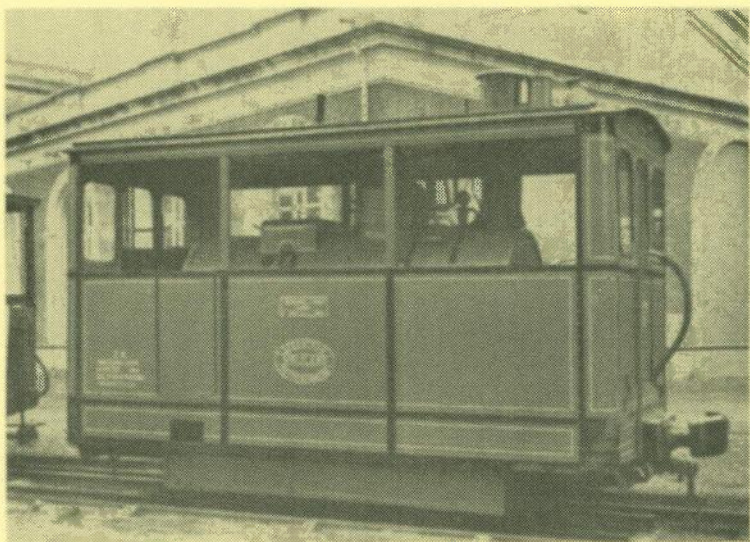


THE NARROW GAUGE



THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY

No. 26 Summer 1960

THE NARROW GAUGE

(Official Magazine of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society)

Editor : W.J.K.Davies, Merton Court, Sidcup, Kent.

No. 26

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We are very grateful to all those who have helped to produce this magazine, especially to Ian Allan Ltd., "Model Engineer", The Model Railway Club and "Railway Magazine" for the loan of blocks; and to the original owners of the photographs for permission to publish them.

Cover Picture :- another unusual locomotive for our covers - the 750mm-gauge steam tram "Vrijland", now in the Netherlands Railway Museum (who also issued the photo).

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Editorial

For once we have some good news for readers - at least we hope you will think it is good news! As a result of the increase in subscription, the Committee has authorised an increased number of magazines yearly instead of the present two a year, starting in 1961. The exact number has yet to be decided. We hope also to produce an extra number this year about mid-November, and this will take the form of a memorial to recently closed narrow-gauge lines. (It was going to be a County Donegal one but, as several overseas lines have closed recently, I am widening the scope).

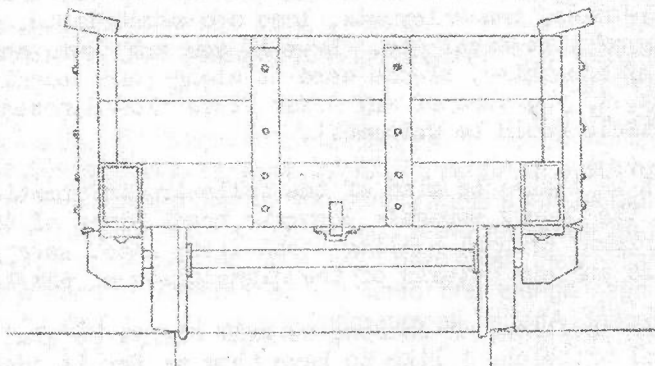
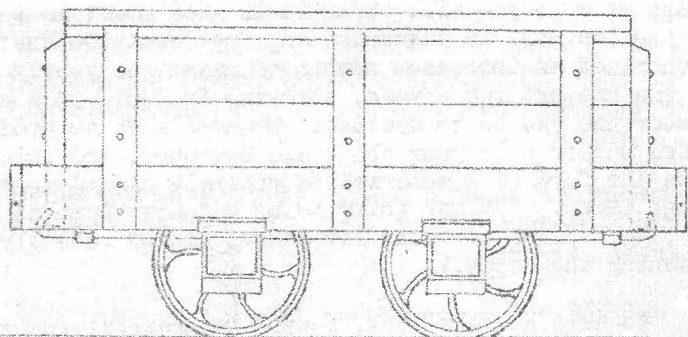
For help in this work, I will be grateful for any information on the following lines, either in the form of articles or just odd jottings : Brienz - Rothorn rack railway; CFD line from Montereau to Egreville; Annemasse - Sixt electric line; Persan Beaumont - Ercuis; and the Plettenburger Kleinbahn. In particular we want these items - maps, track layouts, loco and stock lists, any scraps of historical gen. Even if you only have an odd note of something, please send it along (and needless to say, if you know of any other lines closed recently an article would be welcome).

I will also be glad of the following information about the County Donegal : accurate trackplans of the Letterkenny Branch; rolling-stock list; loco scrapping details and any details of the scrapping of the line.

In addition, of course, we will always be glad of general articles. I like to have them as far in advance of publication dates as possible so that a stock can be built up and the labour of "making them up" ready for press can be spread over a period of time. I specially want fairly short, unusual articles on rolling-stock, buildings, signals and other bits and pieces of narrow-gauge equipment. After all, its your magazine, so why not write for it?

4.

3'9" Gauge Clay Wagon
~Fayle's Tramway, Norden~



feet

Drawn: GRH. 5/59

Traced WJSD 5/60.

An Unusual Narrow-Gauge Wagon :

Clay Wagon from Fayle's Tramway, Norden.

G.R.Hatherill

The wagon stock on the old 3'9"-gauge mineral tramway at Fayle's Norden (Dorset) Works was mainly composed of locally-built open wagons. The majority of these were fixed-sided four-wheelers with wooden frames and bodies and two-plank sides. The design itself dated back to the very early days of the line.

The axleboxes were either plain, open-ended pedestals or simple unsprung grease-boxes with hinged lids. The drawbar was of wrought iron, square in section and bent up at each end to take the loose coupling chains. The wheels had six curved spokes but as it was normal to sprag the wagons on hills with a bar thrust through the wheels, some of them only had five spokes in later years!

As these wagons were locally built, there were considerable minor variations in dimensions and details, but the drawing is of a typical wagon. It is based on notes and measurements taken in 1950, when the wagons were lying scattered about in a field following the conversion of the line to 2'0" gauge.

Dimensions

Length overall8' 0"
Width over side timbers.....6' 0"
Height, rail to splashboard 2'10"
Wheelbase2' 8"
Wheel diameter, approx.1' 8"

Editors Note : the 3'9"-gauge line dated from 1868, when it was reconstructed from an even earlier plateway, and the new line was built to connect Norden (near Corfe Castle) with Goathorn Pier. In 1948 the line, now reduced to a network of lines around Norden, was converted to 2'0"-gauge (1'11½ ") owing to the difficulty of acquiring 3'9"-gauge locomotives.

"Townsend Hook"

This locomotive, the fourth to be preserved by the N.G.R.S., was built by Fletcher Jennings & Co. of Parton, Whitehaven, (172L/1880), being delivered to the Dorking Greystone Lime Co. at Betchworth in 1881. On that system it was numbered 4 and worked for the whole of its life hauling lime from the quarry faces to the kilns, and working the inclines. These were of a rather peculiar type in which the locomotive, running down a slight slope, acted as a counterweight to ascending or descending wagons.

It was the first of the narrow-gauge engines to cease work, probably in 1952, and remained disused until it was preserved by the NGRS (London & Southeast Area) earlier this year.

Technical Details

Type : 0-4-0T with outside cylinders and Stephenson's valve gear. Salter safety valves are fitted.

Cylinders : 8" x 16"

Wheel Diameter : 2' 4"

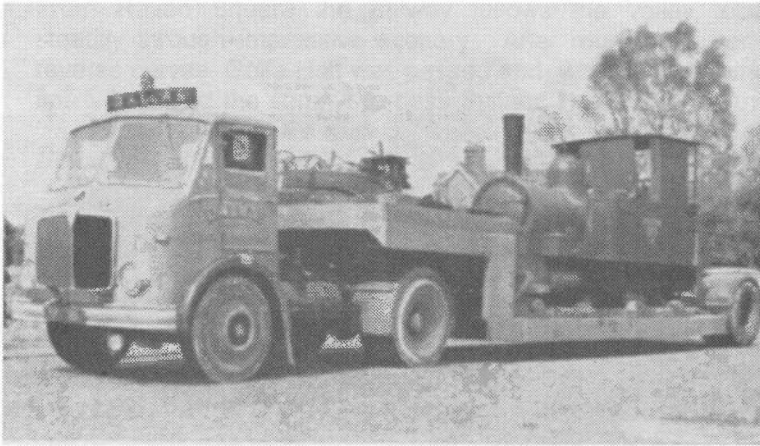
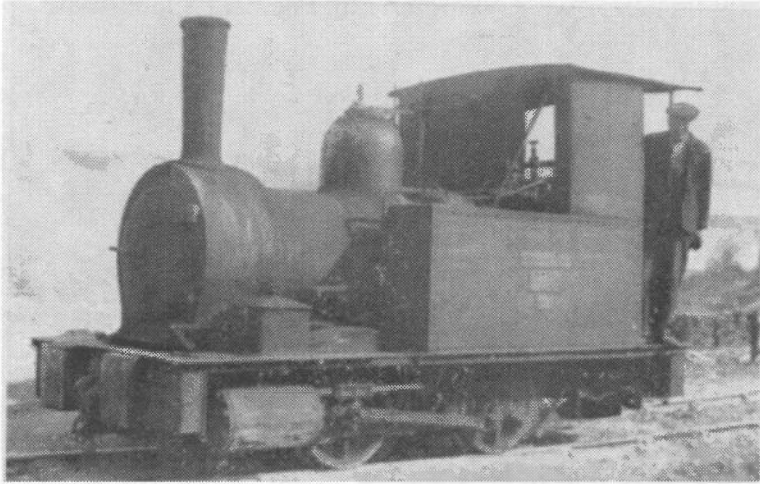
Boiler Pressure : 120lbs (originally) increased to 140lbs when reboilered in 1898

Gauge : 3' 2 1/4"

When built, the locomotive had two Friedman injectors carried under the footplate and delivering water to clack valves placed on either side of the firehole. Later, Penberthy injectors were fitted, mounted on top of each side tank and delivering water to the front of the boiler barrel.

Link couplings and metal-faced dumb buffers are fitted. When delivered, the locomotive was cabless, but one was soon fitted by the quarry company. The original wooden brake blocks were also replaced by cast-iron ones because of the steep gradients. Otherwise, the locomotive appears to be substantially in its original condition.

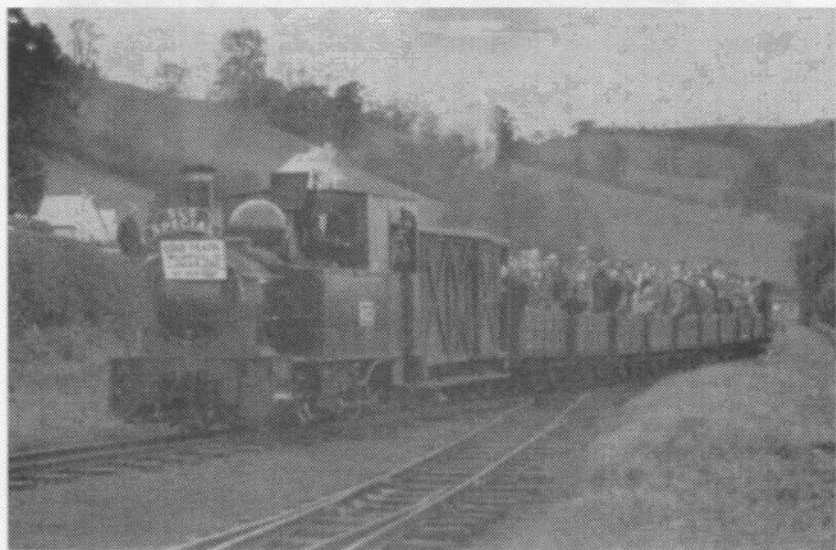
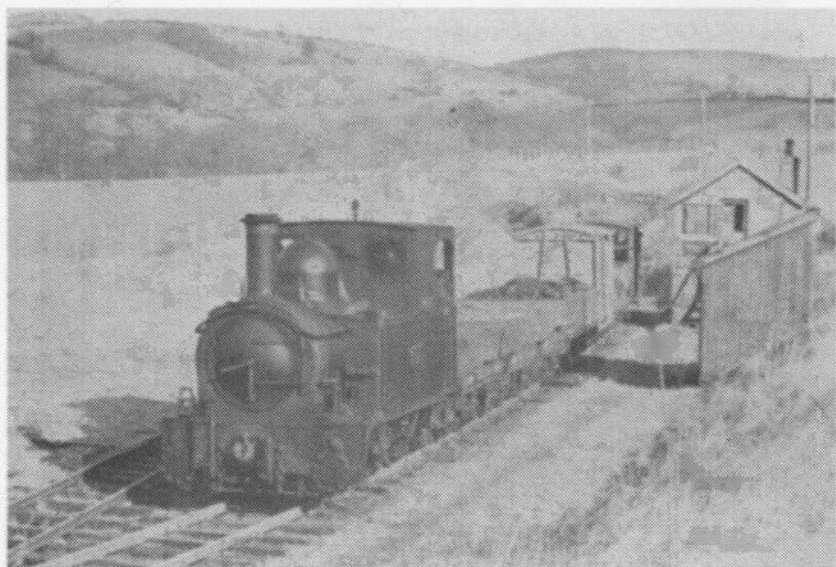
n.b. Although much of the money required has been raised, more is still needed, in particular for the purchase of a spare set of wheels we have been offered. Will YOU help? Donations to Mr. Townsend.



Photos (upper) : "*Townsend Hook*" at work on the quarry line at Betchworth (photo : E.Griffiths; block : Model Engineer)

(lower) : The locomotive en route to its present resting place (photo : J.Townsend; block : Model Engineer)

"Townsend Hook"



Journeys on the Narrow Gauge No. 5 - Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

A.E.Rimmer

I made my first trip on this line in August 1945. It was a few days after VJ DAY and the weather was perfect. No. 822 "*The Earl*" was busy shunting in the yard and eventually the train was ready for departure. We had about seven wagons of coal and general merchandise, a covered van and the brake van. I climbed aboard the brake van, the Guard gave a wave of his hand and we were off.

Immediately after leaving the goods yard we were confronted with a short, steep gradient of 1 in 33, which lifts the line over the Shropshire Union Canal, and soon after, the fireman jumped down to open the gate and stop the traffic in the main street while we crossed. From there, we threaded our way between the houses to Seven Stars Halt and then the locomotive was opened out to climb the 1 in 36 to Raven Square.

From Raven Square the railway follows the valley, climbing steadily through impressive scenery. After rounding a series of reverse curves, Golfa Halt was passed and, with cinders flying, we finally breasted the summit to pass Sylfaen Halt; a mile further on we reached Castle Caereinion where there was a loop and a signal box, both disused.

The fireman got down once more to open the gates across the road and we proceeded down the gradient, passing first Dolarddyn Halt and then Cyfronydd Halt, which boasted a loop. Sheep wagons were often stored here.

The train crossed a viaduct and a girder bridge, and climbed again, passing Heniarth Halt and, leaving the river, reached Llanfair. After shunting, the return train was assembled and we headed back for Welshpool, taking water en route from a tank near Llanfair.

Photos (upper) : W & Ll. Rwy goods train passing Castle Caereinion in 1951, locomotive No. 823.

(lower) : Last train entering Llanfair, 3.11.56

(Photos P.B.Whitehouse; blocks Railway Magazine)

**"Correspondance a Bois Seigneur"
....or The Decline of the Vicinal Autorail**

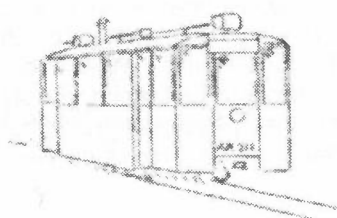
E.K.Stretch

The metre-gauge network of the Belgian Vicinal Railways (SNCV) is well known as Europe's largest light rail system. Until a few years ago, its activities were not even confined to Belgium, for one or two lines penetrated into France and Holland, and there were also connections with light railways in Germany and Luxembourg.

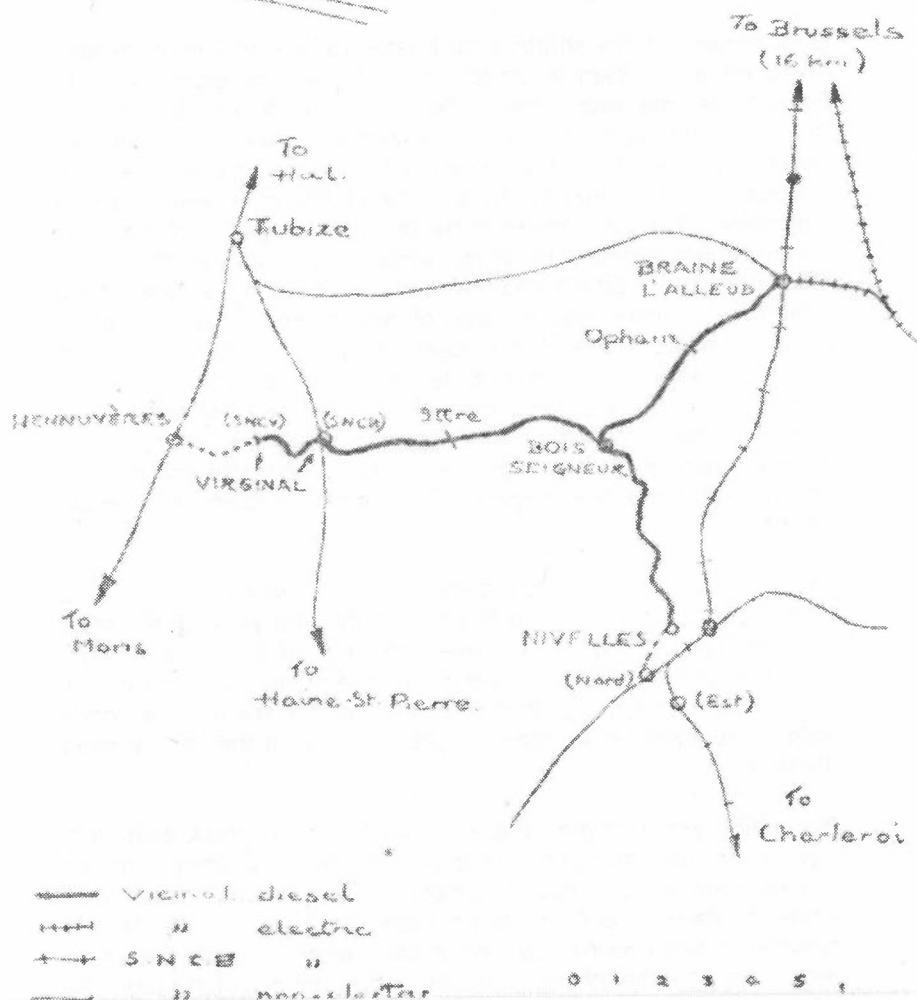
The Vicinal is very often dismissed as 'just a lot of trams' but even its many electric lines, though operating what are undoubtedly tramcars and with a fair amount of street running in the larger towns, are not without railway features; there is a tendency to run two, three or even four-car trains at comparatively long intervals, rather than single cars at frequent intervals, and there is still a fair amount of goods traffic on some lines. Short goods trains are not entirely unknown even in the streets of Brussels. The rapidly-declining number of non-electrified lines, however, are certainly not trams, and it is with a description of a visit to one of them that this article is mainly concerned.

In 1946 the whole nation-wide network was virtually intact, with 4,811 route km. (2,969 miles) of which 1,466 km. (911 miles) were electrified. A few new lines and new electrifications brought the electrified total up to 1,528 km. in 1950, but it was about then that the great abandonments began. These have virtually eliminated non-electric passenger service. By the end of 1958, the electric systems had declined to 1,051 km., operated by 701 motor-cars and 558 trailers; they comprised the extensive Brussels suburban network, the smaller Antwerp suburban system, a few lines at Liege, the magnificent coastal line from De Panne to Knokke, and one or two other remnants, of which all lines in the Ghent area have now been abandoned.

The non-electric lines, now with 110 diesel cars, 61 trailers and 19 steam locos (there were once over 1,000 steam locos) have undergone a catastrophic decline - from 3,345 km. ten years ago, to 1,035 km. in 1955 and only 610 km. at the end of 1958.



CORRESPONDANCE à Bois Seigneur



Of these, 610 km. - quite a large proportion, are open to goods traffic only, and in some cases even this is seasonal (e.g. the sugar beet harvest). By Easter 1959 passenger service was provided only on the following lines : Bastogne - Martelange, 25 km. (in the province of Luxembourg); Tienen - Hamme-Mille, about 20 km. (South Brabant); Virginal - Nivelles with its branch to Bois Seigneur. All these lines have since lost their passenger traffic but the summer-only service from Han Village to Les Grottes de Han, in the Ardennes, may still be open.

On a rather wet day shortly after Easter 1959, I arrived at Nivelles (alias Nijvel) to sample travel on a Vicinal non-electrified line. Finding the line was rather difficult - the main line trains from Brussels arrive at Nivelles-Est. The Vicinal terminus, described as 'Nivelles (terminus)' in the timetable book and 'Nivelles (tram)' in the posters, was originally close by the station of Nivelles-Nord on the National Railways line from Baulers to Manage, which now has no passenger service. However, when I found Nivelles-Nord after descending a steep hill into the town and climbing another steep hill out of it, there was no sign of any metre-gauge. A shallow cutting showed where it had been, and after about a hundred yards the site of the track joined the main Brussels road. It formerly ran along the west verge of this road, heading north out of town, and then, after about one kilometre, suddenly swung across the road; here there is a large yard, a station building and a shed, and here the line now begins. This point is known as Nivelles-Depot.

Owing to the fairly recent curtailment of the railway, the layout here is very curious, for originally the branch into the yard left the main running line just beyond the level crossing. It still does, but the track only starts about sixty feet before the points, so that it is now impossible for anything other than a railcar and trailer, or a goods train of about three wagons, to get in or out of the yard without division.

About fifty yards beyond the junction, the depot track splits into several sidings, alongside an imposing station building. In the sidings were about a dozen railcars of the standard Vicinal four-wheeled design, and a trailer (nowadays railcar trailers are sometimes seen coupled to electric cars, when they can always be recognised by the chimney of the stove projecting through the

roof!). Also present were one or two vans, several wagons and an oil-tank wagon - and numerous motor buses.

Standing just short of the siding points was railcar AR.213, forming the 12.30 p.m. departure. Early Vicinal railcars were single-ended 'buses on flanged wheels' but a standard double-ended design was evolved quite early and about 300 were produced. There were minor differences of course, but the majority were extremely rectangular and resemble the typical continental four-wheeled tramcar. The body is usually 2.32 metres (7' 7 1/4") wide and 9.5 metres (31'2") long, with a capacity of 24 seated and 32 (very crushed) standing passengers. The wheelbase is 3.75 metres (12' 3 1/2") and the wheel diameter 62 cm. (2' 0 1/4"). Tare weight is ten metric tons.

There are sliding doors each side of both end platforms, and usually three windows each side between the doors. There are no interior partitions. The seats are bus type, double seats each side of a centre gangway and arranged back-to-back so that an equal number face in each direction. The 95hp. engine is mounted transversely, partly beneath and partly between the backs of a pair of seats halfway along one side. The radiator is on the roof.

There is a four-speed gearbox with separate reverse, and maximum speed is 70kph (43mph) when running alone. When the driver changes ends, he takes the throttle, brake and gear levers with him. The clutch pedal stays where it is, and the pedals at both ends move together.

These diesel cars are normally one-man-operated, except when working with a trailer, but use of trailers is now rare and a number of railcars no longer have brake pipes. With the withdrawal of passenger services over the last few years, some railcars have been converted to diesel locos. by fitting more powerful engines and altering the gear ratios. As most of the seats are retained, these are not easily distinguishable from those still in passenger service, except that the locos have numbers prefixed ART (for Autorail tracteur) instead of AR (for autorail).

At 12.28 a Vicinal bus, labelled 'Nivelles-Bois Seigneur', roared up from the town, thus indicating why the timetable still shows the service as starting from the 'terminus', and the passengers hastily transferred to AR213. The driver issued tickets and we lurched

over the points by the level crossing and, reversing, rattled off up a steep grade, turning sharply north along the rather uneven and very grass-grown track which is such a contrast to the heavy, well-ballasted track of the electric lines. After a short distance, the line meets the Brussels road again, and heading northwest, passes under it. After meandering across the fields for 2 ½ kilometres, the line reaches the road from Nivelles to Hal, and runs along its eastern verge for about 1 ½ km., occasionally at a slightly different level to ease the gradient.

Then suddenly, protected by an enormous sign 'TRAM' suspended across the road, the track changes to grooved tramway rail and for 200 yards runs up the middle of the main street of Bois-Seigneur-Isaac. There is a stop halfway up the street, which most passengers use, but the station of this name is just beyond the village, where the track leaves the road again. It consists of a bare island platform of some length, flanked on both sides by a main running line and a run-round loop. There are also a few grass-grown sidings which, at the time of my visit, contained a railcar trailer and a couple of wagons. At the north end of the station, by means of a double-slip diamond, the two main running lines from the platform converge and divide again, left for Virginal and right for Braine l'Alleud.

Until the passenger service was withdrawn on 5th July 1959, this had been the only place left on the Vicinal where two autorail services connected. In the final timetable there were about eight journeys a day on both lines, with all possible permutations and combinations of the connections and through workings. Most frequently the car from Nivelles ran through to Virginal, with a connection to and from Braine l'Alleud, but on the 12.30 from Nivelles, on which I travelled, the through car was from Braine l'Alleud and there was no service to Braine. We had to wait a few minutes at Bois-Seigneur but soon the usual two-tone horn was heard and AR729 appeared. Passengers and mail were quickly transferred between the two cars; AR213 set off back to Nivelles and AR729, reversing, continued its journey to Virginal, passing at the north end of the station for the driver to alight and change the points.

The Braine l'Alleud line curves off sharply to the right (east) and follows a meandering course for 6km. through the village of Ophain to Braine l'Alleud (alias 's Eigenbrakel), where it enters the town by a sweeping curve on an embankment; it crosses over a country road and then runs alongside the SNCB main line, climbing above it to cross a road on the level and then dropping again to a terminus by the railway station, beneath the trolley wire of the Vicinal electric line to Waterloo and Brussels 20km. away.

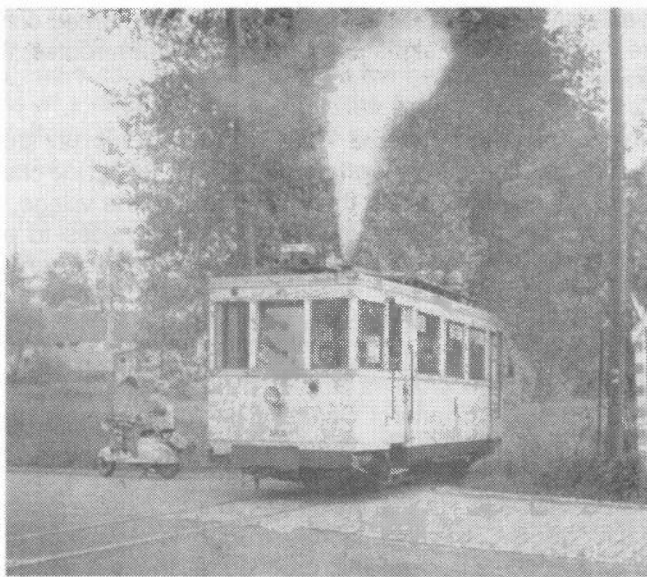
The Virginal line turns sharply left on leaving Bois-Seigneur and winds across the fields in a westerly direction. There are quite considerable earthworks on this section, and in one cutting we encountered a cow which was, however, considerably startled by a "pom-pom-de-pom" on the horn and which made off quickly. The line descends into a shallow wooded valley; near the village of Haut-Ittre, 2km. from Bois-Seigneur, there is a small station with a loop and disused siding, but there are several request stops more conveniently situated for the village. Most are marked only by the same 'Arret facultatif' signs that are used on tram routes, though a few read 'Arret du train'.

Ittre, about 1 ½ km. beyond Haut-Ittre, has a similar station but more sidings. Immediately after this station, the track changes to grooved rail and runs along the main street of the village, hard up against the houses but occasionally changing sides to ease the curvature in the winding street. Once clear of the village, Vignoles rail resumes, and the line takes up a position at the edge of a narrow winding road in the bottom of the valley.

After 2km. the line crosses a river by a substantial viaduct and then crosses the Charleroi Canal. The road bridge alongside is very weak and rickety. Then comes a steep climb on private track and finally a bridge over the secondary line of the SNCB from Haine-St.-Pierre to Hal. Outside Virginal Station, a few hundred yards further on, the Vicinal has a long loop with a crossover halfway, the whole being laid in grooved rail in the roadway.

Here the mail bags were unloaded and entrusted to the SNCB. Then AR279 set off again for the last 3km. to Virginal (Vicinal) a steep and extremely winding course up through the woods to a terminus in a typical Vicinal village station with sidings and station house. Formerly the line continued to Hennuyeres, but this was an early casualty of the Vicinal abandonment plans.

Considering the extremely meagre goods traffic, it is surprising that this line lasted as long as it did. The survival of the passenger service can be ascribed mainly to the bad roads and to the fact that there was no direct route between certain of the villages. I have not heard whether it is now closed completely; if not, it is presumably reduced, like many Vicinal outposts, to a goods train "as required", probably about one a week. As for the passengers, it is rare for the Vicinal to provide a bus service as good as the rail service it replaces. Not only are there often routing difficulties, but the policy seems to be to provide a fairly good rail service until they are sure it does not pay, and then withdraw it entirely rather than piecemeal. The decline in rail traffic is due to private transport rather than bus competition.



Vicinal diesel railcar on a non-electrified line (now closed) near Casteau. Photo : M. van Witsen. Block : Ian Allan Ltd.

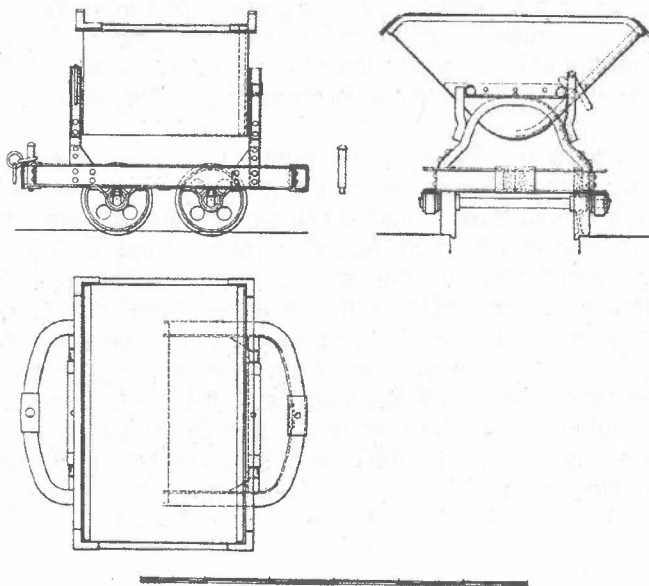
A Contractor's Side Tipping Wagon

A.L.Thomas

This 2'0"-gauge wagon is of a type built in large numbers over many years. The design appears to have become standardised even between manufacturers, constructional details usually being virtually identical, even to the number and size of rivets.

This example was found working, with two or three others, on the cable-hauled claypit railway belonging to a pottery in North London. The railway is on a continuous incline of about 1 in 10, rising some twenty feet out of the pit in a straight line, then continuing round a sharp right-hand bend, still climbing, and ending about ten feet above ground level in the main shed, the last few yards being on viaduct. There is a branch leaving the "main line" with a trailing junction to the left and ending in a concrete storage enclosure.

The only clue to the manufacturer of the wagons is the single word "RECORD" on the axleboxes. If anyone can identify them, I would be very interested to hear from them.



The St. Austell & Pentewan Railway

Part 1.

G.T.Wheway

Early Days

Several years before the Festiniog Railway started making use of the force of gravity to transport slate from Blaenau Festiniog for shipment at Portmadoc, the same principle was being used (though on a much smaller scale) on the St. Austell & Pentewan Railway, to move china clay from the former town to the docks at Pentewan on the south coast of Cornwall. This railway started in 1832 as a purely local line; no Act of Parliament was sought to authorise it.

The line, of 2'6" gauge, started in St. Austell, on a site now occupied by a branch of the Cornish Mines Supplies Co. After a short distance, the track crossed the Pentewan bypass and then ran alongside the St. Austell - Mevagissey road for a mile or so before crossing it on the level. From the level crossing to Pentewan the line was out of sight of the road, although running more or less parallel to it, as between the road and the railway there ran a river which emptied itself into the sea at Pentewan; also the countryside was well-wooded.

At Pentewan the railway rose on a gradient of 1 in 45 to reach the trestles on which it ran by the side of the docks; this was to facilitate the unloading of china clay into coastal vessels. Sidings were provided between the level crossing and Pentewan.

There was a gentle downward gradient from St. Austell to the crossing of the Mevagissey road, but from there to the docks the line was almost level. Loaded china-clay wagons were therefore sent on their way from St. Austell in rakes of four or five, gravity taking them as far as the level crossing. It appears from a contemporary account that the wagons, once set in motion, travelled unattended until they came to a halt. Perhaps they were expected always to stop short of the level crossing! From there, horses took over to pull the wagons to the docks. Horses were also required to pull the wagons back to St. Austell; they did not travel empty, loads in the reverse direction consisting of coal and, sometimes, timber.

Very little is known of the working of the line in its horse-drawn days, as the records of those years are in private hands and have not yet been published. Following the success of steam locomotives on other narrow-gauge lines in the 1860's, however, a Bill was promoted in the 1874 session of Parliament to authorise the railway (or tramway as it had been known until then) to use steam locomotives and to carry passengers, livestock and goods. This Bill received the Royal Assent on 7th August 1874.

The Railway Constituted

The St. Austell and Pentewan Railway, Harbour and Dock Act, 1874, defined the length of the existing horse tramway as three miles, six furlongs and eleven yards. It authorised the formation of a new Company with a capital of £50,000, to run the railway and the docks at Pentewan. Besides authorising steam locomotives to be used, the Act also permitted no less than seven branch lines to be built, connecting with the existing railway and with one another.

The gauge of 2'6" was reaffirmed, but the Act stipulated that "the quantity of land to be taken by the Company (*presumably in connection with the authorised extensions*) shall not be less than is required for the construction of a railway of 4' 8½ ".

The carriage of passengers and livestock was provided for, and maximum charges for their conveyance laid down. Paradoxically, though livestock was never carried, despite the terms of the Act, in later years passengers were carried in large numbers; however the rides were free and only on special occasions. More on this anon.

Despite the wide scope of the Act, the only part of which advantage was taken was the conversion of the line to locomotive traction. None of the seven extensions were built, nor were fare-paying passengers carried; the line continued to be solely a mineral railway.

However, steam locomotives were not allowed to invade the quiet Cornish countryside overnight. Local horses were not used to such noises along the roadside and opposition was so strong that the first attempts at introducing steam traction were confined to the section between the level crossing and Pentewan Docks. Familiarity breeds contempt, however, and there is ample

photographic evidence to prove that, eventually, locomotives regularly ran the whole length of the line. Doubtless, when locomotives were confined to the seaward end, horses continued to pull wagons up into St. Austell. Thus the line must have been a railway and a horse tramway at the same time.

It was mentioned earlier that the Act of 1874 gave the railway powers to carry passengers, and also stipulated their maximum fares. Passengers there were in plenty, mostly very youthful ones, but they all enjoyed the privilege of a free ride to the seaside at Pentewan and back to St. Austell.

During the summer months, it was the custom for the various Sunday Schools in the St. Austell district to have a trip to Pentewan as their annual treat, and the owner of the railway provided a free ride as part of the excursion. There were no passenger carriages and the 'Directors Saloon' was either too sacrosanct or too small for these occasions, so the only way to deal with the situation was to clean out the requisite number of china clay wagons (and what a cleaning they would need, too!), and let the trippers travel seated on benches placed along the wagon sides. It was an excellent arrangement provided the rain kept away!

These runs to Pentewan were not just joy-rides for wagon-loads of Sunday School children; teachers, parents, friends and relations joined in as well, and of course the band could not be left behind. So that as many grown-ups as possible could be included in the outings, they always took place on a Thursday afternoon, which was the district's early-closing day; there was thus no shortage of helpers. Twenty-one trucks might be used to convey one school trip, and refreshments en-route for the children, in the shape of buns and fruit, were not forgotten.

Owing to the rise from Pentewan to St. Austell, the return journey usually had to be made in two trains (actually the same train running twice as there would only be one engine in steam).

Came the Great War, and the Pentewan Railway continued to function, under Government control. The Sunday School free excursions continued to run, though the refreshments diminished in quantity as food became scarcer. The line achieved brief nation-wide fame, by having a photograph of one of its war-time

Sunday School excursions published in a national daily paper. Towards the end of the war, however, the railway suffered a "temporary closure" - and traffic, either animal, vegetable, or mineral, was never resumed on it again.

Present Day Remains

Today, one can walk along the footpath which formed the trackbed of the railway, from the St. Austell end to the St. Austell Bypass, a distance of just over a quarter of a mile. Then, following the St. Austell - Mevagissey road, the track continues as a made-up path by the roadside, but raised above it by anything up to three feet. A walk along this for about a mile brings one to the site of the former level crossing which, like many others of its kind, was something of a danger spot, at least one fatal and one serious accident having occurred there.

Once over the level crossing, all traces of the line are lost in the woodland which stretches thence right to Pentewan, and at Pentewan Dock all traces have long been obliterated. By the side of the road near Pentewan Village, however, one can see a bricked-up hole in the wall - probably the site of another level crossing.

(to be continued)