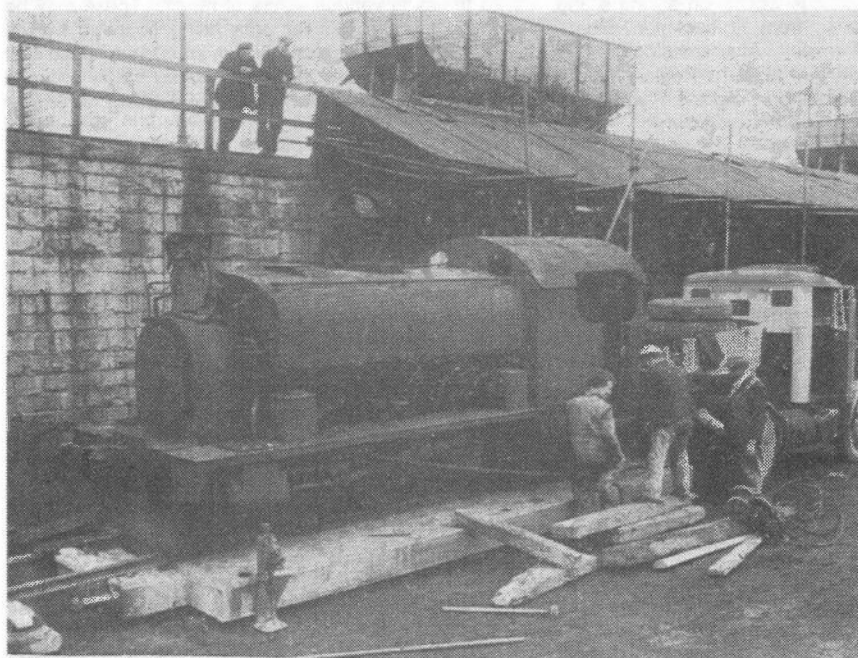


# THE NARROW GAUGE



**THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY**

**No.21 1957 / 1**

## THE NARROW GAUGE

Narrow Gauge Railway Society

1957/1 \*

[ \*: No. 21 in numerical sequence]

### The Lee Moor Tramway

*(Based on a report by J.A.Cordingley of a visit during August 1956, with additional information from D.G.Attwood and N.E.Danger)*

This tramroad, with a gauge of 4'6", is a remnant of the Plymouth and Dartmoor Railway which was sanctioned by an Act of George III and opened in 1823. The purpose of the tramroad was to bring clay from the Lee Moor Pits to Plymouth Quay, a distance of about 11 miles. Originally the track was laid on stone blocks and was worked by horse traction. In 1899 two Peckett 0-4-0T locos were introduced to work the portion of line between the two inclines. Regular traffic ceased at the end of 1939.

Traces of the line are not hard to find on Plymouth Quay, and some 300 yards up the roadbed the track is visible; it can be followed for over a mile, continuing past the Laira Goods Sidings where, on a long siding, are 23 trucks in various states of repair. These may be seen from Embankment Road near the Laira Inn, the car park being bounded by the tramway. After crossing the GWR by a guarded level-crossing (which imposes a speed limit on the Western Region main line) the tramway follows the main line for some distance before crossing the Plymouth - Exeter Road; there are the remains of a siding here, now very much overgrown.

The track then follows the road for about half a mile before turning away to cross the River Plym by a two-span girder bridge at Marsh Mills. Here there is a further siding containing eight wagons. Leaving the river, the line runs alongside the GWR branch line to Launceston. Prior to Marsh Mills the track is in reasonable repair; the gauge is fairly constant and the roadbed relatively well drained. From this point onwards, however, there is a gradual deterioration; the roadbed is not so well drained and the sleepers are therefore in poor condition. This is partly due to the track running through trees and in close proximity to a small river which has undermined the track to some extent.

About a quarter of a mile after passing Marsh Mills, the tramway crosses a siding from the Launceston Branch to a REME Depot. There are no crossing gates, but the line is guarded by standard GWR signals. Beyond here the track is much more overgrown, but has a footpath running down the middle. The line again crosses the Launceston Branch over a gated and signalled level-crossing; here the GWR signalbox bears the title "Lee Moor Crossing Signal Box". The fishplates connecting the lines to the crossing have been removed at this point, and the track has sunk a couple of inches.

Beyond the crossing the line is even more overgrown, but can be followed without difficulty to the road leading to Plym Bridge Halt. Nearby is probably what was once a run-round and some stables. The timber road-bridge here is practically impassable. The line then enters a cutting and starts to climb towards the first incline, the approach to which is very overgrown.

The incline itself is even worse; bushes, gorse and even small trees up to about fifteen feet tall grow in the track, and in some places make it completely impassable, whilst visibility is down to zero. One haulage cable is still in position over some of the rollers, the other is presumably still on the drum beneath the collapsed roof of the winding-house at the top of

the incline. Also at the head of the incline is a small crane, believed to be on a flat wagon; this may well have been used for re-railing wagons when the railway was in use.

Gorse is the worst enemy encountered after this, but with only one or two short deviations, the line can be followed to the top. About a mile beyond the incline, the line crosses a small secondary road by a suitably-signalled level crossing. The signals are LMT specials with very little paint left on them. The track now runs in a cutting where the rails have been removed and stacked at the side, but some of the original stone blocks are still in position. Some 500-600 yards further on, several trucks, all overgrown, still stand on the track, whilst on the left is a long siding containing some twenty others.

Soon after, the line runs into the main works, where a scene of desolation meets the eye. Odd trucks are strewn about, some in fair condition, others broken beyond repair, and most of the track is waterlogged and overgrown with grass. The loco shed and repair shop are kept in good order, the latter boasting a good selection of tools and still in use, whilst the loco shed is very effectively boarded-up but one can glimpse the two locos through cracks in the doors.

The second incline starts immediately beyond the Wotter Works, but there is very little track in place. From Lee Moor Village, at the head of the incline, to the disused Cholwich Town Works, the track is now in very poor condition, in some places hopelessly out of gauge, whilst in others it has been removed altogether. The disused power-house and works present a very desolate picture; the engine in the power-house has been broken up, gear wheels cut off their axles, and the pistons of the steam engine removed.

A word or two about the wagons: there were 31 on the lower level, 40 on the middle section, and none on the top level - a total of 71. They are braked on one side only and are of two types, side- and end-door. Dumb buffers appear to be standard; the wagon number is on the side opposite to the brake, the highest number seen being 139 and the lowest 7, but many have now been removed.

A further point of interest is that where the track approaches the GWR level crossings it changes to bullhead rail, reverting to spiked track about fifty yards beyond. The bullhead rail can be clearly seen in two of the photos in Light Railway Handbook No. 7 "Mineral Railways", Third Edition, by R.W.Kidner. A map of the route also appears in the handbook.

In the early part of 1956 a note appeared in the "Railway Observer" stating that the tramway was to be restored, and brought into use once again; news of any developments will be welcome.

The following prints, 120 size, can be obtained from Mr. Cordingley at The Clock House, Braintree, Essex, price 4d. each plus postage :

- 1) LMT crossing of Plymouth - Exeter Road
- 2) Marsh Mills Bridge
- 3) Marsh Mills Siding with trucks
- 4) Launceston Level Crossing
- 5) Timber Bridge over Plymbridge Road.

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APOLOGIES are due for the non-appearance of the summer edition of this volume, but a number of setbacks were experienced and it was just not possible to issue one. However, we have got together a selection of photographs which have appeared in "Narrow Gauge" from time to time, together with a couple of articles which we feel will be of interest, and hope that you will enjoy this issue.

Contributions for the next issue are urgently needed, but please ensure that they are original; we would like to hear of some of the lesser-known lines that have not been covered by the technical press. Closing date is March 31<sup>st</sup>.

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### **Ravenglass Reminiscences**

*K. E. Hartley*

My first view of Ravenglass was not inspiring; it was on a wet afternoon in mid-August 1929, and well past normal tea-time! However, I was lucky in obtaining "digs" without any bother - and moreover, they were adjoining the station! So after changing into dry clothes and enjoying a hearty tea, life seemed much more pleasant.

The next morning I was up early, and whilst waiting for breakfast, made my way to the stone-built engine shed which had formerly housed the old 2'9"-gauge 0-6-0T locos "Devon" and "Nab Gill". Here I found a scene of some activity, as the three 15"-gauge steam locos "River Esk", "River Mite" and "River Irt", were being prepared for the day's work; one of them had the ingenious portable steam-raising device slipped over its chimney in order to draw up the newly-lit fire. This apparatus consisted of a long extension chimney, within which was a steam jet, supplied, via a flexible pipe, from a vertical boiler at the side of the shed.

The other locos were being cleaned up, and presented a pleasing picture in their bright green paint and polished brass-work. At the back of the shed, partially dismantled, lay the original 15"-gauge R & E locomotive, the Bassett-Lowke 4-4-2 "Sans Pareil", still in a faded maroon livery. Also in the shed were a number of 2-ton steel wagons and one of the Muirhill 0-4-0 petrol tractors. These latter were devoid of paint and presented a very workaday appearance.

Wandering outside the shed, I found the old boilers from the two 4-6-2 locos "Colossus" and "Sir Arthur Brockleby"[sic] discarded when their chassis were united to form "River Mite"; [these were] lying among other relics of the past such as the body of the 2-6-2 'Lanchester' petrol loco, and the little Economic flat-twin 2-stroke engine from one of the rail-scooters, used for inspection etc.

After breakfast I took a stroll along the river estuary, by the side of which the line runs for a little distance. I was rewarded by the sight, and sound, of a Muirhill 0-4-0 tractor hauling a load of stone. I must admit that I was not very favourably impressed by this noisy, rattling, cavalcade, being somewhat prejudiced against a machine of such obviously 'farm tractor' origin working on a railway. Nevertheless, the Muirhill's have rendered good service over many years; indeed, does not one of them, disguised as an 0-4-4T, still perform doughty deeds on passenger service?

Retracing my steps. I went to the R & E station to find out the times of the trains, and decided to travel to Dalegarth terminus later in the morning, first picking up a supply of sandwiches. The whole layout at Ravenglass had only recently been completely

reorganised, and presented a neat and well-kept appearance. The three platform lines converged onto a substantial turntable at the dead-end, thus enabling locos to be turned immediately on release and also saving several sets of points.

The station building was new, and entirely unlike the old barn-like structure, whilst, adjoining, a spacious new carriage shed had been erected. Near this, but beyond the running lines, was the ingenious wagon-tippler for unloading the 2-ton stone wagons direct into standard-gauge trucks. The main portion of the tippler consisted of an open cage, with circular ends, resting on roller wheels, into which the n-g trucks were pushed, locked in position, and the whole issue rolled over through 180°. This device had been in use for some years, and although still in service, was being replaced to some extent by the big 6-ton steel bogie hopper wagons, of which I believe there were six.

In 1929 there was no standard-gauge track up to the Murthwaite crushing plant, and all traffic was entirely borne by the 15" gauge. In the station yard sidings was to be seen a strange variety of coaches, both open and closed. The former were far more numerous, and comprised both four-wheelers (some of Bassett-Lowke manufacture) and bogie carriages, of a more or less similar design. The covered coaches were more varied in style and, I imagine, included all Sir Arthur Heywood's types - kitchen car, sleeping car and all! At any rate, scarcely any two were identical, as my photographs show.

Time was getting on, so I bought my ticket and went to join the train. This was composed entirely of open coaches, headed by the good-looking 2-8-0+0-8-0 "River Esk" which had, a year previously, been converted by the Yorkshire Engine Company to the Poultney System in which the tender chassis, fitted with cylinders, became an 0-8-0, with steam supplied by the loco boiler. This rebuilding gave the tender body a somewhat 'on stilts' appearance, which however, was not so clumsy-looking as that on "River Mite". A few minutes later, with a shrill blast from "River Esk"'s whistle, we pulled out of the station, rumbled over the road under-bridge, past the loco shed and repair shops, and followed the river for some little distance.

The speed was not very high, but the scenery improved as we went along, and presently we reached Murthwaite, with its fan of sidings and crushing plant. Here I noted the tenders, both six-wheeled and bogie, from the former scale-model locos, also the chassis of "Ella" the Heywood 0-6-0T, together with a Heywood boiler on a trolley and a number of the new bogie wagons built by the Yorkshire Engine Co. These carried six tons, had a tare weight of 2 ½ tons, and were painted grey, with lettering and numbers in white.

The next stop was at Irton Road, but nothing of particular interest was noted here. Soon after we came to Eskdale Green, and at length, into the new terminus at Dalegarth. Here the single track branched into three lines which all terminated at another turntable - R & E locos at this period always ran chimney-first, which was not the case in earlier days on either the 15" or the 2'9" gauges. The long platform (110') was covered for much of its length, and boasted a large refreshment room, capable of holding about two hundred persons.

I spent the afternoon walking over to Wast Water, and reached Dalegarth again about 6 p.m. As the train was not yet due in, I sampled the delights of the refreshment room, including a cup of 'super-heated tea' which I only partially enjoyed. The evening was rather cool, and I was not really sorry to see "River Irt", the massive 0-8-2, arrive with a train of closed bogie coaches. The coach in which I travelled had been the sleeping car, though I found not bunks but massive cast-iron-legged seats which appeared to have been 'borrowed' from the refreshment room at some earlier date.

The journey was quite uneventful until we reached Murthwaite again, where I was rather surprised to see "River Mite", the ingenious but ungainly 4-6-0+0-6-4, heading up the dale

with a train composed mainly of open coaches, well-filled. Both trains paused for a few moments in the passing loops, then we continued on our way to Ravenglass. On arrival I made my way to the engine shed for a final look round, and was lucky enough to encounter en-route "River Irt" and her driver, who invited me to ride on the footplate for the short distance to the shed. Actually it was on the tender seat, wide enough for three, that I rode, and noted with interest the massive back-head and fittings of the 0-8-2. Not much of the 'toy railway' there!

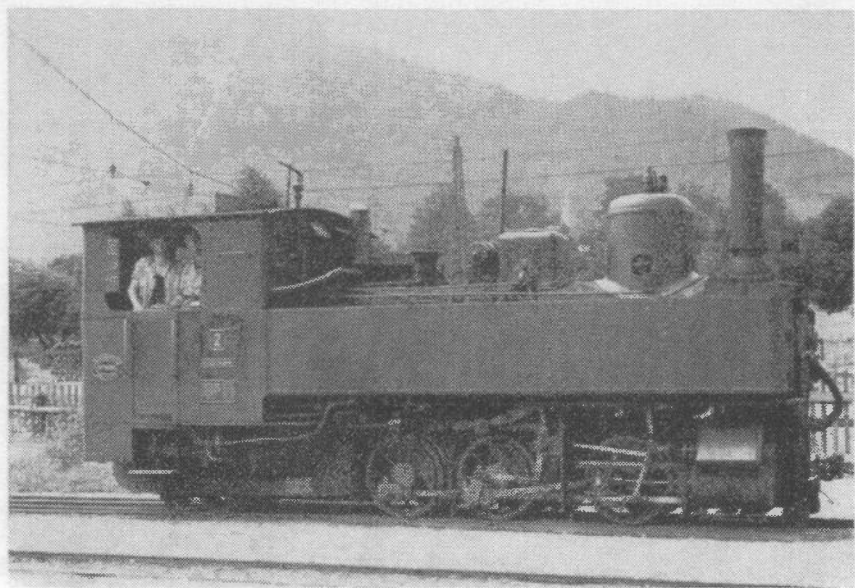
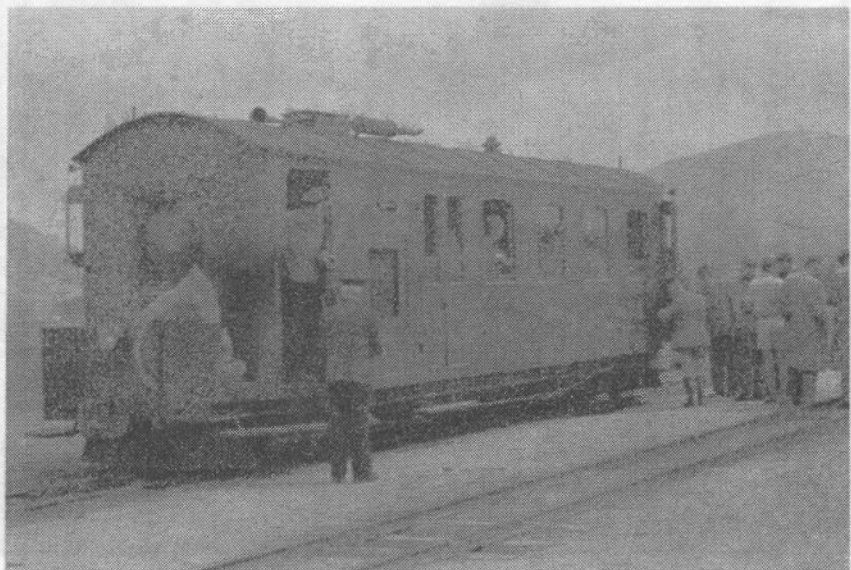
Next morning I was up at the station early as I wanted to see the double-bogie petrol loco, "I.C.L. No.1", having been told that it worked the first passenger train of the day. It was there alright, and a brave sight it made. Two years previously it had been fitted with a new body, very much on the lines of the experimental North Eastern 4-6-4 electric loco. And of course, the green livery heightened the similarity. The motor was a Ford, and drove the rear bogie through standard Ford gears. Readers who are old enough to remember the hey-day of Henry Ford's "Tin Lizzie" (or Model 'T') will recall the characteristic whine as these vehicles started off, and No.1 moved off to precisely the same sound.

The cast brass number plate read "R & E R Builders. 1927. Ravenglass I.C.L. No.1". These makers' plates, which gave the locos a very 'pukka' appearance, also figured on "River Irt" (R & E R Builders. 1927. Loco Dept. No. 7 Ravenglass) and "River Mite" (R & E R Builders. 1928. Loco Dept. No. 8 Ravenglass). "River Irt", the 0-8-2 rebuilt from the Heywood 0-8-0T "Muriel", was a very massive-looking loco, due to the width of the old Heywood chassis with its outside frames, cylinders and valve gear; it was also very powerful, and I was told worked at 200lbs per sq.in. (*n.b. "The Locomotive" dated September 15<sup>th</sup> 1928, gives 180lbs as the steam pressure for all three "River" locos. Ed.*).

"River Mite" (and MIGHT NOT, as one driver feelingly put it!) was considerably less powerful, with 165lbs pressure and evidently not too reliable. "River Esk", originally built by Davey, Paxman & Co., had a Yorkshire Engine Co's plate dated 1928, and bearing Works No. 2229, commemorating her conversion to the Poultney Patent system. These three steam locos, as well as I.C.L.No.1, were very smart in LNER green, lined black and yellow, with black frames and red buffer-beams. Additionally, "River Esk" and "River Irt" had polished brass domes. The coaching stock was, when newly-painted, maroon, but much of it had weathered to a dirty pink; underframes were black. In addition to a fair number of all-steel one- and two-ton wagons, a few of the early wooden wagons remained in service in 1929.

Since I paid this visit to Ravenglass, a good many alterations have, of course, been made to the R&ER, but these have no place in this purely personal account; for I have never been able as yet - in 1956 - to make a return visit to Cumberland, and its "Smallest Railway in the World".

Postscript : A route map of the railway, along with photographs, appears in Kidner's Light Railway Handbook No. 3 "English Narrow-Gauge Railways". During a recent business trip to Cumberland, E.G.Cope stopped at Ravenglass long enough to see both "River Irt" and "River Esk" undergoing overhaul. Also noticed were the 1929 Fordson locomotive and the now-derelect I.C.L. loco. He was informed that a new diesel locomotive of contemporary design was under construction at the works, but no further information was available at the time of going to press. A new set of postcards, and some very attractive souvenir pencils, were on sale at Dalegarth Station during the summer. The railway is very much alive, contrary to some rumours, and members are asked to make this as widely known as possible.



## Penlee Quarries Ltd. : A 2ft.-gauge line in Cornwall

K.E.Hartley

On my visit to Newlyn during the summer of 1956, I was lucky to find a motor coaster loading stone alongside the south pier, although it was Saturday afternoon. On the pier I found a train of sixteen side-tipping trucks being unloaded one by one in the little shelter which covers the below-rail hopper, from which a system of conveyor belts takes the stone, in this case granite chippings, direct to the ship.

The loco presently propelled the empties to the landward end of the pier, paused a few seconds to allow a full train to pass, then proceeded on its way to the crushing plant hoppers. The track is embedded in the surface of the pier, and is double, except at the inner end where it 'comes ashore', curving round to follow, more or less, the shore line. Hence trains have to pass either on the pier, or near the crushing plant.

The two locos I saw were Ruston Hornsby 0-4-0 diesels of very pleasing outline; very smart in deep green paint, with brightwork and decor polished, and fitted with large cabs. Electric headlights are fitted; I was told that loading carries on into the night. The locos were identical, the names "J.W.Jenkins" and "T.W.Lewis" being carried on cast nameplates attached to the front end of the frames.

The celebrated Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT, formerly "Penlee", was found near the pier, dumped on some spare ground by the shore, and very derelict. The cylinders were *sans* covers, pistons, etc., some of the outside Stephenson valve motion was stripped of fittings, while the cab sheets etc. were rusting away. Yet an employee told me that, given a new firebox, the loco was still good! During the previous year the engine, mounted on a low-loader, had taken part in a carnival procession in the vicinity. For this occasion it had been given a lick of grey paint, the frames painted black, and the dome, painted silver, adorned with a TV aerial! An oversized home-made chimney had replaced the original, whilst chalked on the side of the boiler was the inscription "Not For Sale"!

### Cover Photograph

This was taken during the preparations for moving the 0-6-2T ["Barber"] built by T.Green & Sons Ltd, Leeds, from the Bilton Junction terminus of the now-defunct Harrogate Gas Works 2ft-gauge line, on April 10<sup>th</sup> 1957. The work was carried out by Elliott's of York, and the Society has contributed the sum of £10 towards transport and siting costs.

In addition a supply of paint has been bought and one or two enthusiastic members have made a start on renovating the locomotive. Unfortunately, we have not received enough support from local members, and there is still much work to be done. The locomotive is on 'indefinite loan' to Leeds City Museum Committee, and it is in our interest to see that the repainting etc., is completed as quickly as possible. Therefore all members are asked to help in some way, either by cash donations to the Preservation Fund, or by lending a hand to finish the work which is outstanding.

Working parties can be arranged for either Tuesday evenings or Sunday mornings, so if you live near enough to lend a hand, phone Mr. Halton or Mr. Cope and make the necessary arrangements. The loan or donation of paint-removing equipment is one of the most urgent needs!

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EXPLANATION of the 1957/1 on the front cover; the covers were printed earlier this year at the time when it was hoped to issue two magazines, and it has not been practicable to have it erased - sorry!

FINANCES. In order that members who do not have any knowledge of accountancy should be able to understand the situation more clearly, Mr. J.M.Birdsell has kindly audited the books and prepared a Receipts/Expenditure Statement as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 1957 :

INCOME - Subscriptions	39. 1. 0.
Preservation Fund	2. 0. 0.
Sale of Books/badges	2.15. 0.
Sale of photos/	
Photo Competition fees	15. 3.
Total	<u>44.11.3</u>

EXPENDITURE - a) general :	
Magazine	15.16. 0.
Postage and general	7. 7. 1.
Hire of room	2. 0. 0.
b)capital :	
Duplicator and access.	23.15. 1.
Typewriter	6. 0. 0.
Books for Ref. Dept.	1. 14. 8.
Total	<u>56. 12.10</u>

CASH IN HAND as at 30<sup>th</sup> Nov.1957 : 49. 5.11.

It is hoped that a detailed balance sheet will be available to members who attend the AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1958 at the YMCA, Albion Place, Leeds 1.

Business Meeting 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Tea.

Film-strip show 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Other Societies members are welcome to come along in the evening.

### Illustrations

Cover : T.Green 0-6-2T "Barber" being loaded at Bilton, Harrogate, for transport to Leeds, where it is now preserved.

- 1) Salzkammergutlokalbahn (Austria) railcar about to leave St. Lorenz for Mondsee.  
(photo F.Church)
- 2) Zillertalhbahn Loco. No. 2 at Jenbach, Austria.  
(photo courtesy Eisenbahntechnisches Bildarchiv, Wien)
- 3) Festiniog Railway "Prince" and train at Boston Lodge 20<sup>th</sup> August 1955.  
(photo A.E.Rimmer)
- 4) Welshpool & Llanfair Railway No. 823 at Castle Caerinion, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1955.  
(photo W.Woolhouse)
- 5) Chattenden & Upnor Railway Drewry 0-6-0 diesel loco and train at Upnor  
(Low Level) Station 7<sup>th</sup> April 1956.  
(photo W.J.K.Davies)
- 6) Bagnall 0-6-2T "Triumph" of Bowater Lloyd's Paper Mills, Sittingbourne, shunting  
at Ridham Docks. (photo W.J.K.Davies)
- 7) Bagnall 4-6-0T "Kilkee" of the former West Clare Railway, Ireland.  
(block courtesy W.G.Bagnall Ltd.)
- 8) Denver & Rio Grande Western 2-8-2 No. 486 and caboose crossing Tobate  
Trestle on the Cumbres Pass line.  
(photo J.F.Horan, Denver)

Issued by the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, Leeds 16.  
Cover and art pages printed by Dennison Bros., Yeadon.  
Duplicating by Margaret Fenton Ltd., East Parade, Leeds 1.

*(Compilers Note : This volume contains Issues 19, 20 and 21 of "The Narrow Gauge", which were cover-marked 1956/4, 1956/5 and 1957/1 but not properly dated. From the contents it would appear that the actual publication dates were (approximately) October 1956, January/February 1957, and January 1958 respectively, the gap being due to illness amongst committee members.*

*It should also be mentioned that 1957/58 saw the introduction of the Society's companion publication "Narrow Gauge News", which took over the task of publishing every-day events, activities and news, leaving "The Narrow Gauge" to concentrate on articles and illustrations. L.L.)*

