

# NARROW GAUGE NEWS

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## EDITORIAL:

Before we proceed any further; I would like to take this opportunity of conveying the best wishes of the Editor and the Committee to the members of our Society, for the forthcoming New Year.

As we go to press it is learned that due to exceptional pressure of work, one of our members has been forced to resign from the Society, as well as having to cease ALL railway interest indefinitely. He is Major E. Kukla, who owns a farm in Cheshire. It is certainly a blow when one has to give up one's hobbies for any reason; so I should like to wish Major Kukla all the very best, and every success for the future.

With this issue we are experimenting with the 'book' form of Newsheet. A number of members have asked from time to time whether this step could be taken - so for the next twelve months we are to give it a trial. If at the end of the year we find that it has proved a popular move, then we shall continue with it. If not, then the Newsheet will resume its previous format.

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N.B: We often receive letters asking for information, querying items in the last magazine or newsheet, complaining about something, or - less frequently, even giving us odd little bits of information which are not exactly news, but interesting all the same. It was therefore decided at the last Committee meeting to try to run a letter column in which all these points might be thrashed out. And we start with an extremely provocative letter from a well known member . . . . .

See WHISTLESTOP on back page.

LEEDS AREA. A meeting and film show has been arranged for the evening of Friday January 30th at Headingley Hill Congregational Church Rooms, Headingley Lane, Headingley, Leeds 6, starting at 7.30 p.m. It is hoped to discuss the future policy of this Area. The future programme of meetings is also on the agenda. Will all members in the Area please make a special effort to attend. Those travelling from the City Centre by public transport should take a No. 1 (Headingley, Lawnswood) 'bus from Bishopsgate St. near City Station, alighting at Cumberland Road. Entry to the rooms is from Cumberland Rd.

BIRMINGHAM AREA. The first meeting of this area, under the able guidance of Ron Heaton, will be on Tuesday January 13th at the Exchange Restaurant, Stephenson Place, Birmingham; starting at 7.00 p.m. The meeting will hear a talk by Alan Pratt on the Welsh Highland Railway, illustrated with photos and models. Friends are welcome.

Another meeting will be held at the same place on Tuesday 24th February at 7.00 p.m. This will be a business meeting to formulate future policy and members are asked to make a special effort to attend. A 35mm projector and epidiascope will be available for showing slides and photos, should time permit.

LONDON & S.E. AREA. The next meeting in this area will take place on Saturday 17th January, at 7.00 p.m. at the Railway Tavern, Liverpool Street. We hope to hear a talk on the Festiniog Railway.

N.B. Needless to say, all members of the Society and their friends are welcome at these meetings; you do not have to be a member of the Area concerned.

LEE MOOR TRAMWAY. Mr. Cordingley's article dealing with this line which appeared in 'THE NARROW GAUGE' 1957/1 has just recently brought in one or two letters dealing with it, so therefore, as a kind of postscript here are extracts, mainly in full - from firstly: Mr. D.G. Attwood of Reading, Berks.

'Since reading Mr. Cordingley's article ... come across some interesting items which throw a little more light on the recent issue of the Tramway.' '... copies of the Railway Magazine, came across a note in the issue for March-April, 1946, stating the Lee Moor Tramway was re-opened on Monday October 8th, 1945, after having been closed to traffic during the war.' 'I walked the line from Cholwich Town Clayworks the Dartmoor terminus, to the Laira Crossing, on June 29th, 1947. Although the section from Water Works to Cholwich Town appeared to have been derelict for some years and some of the track had been lifted, the remaining sections were in good shape. The track was in good condition, although the cable runners were not all in place on the Cann Wood incline.

'There was certainly no difficulty in walking the sleepers at any point, and Mr. Cordingley's account of bushes, gorse and 15 ft. trees indicates the extent to which ten years of neglect can affect a railway.

'My visit was made less than two years after the opening, but traffic had already ceased. A pipe line running beside the track seemed to give the answer; clay being pumped to Sutton Harbour in suspension and processed there. It would be most interesting to know just when traffic ceased. Has any member any further information? If not, perhaps an official letter from the Society to: English Clays, Lovering Pochin & Co. Ltd. St. Austell, CORNWALL, might help to settle the matter.'

Notes from A. Travis: The line of the Lee Moor Tramway is now very much overgrown and from the foot of the second incline to Cholwich Town Works all track has been removed. At the top of this incline the winding house has collapsed and the drum has toppled from its perch. Above the incline section of the route has now appeared a new housing estate.

At Lee Moor the two Peckett 0-4-0 tanks built in 1899 are still reposing in the loco shed, and except for point-work on a road crossing, all track has been removed. The loco shed is surrounded by wagons in various stages of dilapidation. Even though the shed is blocked up and the windows boarded over, both locos can be seen through cracks in the doors, etc.

Track begins at the entrance to Cann Wood, where on the site of an old siding four very overgrown wagons are to be seen. After this point there is still quite a lot of track in position, and just beyond the woods is another group of abandoned wagons. Further on, the track is completely overgrown and in parts is flooded up to rail level. After entering a short cutting the route is easier to follow, due probably to the fact that a short section has recently been removed. Passing a gated road crossing, the line continues to Plymouth, and much is impassable until after the passing of Marsh Mills, where the roadbed is in current use as a footpath. Crossing the main Plymouth-Exeter road the line passes under a road bridge and continues to Plymouth Quay.

According to an employee at Lee Moor, the line will probably not re-open, owing mainly to the fact that road vehicles have completely taken over its duties and the high cost of re-laying the track and repairing rolling stock. (Answer to a query in the January 1958 Narrow Gauge).

#### VALE OF RHEIDOL RLY. (In retrospect by N.E. Danger)

'..... 1957 was an exceptional record year for British Railways' only narrow gauge line. With the Tal-y-llyn to inspire then, the State Railways have doubled their traffic in only four years. In 1952 and 1953 about 14,000 passengers were carried each season. A limited poster display of one of Mr. Boyd's photographs, and our President's appeal to enthusiasts everywhere, raised the figure to 16,000.

The big publicity drive, improved service, and cheap evening fares brought the 1955 total to 23,500. Names for the engines and Great Western livery for the coaches played their part in attracting 27,000 passengers in 1956. Sunday trains and operation at Easter raised the total to 28,100 in 1957. And I venture to suggest that 1958 will be as good a year as 1957.'

## LYNTON & BARNSTAPLE RAILWAY.

Little is now left of the old line although at Barnstaple the old narrow gauge bay platform is still in existence, complete with warning notice and a signal base. Some of the track can be followed through Barnstaple, and near the former Pilton Works can be found a pair of level crossing gates.

The main interest lies at Snapper Halt, here the station building, platform and entrance are still intact. The building is in use as a garden shed, and platform serves as an allotment. Here also stands the remains of coach No. 6991, the third brake which is still in use as a summer house. The route of the line can be followed for a distance of about 400 yards. For part of the way there is a slate wall, and also a small cattle bridge. 300 yards beyond, coach 3rd brake No. 6993 still reposes on the track; condition being fair, and although reports state that it is in use as a hen house it is part filled with earth. From here parts of the old route can still be seen from the main road, including several old bridges - some abandoned - some in use as buildings and others just filled in. Chelfam viaduct is next in sight and is in very good condition. A few years ago it was filled with concrete to avoid demolition. About 100 yards before the viaduct, can be found a rather picturesque bridge, crossing a farm track. Although overgrown, it still appears in fairly good condition. From here the route can be followed to Lynton with few variations.

### NOTES FROM E.K. Stretch.

Isle of Man Railway. The winter service which began on October 13th is much the same as last winter. Services are of course, run on weekdays only. There are two trains each way on the Port Erin line, leaving Port Erin at 7.30 a.m. and 12.50 p.m. and Douglas at 10.30 a.m. and 4.00 p.m.

There are two trains between Douglas and Ramsey at 1.30 p.m. and 3.45 p.m. Also two from Douglas to Peel, at 11.35 a.m. and 4.15 p.m. On Saturdays the latter train is replaced by a Peel section attached to the 3.45 Ramsey train.

There is also a train from Kirk Michael to Ramsey at 8.10 a.m. Saturdays excepted. In the reverse direction there are three trains from Ramsey to Douglas running at 6.45 a.m., 10.05 a.m. and 4.05 p.m, and three from Peel to Douglas at 7.25 a.m, 8.05 a.m. and 1.40 p.m. The 7.25 from Peel combines at St. Johns with the 6.45 from Ramsey. The 8.05 from Peel does not run on Saturdays. The only occasions on which trains cross at intermediate stations are at St. John's at 10.53 - 10.57 and at Kirk Michael at 4.32.

Tal-y-llyn Railway: The 'Giesel Ejector' was fitted to No. 4 in early September, and the chimney of this loco now presents an extremely curious appearance; somewhat like a spark-arrester put through a mangle! Or perhaps the mouthpiece of a tin whistle many times magnified.

Even in the short time remaining from then to the end of the running season, the new device showed a very considerable reduction in coal consumption. No. 4 was chosen for this experiment because it was desired not to interfere with the appearance of the more historic locos Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Also probably No. 4 is in use more than the others.

An unfortunate contretemps - difficulty in raising steam on the loco scheduled for use that day, resulted in the morning train on the 10th September being hauled by the diesel loco. Readers may rest assured that this was an emergency procedure and that there is no intention at all of this becoming a regular occurrence.

All being well, it is intended that in 1959 a weekly service (Fridays) will be run between Easter and Whitsun. This has not been done since 1954. As usual, a service will operate at Easter and the regular daily service commence at Whitsun. Concerning the list of coaching stock published in the November newsheet, the new standard open body was fitted to No.12 in place of its Penrhyn body 'D' early in the season, but No.11 has not so far been dealt with. Incidentally, the new open coaches Nos.12 and 13 are commonly referred to at Towyn as the 'New Penrhyns'. The official seating of Nos.14 & 15 (Glyn Valley) is 12, since they are 1st class; but in fact they could seat 16 in comfort, being wider than any other stock on the line. A friend of Mr. Stretch informs him that, on travelling over the Penrhyn Rly.

during the middle of September, a diesel loco was in use over the 'Main Line'.

IRISH NOTES: From Michael Bunch. The Summer Timetable was in operation between 30th June and 6th September, and had more workings than in previous summers:-

Strabane to Letterkenny	6	each way		
" " Stranorlar	8	" "		
Stranorlar " Donegal	5	" "	Mon.-Fri.	(6 ea. on Sats)
Donegal " Killybegs	5	" "		
Donegal " Ballyshannon	4	" "	Tues-Fri	5 Mon. & Sat.

Excursions were run to Rossnowlagh each Sunday, but only through to Ballyshannon on four occasions. The 'Hills of Donegal' excursion run by the G.N.R. does not now go part of the way by C.D.R. due to closure of the G.N.R. Bundoran branch which was also part of the excursion. Therefore all the railcars are free for the Rossnowlagh excursion and are turned on the turntable there. The steam hauled excursions are rare, and only catered for on the four occasion when running through to Ballyshannon.

The Ballyshannon branch is NOT to close at present; at least not until the roads are in a better state of repair to carry the extra traffic. Likewise the whole of the C.D.R. must remain open until new road bridges are built across the River Finn between Strabane and Lifford and Castlefinn, as the existing ones are very old and weak. Due to the activities of the I.R.A. no-one wants to do any bridge building, and in fact the I.R.A. placed two biscuit tins of gelignite under the Lifford Rly. bridge on August 7th, 1958. Fortunately, these were spotted before they went up. On September 30th, the C.D.R. came under a new Committee. The G.N.R. was dissolved and all its assets divided between the U.T.A. and C.I.E. The D.D.R. is therefore the joint property of these two concerns.

The one-time Derry terminus of the C.D.R. is now nearing completion after reconstruction of the buildings into a warehouse. About one mile from Derry the track has been engulfed in a road-widening scheme; but elsewhere the site is still quite clear. The Glenties Branch is still quite discernible, but has been built upon at Ballybofey.



## INDUSTRIAL LINE NOTES.

Rugby Portland Cement Manufacturers, Southam.

The only remaining narrow gauge track (60 cm) at any rate at the factory end, in in and immediately outside the engine shed. This is quite a large building situated at a higher level than the factory, though close to it; and inside there still survive three of the Peckett 0-6-0 ST locos which used to work the line, 'JURASSIC' (No. 1007 of 1903) 'MESOZIC' (No. 1327 of 1913) and 'LIASIC' (No. 1632 of 1923). Also reposing in the shed are five diesels, some complete and others bordering on the verge of dereliction. Outside there is a boiler, presumably from one of the other three locos, now scrapped.

Penlee Quarries Ltd., Newlyn.

This line, of 60 cm gauge, unlike the preceding one, is still in operation; and is used to convey gravel from a quarry to the pier at Newlyn.

There are at least six diesel locos, all 4-wheel as follows:- 'J.M. JENKINS' and 'T.W. LEWIS' (both Ruston & Hornsby built; LM 24, also possibly a Ruston job, two Hudson Hunslets of 1942 and, the oldest of the lot; Kerr Stuart No. 4468, of 1930. Also at the quarry are the remains of 'PEN-LEE', an 0-4-0 WT built by Orrestein & Koppel around 1908, (being one of the very few locos of this make in the country.)

Finally, a correction sent in by Mr. King with regard to the County Donegal notes in the Sept/Oct issue: Mr. King states that the Letterkenny goods is not normally worked from Strabane. An engine is stationed at Letterkenny for this purpose and makes two return trips, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, to Strabane. The afternoon Strabane-Letterkenny trip was, until recently an advertised mixed train and was also the last regular working on which it was possible for the general public to travel behind a steam engine. The two engines at Strabane are normally spare, though one was recently in use to replace 'Phoenix' which was under repair at the time.



## Notes from Paul Myatt

A visit was made by Paul Myatt earlier this year to the Chattenden & Upnor Rly; and it was found to be in very good condition, track being well ballasted throughout, the railway works appeared to be busy and all rolling stock in very clean order.

During August a visit was paid to the old Snailbeach District Rly. most of which has been lifted. The only portion now in existence, apart from round the mine, is from Pontesbury to the Shropshire County Council crushing plant at Callow Hill. From there up to the overbridge carrying the Minsterly Road the route of the railway is used by the road vehicles of the S.C.C. from the crushing plant. From the bridge the route is in use as a footpath with only odd sleepers remaining as evidence of a railway's former existence.

The only remaining rolling stock is at Pontesbury, consisting of 24 hopper wagons and one flat truck. There is also one hopper body and one wagon with a smashed frame and no wheels. These were the only wagons seen, although others may have been hidden in and around the dense mass of vegetation which enveloped the exchange sidings. No motive power of any description was on the railway. All track from the crushing plant to the exchange sidings was completely overgrown with grass.

Items reported by Mr. Myatt as being in current Model Engineer Magazines:

2.10.58 Photos. of loco and loco valve gear, as working on 2' gauge line at Port Elizabeth (S. Africa). Both Beyer Peacocks. Letter containing description of Rly. and locos appeared in ME. for 16.9.58.

9.10.58 Photo of Furzebrook loco 'Tertius' awaiting disposal at Creech. Half-page article dealing with battery-operated locos in use in tunnels through Rock of Gibraltar.

Manchester Guardian 17.11. 58. Article and photo. of Raven-glass & Eskdale Railway.

## ISLE OF MAN RAILWAY STATION PLANS.

To hand is a copy of a sheet of the above-mentioned plans which have been very carefully compiled by member E.K. Stretch of 1 Lancaster Villas, Lancaster Road, Newcastle, STAFFS. These plans are drawn to an approximate scale of 150 feet to the inch, cover every station on the Isle of Man, contain a wealth of details, and are available from Mr. Stretch at his address (given above) at the modest charge of 1/6d. (inc. postage).

## SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY:

Mr. David Brown of Radcliffe, Lancs. draws attention to an article published in the December 1958 issue of Boys Own Paper concerning the remains of this line, which as many of you know was closed in 1929.

In this letter the author writes of a visit made in an effort to find remains if possible along the right of way. He states that an overbridge at Halesworth is still intact and that a section of the three-span girder bridge over the River Blyth at Walberswick is still in use for pedestrians and cyclists. He states also that at least one section of track (position not given) still remains in situ - twenty-nine years after closing! Although of course considerably overgrown by now.

## NEWS FLASH!

Straight from the 'Iron Horse's Mouth' comes the news from Portmadoc that the Lynton & Barnstaple coach at Snapper Halt is to be dismantled by F.R. Staff in January 1959, transported to Portmadoc, and reassembled there for use on the Festiniog system.

RESEARCHERS' CORNER

(All communications to W.J.K. Davies)

At the last Committee meeting, we decided to ~~to~~ to encourage active research within the Society, and this is one of the results. I hope to feature in each issue, a line or lines ~~which~~ really need investigation, in the hope that one or more members will do something about it.

Please let me know if you are prepared to help, so ~~that~~ we can collate and unify your efforts.

At present there are five active projects being undertaken for the Society:

1. Manchester Corporation Railways - M. Swift, 13 Quarry, Close, Brockholes, Huddersfield.
2. Bowaters Lloyd, Sittingbourne - A.G. Wells, 64 Martyrs Field Rd. Canterbury, Kent.
3. Harrogate & Leeds Corporations -
4. Fayles Clay Works, Norton, - both by W.J.K. Davies
5. Dorking Greystone Lime Co. - P. Myatt & partners 17 Gloucester Rd. North Harrow, Middlesex.

If you can help in any way, with information or photos, particularly the latter, please contact the person concerned. If you are willing to do research into a line, please let me know.

Book Review

THE LAGOS STEAM TRAMWAY 1902-1933 by N. Miller. Published by W.J. Fowler, 245 Cricklewood Bdy. N.W.2. 30pp. photos, map 7/6d

This interesting little book is a rather fragmentary account of a line of which we feel none of our readers had previously heard. In spite of the lack of records, the author has found out quite a bit about the line, including details of its tram locos. which were really steam rail motors. The booklet is well produced on glossy paper with thick board covers and this no doubt accounts for the fairly high price. It would not interest all N.G. enthusiasts, but if you like 'foreign' lines it is a must.

W H I S T L E S T O P !

All communications please to W.J.K. DAVIES, Merton Court,  
Sidcup, Kent.

Sir,

May I ask your help and that of the readers of this newsheet, in order to settle a discussion in which I took part recently?

The question was: At what point does a narrow gauge railway cease to be a real railway, and become an oversize model?

It was generally agreed that the dividing line is 15" gauge. There was no doubt that anything less than this was a model, or that anything over this could be regarded as a light railway of narrow gauge. But what of 15" itself?

My own opinion is that the answer to this question depends on the locomotives. If they are scaled-down versions of larger types, actual or freelance(i.e. if they have cabs which only a scaled-down man could get into) then the line should be regarded as a large scale model; but if they are designed as full sized locos for their gauge, then it is a true narrow gauge railway. Examples of each type are:-  
1. The R.H. & D.R. and 2. the late Eaton Hall line. (The Emett railway in Battersea Park is presumably not a model!)

The foregoing is a tentative solution to a problem which has puzzled me for a long time. It would be interesting to hear what others think.

D.A. BOREHAM.

Have you got a yen to argue; a grievance or a need for information? If so, let us have your letters!