). The town and the railway is still completely closed with a strike organised by members of the GJM party, who want a separate state within India, independent of West Bengal.

Fortunately most of the violence has ceased since the station at Gayabari was set on fire and largely destroyed (*NGW123*). A week after that happened, one of the Siliguri newspapers led with a story that, although Gayabari station had been burnt, its 'twin'

existed on Adrian Shooter's Beeches Light Railway in

Britain! If there had been continuing violence, that would certainly have been the subject of the report.

Strikes and demonstrations continue, and it is becoming increasingly clear that resolution of the dispute between GJM and the West Bengal state administration will end up as a problem for India's central government to solve.

For the first time in more than 150 years, there will be no Darjeeling Tea offered in public auction later this month – all the tea estates are affected by the strike.

Work has started on extending the CF de Bon Repos in FRANCE, based at the former station on the Réseau Breton between Rostrenen and Loudéac closed to passengers in April 1967. The aim is to link Bon Repos, named after the local monastery that is now a tourist attraction, with Gouarec, 4km distant. As the original trackbed is not available, a metre-gauge line will run alongside the adjacent road. Work on a new level crossing at Gouarec has begun and in July the D2164 road was closed so that a lengthy diversion could be put in place.



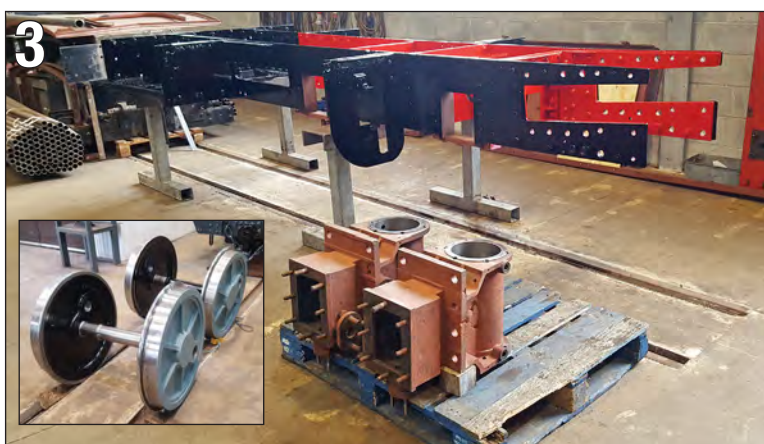
Current operations are confined to a short length of 600mm gauge track through Bon Repos station, on which services are operated at weekends between May and September. The collection of metre gauge stock includes a single-unit railcar and three tramcars. A recent arrival at Gouarec is former CF de Provence centre-cab BBdm no BB401 (Montmiral, 1962).

Report and photo: Philip Horton





Currently one of the busiest narrow gauge workshops in the UK is at Aberystwyth on the Vale of Rheidol Railway, as our photo feature shows.



1) The long-awaited overhaul of Vale of Rheidol no 7 'Owain Glyndwr', which has not run since 1998, is progressing well. No 7's boiler is externally complete and awaiting its tubes having successfully passed a stage inspection by the boiler inspector. Fitting of tubes and the regulator valve will take around a week and will be followed by a hydraulic inspection.

2) General view of the work on no 7, showing the frames, the newly riveted tanks and the boiler.

3) The VoR is overhauling Tallylyn Railway Hughes 0-4-2ST no 3 'Sir Haydn'. Frame repairs and riveting are complete and the first coat of gloss paint applied, the cylinders have been remachined ready for refitting to the frames, while the wheels (inset) have been partly painted and await crank pin fitting.

4-5) The railway has also secured the contract to restore 1917-built Baldwin 4-6-0T no 794 for the Welsh Highland

Heritage Railway and the components have been transferred to Aberystwyth. Planning and design work is in progress and physical restoration of the loco will commence in the spring of 2018. It is to be restored to represent WHR Baldwin 590, scrapped in 1942.



6-7) Meanwhile restoration of an original VoR cattle van is making steady progress. This was built for the line by the Great Western Railway in 1923 and transferred to the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in 1937. It was purchased by the Ffestiniog Railway in 1960 before the W&LLR was preserved, and heavily modified for various works uses, before being re-acquired by the VoR in early 2015.

The chassis of the van is complete and painted, the floor progressing and the upper ironwork for the doors all manufactured and awaiting riveting to the frame.

*All photos: VoR*





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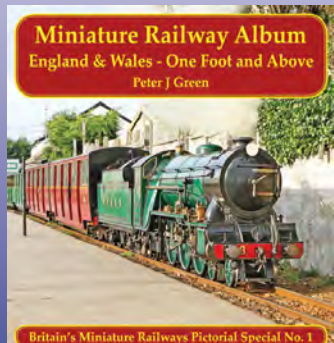
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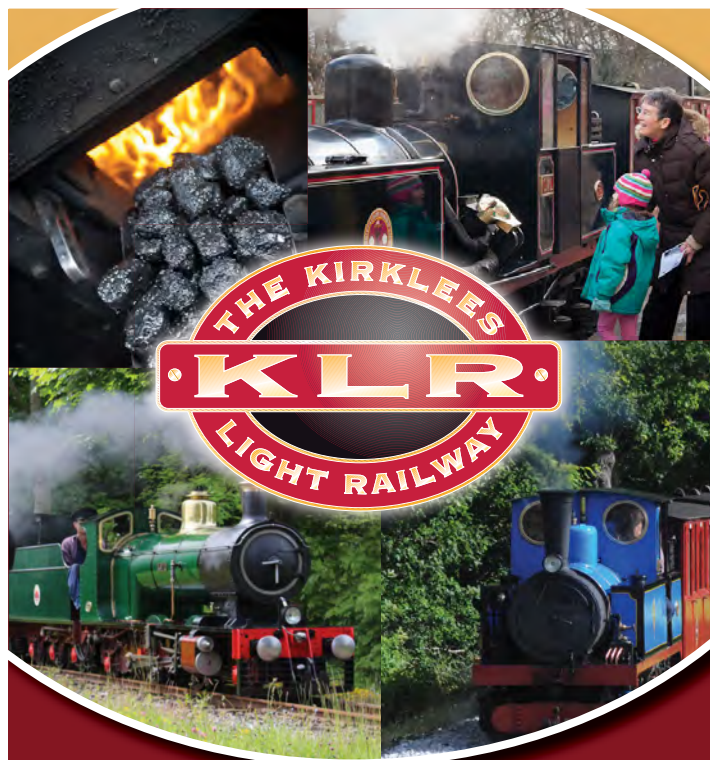
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# Happy birthday Romney

The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway knows how to run an impressive Gala event, but the 90th anniversary celebrations on 15th-16th July reached new heights...



Above: The many named trains included this one, hauled by Pacifics 'Hercules' and 'Dr Syn' for the new *Romney Then & Now* book.

Left: Captain Howey and Henry Greenly discuss the finer points of carriage stock.

Below: Hythe has seldom been so busy a station.

All photos: Steve Town

Many will remember the weekend of intensive action that marked the 90th anniversary of the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, a two-day timetable that seemed to lack for nothing.

Among highlights of the many sights were named trains from every decade of the 15-inch gauge line's life, and a re-enactment of the inaugural train at Hythe, complete with a jazz band and appearances from RHDR builders 'Henry Greenly' and 'Captain Howey'. They were to be seen discussing the line in the one remaining four-wheeled carriage, skillfully restored by Austin Morris at the Windmill Farm Railway.







Double heading, locos running in reverse, locos in unfamiliar formats – Greenly Pacific ‘Typhoon’ looked particularly impressive running without its usual smoke deflectors – and a superb Saturday evening line-up at New Romney all helped to cement the anniversary event as something truly special. *NGW* suggests that the RHDR starts making plans for its centenary now – it will be tough to beat the success of the 90th birthday... **NGW**

**Above:** Unusual sights, a four-wheeled carriage and ‘Typhoon’ without deflectors.

**Right:** Time to contemplate as ‘The Bug’ enjoys a light-engine run.

**Below:** Romney locos in reverse – you don’t see that very often...

**Bottom:** Power parade at New Romney shed on Saturday night.





# Romania's Forest Railways

In the first of a two-part feature, *Philip Horton* recalls visits in the 1990s to lines that were then still working industrial railways.

Prior to the development of railways, the timber industry usually floated felled trunks down a river to a sawmill. Although the practice was cheap the timber was often damaged en route. When steam locomotives became available in the middle of the 19th century narrow gauge forest railways soon spread throughout Europe. Operations probably peaked during World War II with many lines continuing into the 1960s. The Iron Curtain then divided Europe and, with industrial development proceeding faster in the west than under the Communist regimes, forest railways were swiftly replaced by road haulage.

In the east, however, many state-owned forest railways remained at work into the 1980s and '90s. Nowhere was this more true than in Romania, although visiting the lines was both difficult and potentially risky. But following the overthrow of the Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989 visits became much easier. It was soon discovered that more than 20 forest railways were still operating in the wooded valleys of the Carpathian Mountains in Transylvania.

At the time the Romanian Forestry Railways (CFF – Calea Ferata Forestiera) still operated a large fleet of 760mm gauge steam locomotives. These were predominantly 0-8-0

**Above: Moldovita 0-6-0T no 763.193 waits to depart with a train of empty bolster wagons for Argel. The carriage carries members of Warwickshire Railway Society.**

**Below: No 763.193 crosses the River Rasca – one of the concrete piers has been washed out and replaced with lengths of timber. The loco's makeshift tender is clearly evident.**

tanks, more than a hundred of which were built for Romania's forest and industrial lines during the 1950s at the locomotive works at Resita. A further 12 were built to a slightly modernised design at the Reghin Tractor Factory in the 1980s. These had largely replaced the pre-war engines supplied by other European manufacturers, which once included numerous ex-Hungarian Type 70 0-8-0Ts. First built in 1905, when Transylvania was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the last ten were built in 1949/50 for the CFF.

While only a handful of engines were at work at any one time, some of the larger systems had an allocation of ten or more, at least half of which were usually





dumped. Some of the larger networks operating in the summer of 1991 included those at Berzasca, Cimpu Cetatii, Comanesti, Covasna/Comandau, Tismana and Viseu de Sus. The Berzasca system was notable for having both the oldest and youngest engines still at work; 764.243 (Budapest, 1911) and 764.412R (Reghin, 1987), while the Covasna to Comandau line included a rope-worked incline.

In the following years Romania's forest railways suffered a rapid decline as the forests were privatised. Many were replaced by road transport, often because the railway had been washed out by flooding. Elsewhere timber reserves were simply worked out. The last use of a system's steam loco was often to remove lifted track!

A few survived, however, helped by the fact that western enthusiasts were prepared to pay to travel on them behind steam. The Romanian 'Ronedo' company (joined later by 'Rom Steam – Aldo') was therefore set up to cash in on this demand. I described several special trains run on the State Railway's (CFR) 760mm gauge lines, organised for the Warwickshire Railway Society, in *NGW* 75 and 76. These tours included travel on CFF lines at Moldovita and Viseu de Sus in May 1996 and from Covasna to Comandau in October 1997. The 1996 tour also included what remained of the former CFF line at Orastie.

## Moldovita

The Moldovita system was in many ways typical of Romania's forest lines. It started from a depot and sawmill just north of the town where there was a connection with the standard gauge CFR branch line from Vama. From Moldovita the CFF lines, some over 20km long, spread out like the



**Above: Moldovita Resita loco no 764.449 after it had been hauled out of the shed.**

**Right: On the Viseu de Sus 0-8-0T no 764.484 is en route to Botizu. A worker is carrying a hosepipe to refill the loco from the adjacent river.**



**Below: A Viseu de Sus 'drazine' is passed by a special headed by no 764.484. The line to the right leads up the Novatului Valley.**

**All photos by Philip Horton – taken in May 1996, except Covasna/Comandau, in October 1997.**

branches of a tree alongside the River Rasca and its tributaries. Work on the railway began in 1900 in the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with further branches added over the years, the last as late as 1987. At the time of our visit two steam locos were on the system, a standard 0-8-0T no 764.449 (Resita, 1956) and a rather quaint 0-6-0T no 763.193 (Krauss, 1921). It was said that the lighter Krauss was preferred as the Resita loco tended to spread the track.

It was therefore the Krauss,

complete with a makeshift tender, that was waiting at the head of a rake of empty bolster wagons on Sunday 5th May 1996. A passenger carriage was attached to the rear along with a primitive brake van, an arrangement repeated on the other forest railways visited. After a delay while several Sunday market stalls were moved away from the track, we headed out of town parallel with an unsurfaced road. This was well used by local people who were returning home both on foot and by horse and cart. »







***"After a delay while several Sunday market stalls were moved away from the track, we headed out of town parallel with an unsurfaced road..."***

**Left: By 1996 the once extensive Orastie forest railway had been replaced by road transport but several 0-8-0Ts were retained to shunt the mixed gauge yard. The problem in shunting standard gauge wagons with a 760mm gauge engine is clearly evident as the fireman leans far out of the cab of no 764-414.**

**Below: Standard gauge buffers are clearly in evidence as 764-414 arrives with its mixed gauge train.**

The line then crossed the road and ran between it and the River Rasca. Several photo runpasts were undertaken en route for Argel. These included diverting our train a short distance up the branch for Rascovie which followed the river. In doing so it crossed a bridge which clearly showed signs of damage caused by the floods of November 1995.

Once our train had backed off the bridge we rejoined it and headed alongside the River Argel towards our

destination, 12.5km from Moldovita. At Argel no 763.193 came off our train, shunting the empty bolster wagons into a siding. It then collected four loads of timber, supported on eight bolster wagons, and shunted these onto our carriage and brake van. The tender was placed at the rear. With brakemen positioned along our loaded train we set off back to Moldovita where, after further runpasts, we arrived safely. Timber ceased to be extracted by rail in 2001.

## Viseu de Sus

Our next visit, two days later, was to Viseu de Sus on the River Vaser with its depot, sawmill and connecting CFR branch line. In addition its large allocation of steam engines required a small works. Until the 1930s felled timber was floated down the Vaser eventually to reach the Danube. In 1932 however, a railway was built alongside the river and was later extended for over 44km to Coman. A branch along the Novatului Valley opened in 1952.

In the early 1990s three trains usually left Viseu de Sus each Monday carrying forest workers to the various work camps for the week. The trains included a passenger carriage that was also used by the local populace. Two trains ran on other weekdays. A number of small road vehicles ('drazines'), converted to run on rails, were also in use by both work gangs and passengers.

The evening before our tour we visited the depot at Viseu de Sus to check the arrangements. While there no 764.452 (Resita, 1955) arrived with an open-sided carriage containing a few forestry workers and then proceeded to shunt several loaded wagons around the yard. Two ex-Budapest 0-8-0Ts, nos 764.313 (Bp, 1922) and 764.355 (Bp, 1950), were also noted, both in a derelict state. Next morning our train was headed by no. 764.484 (Resita, 1958). We set off alongside the river, heading for the forest station at Botizu, 26km from Viseu de Sus.

En route we stopped for numerous photo runpasts and twice for water. At the first, 8.5km from Viseu de Sus, water was taken from a water crane, the only one on any CFF network. At our second, where several loads of timber were waiting to be taken down to Viseu de Sus, water was pumped direct from the river. Shortly after this we were able to photograph the train emerging from the only tunnel on a CFF line. Once at Botizu our loco shunted the bogie wagons into a siding and then joined the front of our two carriages. During our stop at Botizu two of the railway's rather decrepit 'drazines' arrived. We were to pass a third at the Novatului junction on our return to Viseu de Sus.

## Orastie

The forest railway at Orastie opened during the 1940s and once extended for some 41km up the valley of the Apa Orasului. Several further branch lines were built in the 1950s. The railway was replaced with roads following storm damage in the early 1980s. A small section was nevertheless retained to trip wagons between the nearby CFR mainline





and sawmill. This was done using 760mm gauge engines running on mixed gauge track! These were fitted with standard gauge buffers offset to the left of the loco. During our visit on 10 May no 764.414 (Resita, 1952) was seen shunting wagons in the yard. Two further Resita tanks were dumped there along with a non-standard 0-8-0T no 764.357. This was one of a group of engines built in Bucharest by the 23rd August Works in the 1950s. Others of the class worked passenger trains on the CFR 760mm gauge 'main lines'.

## Covasna to Comandau

The line from Covasna dates back to the end of the 19th century and claims to be the first forest railway in Romania to use iron rails and steam locomotives. The line to Comandau, including the incline, was not opened until the 1920s and was later extended through Benedec to Dobroslav some 50km from Covasna. The railway was still at work at the end of the Communist regime but in the winter of 1995 heavy snow and gale force winds blocked both road and rail access to Comandau. The line was nevertheless reopened in August 1996 only for the incline to be damaged by a forest fire early in 1997. Would it be rebuilt in time for our October visit? On arrival at Cosvasna on 11 October 1997 we discovered that it had reopened a month earlier.

By this time only cut timber was carried on the railway as a sawmill had been built at Comandau. However a sawmill and furniture factory remained at Cosvasna, each with its own standard gauge steam loco. No 764.405R (Reghin, 1984), the engine that was to haul us to the foot of the incline at Siclau, was first posed alongside one the two standard gauge engines, 0-6-0T no N3.404 (Kassel, 1909). After a number of runpasts we arrived at Siclau, 11km from Cosvasna.

Here one of the two incline platforms, carrying a load of sawn timber, was descending from the summit station. On arrival the resident horse 'Misha' (born in 1981 and therefore three years older than our loco!) hauled its load, supported on two bolster wagons, off the car. We boarded the open platform in heavy rain. After an exchange of whistles between no 764.405R and the loco at the incline top, we started to move. Halfway up, where the broad gauge line splits in two, we passed the descending loaded platform. Both platforms were attached to either end of a single wire rope! On arrival at a very misty incline top we left the platform to find another horse 'Mico' (born in 1993) waiting to haul a

***"The last use of a system's steam loco was often to remove lifted track..."***

**Top right: The famous Covasna/Comandau incline starts at Siclau where the horse 'Misha' is waiting to haul a load of cut timber off the lift platform.**

**Right: Only a single wire rope separated the Warwickshire Railway Society party from oblivion when they travelled up the incline in pouring rain! Halfway up they passed the descending lift platform with its timber on two bolster bogies.**

**Below: 4-6-0T no 764.247 waits at the top of the incline after bringing in a train of cut timber. The horse 'Mico' is being led to the next wagon which it will haul onto the lift platform.**



further load on board. Both horses were stabled at the foot of the incline. Mico travelled up each morning and down again in the evening.

The loaded bolster wagons had been brought from Comandau by a rather handsome 4-6-0T, no 764.247 (Krauss, 1916), which later hauled our train to Comandau, performing a number of runpasts en route. Unfortunately because of the wet and misty conditions we were unable to make the most of what otherwise

would have been spectacular scenery. Despite the discomfort, I felt that we had witnessed an aspect of railway working which would soon disappear for ever. The incline finally closed at the end of 1998 and although a scheduled ancient monument it is currently derelict.

Today only a handful of forest lines remain catering mainly for the tourist industry. In Part 2 of this article Brian May will describe a visit in the autumn of 2016. **NGW**







# New Era in Ireland

A current multi-million investment in the largest narrow gauge network in the British Isles is on an epic scale. *Ted McAvoy* goes behind the scenes.

It is the better part of 50 years since narrow gauge steam faded out of the British industrial scene and, over the last few decades, even the little niche railways at sewage works and peat bogs have all but disappeared. Wonderful though our many preserved railways are, some

of us still pine for the grass-grown or mud-covered tracks and battered rolling stock of old industry.

I don't have that problem. Just across the Irish Sea, spread across the Midland counties, are 17 working industrial railways, almost all of them built to 3ft gauge. Far

**Above:** The locomotive production line at Derrygreenagh Works. Stripped frames arrive on the right-hand track and re-assembly takes place on the left-hand line.

**Below:** Inside LM405, the first rebuild, while it was at work in July 2016 at Derrymoylin Bog. The author had to drive while the 'real' driver freed blocked sanding pipes.

*All photos in this feature by Ted McAvoy*



from being anachronistic relics, they are vital transport arteries, essential to the industry they serve. So much so that, even in 2017, their owner is spending millions of Euros to make them even better.

The railways are operated by Bord na Mona (BnM), originally Ireland's Turf Development Board. Since 1946, the firm has systematically harvested many million tonnes of peat for energy, fuel and horticulture. In recent years, with the pressure to stop using peat, Bord na Mona has diversified into wind power and biomass but the peat industry will continue to be important for another 13 years or so.

In 2016, BnM sold some 3.5 million tonnes of peat and 95 per cent of this was carried on at least part of its journey by narrow gauge trains. To put those figures in perspective, during the last week of February 2017 the 17 railways transported 10,000 bogie wagon loads of peat in six working days –



narrow gauge on an epic scale.

For decades, peat was subsidised by the state but this has now ceased, making it crucial for BnM to make its railways and other operations more efficient. On the railway front, it needs to move more peat per train with less breakdowns and derailments. BnM is tackling this in two main ways – upgrading track and rebuilding no less than 50 diesel locomotives to a higher and very up-to-date specification. The rebuilding programme will run until the end of 2018 and the cost is variously estimated somewhere between 3 and 4 million Euros.

### The great rebuild

The 50 locos are all 4wDH heavy-duty peat haulers, working mainly at power stations or briquette factories. The vast majority were designed and built by Bord na Mona over the last 25 years and they are already exceptionally good workhorses, coping manfully with two-shift working, heavy loads and often atrocious track. Their main features are floating wedge or chevron suspension, four massive sand boxes, a 115hp Cummins engine and an ergonomic cab with power-assisted controls. Good though they are, they could still be better and BnM decided a couple of years ago to redesign them to take bigger loads with smaller engines and to spend much less time being maintained or repaired.

Rebuilding 50 locos was always going to be a major exercise and BnM's engineers decided a proper production line was the only option – so they built one at their Derrygreenagh Works in County Offaly. Newly arrived locos go first into an outdoor shed where they are completely stripped down and all unnecessary cleats and brackets oxy-cut from their frames. Then they move into Bay 1 where a chassis jig is positioned on the frames and all the new cleats and brackets slotted into place. The wheelsets are removed, along with the drive units, and stripped down for repair, replacement or re-tyring. The loco frames are then painted and the loco craned sideways onto the assembly track.

As the loco is being reassembled (with a four-cylinder Cummins turbo engine replacing its 6-cyl straight engine) its new cab is taking shape in the cab assembly area. This features a sophisticated control system, LED lights, a monitor displaying real-time information on the loco's wellbeing and even a GPS location device.

Soon, the mechanical rebuild is



**Above: New and on test, LM409 pauses outside the works in March 2017.**

**Right: Inside LM425. On the left armrest are touch controls for the LED lights and the red brake lever. The handbrake is on the floor, just visible at right is the red throttle.**



**Below: LM411 awaits the start of the second shift at West Offaly in March 2017. Note the massive sandboxes, tinted windows and the buffing gear to allow automatic tipping of the loaded wagons.**

complete, the wheelsets are refitted and a great deal of electrical wiring installed. The cab and bonnet are bolted into place and the finished loco outshopped in the new livery of dark brown with numbers and

lettering in a kind of orange.

The first rebuild, no LM405, was outshopped in June 2016 and spent a week on trial at Lough Ree power station in County Longford before going to its permanent home at »





West Offaly power station. A test run at Derrymoylin Bog in July was particularly demanding. When the sanders seized up, I had to take over driving while the real driver attacked the blocked pipes as we crawled along the track.

It's hardly surprising that there have been teething troubles and these mainly concern the sanding gear. Working sanders are absolutely crucial to BnM locomotives. As drivers often say, "If your sanders pack up, you won't be coming home." Even though the locos carry 300kg plus of fine gravelly sand, they often need a refill on the longest runs. The new sanders had pipes too small in diameter, made of plastic which can't safely be whacked with hammers when they block up. Some drivers are also not too impressed with the new armchair seats which they reckon are too flexible and there are one or two other niggles, but the design evolves and later rebuilds should have these problems ironed out.

By March 2017, production was up to one complete loco every three weeks. Newly rebuilt machines are quickly tested before being returned to their home railways and put straight into use. On a visit in the first week of July (my 35th!), 14 rebuilds had been completed and

the locos put into service. Three more were in the workshops. Many design details have been modified in response to feedback from drivers and the prototype, LM405, has gone back to the works to be updated. One of the locos has also been in a head-on crash and is currently rather poorly but thankfully no one was hurt.

I had a go with LM425, including a trip over the Shannon viaduct at Shannonbridge, and the loco really is a pleasure (doddle!) to drive. On the left armrest are touch controls for the eight LED lights and the red brake lever. On the floor is the handbrake and on the right the throttle and the toggle switch and buttons for drive options and power sanders. The screen displays a load of real-time information and is linked to a range of sensors.

### Further investment

To get the best out of these rebuilt locomotives, BnM knew that its long-distance main lines needed to be brought up to scratch and so a track relaying programme costing between 2-3 million Euro has been authorised. Traditionally, each of the big peat locos hauled 16 bogie wagons with a payload averaging a bit less than 100 tonnes. The rebuilds are expected to handle

***"On a visit in March 2017, around 110 locomotives were in use on several hundred miles of track..."***

**Below: Bord na Mona lines can often look more striking in black-and-white than in colour! Rebuilt LM411 (left) and unrebuilt LM429, seen at West Offaly, may appear similar but differ in hundreds of details.**

payloads around 120 tonnes, achieved by either attaching more wagons or piling the peat up higher!

Money has been spent on the railways in other ways – 16 service locos have been rebuilt with new engines and hydraulic transmission, batches of new bogie wagons have arrived and new unloading tippers have been built on three sites, two with completely new 3ft gauge railways. Old-style fuel wagons are being replaced with new bunded tankers. And because Bord na Mona lays and rips up many miles of track every week, the fleet of home-made rail laying machines has been upgraded. At Shannonbridge, a new wagon repair works has been built.

Despite all this up-to-date equipment, the railways are so extensive that many older locomotives are still in use, ranging from Rustons built in the 1950s to Hunsletts of two types built between 1962 and 1988. On a visit in March 2017, around 110 locomotives were in use on several hundred miles of track. On the Saturday afternoon just before I came home, I sat and watched as two locos and 32 wagons rumbled across a main road in the heart of County Offaly and headed off into the scrub and flowering gorse beyond. Long may it continue – there ain't nothing like it! **NGW**





# The landscape of industry

July means Threlkeld, and this year's Gala at the industrial museum did not disappoint...



■ Choosing the photos to adorn the *News Gallery* pages is always an enjoyable task, though the choice of suitable images can vary immensely. Sometimes we are overwhelmed with pictures and irritated that we have to leave superb pictures out, and in other months we can struggle to get enough to fill the pages.

We never have this problem with the September issue, and we always know which location is going to feature. At the end of July the Threlkeld Quarry Museum in Cumbria holds its annual Gala and an accompanying photo charter. Threlkeld is just about the most authentic industrial location one could ask for, and when the host of visiting locomotives always invited are combined with freight trains and proper wagons loading from a steam shovel, any photographer who doesn't come away with some special shots should perhaps give up!

Above: Among the visitors joining Threlkeld resident Bagnall 0-4-OST 'Sir Tom' this year were former Dinorwic Quarry Hunslets, 'Cloister', owned by the Hampshire Narrow Gauge Railway Trust and enjoying a new lease of life after repairs incurred by an earlier lifting accident, and 'Irish Mail' based at the West Lancs Light Railway. *Photo: Matt Ditch*

Right and overleaf: The visitors raise steam – also attending were new-build Hunslets 'Jack Lane' and 'Statfold', and Hudswell Clarke CSR No 19, all from Statfold Barn.

*Photos: Steve Sedgwick*











**NARROW  
GAUGE  
WORLD**





As well as the industrial location, the scenery around Threlkeld is pretty impressive too. 'Statfold' and the Hudswell Clarke rest between duties.  
*Photo: Matt Ditch*

Load them up... Cloister waits in the quarry for a rake of skips to be loaded by a Priestman excavator while stablemate, Irish Mail, reverses past.

The two locos had a long working day – here they shunt in the quarry in early evening sunlight.

*Photos: Steve Sedgwick*





# Glasgow's other underground

*Hugh Dougherty reports on a 750mm gauge line filling a vital industrial function.*



Think narrow gauge, underground railways in Glasgow, and you'll come up with visions of the 4ft gauge Glasgow Subway, traversing its six-mile circular route since 1896.

Unbeknown to most Glaswegians, however, another narrow gauge line has been running deep underground since 2016, as Scottish Water has dug deep under the south side of the city to build its 3.1-mile long, £100m, Shieldhall Strategic Tunnel.

Providing transport daily for both tunnelers and machinery, the 750mm gauge line connects Queen's Park to Craigton, in what will become the wastewater tunnel at depths of up to 32 metres. Engineers say that the new sewer, which will boost the capacity of the city's system, could not have been built without the railway.

"We have three train sets on the 750mm railway," comments Derek Christie of contractors Costain. "The trains are battery-powered, man-rider, electric sets and are made by Clayton. They are used to transport tunnellers and engineers to the workface and have proved invaluable."

## Saintly protection

Many of the members of the workforce are well-used to temporary narrow gauge rails, as they worked on the Channel Tunnel, and they regard the railway as an ideal way of getting to and from the cutting shield. Shortly after boarding at the Craigton end of the works, the train passes a statue of St Barbara, the patron saint

***"The new sewer, which will boost the capacity of the city's system, could not have been built without the railway..."***

**Above: A Clayton loco makes ready to leave the main shaft at Craigton. Trackside St Barbara (inset) keeps the tunnellers and their trains safe.**

**Centre right: Track inspection with points and well-laid track in view.**

**Right: A train moves various components on the double track in the tunnel.**

**All photos by SNS, courtesy Scottish Water.**

of tunnellers, and the men nod to the saint who is there to watch over them in the best traditions of tunnel builders worldwide.

When complete in late 2017, the line will be lifted and taken off for use on future contracts, and the tunnel flooded with wastewater. **NGW**







# Taking the Maine Chance

*Wayne Laepple gives an insight into preservation US style on the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington.*

To anyone who may have attended the 2016 National Narrow Gauge Convention in Augusta, Maine, USA, the 2ft gauge Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum is a happening place. There is, and has been almost since the beginning, a lot going on at this museum, whose motto is 'Rebuilding Maine History'.

Started in 1989 by one man, the late Harry Percival, the railway museum group has grown to more than 1,100 members drawn from

every state, not to mention Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Australia and Japan. There is just something about this little railway, which was never a great success in its working life, that takes hold of the imagination.

The original Wiscasset & Quebec Railroad began construction at the sea port of Wiscasset in 1894, though its original charter dates back to 1854. During its 39 years of existence, it went through several owners and expanded to over 50

miles, with dreams of going much further, but at the end of its life had shrunk to its original 43.3 miles. When everything came to a stop on 15th June, 1933, the last train behind engine no 8 lay derailed on a riverbank and never moved again until the scrap men came more than a year later.

## Taking shape

Let us fast-forward now to 1985 when Harry Percival, who had grown up along the abandoned railroad little imagining what it must have been like, learned that much of the right-of-way was still owned by descendants of Frank Winter, the last operator of the line. They wanted to get rid of it to alleviate tax issues, and Percival made an offer that was quickly accepted. He found himself the owner of about 22 miles of the original right-of-way.

In 1988, Percival discovered that the line's original 1854 charter had never been formally dissolved. Further, he learned that he could revive it by simply paying a small fee and calling an annual meeting – which he did with all speed. The Wiscasset & Quebec line was again a going concern and today it leases portions of the right-of-way to the

**Above: Master Mechanic Jason Lamontagne watches and listens intently during no 9's first run in December 2015 after nine years under restoration. Built by Portland in 1891, the 0-4-4 had spent 60 years shut in a shed following closure of the original line.**

**Left: The author and retired railroader Wayne Laepple grinds away inside the smokebox of no 9 during the final stages of the loco's restoration, April 2015.**

**All photos by Stephen Hussar**





Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum!

The WW&F began to take shape in 1989, and it has been rebuilding the railway ever since. A strong volunteer corps has cleared 80 years or more of trees and brush from the right-of-way, laid 2.9 miles of track, and built replicas of several original stations and support buildings, in addition to maintenance and equipment storage buildings.

This writer joined the WW&F in 2001 after reading its quarterly newsletters lent by a friend. He was intrigued by the can-do spirit of the group as much as by the attraction of being a part of one of Maine's legendary 'two-footers'. A retired railroad official and long-time railway enthusiast, he was eager to become a part of such a dynamic organisation.

### Weekend effort

Early on, he began to participate in the two annual 'Work Weekends', one at the end of April and the other in early October during the four-day Columbus Day holiday. Members from as far away as Florida, Texas and Colorado, as well as folks from nearby New England states, converge on the museum to tackle building track, painting buildings, repairing rolling stock and locomotives and myriad other tasks.

It is not unusual for 75 to 80 people to show up for these events, and they set to with a will. In the past, folks have had to shovel snow off the right-of-way to lay track, and several years ago, more than 40 donned foul-weather gear to work through four days of unrelenting downpour. In return, the museum provides lunch and dinner, a train ride or two, and unlimited time to visit with fellow enthusiasts.

I helped lay track during the first few years, including one memorable weekend during which we built 1,500 feet of line. An annual pattern developed, in which we would build new track during the spring, and in the fall we would add ballast and surface it. We have also built several switches (points), eventually learning to pre-fabricate some components to speed construction.

In keeping with the museum's motto 'Rebuilding Maine History', as many tasks as possible are undertaken in the manner they were done a century ago. Thus most track building is done with hand tools – spike hammers, lining bars, wrenches, picks and shovels. Cross-ties (sleepers) and rails are hauled to the work site by rail and placed on the grade by hand. Dog spikes to fasten the rails are driven by hand, one at a time, and ballast is unloaded the



***"I helped lay track during the first few years, including a memorable weekend in which we built 1,500 feet of line..."***

same way, one shovelful at a time. In one concession to modernity, several volunteers designed and built a mechanical tamping machine, since manual packing was just too slow.

In addition to building track and structures, the WW&F Museum has also developed a fully equipped workshop, starting soon after the museum was founded. A one-track building has grown into a four-track structure patterned after the original railway's workshop. One section of the building is heated and includes a service pit. An impressive array of machine tools, including several lathes, a milling machine, two drill presses and a growing complement of woodworking equipment has been assembled.

Several years ago, a museum member was in a large industrial shop in Syracuse, New York, where he noticed a big machine hanging from the roof trusses. He enquired and learned it was an Allen riveter of 19th century vintage, designed to drive rivets in boilers. Further discussions ensued, and in the end the company donated the Allen machine, along with a Hanna 'bull riveter', to the WW&F.

A desire to build a new locomotive boiler in-house, rather than contracting it out to a commercial boiler shop, led to the restoration of both machines. To form the tube sheets, firebox throat sheet and other parts, museum shop workers next decided to build a hydraulic flanging »

**Above: No 10, a 1904 product of Vulcan Iron Works, steams in the late afternoon sun at Albee's Crossing in August 2014.**

**Right: Many hands make light work! A team of volunteers lowers a length of 56-pound rail into position on the main line in October 2009.**







machine, which is undergoing testing at the time of writing.

### Locomotive restoration

This writer began working in the railway shop several years ago. It was obvious that there were plenty of volunteers able to perform most tasks around the museum, but not many with the interest or ability to undertake equipment repair and restoration. Having worked in machine shops as a young man and on steam locomotives, I am able to put my antique skills to good use.

Museum members have restored WW&F no 9, an 1891 Portland 0-4-4T, including a new boiler,

frame modifications and other improvements. The project took the better part of nine years to complete, but the results are worth it. Following the railway's closure in 1933, no 9 was purchased by two enthusiasts who moved it to Connecticut. The engine sat in a shed for more than 60 years before returning to Maine in 1996.

In addition to a new boiler, it was found that the engine's frame was damaged and poorly repaired and a cylinder was cracked. The frame was replaced and a repair was devised for the cylinder. While installing the side rods, it was discovered that one pair of wheels was not in quarter, so WW&F personnel designed and

**Above: No 9 drifts into Alna Center with an April 2016 photo charter.**

**Below: Stewart Rhine checks the museum's replica of a 1922 Ford railcar in November 2013. This vehicle was meticulously crafted by Leon Weeks.**

built a portable quartermaster machine. While it was slow and noisy, it did the trick. In December 2015, no 9 joined no 10 and a diesel in heading the annual Victorian Christmas trains, enjoyed that year by more than 1,000 people.

No 10 was built by the Vulcan Iron Works of Wilkes-Barre, PA, in 1904. Originally a 30in gauge locomotive, it was used by a succession of sugar plantations before being sold to the Edaville Railroad in Massachusetts and re-gauged. It was purchased by the WW&F in 1999 and early in 2016 it was found that its boiler had multiple serious welding defects. While it may have been possible to make repairs, there was no guarantee that further defects would not emerge. So the decision was made to design and build a new boiler.

A major fund-raising effort began in early 2016 with twin goals. Not only would a new boiler be constructed for no 10 but one would also be built for no 11. By March 2017, 60 per cent of the \$130,000 goal was raised and work was begun on the boilers. By purchasing the steel plate for both at the same time, a substantial saving was made. After buying the steel, it was taken first to a commercial shop where computer-assisted water-jet cutting made all the necessary rivet holes and other openings in the plates. These were then moved to another facility where boiler courses were rolled to the design diameter and the firebox sheets were formed.

No 11 will be the third steam







locomotive on the roster. It is a replica of WW&F no 7, a 1907 Baldwin 2-4-4 Forney engine that was damaged in a roundhouse fire in 1931 and subsequently scrapped. A number of patterns have been completed for the locomotive and some small parts have been made. The boiler will be a major step forward in its construction.

### Present and future plans

Other projects completed in-house include restoration of a Bridgton & Saco River boxcar and building two freight cars from scratch. A further two have been restored. In 2016, the museum also built a replica Portland Co turntable of the same type employed by the original railroad. Other than excavation work performed by an outside contractor, all work was by volunteers, and it was a grand moment when no 9 took its first spin on the table (*NGW* 117).

In the coming years, we have plans for a replica of the original WW&F roundhouse, we hope to restore one passenger carriage and build two new carriages, and we want to extend the railway at least another mile. Eventually, we'd like to build a demonstration sawmill and shingle mill, using equipment salvaged from

**Above: Rolling stock is shunted under cover by no 10 in December 2010 – last day of the season.**

**Below: On a crisp morning in March 2016, no 9 roars across Humason Brook trestle.**

several sites in the region, to provide a destination for our trains. We also hope to expand our offerings of special events to attract the public.

The museum is fortunate to count among its members several folk with engineering backgrounds, professional woodworkers and machinists, mechanics and electricians, truck drivers, and the owner of a sawmill. Each and every one of them, as well

as every member or friend who volunteers, is focused on the museum's success. We are indeed 'rebuilding Maine's history'. **NGW**

### More Information

Full details of the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum – including opening and operational dates – can be found online at <http://wwfry.org/>







# Off the beaten track

*James Waite concludes his two-part feature on lesser-known narrow gauge survivors in Sweden, looking at the central and southern half of the country.*

The Köping-Uttersberg Järnväg, at the western end of Lake Malaren about 140km west of Stockholm, was a 1093mm gauge line built from 1864. Sweden has many unusual gauges but this one was in a league of its own. The British engineers involved in the building of Sweden's early railways brought with them a general acceptance of British measurements. The Köping-Uttersberg line was intended to be built to the 3ft 6in gauge and had this been followed through it would have been only the world's second line of this gauge after the first one in Norway opened two years earlier.

They also brought a preference for British-built locos but in the 1860s

the fledgling Swedish loco-building industry was getting under way. The new line ordered its first locos from the Swedish firm Munktells of Eskilstuna, not far from Köping, and in an effort to help them specified that the gauge was 3.59 Swedish feet, the equivalent of the British 3ft 6in. Munktells seems to have decided that this couldn't be right as railway orders were always specified in British measurements and so built the locos to a gauge of 3.59 British feet or 1093mm. When the misunderstanding became apparent it was reckoned to be simpler to adjust the gauge of the track rather than the locos.

The line eventually became a part

**Above: 0-4-0T 'Vaulunder' has rested in this shed at the old ironworks at Surahammar with a short train since the late 1920s.**

**Below: This 760mm gauge 0-4-0T spent its working life at Höganäs Billesholms AB and is now at the Frövi industrial railway museum.**

**Both photos, September 2015.**

of the Sveriges Järnväg, the state railway, and lasted long enough for the SJ to regauge one of its 891mm gauge Z4p/t class diesel shunters to work on it. The line eventually closed in 1968 but happily one of its more recent steam locos, no 7 'Patric Reuterswärd' (Nohab 390/1894), survived in industrial service. A small preservation society has taken it under its wing and is gradually restoring it to working order at a purpose-built museum at Köping harbour near the terminus of the old line. It shares its home with the regauged SJ diesel and one of the railway's old carriages.

The society has around 200 yards of track at the harbour at Köping, overlooked by the remarkably ornate house built for one of the railway's former managers, an expense which the small and none-too-wealthy line couldn't really afford. The restoration of the steam loco has stalled until the funds can be raised to build a new firebox but once this is overcome the harbour should once again see a steam loco at work.

A little to the northeast of Köping is the Bruksmuseum at Surahammar. It is housed in the town's old ironworks which opened in the early 1800s. In about 1865 its owners won a contract from the SJ to manufacture rolling stock wheels and these have been made in the town ever since. The ironworks closed in about 1903 when the business moved on to more modern premises. Its machinery, much of it specifically made or adapted for manufacturing the wheels, was left in situ and became





central to the museum when it opened in about 1920.

In 1876 the ironworks built a railway which ran for about 10km west from Surahammar to Lisjön; like many similar lines its main purpose was to bring in timber from the forest as fuel for the furnaces. The 1093mm gauge was chosen to allow it to join up with the Köping line which ran close to Lisjön though in the event the connection was never built. The only loco was a tiny 0-4-0T named 'Vaulunder' (Kristinehamn 17/1876) which ran until the line closed in 1926. Two years later it took up residence in a small building at the museum together with a primitive carriage and a timber wagon. They've been there ever since.

### Oddities of many kinds

Not that far away is the Frövi Maskin & Bruksbanemuseum, based out in the countryside to provide a home for a huge collection of small narrow gauge locomotives. Most are electric or internal combustion but the gatekeeper is the tiny 760mm gauge 0-4-0T no 3 (Krauss Munich 1320/1883), one of 11 0-4-0Ts which worked at a large ceramics factory at Höganäs, on Sweden's coast to the north of Malmö. Höganäs no 9 'Hercules', built by Ljunggrens at Kristianstad (31/1917), is safely in store at Kristianstad's railway museum after several years in a scrapyard.

Delary, near the southwestern corner of Småland in southern Sweden, is another remote spot. It was home to another small ironworks which made the change to producing paper pulp in the 1870s. The new pulp business built a railway between 1875 and 1895 to connect the factory with the nearest main line station at Strömsnäsbruk, 16km away, where another factory was built. Its gauge was 643mm or 26 Swedish inches.

Its owners had clearly not lost all their old ironworking skills because the Delary plant built four locos for the railway between 1878 and 1916 – and what unusual machines they were! The first, a 2-2-0T, must have been remarkable in many ways but sadly it seems that no photos of it have survived and it lasted only until 1890. The others were 0-8-0Ts numbered 1 to 3 and were built between 1884 and 1916. No 1, at least, started out as a saddle tank but both it and no 3 ended up as side tanks. No 2 was damaged in an engine shed fire in 1928 and was rebuilt as a fireless loco. On all three locos the first three axles were positioned very close together at the front. There was then a long gap under the firebox and the fourth axle



**Above: Deep inside its shelter, Strömsnäsbruk AB's 0-8-0T no 3 'Aug. Schmitz' is photographically challenging. This distinctly unusual loco nevertheless justified a lengthy journey by James in August 2015.**

**Below: No 1 'Trollhättan' was the first loco built for the Uddevala-Vänerns-Herrjunga Järnväg in 1865 by local company Nohab. It today lives at the Innovatum museum in a part of Nohab's old factory in the town. August 2015.**

was located underneath the distinctly roomy cab.

The railway also had a 0-4-0T named 'Karolina' (Orenstein & Koppel 7696/1919) and Sentinel 7543/1928, a four-wheeled two-cylinder machine. All the steam locos had been withdrawn by 1959 when most of the railway closed, leaving only some tracks inside the plants at the two towns which lasted until 1974.

Today the O&K loco runs on the Bödabanan, a heritage railway on Öland, but sadly the Sentinel and the fireless loco were scrapped. No 1 is preserved at Delary and no 3 at Strömsnäsbruk. They both live under wide-roofed shelters which make photography difficult on a sunny day except at dawn and at dusk. I figured it was well worth making the long journey to see these most unusual machines. There was little traffic on the wide country road which connects the two towns and some

spirited driving enabled me to photograph both of them a little before sunset.

### Museum treasures

Much more accessible is the Innovatum museum which occupies a part of the huge old Nohab loco-building complex in Trollhättan. Its very first locomotive was 2-4-0T 'Trollhättan', built for the 4ft gauge Uddevala-Vänerns-Herrjunga Järnväg in 1865. It was a more or less direct copy of two locos built in Bristol two years earlier by Slaughter, Gruning & Co, the predecessors of the Avonside Engine Co, for the Borås-Herrljunga Järnväg. 'Trollhättan' became an exhibit at the Nohab factory as long ago as 1899 when it was withdrawn from service. It now belongs to Sweden's National Railway Museum at Gävle and is on loan to Innovatum. The UVHJ and the BHJ were among four 4ft gauge railways in Sweden, all of which were







built in the 1850s or 1860s.

The Stockholm–Roslagens Järnvägar once ran a network of more than 300km of 891mm gauge railways which served the Roslagen district to the northeast of Stockholm. The first part of this network, from the old university and

cathedral city of Uppsala eastwards to Länna, opened in 1876. It was subsequently extended by way of junctions at Faringe and Rimbo until its lines reached the Baltic coast at Hargshamn, Hallstavik and Norrtälje as well as providing a suburban service closer to



**Above:** SRJ 2-6-2 no 28 in store at Faringe engine shed, July 2006. These had the largest diameter driving wheels of any narrow gauge loco in Sweden and they were also the fastest on the SRJ system.

**Left:** SRJ 2-4-0T 'Rimbo' in store at Gävle museum.

**Below:** SJ 2-6-0 no 4013 is one of only two survivors of the extensive 3ft 6in gauge system which ran in the south eastern corner of Sweden. It's also in the reserve collection at Gävle museum. Both photos, July 2016.



Stockholm, based upon the present Stockholm East station.

The railway was nationalised in 1951 and amalgamated with the SJ in 1959. Closures began the following year and by the late 1970s the whole network had been abandoned apart from the lines close to Stockholm which today form a busy electrified commuter system 65km long. After the line from Uppsala closed it was purchased as far east as Faringe by the Uppsala city council which since 1977 has helped enthusiasts operate it as the Uppsala- Länna Järnväg. It's nicknamed the 'Länna-Katten' or Länna Cat, supposedly from its early days when a small steam railcar ran along it which hissed and wheezed as it went in what was said to be a cat-like fashion!

The line is one of Sweden's better known heritage railways, not least because it is close to Stockholm's main airport and is readily accessible by public transport, but two very interesting surviving steam locos from the old SRJ aren't on public view. The 2-6-2 no. 28 is one of three similar locos built for the railway by Henschel in 1920. Weighing 62 tonnes in working order they were Sweden's heaviest narrow gauge locos and with their 1300mm diameter driving wheels were once the racehorses of the Roslagen network. No 28 ran on the Uppsala line between 1987 and 2004 but is currently stored out of use at Faringe engine shed awaiting overhaul. The other, a tiny 2-4-0T named 'Rimbo', was one of its first locos. Like no 28 it belongs to the Swedish National Railway Museum at Gävle. It's now stored there as a part of its reserve collection.

### Rare survivors

The south-eastern corner of Sweden was never served by 891mm gauge railways; instead a network of 3ft 6in gauge lines was built from 1874 with a total length of about 600km. They were eventually taken over by the SJ and from the 1950s some lines were converted to standard gauge and others closed, the last section going in 1979. None were preserved and only two steam locos have survived, both of which the SJ inherited from the Blekinge Kustbanor. Sadly, neither is generally on public view.

One is a 2-6-0, SJ no. 4013 (Nohab 836/1907), which was acquired by the Gävle museum after it was withdrawn in 1965 and is in store there. The other is an attractive 4-4-0T, SJ no 4006 (Nohab 625/1901), originally no 19 'Bodekull' of the Västra Blekinge Järnvägar. It was withdrawn in 1959 and is currently in store at the





The 7mm Narrow Gauge Association

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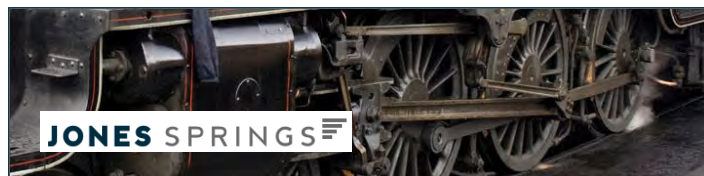
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Kristianstad museum. I first asked to see it a couple of years ago and was delighted to be given access recently, and even more pleased when a farm tractor arrived to pull it out from the store. Apparently it's a long time since it last ventured into daylight and judging by the amount of complaining it made it didn't enjoy its short trip. I was told there's no plan to restore it or put it on public display in the foreseeable future due to shortage of funds.

'Fryckstad', a 0-6-0WT built by the Munktells factory in 1855 for the 1101mm gauge Frykstad's Järnväg in central Sweden, is very much on view. It greets visitors to the museum where it lives near the entrance along with one of the line's primitive carriages which started out its life two years later carrying Sweden's king on a hunting trip. Frykstad is the country's oldest surviving narrow gauge loco; indeed the only older one I can think of anywhere in mainland Europe is 'Gmunden' in Austria which was built the previous year. Curiously, it would probably have been able to run on the tracks at Frykstad since its gauge is only 5mm wider – 1101mm, incidentally, equals 44 Swedish inches. Given Munktells's experience at this early date in building to a gauge based on Swedish measurements one wonders how the firm got things so spectacularly wrong when it was building the Köping locos a few years later! **NGW**



**Above:** Attractive 4-4-0T, SJ no 4006, makes a rare outdoor foray on 18th July 2017 at Kristianstad museum. Rescued from Vislanda, where the SJ scrapped many of its locos, in 1965, it has never been restored.

**Right:** 0-6-0T 'Fryckstad' from the Frykstad's Järnväg at the Gävle museum. July 2016.

*All photos by James Waite.*



## From then to now...

**Charting the changes in familiar narrow gauge scenes.**

More than 60 years lies between these two pictures, taken from virtually the same spot at Llanfair Caereinion station on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway – we can't say exactly how long, because the old picture we only know was likely taken sometime in the early 1950s, when the line was being operated by British Railways and was strictly goods only.

A great deal has changed since the W&LLR was preserved in 1963, but these pictures show that quite a lot hasn't. All of the original buildings, the office at left, the Galvo store behind it and the long shed on the right, still basically occupy the same positions. A platform has grown up around them, and the long shed now serves as the railway's shop, but they are still where they should be.

A new workshop has sprung up where the open yard once was, and today even this workshop's days may be numbered. The standard gauge carriage body once sited behind the Galvo, and used for volunteer accommodation in early preservation days, has long been replaced by something more permanent.

Yet even details such as the three fire buckets visible on the right of the 1950s shot survive today, except they are now mounted on the end of the building. Locos take water here now, and as a W&LLR fireman the Editor knows that if those buckets remained in their original position he would keep hitting his head on them!

*Photos: Andrew Thomas Collection and Andrew Charman*



# Drakensberg – the model...

David Joy recounts his experiences with a gargantuan G-Scale version of the Vale of Rheidol Railway's new acquisition.



Somewhere in the UK must be a small but lucky number of modellers delighted that NGG13 no 60 'Drakensberg' has come to the Vale of Rheidol Railway. They are the owners of a limited-edition model of this Garratt jointly produced by LGB and Aster in 2001 to G Scale. It was in most respects a superb model of a Garratt but among tinges of regret was the choice of locomotive. Drakensberg was housed in a Swiss garden centre on a line with such sharp curves that it was rarely steamed. It seemed a long way to go to see a static prototype and many never made the journey. Now the lengthy wait is over. After months of rumour, the NGG13 is in Wales.

Once LGB had decided to model a Garratt, there must have been much thought on which to choose. The 1:22.5 scale using 45mm gauge track was originally chosen by LGB to be as close as

possible to metre-gauge prototypes. It is tempting to wonder if the maker looked at East African Railways, its locos using a glorious crimson livery well captured by David Mitchell in his features in *NGW* 122 and 123.

Perhaps the survivors were considered too massive or too remote. Metre gauge Garratts are few and far between and so attention turned to the 2ft gauge. In modelling terms there might have seemed a dire discrepancy on 45mm track, but in fact it scarcely jars on a locomotive of this length. For reasons unknown a photograph of a pre-production model carried the initials 'SNRB' on the front unit and 'TSUMEB' on the back, but this was soon replaced by a series of tempting publicity pictures that respectively showed 'Drakensberg' and 'SchBB'.

The choice of the Schinzacher

Baumschulebahn loco was in many ways understandable. It was one of the 12 NGG13s built in Germany by Hanomag during 1927/28 and was now one of the very few Garratts in mainland Europe. It had been bestowed with an evocative name taken from the Drakensberg Mountains on the borders of Lesotho. Moreover, it had recently been restored to working order by a volunteer group following a varied career in Natal. Adverts encouraged UK modellers to blow their annual budget and place orders, as only 600 models were being produced and it was rightly anticipated that few would reach Britain.

## Not for all

Enthusiasm was not immediately universal. Critics saw the prototype as resembling a caged tiger locked in a garden surrounded by potted plants. They found Schinzacher »

Above: Just as was the case with the prototype in South Africa, the model looks well among rugged crags and rich vegetation.

Right: The prototype shortly after arrival at the Vale of Rheidol Railway – many will be looking forward to it hauling trains on the challenging Welsh line.

Photo: VoR





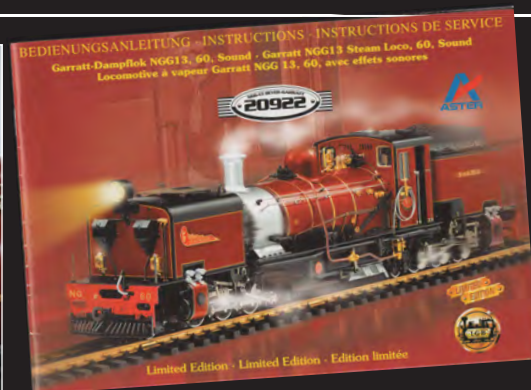


Baumschulebahn difficult to spell and impossible to pronounce. They averred that the loco's red finish, lined in yellow was too garish and there was regret that LGB had not found it possible to produce the batch in several different liveries. This practice, widely adopted by Bachmann, could, the detractors argued, have included a basic black that always seems to suit Garratts supremely well. It might especially have appealed to devotees of the Welsh Highland, at that time springing back into life with Garratts imported from the Alfred County Railway in South Africa.

There was, however, keen anticipation. Back in 1978 LGB had teamed up with Christian Höhne of Putzbrunn to market its hand-made model of a 2-6-2 + 2-6-2

Garratt built by Beyer Peacock for Mozambique Railways. Only 100 were produced, available in the UK at what was then a mouth-watering £3,350. Weighing almost 11kg, this model was a hernia-inducing piece of power to get on the rails and definitely needed large-radius curves. Yet it had immense haulage capacity. How would Drakensberg fare by comparison?

Initial doubts were soon cast to one side. Delivered in a substantial wooden carrying case, the model was 787mm in length and weighed in at 6.3kg. It came complete with a 32-page handbook which noted that it had been handcrafted for LGB by Aster Hobby, described as 'one of the world's foremost makers of metal model trains'. The handbook then went on to highlight



**Left:** A distinctive nameplate adds the finishing touch to the front unit.

**Above:** The comprehensive handbook adds to the anticipation on opening the model box.

**Below:** The great length of a Garratt locomotive is clearly evident as 'Drakensberg' comes to a station stop.

**Right:** The fully-detailed cab interior is difficult to see – let alone photograph! It is just possible to get a realistic glimpse of the driver at the controls and the glow of the firebox.

**Far right:** Correct Walschaerts valve gear, surmounted on the rear unit by the initials of the Schinzner Baumschulebahn.

an impressive range of key features, including two seven-pole Bühler motors, two traction tyres and 12 powered wheels with their own pick-ups. Surprisingly no mention was made that its centre driving wheels were vertically sprung, thus making it possible to traverse the sharpest LGB curves of only 60cm radius without grief.







### A question of sound

Much was said in the handbook about the loco's sound system. Devotees of live-steam models understandably regard electronic sound as anathema, but this one included 'synchronised steam chuffs', a bell and whistle, safety valves making an appropriate roar and even a squealing noise representing a brake application when the loco came to a stop. Crucially, there was a switch in the cab that enabled the sound to be turned off. Further features included directional lights, a smoke unit and a flickering simulated fire in a cab full of gauges and controls.

Many limited-edition models seem to vanish and never be heard of again, perhaps spending a quiet life in showcases and



rarely turning a wheel. It is difficult to assess long-term satisfaction levels but this author has been more than content. Some 17 years after purchase, he remains delighted and any ideas of trying to apply a black livery have long been forgotten.

On a layout with many gradients and sharp curves, the striking red and realistic sounds of Drakensberg grab the attention of younger visitors. Adults often go into a trance, those with Freudian tendencies perhaps dwelling on the 'wobble' factor of a snake-like locomotive moving in all sorts of directions at the same time. Thoughts can turn to arguably the best-ever description of a Garratt penned by the American author Brian Fawcett: "The bucking

engines beneath the tanks heel and sway in opposite directions but the fat boiler slung between them – like a comatose Roman patrician in his litter – scarcely cants."

Problems have been virtually non-existent. Coupling rod screws occasionally work slack but can easily be tightened using the ample range of hand tools supplied with the carrying case. As with any working model, gentle lubrication is needed from time to time but this does not detract from the sheer pleasure of running sessions.

Among it all, time will now need to be found for a visit to the Vale of Rheidol to compare model and prototype. Best to fit it in fairly soon, in case there is any imminent livery change! **NGW**





# Back to the Future...

**Paul Towers** was in need of a smaller, more manageable layout to take to exhibitions, and was suitably inspired by the recent explosion in ready-to-run 009 stock...

*Last month we described how small, quickly built layouts can provide all the inspiration one needs to progress in the hobby. Now veteran modeller Paul Towers describes how he downscaled from his previous 1/24th scale Heywood-inspired exhibition lines and built just such a compact layout.*

I had concluded that carrying bigger items of rolling stock in 1/24th scale together with the layout to exhibitions was getting a bit much and I was wondering what next to model. Having viewed the new Peco Glyn Valley carriages in 009 scale when they came out my mind was made up for me.

In the early days of 009 if you wanted any British prototype you had to make it. Most of my early layouts featured Glyn Valley carriages that were made for me by the late Pete Brennand, while I modified vans to suit.

My idea was to build a layout completely out of items that could be purchased over the counter. My aim was to inspire those people who had bought various items of rolling stock and were displaying them on shelves, while at a loss over building a layout.







**Left:** The Bagnall wing tank 'Anna' brings a passenger train into the station. By the coal heap is a Hunslet Alice class 'Martha'.

**Below:** Aerial view shows extent of the track plan, providing plenty of operational interest.

**Above:** Paul has even modelled himself, having a chat to one of the railway workers and with his white cat alongside.

**Above right:** Train in the station, comprised of Peco ready-to-run vehicles.

**Right:** Sopwith Camel. Paul's first-ever model was of the same plane, carved out of balsa wood when he was around nine. He admits it was terrible!

I believe I have succeeded in building the layout using purchased items although, at the time, there were no ready-to-run models of UK locos available. Therefore I had to use locos either scratch or kit built. That has since changed of course with Minitrains, Heljan and Bachmann bringing



out various models that are highly suited to UK layouts.

The storyline is quite simple. Llandyrau is the upper terminus of a railway that runs up the Garndyrau Valley from a connection with a standard gauge line. It is a Common User line which means it runs passenger and goods trains. Llandyrau is a small town at the head of a valley with popular walks in the woods and the nearby mountains.

I decided to build the layout to a simple track plan that I had used several times before, previous layouts using it had been of standard gauge themes, in chronological order of scales 00 (4mm to the foot), N (2mm), Z (1.385mm) and O gauge (7mm).

I am pleased with the result. The trackplan works well, providing enough operational interest to keep me occupied through an exhibition. The layout has appeared at the Llanberis Slate Museum and my Little Borth y Gest show and is booked to be at the Warley National Model Railway Show at the Birmingham NEC on 25th-26th November. **NGW**

## Constituent parts

**Locomotives:** Minitrains Bagnall wing tank, Hunslet Alice class both Finelines kits built by Charlie Insley  
Huddy Hunslet diesel Finelines kit built by the author

**Carriages, vans, wagons, track, trees, seats, lampposts and cows:** Peco

**Buildings** (including the telephone box): Hornby Scaledale

**Car, vans and Sopwith Camel plane:** Oxford Diecast

**Figures:** Preiser

**Cats:** Langley Models

**Coal:** Acquired from Prince of Wales Colliery, Pontefract.





## Rugby Peckett in 7mm scale

Unveiled at the recent 7mm Narrow Gauge Association annual show was the latest release from Mark Clark's Locos 'n Stuff, the Peckett Gamecock 0-6-0ST that formerly worked at the Southam Cement Works in Rugby. The full-size locos are in the news at present with two of them recently returned to steam – 'Liassic' at the Statfold Barn Railway and in the last month 'Jurassic' at the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway.

Locos 'n Stuff is known for its fine models and as the photos here show, the Peckett maintains the breed. However Mark tells us that this is a test build and the final production model will be of even better quality.

Notable is the unusual motor layout. "As many of you know, Mashima motors are no more," Mark tells us, "so the Peckett is designed around an alternative. It uses a Chinese geared motor with a 1:1 final drive from The Model Works Australia.

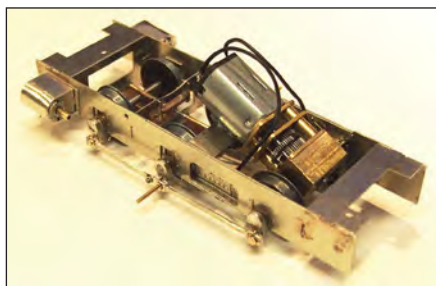
"The benefits are that the Chinese part is cheap and easy to replace and comes with a choice of gear ratios. The Australian part is made to order and can be supplied for 2mm or 1/8th sized axles as required – the Peckett uses 2mm."

The Peckett is built around a chassis in 0.4mm nickel silver, with the body in 0.4mm brass. All the castings are lost wax brass and a 3D printed firebox is included.



The model will be supplied as a complete kit with wheels and fully assembled motor and gearbox, with just the couplings needed to complete.

**Locos 'n Stuff**  
Tel: 01634 575081 (before 8pm)  
E-mail: [borsig1958@gmail.com](mailto:borsig1958@gmail.com)  
Price: £160.00

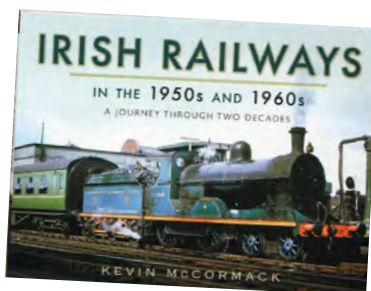


## Irish Railways in the 1950s and 1960s

■ A quiet month for books, with only this one received and the majority of its contents covering the Irish standard gauge, as the author journeyed across Ireland at a time when many systems were in decline.

What narrow gauge there is, however, is highly interesting, mainly due to the use of full colour, mostly previously unseen pictures, each printed over a full page. The major narrow gauge element features the County Donegal lines, with the railcars and even the odd Atkinson-Walker geared steam tractor 'Phoenix' included in the 13 shots taken on the line.

Also included are a dozen photos of the Cavan & Leitrim Railway, which modellers will find of use as they details of infrastructure such as sheds and water towers are clearly visible, and the railcars of the West Clare Railway. The standard gauge material is interesting in its own right, extending to quirky railbuses and even horse trams. **AC**



ISBN 978-1-47387-198-4

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## Midlands show hits 40

The Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, and will be held from 19th-22nd October at its traditional venue of the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre near Leamington Spa.

The show always includes plenty of narrow gauge content, both in the displays from the many model engineering clubs around the UK and on the trade stands, with more than 50 suppliers booked into this year's event. Some 1000-plus models are promised, with some of them running on the five-inch gauge outside track.

Details of the show, including advance booking tickets, can be found at [www.midlandsmodeleengineering.co.uk](http://www.midlandsmodeleengineering.co.uk) while at the time of writing entries of models to the competition classes are still being taken.



## We need information...

In his feature on building a Barclay last month James Hilton forgot to include the contact details for the various suppliers that he used. They were;  
<http://shop.narrowplanet.co.uk> (various kits including the Barclayfication, some including chassis)  
<https://eileensemposium.com/> (tools and materials (eg brass wire, smokbox dart))  
<https://fox-transfers.co.uk/> (transfers, James uses the N gauge 2mm scale range)

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





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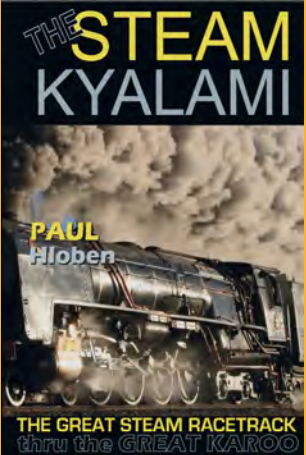
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## Books on narrow gauge around the World

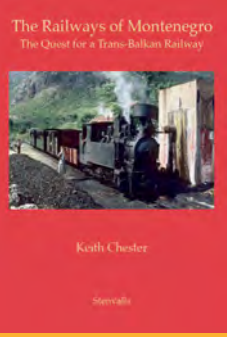
### The Steam Kyalami

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## Weißeritztalbahn reopening

I noticed that the July *NGW* had the briefest of mentions (*there was more in the August issue - Ed*) of the full restoration of the Weißeritztalbahn ((Freital-Hainsberg – Kurort Kipsdorf) in Saxony.

The August issue of the German railway magazine *Drehzscheibe* (*Turntable*) dropped through my letterbox this morning, and contains a report of the re-opening. (*Ed's note – Andrew's translation of the report describes events and includes the fact that while the Weißeritztalbahn Interest Group had contributed heavily to the fight to save the line, only the chairman was invited to the opening. It adds that after the celebration weekend the regular timetable started on 19th June with two trains per day to Kipsdorf, plus an extra trip from Freital-Hainsberg to Dippoldiswalde. "For the next four months the trains will be busy with advance bookings. It remains to be seen how busy the trains will be in the latter part of the year," the magazine concludes*).

Behind this is a story of bureaucracy and politics which will surprise the many who think of Germany as a model of efficiency. One needs to understand that most of the former Deutsch Reichsbahn narrow-gauge lines are not 'preserved' in the sense we understand in Britain. The trains are operated by paid staff, and are specified by the local transport authority.

After much argument the line has been rebuilt, really on a 'no expense spared' basis – new track, and at Kipsdorf a restored loco shed which will never be needed for any conceivable timetable requirement. However, the transport authority was insistent that it could not increase the train operating subsidy; for most of the year this covers one loco in steam, and that is how it will stay, even though the line is now almost twice as long. The background to this is

that the German federal government has been reducing local rail transport subsidies to the eastern states with their lower population. So to run a couple of trains all the way the overall service has to be very sparse.

As the article pointedly says, it will be interesting to see what long-term usage this sparse service generates, once the initial enthusiasm is over and the pre-booked parties have come and gone. I hope it doesn't become a white elephant.

*Andrew Nock*

## More from Borneo

I enjoyed James Waite's article on railways in Borneo in *NGW* 122, it is just a shame you did not publish it a few months earlier as we went to Borneo on holiday at Easter. I did spot the railway line when going to the airport at Kota Kinabalu, but did not have time to investigate it.

We visited the Sabah Museum, which has a very recently completed railway gallery telling the story of railways in Borneo. The Hunslet tank engine no 1092 of 1912 is no longer on display there, but Hunslet tender engine no 1110 of 1913 is on show. This was built as a tank engine and later converted to a tender loco. The photos show a couple of the main exhibits, the little speeder was very interesting.

*Sean Cullen*

## Provence inside information

In *NGW* 123, the August issue, there is a comprehensive article on the Chemin de fer de Provence. While a good account of this railway it lacks flesh on the bones so to speak, but I don't doubt that is due to lack of space. I wish to put some of this flesh on the bones.

I myself owned an apartment at Eze Village (Midway Nice Monaco) for nearly 40 years and on most of my visits I travelled on this railway. It has gone through many vicissitudes such as 'le grand inundation'



**Above: Exhibits at the Sabah Railway museum in Borneo – see the letter from Sean Cullen.**

(flooding) in 1994. My sister, married to a Frenchman, also lives in the area, in a village to the east of Grasse - Le Rouret and Philippe also keeps me updated on this railway. He tells me a guide to all the restaurants, hotels and the like along the route has just been issued; mainly I suppose for the benefit of walkers.

I have found that the railway could be run much better - the staff regard it as 'just a railway' and the tourist potential is generally ignored. There are grounds for much improvement. For example there is no catering trolley, so passengers must bring their own and the journey to Digne is a long one at three hours 15 minutes.

When I travel I tend to bale out at St André, – we have about three hours here before the train returns from Digne thus giving time of an adequate luncheon.

This railway was often referred to as Le Train de Pignes - because in former times it travelled so slowly that passengers would hop off, gather up the pine cones lying alongside the track, and take them to the engine.

A helpful hint – when joining the railway drive to LIngostière where there is a small car park. It is very difficult to join in Nice, unless you are staying in the city.

*Michael Sullivan*

***"It will be interesting to see what long-term usage this sparse service generates... I hope it doesn't become a white elephant..."***

## Of private owner wagons

Your item in *NGW* 123 on the Welshpool replica private owner wagon states that the only other narrow gauge railway to use such wagons was the Leek & Manifold.

Whilst hoping that I don't appear too sad, I have exhaustively trawled all the published secondary sources on the Manifold but can find no mention of any private owner wagons, although of course standard gauge ones were carried on the transporter wagons.

However, the County Donegal



Joint Committee operated a fleet of four oil tankers owned by Shell (CDJR running numbers 337-40) and five owned by Esso (341-345). These were used for traffic from Londonderry to Killybegs where the customer was the fishing fleet. The Shell tankers were at a date I cannot trace, purchased by the CDJR. Patterson's *County Donegal Railways* (David & Charles, Newton Abbot, second edition 1969 p198) suggests that 341-5 were actually purchased from the LLSR which fact I have not been able to verify. I doubt it though as all the CDJR tanks seem to have been built to a common design in 1923 by the Midland Railway Carriage & Wagon Company for the same purpose.

The Londonderry & Lough Swilly also operated a fleet of six privately owned tankers, in addition to two of its own. I have not been able to discover the dates of building of any of them, but photos suggest that they were very similar to the CDJR ones. If so, then clearly there was some form of oil terminal at Londonderry where it was transhipped to the narrow gauge for onward transmission. Four belonged to BP, which were numbered in its own series 1537-1540 whilst another two belonged to Anglo-American Oil, numbered in its fleet 3007 & 3008. The LLSR's own tanks were numbers 10 and 185. All appear to have been provided for oil traffic from Londonderry to the various fishing ports served by the line mainly it seems at Buncrana and Burtonport.

The Festiniog Railway had a small number of private owner wagons, a return in 1890 stating that they were of similar construction to those belonging to the Company. Gunpowder wagons were operated on behalf of Messrs Curtis & Harvey, later ICI. My information on these matters comes from Boyd's various histories of the FR and as is so often the case, it is tantalisingly vague but no doubt as much as he could produce given his limited sources. Also on the FR were slate wagons provided by the GWR and LNWR which were worked over the FR and by it from the incline bottoms to their respective yards in Blaenau Ffestiniog. Some 24 of these were leased in 1924 to Brook's Moelwyn Granite Quarry so this is another example of private owner wagons (of a sort) on the FR.

The narrow gauge lines of the NCC not only had private owner wagons, but private owner trains. These were at Larne and operated by the British Aluminium Company, which used three locomotives (0-4-0 Peckett side tanks) and a variety of

**Right: Breton 4-6-0T no E331 awaits its fate following the closure of the line in 1967 – see the letter from Tony Sullivan. Note that the habit of applying graffiti to doomed locomotives was not confined to the UK...**



wagons, including side tippers, at least 40 in number. Their couplings were not compatible with the NCC narrow gauge stock so there was never any inter-running of locomotives and rolling stock. Raw materials and finished products were taken to the Harbour using BAC locomotives and wagons and the BAC railway was located on either side of the NCC narrow gauge, which was used to obtain access across the divide. It is also technically quite possible that NCC locomotives and stock might have visited the works.

Finally, of all places the Southwold Railway operated a total of five privately owned coal wagons. These were even more astonishingly of the Cleminson six-wheeled flexible wheelbase design, being owned by Thomas Moy Ltd, coal merchants. Three were supplied in 1896, had three plank sides with curved ends (presumably four plank) and were built by the owner, who at the same time and later built identical wagons for the SR itself. The initial three were Moy's numbers 1507-9 which carried SR lettering (not numbers) A, B & C respectively. These were sold to the SR in 1922 and 1926, becoming its 37, 38 & 39. In January 1922 Moys built two more, their numbers 1510 & 11 which carried SR letters D & E.

There may of course be other private owner narrow gauge wagons, but so far as I can research, this list appears to be complete.

*David Pearson*

On page 08 of *NGW123* it states that "private owner wagons were very rare on the narrow gauge, with only the W&LLR and the Leek & Manifold Railway known to have employed them."

This ignores the fact that the majority of the slate waggons used on the Corris Railway were owned by the various quarries it served.

*Richard Greenhough, Corris Rly*

*Andrew C replies:* Firstly we can blame the Welshpool line for an incorrect press release as where it stated Leek & Manifold it actually meant Southwold. The fact that the W&LLR press officer also edits this magazine is neither here nor there...

We think the Ed can be forgiven (he says...) for excluding the ways of working in the slate industry and its railways as the article clearly intends to focus on the traditional private owner wagon as seen on many a standard gauge line. But we can't argue with David Pearson's fascinating research into Irish lines...

### Amberley's narrow gauge

With regard to the story 'Polar Bear clocks up 50 years' in *NGW122* – the narrow gauge industrial collection and operating demonstration line was already well-established at Amberley before the transfer of items from Brockham came about due to problems with their lease and site access.

I don't feel this is explained and could lead to future beliefs that the railway project at Amberley started with the Brockham stuff, when in fact this wasn't the case.

*Peter Smith*

*Andrew C replies:* The article is not wrong in that Polar Bear was part of the Brockham museum collection that is now at Amberley, but I appreciate that it does not add that Amberley had a collection of its own before the Brockham transfer.

### Breton memory

The *That was the Year* item in *NGW123* regarding the closure of the Ressa Breton sent me searching through my photographs. The attached shot shows 4-6-0T no E331 at Carhaix on 11th October 1967 after the line had closed. I don't seem to have recorded the number of the loco behind.

*Tony Sullivan*

***"The narrow gauge lines of the NCC not only had private owner wagons, but private owner trains..."***



# Superb stuff...



■ It has almost become a tradition at NGW Towers. We run a news story concerning a visit to a line being made by a particular locomotive, and within a couple of weeks e-mails arrive from *David Mitchell*, with evocative photos of the loco in question during its working life, drawn from David's extensive files.

These we think are particularly fascinating, the subject being Bagnall 0-6-2T 'Superb', today resident at the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway in Kent, and set to star at the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's annual Steam Gala on 1st-3rd September.

The Sittingbourne line was of course created from the redundant lines of the Bowaters paper mills, where David took these shots on a visit on 21st April 1966. "We had a day trip from Halifax to Sittingbourne – no M25 motorway in those days," he told us.

The loco is seen at top working the 3.45pm train from Ridham Dock to Kemsley, upper left at Ridham Dock with the 2.05pm passenger (mixed) train to Sittingbourne, and at left with 0-4-2ST 'Premier' in typically industrial surroundings.

David took many photos of the Bowaters operation, including some in colour, and we will be featuring these in a forthcoming issue.



# Narrow Knowledge...

■ Another clutch of questions on narrow gauge subject matter – If you would like to contribute some similar tricky brain teasers, send them to the editorial address on page 3. Answers as usual next month.

- 1) What route aspect connects the Snowdon Mountain Railway with the Volk's Electric Railway?
- 2) What was the nuclear option taken by the Groudle Glen Railway in January 1985?
- 3) What did narrow gauge railways built at Ampthill in Bedfordshire in 1917, Downham Hall in Suffolk in 1918 and Wool in Dorset in that same year have in common?
- 4) Which locomotive paid the price for the building of the Hunslet 2-6-2T 'Russell'?
- 5) Contractor Henry Boot & Son built and operated a railway from 1916, until it was militarised in 1919. Where?
- 6) Which well known locomotive today spent its working life at the line in question 5?
- 7) Which locomotive came between 'Belmont' and 'Dennis'?
- 8) The first public narrow gauge train to arrive at Aylsham station was hauled by what?
- 9) Which Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway locomotive was named after a pub?
- 10) Where did *NGW* editor **Andrew Charman** take this picture (right)?



Answers to quiz in *NGW* 123

- 1) The second Sittingbourne fireless NG loco was 'Victor' – it was scrapped in 1967.
- 2) The Motor Rail & Tramcar Co Ltd started life in Sussex.
- 3) Simplex locos were Motor Rail's most famous product.
- 4) 'Olive' preserved in South Africa is an 18in gauge Bagnall.
- 5) The Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway used a turning triangle in 1928.
- 6) Hochshneeberg, on the metre-gauge Schneebergbahn rack line, claims to be the highest railway station in Austria.
- 7) Hudswell Clarke built 41 locos for Queensland and Fiji sugar cane lines.
- 8) The Leighton Buzzard Railway started its preservation life as the Iron Horse Railroad.
- 9) Bishops' Court Halt was on the Ramsey line of the Isle of Man Railway.
- 10) The picture was taken at Alan Keef Ltd, Ross-on-Wye.

## YouTube Watch – online narrow gauge films

The online video site YouTube, which encourages users to upload their own clips, is a great source of narrow gauge items. If you've seen a clip that our readers would enjoy watching, why not send in the link?

■ How tough is it to ascend a 1 in 29 tree-lined gradient with sharp curves in the Autumn, when the leaves have fallen? Watch this film from the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5or81VtqFA>



# That was the year that...

Our regular look back in the archives at the narrow gauge news stories of the time and their legacy...

## From 25 years ago

**Teifi Valley Railway** (Newcastle Emlyn, Dyfed, 2ft 0in gauge)

Despite the picture of gloom painted in the national railway press over recent months, the railway remains a friendly and interesting place to visit. All the volunteer staff are generally cheerful and will happily talk to you about all aspects of their railway.

On 22nd July 'Alan George' (Hunslet 606/1894) was in steam hauling three passenger carriages and looking resplendent as usual... In the yard/car park were four new rolling stock arrivals of 2ft 6in gauge from Trecwn, two box vans with sliding roof doors and two open flat wagons. These are due to be regauged at the Tallyllyn Railway, and belong to a consortium of members of the railway society.

*We are not sure what the 'picture of gloom' was all about, but the Teifi's biggest issues were yet to come, with the ripping up of track by a timber operation in 2014, fully reported in *NGW* 100. New management since has put some of the track back but still has a way to go.*

**Bala Lake Railway** (Llanuwchllyn, Gwynedd, 2ft gauge)

There has been much excitement in Llanuwchllyn from the beginning of July when two visiting locomotives have been in steam for the first time on the railway.

'Lilla', a large 0-4-0 Hunslet (554/1891)... is the only one of its kind. It was withdrawn from quarry service in 1956, repaired and sold to Bernard Latham. Virtually nothing has been altered since its quarry repairs in 1956 and it has not been publicly steamed for many years.

'Triassic', a Peckett 0-6-0 (1270/1911) was built for a cement railway near Rugby. There are three other locomotives of this type in existence, one in the USA and two in the UK but none in working order.

*How times change! The Bala Lake Railway has seen a whole host of visitors in the years since, two of the most recent being Kerr Stuart 0-4-0T 'Diana' and the vertical-boilered 'Fernilee'. The railway has also become a home to quarry Hunslet locomotives, boasting five of the little critters at the last count.*

*This quintet does not, however, include 'Lilla', which is today resident on the Ffestiniog Railway and kept very busy travelling about, steaming in venues as far apart as Liverpool's Albert Dock and the Shrewsbury Flower Show. Meanwhile two of the Rugby Pecketts have been restored to service in the last year, but not Triassic, which is currently resident at Bala in non-working form, its owner reputedly proving difficult to contact...*



Photo: Andrew Charman

Extracts from *Narrow Gauge News*, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join, go to [www.ngrs.org.uk](http://www.ngrs.org.uk) or see the advert elsewhere in this issue.





## Unusual Narrow Gauge...

### Pumping New Life into Saltburn Tramway

The narrow gauge Saltburn Cliff Tramway has received an important upgrade this year, *writes (Steve Sedgwick)*, ensuring its continued future operation. The line was opened in 1884 and is the oldest of Britain's four water-counterbalance funiculars still in operation.

The north Yorkshire coastal town of Saltburn sits on a soft cliff above its lower promenade and pier. These are linked by the 207ft long cliff railway which has a vertical drop of 120ft on a 1 in 1.4 gradient. The Tramway lines up directly with Saltburn Pier: looking down from the upper station, this really is a line to the sea, and the similar half-timbered exteriors of the pier buildings and stations are harmoniously painted, along with the two cars, in red and cream. The two parallel tracks were built to 3ft 9in gauge but were converted to 4ft 2½in during a routine winter closure at the end of 1921.

Water for the lift comes from a natural spring at the foot of the line where it is collected in a 30,000 gallon reservoir underneath the lower station and promenade. This water is then pumped to a smaller reservoir slightly above the upper station. Here, the brakeman releases water into the upper car while water is emptied from the car at the lower station. The brakeman then slackens the brake on the large return pulley allowing the heavier, upper car to descend while raising the lighter, lower car.

Initially, a gas engine drove a rotary pump to take water to the upper reservoir, but in 1924 it was replaced by an electric motor. Remarkably, this and the original 1884 pump worked the line until this year. Sadly increasing difficulties in maintaining the 1884 pump in reliable working order led to the difficult decision to retire this vintage piece of equipment.

Thus, April 2017 saw the installation of a new submersible electric pump in the lower reservoir. However, the current owners, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, intend to keep the old pump and electric motor in public view as important heritage elements of this charming railway.

**Below: The line to the sea – the view down to the pier. The inset pictures show filling a car with water at the upper station, and the newly retired electric motor and 1884 water pump.**

*All photos: Steve Sedgwick*



## Special Events

*Only events of interest to rail enthusiasts are included in this guide – for contact details see Diary on following page. If you have an event to publicise send details to address on page 3.*

- **1st-3rd Sept, Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Steam Gala.** Visiting loco 'Superb', fireworks, intensive service, traders, models.
- **2nd-3rd Sept, Rhiw Valley Light Railway Open Weekend.** 15in gauge, coincides with Welshpool & Llanfair Gala. [www.rvllr.co.uk](http://www.rvllr.co.uk)
- **3rd Sept, Bredgar & Wormshill Rly Open Day.** 2ft gauge gem near Sittingbourne, Kent, 01622 884254, [www.bwlr.co.uk](http://www.bwlr.co.uk).
- **3rd Sept, Bressingham Steam Museum Model Railway Exhibition.** Various layouts, traders, steam lines operating.
- **3rd Sept, Corris Railway Gravity Slate Train.** 3.15pm.
- **9th-10th Sept, Bure Valley Railway Steam in Miniature Weekend.** Small scale steam in action, on show. intensive service.
- **9th-10th Sept, Kirklees Light Railway Steam & Diesel Gala,** 'Giants on the Line' theme, visiting Romney locos.
- **9th-10th Sept, Leighton Buzzard Railway Iron Warhorse Centenary.** Details TBA, see website.
- **10th Sept, Stafford Barn Railway Open Day.** 15-plus locos in steam. Pre-booked tickets only, [www.staffordbarnrailway.co.uk](http://www.staffordbarnrailway.co.uk)
- **15th-17th Sept, Welsh Highland Railway Super Power.** Intensive service, bespoke trains, works open, dark sky events.
- **16th-17th Sept, Amberley Museum Miniature Steam Weekend.** Model and miniature road and rail steam.
- **16th-17th Sept, Leek & Rudyard Railway Steam Gala.** All available locos running, guest engines.
- **16th-17th Sept, Perrygrove Railway Steam Gala.** Visiting railway and road engines, intensive timetables.
- **16th-17th Sept, Vale of Rheidol Railway Roaring 20s & 30s Weekend.** Period vehicles, dress, traders, open workshop.
- **17th Sept, Lincolnshire Coast Light Rly operating day.** As part of Skegness Water Park Classic Wheels car show [www.lclcr.co.uk](http://www.lclcr.co.uk)
- **23rd Sept, Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Diesel Day.** Visiting loco 'Badger', all diesel service, demonstrations.
- **23rd-24th Sept, Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway End of Season Gala.** Intensive service, freight workings.
- **23rd-24th Sept, West Lancs Light Railway 50th Anniversary Gala.** Visiting locos 'Alice', 'Stanhope', Cloister, many attractions.
- **24th Sept, Bressingham Steam Museum Vintage Farming Day.** Steam-operated agriculture, railway lines running.
- **24th Sept, Gartell Light Railway Open Day.** 2ft Somerset line, frequent timetable. 01963 370752, <http://newglr.weebly.com>
- **24th Sept, Steeple Grange Light Railway Autumn Traction Event.** Details TBA, see website
- **30th Sept-1st Oct, Leighton Buzzard Railway 50 Not Out Gala.** Celebrating 50 years of operation, details TBA, see website.
- **30th Sept-1st Oct, Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Autumn Gala.** Launch of new-build Baldwin 2-4-2 'Lyn', intensive service.
- **30th Sept-1st Oct, Talyllyn Railway Members Weekend & AGM.** Behind the scenes tours, demonstrations and presentations.
- **30th Sept-1st Oct, Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Vintage Weekend.** As part of Welshpool 40s Weekend, extra attractions.

### Tramways

- **Douglas Horse Tramway:** *Isle of Man*, 01624 662525, [www.rail.im/](http://www.rail.im/) Daily except 4th, 12th, 18th-19th, 25th-26th Sept.
- **Manx Electric Railway:** *Isle of Man* 01624 662525, [www.rail.im](http://www.rail.im) Daily services.
- **Seaton Tramway:** *Devon* 01297 20375, [www.tram.co.uk](http://www.tram.co.uk) Daily services, every 20 minutes from 10am.
- **Snaefell Mountain Railway:** *Isle of Man* 01624 662525, [www.rail.im](http://www.rail.im) Daily services.

### Miniature Railways

- **Audley End Rly** (10.25in): *Essex* 01799 541354, [www.audley-end-railway.co.uk](http://www.audley-end-railway.co.uk) 1st-3rd then weekends
- **Beer Heights Light Railway** (7.25in): *Devon* 01297 21542, [www.pecorama.co.uk](http://www.pecorama.co.uk) Daily from 10am.
- **Lappa Valley Rly** (15, 10.25, 7.25in): *Cornwall* 01872 510317, [www.lappavalley.co.uk](http://www.lappavalley.co.uk) Daily from 10am.
- **Littlehampton Miniature Rly** (12.25in): *Sussex* [www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com](http://www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com) Weekends
- **Moors Valley Rly** (7.25in): *Hants* 01425 471415, [www.moorsvalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.moorsvalleyrailway.co.uk) Daily to mid Sept, then weekends
- **North Bay Railway, Scarborough** (20in): *Yorks* 01723 368791, [www.nbr.org.uk](http://www.nbr.org.uk), Open daily from 10.30am, Gala 23rd-24th Sept
- **Rhyl Miniature Rly** (15in): *Clwyd* 01352 759109, [www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk](http://www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk) 1st-3rd then weekends.



What's On	Fri 1st	Sat 2nd	Sun 3rd	Mon 4th	Tue 5th	Wed 6th	Thu 7th	Fri 8th	Sat 9th	Sun 10th	Mon 11th	Tue 12th	Wed 13th	Thu 14th	Fri 15th	Sat 16th	Sun 17th	Mon 18th	Tue 19th	Wed 20th	Thu 21st	Fri 22nd	Sat 23rd	Sun 24th	Mon 25th	Tue 26th	Wed 27th	Thu 28th	Fri 29th	Sat 30th
Alford Valley Railway: 07879 293934 www.alfordvalleyrailway.org.uk																														
Almond Valley Rly: 01506 414957 www.almondvalley.co.uk/Railway.html																														
Amberley Museum: 01798 831370 www.amberleymuseum.co.uk																														
Amerton Railway: 01785 850965 www.amertonrailway.co.uk																														
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 Vale Light Rly: 01386 422282 www.evlr.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																														
Golden Valley Light Railway: 01773 747674 www.gvlr.org.uk/																														
Great Whipsnade Rly: 0844 225 1826 www.zsl.org/zsl-whipsnade-zoo																														
Groudie Glen Railway: 01624 670453 www.ggr.org.uk																														
Hampton Kempn Rly: 07583 560167 www.hamptonkemptonrailway.org.uk																														
Hayling Seaside Rly: 07775 696912 www.haylingrailway.com																														
Heatherslaw Light Rly: 01890 820317 www.heatherslawlightrailway.co.uk																														
Isle of Man Steam Rly: 01624 663366 www.gov.im/publictransport																														
Kirklees Light Rly: 01484 865727 www.kirkleeslightrailway.co.uk																														
Launceston Strm 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.co.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.com																														
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.ruislidlidorailway.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-tynedale-railway.org.uk																														
Steeple Grange Lt Rly: 01629 55123 www.steeplegrange.co.uk																														
Tallylyn Railway: 01654 710472 www.tallylyn.co.uk																														
Threlkeld Msm: 01768 779747, www. threlkeldquarryandminingmuseum.co.uk																														
Vale of Rheidol Rly: 01970 625819 www.rheidolrailway.co.uk																														
Wells Walsingham Rly: 01328 711630 www.wellswalsinghamrailway.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.wlfr.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



# Deep in the Dales

David Joy delves into a saga of lost hope.



There was once a steam-worked 3ft gauge railway deep in superb surroundings in the Yorkshire Dales. It had an impressive length of almost 13 miles, well in excess of other 3ft gauge concerns such as the Southwold and the original Ravenglass & Eskdale lines. Why then is it virtually unknown?

The answer is that it had the briefest of lives as a contractor's line. Yet it came close to being a very different undertaking that could have been immortalised as one of Britain's finest narrow gauge railways.

The saga began when Bradford decided to build the massive Angram reservoir at the desolate head of Nidderdale. A major issue was its utter remoteness six miles from the nearest village at Lofthouse and more than double that from the existing North Eastern railhead at Pateley Bridge. Adequate transport for men and materials would be essential.

**Above: 'Angram' hauling typical contractor's side-tipping wagons loaded with what appears to be beer for the canteen. At the rear is 'Kitty', the private saloon of John Best.**

**Below: A gang works on the exposed upper section of the line near Angram, well over 1,000ft above sea level.**

**Photos: Collection of Peter Tuffrey from his new book *The Golden Years of Yorkshire Steam (Great Northern)*.**

In 1902 a private road was constructed from Lofthouse to Angram. A year later the reservoir contract was awarded to John Best & Son of Edinburgh. A railway was built alongside the road, adopting 3ft gauge then widely favoured by contractors. By 1904 there was a connecting line from Pateley Bridge, thus completing a 12¾-mile narrow gauge railway.

Bradford was now enjoying a high noon of prosperity. It resolved to turn the section from Pateley Bridge to Lofthouse into the more permanent Nidd Valley Light Railway, but there was then a battle of the gauges. John Best understandably favoured retention of the three-foot, but the North Eastern Railway repeatedly stressed the advantages of standard gauge to save transshipment costs.

A decision was not taken lightly, the waterworks committee dispatching a delegation to assess the

merits of four recently completed light railways. Two were standard gauge and two narrow gauge – the Vale of Rheidol and the Welshpool & Llanfair. After due deliberation, the final decision went against retaining the three-foot.

Events then moved swiftly. There was soon mixed-gauge track all the way up to Angram, but by 1906 the inside third rail was being removed. It had virtually all gone by September 1907 when the standard gauge Nidd Valley Light Railway was opened to passengers. After a mere four years it was the end of a unique 3ft gauge line destined soon to be forgotten.

## Rare photos

Photographs of the brief narrow gauge era are extremely scarce but two of the few accompany this article. The background to the picture of the Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST 'Angram' (397 of 1892) was researched by Harold D Bowtell for his 1991 book *Lesser Railways of the Yorkshire Dales*. John Best brought it to the reservoir contract after building the Cork, Blackrock & Passage Railway. It ended its days in around 1938 at the Ladybower reservoir works in the Derwent Valley.

The second photo is more problematical but it could well show building of the upper reaches of the 3ft gauge line alongside the private road to Angram. Sadly the locomotive is almost hidden by men posing for the camera, although the shape of the cab suggests that it may be Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Nidd' (1658 of 1902), delivered new to Angram. Amazingly, it was later hauled over the moors by horses for the building of Leighton reservoir in Colsterdale. **NGW**





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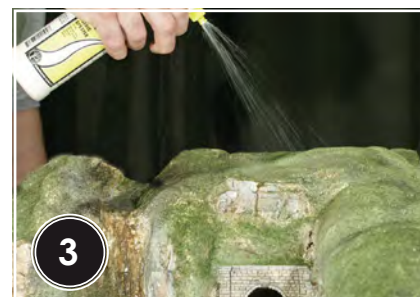
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