

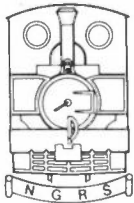


THE NARROW GAUGE

No.73 25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY



NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY

Serving the narrow gauge world since 1951

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The Society was founded in 1951 to encourage interest in all forms of narrow gauge rail transport. Members interests cover every aspect of the construction, operation, history and modelling of narrow gauge railways throughout the world. Society members receive this magazine and *Narrow Gauge News*, a bi-monthly review of current events on the narrow gauge scene. An extensive library, locomotive records, and modelling information service are available to members. Meetings and visits are arranged by local areas based in Leeds, Leicester, London, Preston and Stoke-on-Trent. Annual subscription £3.50 due 1st April.

THE NARROW GAUGE

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A range of back numbers, and binders for eight issues (£1.00 post free) are available from the address above.

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"They don't build trips like that any more." MONARCH is surrounded by members from Yorkshire and London during the famous "green bus" visit to Bowater's, Sittingbourne in June 1963.
(Vic Nutton).

Cover Photo: Despite closures of narrow gauge lines all over the world, one line that has changed little, if at all, during the Society's life is India's famous 2ft. gauge Darjeeling-Himalaya Rly. 0-4-0ST 785 approaches the reversal point near Tindharia with a Darjeeling train in February 1974.
(L.A. Nixon).

ERIC COPE RECALLS HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Having been interested in electric traction since I was quite small, I used to look through the pages of the illustrated magazine "Picture Post" in case there was anything suitable for my scrap-book. However, one day I found an article describing a narrow gauge railway in Wales, and it was not long before a holiday on the Cambrian coast in 1950 provided the opportunity for filming it. The stations and other buildings had a strange fascination in their somewhat decaying state, and it was difficult to see where track started and finished in many places. Indeed the whole of the railway and its quaint rolling stock was full of an atmosphere which, alas, seems to have vanished in the face of inevitable commercialism necessary to ensure that and similar lines' future.

From then on it was not long before I found other narrow gauge railways lurking in the boscaige — some extinct to all intents and purposes, some just surviving. Having found the few remaining Corris vehicles at Machynlleth I decided to purchase the brake van as it was just what I needed for a railway 'den'. However, before I could finalise the idea, I had to go into hospital, so arranged that, having duly paid for it, the van was presented to the Talylllyn Railway Preservation Society.

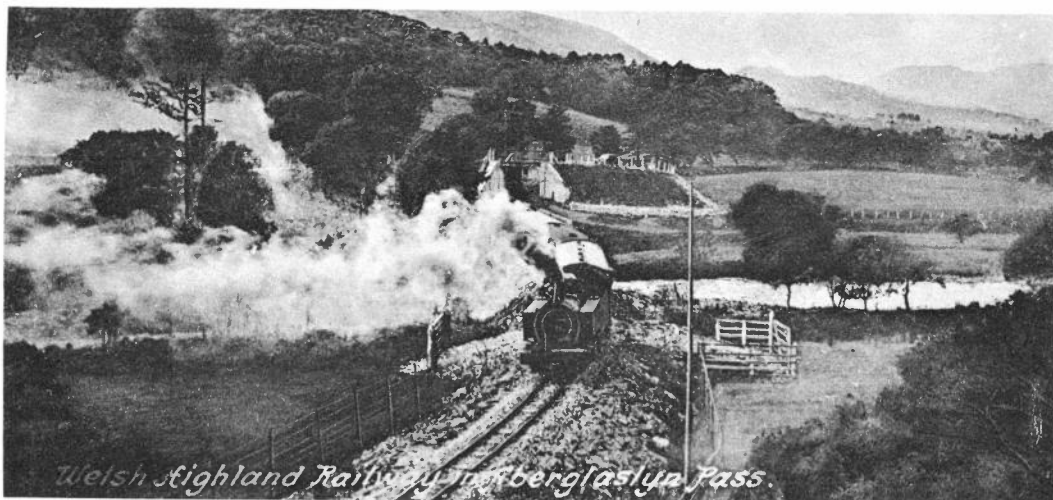
During convalescence I happened to be looking through my postcard collection and there was one card which has always had a fascination for me. It was given to me when I was still at school because of my interest in railways — it is a tinted view, by Frith's, of the Welsh Highland Railway and shows the locomotive "RUSSELL" with a train on the bridge over the Glaslyn near Beddgelert.

It occurred to me that there may be one or two other people who might be interested in such railways, and by now most readers will be well aware of the consequences of my letters to the model railway press at the time, in which I asked anyone who might be interested in the formation of a "narrow gauge railway society" to write to me.

We certainly had fun in those early days — I wonder how many remember the meetings in the cafe at the Majestic Cinema in Leeds, or in the refreshment rooms at Leeds City South and Holbeck High Level? Then there were the evenings when the magazine was being churned out on the flat-bed duplicator, with pages drying off all over the kitchen floor!

The society has certainly grown in the intervening years; having been involved in many projects culminating in the preservation of a number of locomotives and rolling stock in various parts of the country, it has certainly achieved something. When I started the society I envisaged about 20 or 30 members at the most, if that! Of course, it has now grown to international proportions, and in carrying the narrow-gauge railway interest to many parts of the world I feel that some of the informality and 'mateyness' of the early meetings has gone. But there is no doubt that the NGRS has been influential in many spheres — for example, the early talks we had with BR (Western) regarding the possibility of preserving the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway, and the approaches made to the same region regarding the Vale of Rheidol Railway when the line was threatened with closure.

We have been very fortunate in having a good crew on the footplate, so to speak, and to all the officers and members of the society, past and present, I extend my grateful thanks for keeping the narrow-gauge wheels turning.



25 YEARS OF THE SOCIETY

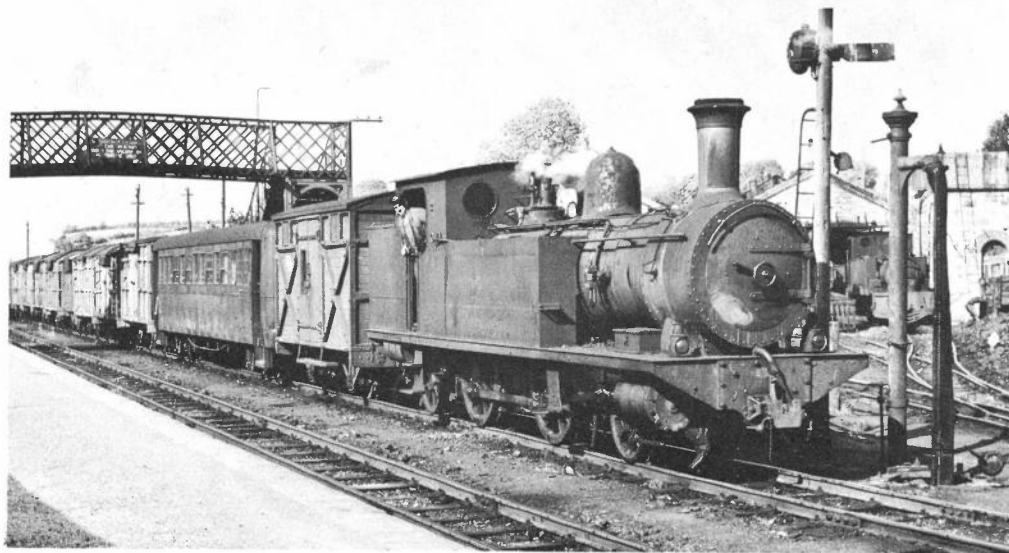
A history of the Society so far by founder member RON REDMAN. Society Chairman and Yorkshire Area Secretary for more years than he cares to remember!

The formation of the Society can be traced back to a meeting at Eric Cope's home in Leeds on 6th. November, 1951, following his exploratory letter to the *Model Railway Constructor*. Two friends turned out on the day, David Nichols, who became our first Treasurer, for four years, and Ken Bell, and thus the N.G.R.S. was formed. The annual subscription was fixed at 2/-, (10p), Life Membership £1.1.0d.(£1.05)., and the aims recorded as an interest in all lines from 15in - 4ft gauge, and membership was estimated to reach 30!

A note on the formation appeared in the February 1952 '*Constructor*' which resulted in the first members being enrolled, amongst whom, still with us, are the writer, Peter Lee, Don Boreham, Peter Halton & Keith Davies.

This is probably a good point to reflect on the state of the Narrow Gauge Railway scene a quarter of a century ago. There was so much steam on British Railways that the 'spotters' craze was still riding high, and the word 'gricer' had not been coined. In England, the Baldwins of the Ashover Railway had clanked into oblivion when the line passed away in 1950, and the only English passenger lines were the famous 15in gauge pair, the Eskdale & Romney Hythe Lines. The Isle of Man still had a superb network of steam and electric worked lines, but the Festiniog had lain moribund since 1946, its future far from certain. The Tallylyn was faring better in the hands of the late Tom Rolt and friends, who were having a go at running a summer service. The Rheidol had so little publicity by British Railways that each winter, rumours spread about that the next season would be the last, but the Western Region still worked a freight only service on the Welshpool.

It was Ireland that had the most to offer with its 3ft 0in gauge empires, the Londonderry & Lough Swilly, County Donegal, Cavan & Leitrim and the West Clare Railways, but the 'Gem' to be prized was the once a month cattle special over the Tralee & Dingle. Little did we realise that, in a few short years all of these would be just memories.



The Cavan & Leitrim section of C.I.E. was one of the most delightful railways in the country, but finally closed in 1959. Here 2-4-2T 12 waits to leave Ballinamore with a mixed train for Dromod.
(N.G.R.S. Library Collection).

On the industrial side, most of us were familiar with the Slate Quarry systems, and some of the ironstone lines of the Midlands, but the remainder of the country was still virtually unknown and waiting to be recorded. The narrow gauge overseas, particularly in Europe, had much to offer but the days of cheap travel had not arrived, and apart from the Denver & Rio Grande, and Darjeeling & Himalayan Railways, both famous the world over, the rest just wanted discovering, along with the records of the Locomotive Building Industry. That industry has taken rather a hammering over the past 25 years and many famous names have vanished, not only steam builders, but diesel as well, as more lines have given way to road transport.

So in 1951, it was obvious that the N.G.R.S. had a lot to go at, and from a very modest start it soon began to make information available to the ever increasing band of members. The first duplicated news sheet was issued in May, 1952, and apart from covering proposals for a 16.5mm gauge exhibition layout to be built on an ex table tennis table, the only news worthy of note was 12 months old — a report on the lifting of the Snailbeach District railway track.

Issue No.2. came out in July with a plea for exhibits for the first ever Society stand at the Leeds Model Railway Society November Exhibition, and along came some superb 16mm. to the foot models by Alan Pratt, with exhibits by Peter Halton & Don Boreham. The *Yorkshire Post* reported on our stand, and since then members have staffed countless stands at shows in London, Leeds, Manchester and York over the years, as well as numerous traction engine and other rallies.

The main news in News Sheet No.2. was the impending closure of the Welshpool and that we had been given the option of acquiring the line in toto. Eric Cope assures us that he set off for the corridors of power at Paddington accompanied by the Society Treasurer, backed up with our total resources at the time - £9.16.0. (£9.80), but after discussion, the N.G.R.S. did not take up the option !

By 1953, a more practical approach to preservation was adopted when £2.5.0. (£2.25) was raised amongst members to mount a plate from 'RUSSELL' together with the works plate from the Welsh Highland Baldwin No. 590 to enable them to go on show at the York Railway Museum.

After assisting with the preservation of the 0-4-0ST locomotive 'ISABEL' from Cliffe Hill Granite Co. for the builders, W.G. Bagnall in March 1953, it was inevitable that we would want our own locomotive and to this end, the rare 2ft 0in gauge (Works No. 441/1905) T. Green, 0-6-2 ST 'BARBER' was inspected at Harrogate's Bilton Road Gas Works and accepted on behalf of the Society and Leeds City Museum.

Frequent working parties were arranged at Harrogate but when the line's Peckett 0-6-0ST was in steam, we generally had a ride instead. 'BARBER' eventually moved to Leeds in 1957 for storage at Copley Hill, and she will soon be moved to the new Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mill, along with two other interesting machines the N.G.R.S. saved - 'JACK' the 18in. gauge 0-4-0 well tank moved from Woodville during October, 1958, and 'LORD GRANBY' a 3ft 0in gauge Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST from Eastwell, saved with assistance by Eric Tonks and moved to Leeds in Spring 1961.

A Convention was arranged in Leeds during October 1953 (we had such grand titles in the old days), after a morning tour of the Works of Hudswell Clarke & Co.Ltd. Membership by this time had topped the 100 mark and a decision was made to increase the subscription to 3/- (15p) per annum. For this vast sum, a magazine was offered to soften the blow and the first issue was distributed for Christmas 1953. Produced on an ancient flat bed duplicator, moved from Wakefield one foul foggy night in an aged 'Morris 8'. The windscreen had to be open in an attempt to see the road, but worse was to come when we started to print the pages, and the Cope's dining room carpet was covered in sheets of paper which varied in intensity from soot to whitewash. We never mastered that infernal duplicator, but we did have some funny letters from members regarding problems deciphering their copies.

A membership badge was introduced in 1953, and sold at 1/- (5p) each to members, which took the form of a celluloid metal button badge with two broad lines across representing running rails with a narrow line in the centre for overhead or third rail. The whole was bonded by the winged wheel international railway emblem. The present style of badge came into being after the 1954 A.G.M. in Manchester, and the originals produced in brass lined out in green with N.G.R.S. on a scroll under the leading elevation of an L. & B. Manning Wardle were sold for 3/6d each (18p). The design was based on a suggestion by a Manchester area member whose name unfortunately was not recorded, possibly lost due to the shock of the subscription rising to 10/- (50p) per year or £3.3.0. (£3.15p) for life membership.

A fund raising fiasco of the good old days was the never to be forgotten N.G.R.S. dance at Headingley Pavilion Ballroom in Leeds on Friday 26th February, 1954, from 8pm to midnight for 3/- (15p) a ticket — yes a full year's subs. at the time. At a generous estimate, no more than 30 people turned up, partly due to the appalling weather, which was also blamed for the absence of the two 'Tiller' girls invited by Eric ! A good

night out was had by all and at least we had plenty of room on the dance floor, but our venture into the entertainment business was not repeated.

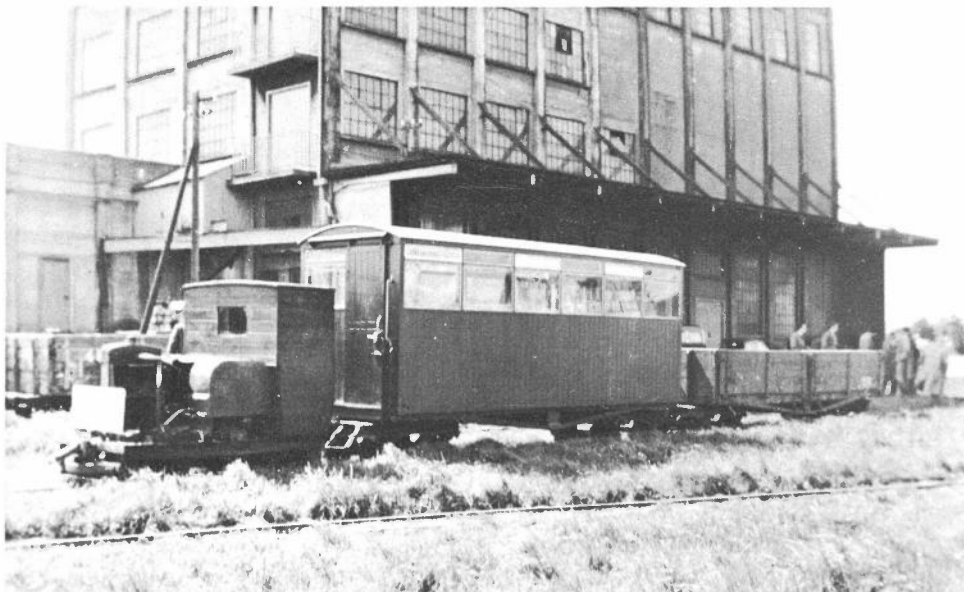
The writer took over the Society Reference Department about this time with the intention of founding the Society Library. It all fitted with room to spare into a couple of shirt boxes, a far cry from our present superb collection which fills most of a room at the home of Peter & Sheila Lee.

Ken Lister, our first "Industrial Adviser" (another good early title), located two locomotive nameplates from J.B. EARLE, one of the pair of superb Kitson tanks of the Leek & Manifold Railway. They turned up in a Leeds scrap yard having escaped cutting up when the yard's shearing machine had broken down and one had found use as an improvised drain cover. The 60lbs. of gunmetal was acquired on behalf of the N.G.R.S. for their scrap value of £4.0.0.

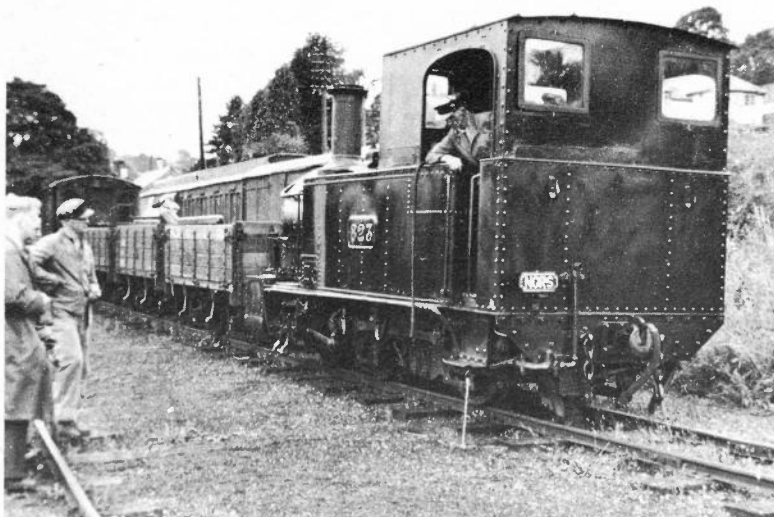
All the early publications and note paper carried an engraving of a tiny Bagnall 0-4-2ST PEKOE TIP typical of that company's plantation locomotives and in February 1954 Cliffe Hill Granite Co. presented the Society with a similar style 0-4-0ST PETER. It was moved to the manufacturer's works at Stafford pending the N.G.R.S. collecting funds to pay for an overhaul, years later during an official visit a bush was noted growing out of a hole in the saddle tank !

During May 1954 the first of many visits to the works of the Hunslet Engine Co. in Leeds was arranged and in August one of the best early Railtours was run over the 2,360 yard 2ft 6in gauge line of the N.C.B. between Ledston Luck and Peckfield collieries. The party travelled in 3 ¼ ton capacity mine cars hauled by a 100 h.p. Huwood-Hudswell mines locomotive. The whole set up was a show place at the time, a far cry from the run down system we revisited for the 1976 25th. A.G.M. in Leeds, not surprising when one considers it has run round the clock for the intervening 23 years.

The following year was a vintage one for organised visits. In May 1955 we had the first of two tours of the extensive 60cm. gauge system of Smith's Potato Estate at Nocton, Lincolnshire, a veritable museum of 1st. World War equipment. In June a special was planned over the Welshpool but had to be cancelled due to a national rail strike. It was re-organised at short notice by Bill Woolhouse for the 20th. of August. A meagre turn out of members enlisted the Welshpool Station Master's family to swell the numbers and a superb time was had by all with considerable excitement in various places when clearances between loco and road vehicles parked at the lineside were minimal. Loco 823 worked the special and we had the satisfaction of holding up the Llanfair bus whilst we crossed the road at the roundabout. The year also recorded the first regular meetings in London which have continued to the present time, with Don Boreham in the chair.



Nocton Estate Special on 15th. May 1955. Early Motor Rail with director's shooting coach make up the N.G.R.S. train — all for 2/6 a ticket !
(Ron Redman).

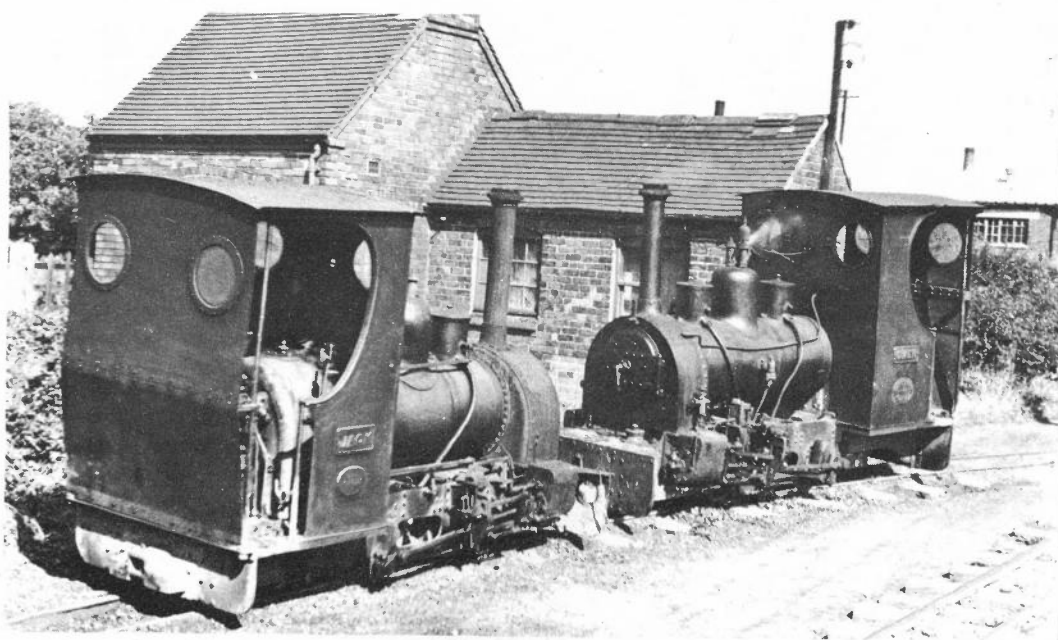


*Welshpool & Llanfair special train with 823 about to depart from Llanfair on the 1955 visit.
(Ron Redman).*



The conspirators. With Yorkshire flat caps well to the fore founder members Ron Redman (Chairman), Eric Cope (Secretary), Dave Nichols (Treasurer) and Pete Brennand (who became the first newsletter editor) brave a Pennine gale to explore the derelict remains of Whitaker's Scout Moor Tramway in 1953.

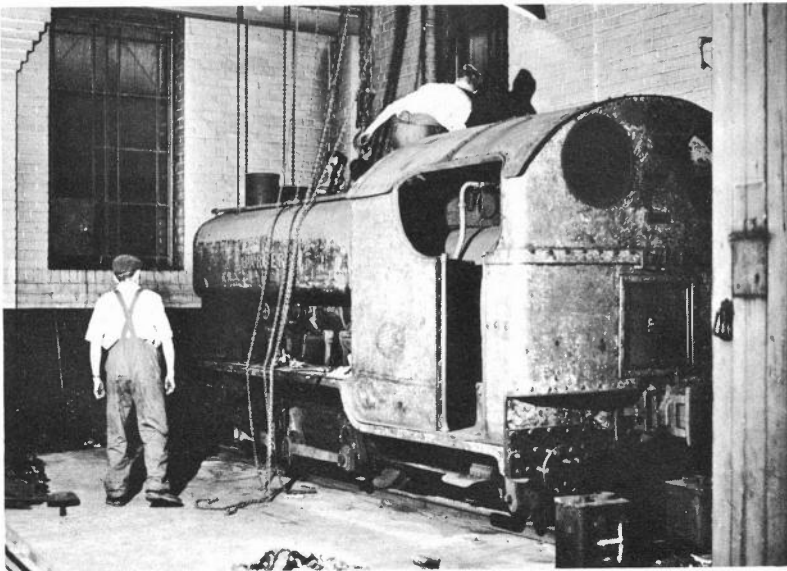
(D.F.Nichols).



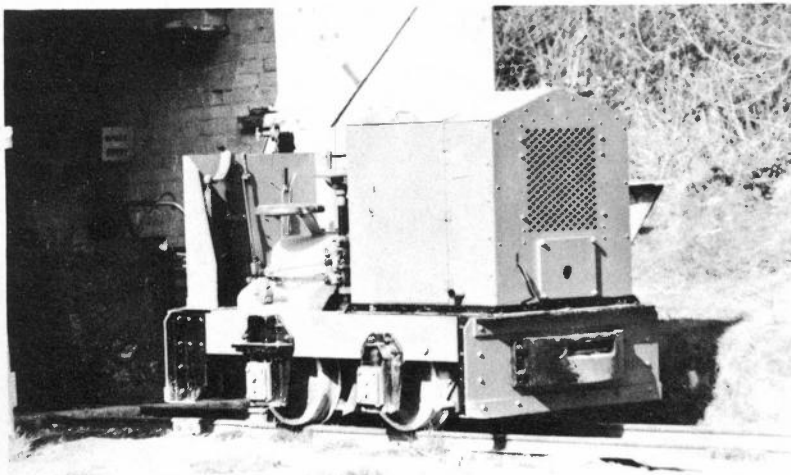
*Gems of the 18in gauge — JACK and GWEN at John Knowles & Co., Woodville.
(Maurice Billington).*



Horwich Works 18in gauge contrasts — 1887 Beyer Peacock 0-4-0ST/T WREN and ZM32, its LAT class Ruston diesel replacement during the Society visit on 4th. October 1959. (Mike Swift).



An early working party on BARBER in Copley Hill store. (K. Bell).



'Montania' Orenstein & Koppel diesel THE MAJOR has been restored to a very high standard at Brockham Museum, founded by London Area members in 1962. (Narrow track Ltd.)

Eric Cope's most ambitious project came in 1956 with an organised Society visit to Austria. Few members ventured so far afield in those days and conducted rail tours were unheard of. The party of 12 visited the lines of the Innsbruck area, the Saltzammergut and the Zell-am-Zee to Krimml all for £22 per head, but needless to say floods caused problems for the party but "narrow gaugers" have to take that in their stride.

The less wealthy of us visited Bagnall's Stafford Works, and in July the 18in gauge line of John Knowles & Co. (Wooden Box) Ltd. at Woodville, along with the first of many tours over the Manchester Corporation Waterworks 3ft 0in gauge line at Tintwistle, Longdendale, where the late Mr. W. Sharp always made us very welcome. The Corporation quoted us 16/7d to cover the driver's wages for 3 hours, but in the end the invoice was for £1-0-0, still good value !!

The A.G.M. moved to London, the membership was up to 120 but had to reluctantly accept the resignation of Eric Cope as Secretary, his place being taken for one year by Peter Halton. During November a meeting was arranged in Huddersfield with a theme of American narrow gauge and was notable for the fact that Mike Swift first came on the scene. In 1957 the Society introduced the Narrow Gauge News intended to be issued as and when we had sufficient material. Edited by Peter Brennan the first issue ran to both sides of a single foolscap sheet.

With the Society trying to improve its services and control its expanding collection of preserved locomotives it was a hectic period with the committee meeting at Chairman Eric Cope's home. One night the business was interrupted by a telephone call from a member's wife to report that the Martians had landed! Reluctantly Society matters were put aside and we trooped out into the garden to inspect the night sky and repel the invaders. All was soon back to normal when a second phone call assured us that the first call was as a result of catching a snatch of the weekly Goon Show on the radio and that she had panicked. !

The London Area produced the first Society handbook early in 1958. Compiled by Keith Davies the 33 page booklet covered in detail the 2ft 8in gauge Furzebrook system of Pike Bros., Fayle & Co. Ltd. The News was put on a regular bi-monthly basis at which it has remained ever since despite many problems with duplication and distribution over the years. Many members all over the country have helped often without credit to improve the publication which is now accepted as a model of Society publications.

The 1958 A.G.M. was in Nottingham after a well attended coach tour of the ironstone lines at Eastwell, Waltham and Belvoir Castle, the precursor of many memorable A.G.M. Day visits in the years since. At the meeting Clifford John was appointed Secretary and Keith Davies Magazine Editor. An immediate improvement in frequency of publication ensued as well as a notable increase in continental coverage. Two of the best of Keith's issues were the Saltzkammergut Lokalbahn Obituary in 1958 and issue No. 20 in 1960, a special magazine on closed European lines. Keith also found time to compile Handbook No. 2 published in 1959 on the 4ft 0in & 2ft 0in gauge lines of Parish's Loam Quarries, Erith, Kent.

Expansion was the theme for 1959 with regular meetings starting in Birmingham and Leeds. The West Yorkshire members had held informal meetings since the formation of the Society and by this time had outgrown the member's homes and even the 1st. class bar at Holbeck High Level Station and various other such exotic locations. London Area were hosts for the 1959 A.G.M. followed by a superb slide show by Lance King. Colour slides were not so numerous in those days. Following news of the closure of the Dorking Greystone Lime Co.'s system in January 1960 a group of London Area members led by John Townsend started negotiations to save TOWNSEND HOOK, one of the rare Fletcher Jennings locos here (But no relation to the preservation organiser!). By March it was in the bag and moved a month later for storage at Sheffield Park on the Bluebell Railway. By A.G.M. day in Birmingham the subscription was on the increase again to 17/6d (87½p) but for the first time the funds could stretch to a grant for the Library to start to purchase books.

A last visit was planned to Nocton Estates but Smith's packed in early and we had to settle for an autumn monsoon special on the latest narrow gauge — the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway. The weather was so bad we had to push the train to start it, the line having no steam in those early days !

The 10th. anniversary came in 1961; a sad start was the demise of the West Clare but the news sheet for April carried a delightful lament penned by Vic Bradley. The same page welcomed another well known enthusiast to membership — the Rev. E. R. Boston. After a visit to the works of Robert Hudson a lively 10th.

A.G.M. was held in Leeds. Membership was up over the 200 mark but costs were rising at an alarming rate. Clifford John declined to stand for re-election, Mike Swift and Geoff Welsh took over as secretary and treasurer, posts they both hold to this day, gluttons for punishment !

Two events were planned to mark anniversary year, a dinner held in Leeds notable for a special cake made by Sheila Lee topped with an icing sugar model of PEKOE TIP, and most memorable of all was the

fabulous railtour of the Kettering and Wellingborough ironstone systems. No less than 125 members and friends attended the best supported Society event to date, a triumph of organisation on the part of Mike Swift. 1961 also saw the publication of the third Society hand book, *The Dorking Greystone Lime Co. and the locomotive Townsend Hook* by John Townsend and an attractive special issue of the magazine was issued on the County Donegal Railways.

We all moved south for the 1962 A.G.M. in London which was preceded by the formal opening of the newly formed Brockham Museum by Major E.W. Taylerson, and another handbook came on the scene with Arthur Wells' history of Bowaters Sittingbourne Railway, the system that welcomed that never to be forgotten joint visit by the London and Yorkshire areas in June 1963. That year Birmingham were hosts to the A.G.M. and membership was a record 279. Keith Davies handed over the magazine for a year to Paul Myatt and Peter Brennand the news sheet to Mick Mallett. Ken Bettis took over the thankless task of preparing the envelopes for dispatch of Society publications, a terrific solo effort he carried out for nine years.



The most ambitious visit was the Society's 10th. Anniversary Railtour over the 3ft. gauge ironstone railway at Kettering. Over 120 members and friends travelled behind Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST KETTERING FURNACES No. 7 to Rothwell Quarries in June 1961.

(G. Lumb).

Ken Hartley's superb book on the Sand Hutton Light Railway came off the press in 1964. The first fully printed handbook, it was produced by Henry Holdsworth who made such a good job of the task that he ended up with the magazine editor's job too. His first issue of the new style (photo litho) magazine was No. 37 dated February 1965 and since then the Society has never looked back. Henry only volunteered to do two issues but actually held the job single handed until issue No. 58 in 1971, many issues containing superb drawings by Bill Strickland.

Manchester area arranged the 1965 A.G.M. with a visit over the out of this world tracks of the Mordale Peat Bogs, a lively ride not for members of a nervous disposition. Keith Stretch took over the news sheet and Barrie McFarlane became Publications Officer. The newly formed East Midlands Area had started meetings in Leicester and invited us over for the 1966 A.G.M. and a visit to Cadeby Rectory. Subs were on the increase again and had to be fixed at 21/- (£1.05). The Yorkshire area visited the Welshpool in June for a ride behind MONARCH. This was the first time it had been risked with a passenger service and it was a long time before the experiment was repeated !

The Stoke area was founded by Keith Rogers at the Roebuck Hotel in Autumn 1966 and since then a few gallons have been put away at meetings at this popular venue. Ivan Stephenson took over the newsheet editorship at the London 1967 A.G.M., a post he filled very well up to 1976, and we were pleased to welcome Jack Buckler as membership secretary after the collapse of the Manchester area and their

ambitious team. In June a Yorkshire area visit to Ravenglass rode behind the new locomotive RIVER MITE. The return visit was made during the height of a storm and the coach journey back to Leeds resembled a nudist club outing, of all visits this is the one most talked about !

Stoke Area arranged the 1968 A.G.M. and gave us a 'hairy' ride over the near impossible track of Eclipse Peat Co. and in contrast the following year the meeting moved back to Leeds and rode the immaculate track of Jack Buckler's private railway with ALAN GEORGE. Jack resigned as membership secretary with over 500 on the books his place being taken by Ralph Martin, who did a very capable job until retiring in 1976. A special milestone of 1969 was the 50th. issue of THE NARROW GAUGE, a 66 page epic highly praised by the membership. By the 1970 A.G.M. at Hockley Heath we had 532 paid up supporters and running costs were giving problems and it was time for £1.50 per year and junior membership, never economical, to be abolished. One sad note was the death of Honorary member Major E.W. Taylerson at the age of 77. We were back in the publishing game jointly with the I.R.S. with Mike Swift's monumental work *Preserved Locomotives of the British Isles*. At 75p for 114 pages it was real value for money.

The G.P.O. strike gave a lot of problems and expense for three months in 1971, prior to the London based A.G.M. High spot of the day was a double headed special over the Whipsnade & Umfolozi line, very well organised by Andrew Wilson. By now we had 600 members, Henry Holdsworth resigned and his place was taken by R.P. Morris and a team of helpers who carried on the magazine until 1975. Another loss was Barrie McFarlane as Publications Officer, replaced by Ron Cox who expanded the facilities to cover overseas publications and carried on an efficient service up to 1976. One last visit in November at which a number of invited members attended was the steaming of the last narrow gauge steam loco turned out by the Hunslet Engine Co., a wood fired 0-4-2ST for Indonesia.



Manchester Corporation Waterworks 3ft. gauge line in Longdendale, Cheshire was visited by the Society on several occasions. In June 1965 48DL Ruston Hornsby 4wDM 283884/1949 paused in the woods with our special train. (the late Ian Brown).

The 21st. anniversary was in Leeds and attracted the largest gathering of members ever recorded, visits included Hudswell's and Hunslet's works and the ever popular Knostrop 60cm. gauge system. After an extra long meeting members had the pleasant task of judging over 300 entries in the photo competition, well arranged and presented by M. Jacob, the show in the evening being a light hearted look at the N.G.R.S. "warts 'n' all" at its coming of age.

Sydney Leleux organised the 1973 A.G.M. visits to Springfield Tileries and a special at Trentham Gardens behind the fine steam outline Baguley locos. Graham Holt invited us all over to Leicester the following year with a visit to John Vernon's line at Newbold Verdon to ride behind his ex-Penrhyn loco PAMELA. The last visit to London was in 1975 when Peter Lemmey arranged the day, our double headed special over the Knebworth & Wintergreen Railway being run in an absolutely torrential downpour. The meeting that

followed accepted the resignation of R.P. Morris as magazine editor and voted in Andrew Neale to the hot seat, P.D. Nicholson handed over the post of Records Officer to Pete Briddon with Robin Butterell to handle the miniature side.



B.I.C.C. Belvedere Bagnall with special headboard to mark the 1967 A.G.M. visit (Henry Holdsworth).



Hunslet locomotives and crews outside the Howdenclough Light Railway shed. ALAN GEORGE (606/1894) with Jack and Marjorie Buckler and SHOLTO (2433/1941) with Ivan Stephenson and Roger Jackson. (J. Buckler collection).

In 1976 the NGRS steamed on to celebrate its silver jubilee, the year starting with the 100th. issue of the newsheet. The A.G.M. revisited Leeds with visits to Ledston Luck Colliery and Jack Butler's extended railway at Howdenclough. The well attended meeting reluctantly accepted the resignation of Ivan Stephenson after nine years in charge of the newsheet who handed on to Ron Cox. Rob Pearman joined the committee to handle the membership secretary's post vacated by Ralph Martin, and Graham Holt, the East Midlands area secretary, added to his workload with the post of publications officer. Another area started in the North West with regular meetings at Euxton, Chorley, Lancs. and we look forward to joining them for the 1977 A.G.M.

25 years is as good a reason as any for a Dinner and on the 30th October a full house gathered at the Mansion Hotel in Leeds to mark the occasion in style and followed it with another unique show "Carry on Gricing", a slide show to remember !

That was the first 25 years of the Society and if you all enjoy the next quarter century as much as I have enjoyed the last we all have a lot to look forward to. May I take this opportunity to thank all members for their support over the years and in particular the officers past and present. Many have served for long periods retaining continuity and experience within the organisation, and with your support the continued success of the Society is assured.

TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY PRESERVATION

Society Secretary **MIKE SWIFT**, author of the 1970 Society publication on British preservation and an active preservationist since 1955 reviews developments.

Preservation is without doubt the most significant railway development during the life of the Society. Who could have forecast in 1951 that this would have spread so widely, in so many ways, with the support of hundreds of dedicated enthusiasts. This movement has paralleled an international trend towards "live" preservation, so different from the Victorian museum concept.

To fully appreciate the magnitude of this development, we should first review what narrow gauge equipment was preserved prior to 1951. PET, the 18in gauge 0-4-0 saddle tank rested at Crewe Works, fortunate for a locomotive built in 1865. The similar machine, DOT, was at Beyer Peacock & Co. Ltd., Gorton Foundry, with the pioneer Garratt brought back from Tasmania in 1947. Two Portstewart Tramway steam locomotives, their entire stock, were at Hull and Belfast. These, together with some small items at York and a few local museums therefore represented the development of the narrow gauge railway. But this was not the whole story, for in Wales and Massachusetts moves were in progress which were to set the pattern for the future.

In 1950 the Talylyn Railway ceased operations and seemed likely to follow others to the scrap heap. Fortunately it was such a quaint survivor that it attracted the attentions of enthusiasts, and at a meeting in Birmingham the Talylyn Railway Preservation Society was formed to provide finance and labour to keep the line in operation. The trials of the early days are delightfully told by L.T.C. Rolt in "Railway Adventure", but now its creators can see in the Talylyn and its many imitators the wisdom of undertaking this pioneer venture.

Immediately after the Second World War, Ellis D. Attwood started moving equipment from the 2ft gauge lines in Maine to his cranberry farm at Edaville, Massachusetts. A 5½ mile line was laid and operating by 1946, and soon opened to the public, the first narrow gauge passenger line constructed on a new site. This plan has since been followed in many parts of the world.

By Autumn of 1951 the stage was set for the next phase, formation of the Festiniog Railway Society. The need for substantial capital prevented the Society from following the T.R.P.S. example, and it was not till 1954 that a group headed by A.F. Pegler secured control of the Festiniog Railway Company. The Society was reconstituted as a limited company to assist in reopening the line.

Although the Talylyn was run down, the Festiniog was completely derelict, and clearing the route sufficiently to allow a train to pass occupied no less than six months. Track repairs permitted the first mile to be opened in July 1955, and a few days later PRINCE entered service after rebuilding.

At that time the Welshpool & Llanfair branch of B.R. still carried freight, and in 1952 Eric Cope contacted B.R. on behalf of the N.G.R.S. to ascertain its future, and introduce the idea of preservation if closure was planned. Accordingly, after closure in October 1956, a preservation society was formed in London, but did not gain access until 1959. Their principal problem was lack of passenger vehicles, but closure of the Chattenden & Upnor railway in 1961 released 2ft 6in gauge stock, which was purchased. Services were planned to start in 1962, but problems with the route through Welshpool delayed this, and a new base had to be established at Llanfair. The first trains ran from there to Castle Caereinion in April 1963.

These three lines have all developed in their own way in the intervening years. Each had a different character, and still has at the present day, but that character has changed. The railway preservation business — and business it must be in the harsh commercial world of the 1970's — has come a long way since the adventure started at Tywyn in 1951. Changes have often been criticised by those who considered development incompatible with preservation, without appreciating that equipment subjected to wear and tear requires protection, maintenance, and eventual replacement.

The Talylyn ran only to Rhydyronen in 1951, with DOLGOCH ambling over turf covered track with the original four wheel carriages, carrying around 16,000 passengers. With some 175,000 passengers now travelling, stock has had to be increased, firstly with the former Corris Railway locomotives, Penrhyn Railway open carriages, and a pair of bogie vehicles built by the railway. During the past ten years a series of new bogie carriages providing standards of comfort demanded by present day travellers have entered service, and a locomotive — IRISH PETE — is being reconstructed. The preservation ideal was convincingly portrayed in restoration of Corris and Glyn Valley stock to a superb standard. The turf covered track is now entirely replaced, Pendre depot improved and enlarged to accommodate and maintain the increased stock, and Wharf and Abergynolwyn stations completely rebuilt to handle summer crowds. Then, in 1971, a ¾ mile extension from Abergynolwyn to Nant Gwernol was started, and this milestone in Talylyn progress opened in May 1976.



The charm of the Talylyn is perfectly captured in this view taken in 1967. DOUGLAS heads the morning train to Abergynolwyn, which includes the Refreshment van, restored Corris saloon, an original four wheel carriage, and a new bogie carriage. (Talylyn Railway).



Early days on the Festiniog Railway. PRINCE raises steam at Harbour station while the "Simplex" stands by with the works train one September morning in 1956. (M.Swift).

The Tallylyn has come a long way in the last twenty five years, but still retains much of its former charm, especially when DOLGOCH or TALLYLYN turn out with the original four wheel carriages.

In 1955 Porthmadog was a quiet backwater, but the tourist invasion has since grown beyond even the wildest forecasts. Only by continual growth has the Festiniog coped with this challenge, and completely changed in the process. For this very reason the line has had more than its share of critics, though of its success there can be no criticism.

Traffic figures clearly illustrate this growth, from 20,000 in 1955 to well over 400,000 now. The line was progressively reopened — to Minffordd in 1956, Penrhyn in 1957, and Tan-y-Bwlch in 1958. This rapid advance required major track clearance and sleeper replacement. Boston Lodge workshops were in poor shape, but offered space and limited equipment for restoring locomotives and stock. With PRINCE in service, work concentrated on the double Fairlie TALIESIN, which entered service late in 1956. Carriages in reasonable condition were progressively restored, and first class accommodation introduced in 1957, together with buffet facilities. With services through to Tan-y-Bwlch the railway prepared to consolidate its position. Improvements to track and communications to handle rapidly growing traffic were given high priority, and a small group at Boston Lodge rebuilt ever more decrepit carriages into things of beauty. A former Lynton & Barnstaple carriage spent many years in the shops, finally emerging in 1963 as the prototype of a new standard series which has been introduced in recent years. The second Fairlie took the rails in 1961, and LINDA and BLANCHE shortly afterwards. An early import, the Alco 2-6-2 tank MOUNTAINEER, joined the stud in 1967. The land bordering the line has been extensively developed for forestry in recent years, and to reduce the fire risk the Festiniog Railway carried out lengthy experiments with oil firing. This proved very successful, and in addition to preventing lineside fires has resulted in substantial operating economies.

In March 1964 the Company announced the Llyn Ystradau deviation to reinstate the route to Blaenau Ffestiniog, severed by construction of the pumped storage scheme at Tanygrisiau. Survey work had been in progress since 1957, but the first sod was not cut until early 1965. As a prelude to complete reopening, services were extended to Dduallt in 1968. The Lands Tribunal case for compensation proceeded slowly, but in 1971 was decided in favour of the railway. In 1976 the new tunnel was holed through, and there is little doubt now that the new route will be opened in 1978.

Traffic figures on the Welshpool have yet to pass the 50,000 mark, but the line has not had to face the problems rapid growth creates, and retains its quiet rural character. Locomotives and rolling stock from Bowater's, Austria, Antigua and Sierra Leone have substantially eased pressure on the original limited resources, and opened a new dimension of travel on a British narrow gauge railway. Services were extended to Sylfaen in 1972, and trackwork has since concentrated on the section to Welshpool as a prelude to reopening the whole line.

This great activity in Wales tended to overshadow developments elsewhere. The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway was offered for sale in 1958 and 1959, then by auction in 1960. A preservation society had been formed, but with insufficient funds until Mr. Colin Gilbert came forward with financial backing to enable a successful bid of £12,000. A new operating company was formed in 1961, and the society reconstituted as a limited company to provide supporting funds and labour. The R.&E.R. never suffered closure or neglect, and the new owners therefore had a sound foundation on which to develop. A deviation was built at Holling Head to ease reverse curves, and Ravenglass station reconstructed and improved. New covered carriages far more suited to Lake District weather have gradually been introduced, and two completely new steam locomotives — RIVER MITE in 1966, and NORTHERN ROCK in 1976 — strengthened the motive power position. A recent development was conversion of the redundant B.R. station at Ravenglass to a public house, the "Ratty Arms".

Two former industrial railways have also been transformed into passenger carriers. In 1968 the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway granted running powers to the Iron Horse Preservation Society, renamed the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway Society the following year. Services started over the first mile from Pages Park in 1969, and now operate to Stonehenge (2¾ miles), where workshops were established in 1970. Although trains only run at weekends and holidays, traffic has grown to around 20,000 passengers a year. Although the railway operates a fleet of Simplex locomotives, so much a part of the L.B.L.R. in its sand carrying days, steam power also plays a big part. The De Winton CHALONER was an early arrival, followed by PIXIE, originally preserved by the Industrial Locomotive Society in 1957. THE DOLL arrived in 1969, but requires heavy repairs, so RISHRA, the unique Baguley imported from India by M.G. Satow, and P.C. ALLEN imported from Spain have done much of the work in the past few years. Carriages were constructed by the society, which has achieved a great deal with a small membership and limited resources.

In October 1969 the 2ft 6in gauge line operated by Bowater's at Sittingbourne closed down, and part of the route together with locomotives and stock were leased to the Locomotive Club of Great Britain. The

Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway, as it became, opened in the summer of 1970. The locomotive depot from Sittingbourne was moved to Kemsley Down, where a new station was established. Although the scenery along the line can hardly be described as scenic, it offers an unusual trip close to large centres of population. Its major advantage, for a line operating only at weekends, is undoubtedly the security offered by its location on Bowater's premises.

Since then availability of industrial railway equipment, coupled with a transport need in holiday areas, led to the growth of many lines. First was the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, utilising 2ft gauge equipment from the Nocton Estate Railway. The first section opened in 1960, with modified Simplex diesels and home made carriages, but steam traction appeared in 1962 when JURASSIC arrived, followed by ELIN in 1969. Two carriage bodies from the Ashover Light Railway were constructed with bogies from Nocton Wagons, and the most recent arrival is a further body from the Sand Hutton Light Railway. In 1965 the line was completely relaid on a new alignment, and extended to a new station at South Sea Lane.

The Clinton Devon Estates laid out the Bickton Woodland Railway during 1962-63 to give visitors access to a fine grove of pine trees in Bickton Gardens. This 18in gauge line uses former Royal Arsenal Railway equipment including the 0-4-0 tank WOOLWICH. Two Ruston diesels, and a powerful Hunslet 0-4-4-0 diesel from the same source have since been added, a bogie closed carriage from R.A.F. Fauld, and open carriages rebuilt from R.A.R. bogie wagons.

A similar need created the Bressingham narrow gauge railways. Alan Bloom was receiving increasing numbers of visitors, and in 1966 laid out ½ mile of 1ft 11in track in the nursery to enable these to be viewed from the train. GEORGE SHOLTO and GWYNEDD, together with track and stock from Penrhyn Quarries formed the basis for the line, which developed the following year into the Fen & Freezen Hills Railway, now two miles long.

A second line, the 1 mile Woodland Railway opened in 1969, but closed in 1973 when part of the route was incorporated in the 15in gauge Waveney Valley Railway. Worked by Krupp "Pacifics", this added to the locomotives of German origin already represented by EIGIAU and BRUNHILDE.

1971 proved to be a bumper year, with several new lines opening. Pleasurail developed two railways; the 2ft 6in gauge Whipsnade & Umfolozi running into the white rhino paddock at Whipsnade Zoo, and a 1ft 11½in gauge line in Knebworth Park. Former Bowater's equipment was used at Whipsnade, and the track was extended in 1973 to form a 1½ mile circuit offering views of many African animals at close quarters. The Knebworth West Park & Wintergreen Railway was also extended into a route 1¼ miles long from a picturesque terminal station to loop round serving the camping grounds. Several imported locomotives now work here, including an attractive Bagnall 4-4-0T from Natal, and an East German 0-8-0. Last summer a special open day was staged, and this promises to become an important event in the narrow gauge calendar.



The "Grand Parade" at the Narrow Gauge Steam Rally, Knebworth Park on 24th July 1976. From right to left are Hunslets No.1, and LILLA, Peckett TRIASSIC, Avonside SEZELA No. 4, Bagnall PIXIE, Orenstein & Koppel EIGIAU and Barber TRIXIE. (Linehaul Systems Ltd).

Also in the south, the 1 mile Hollycombe Woodland Railway opened, operated by CALEDONIA from Dinorwic. Local objections caused by fears that the development would create traffic problems raised doubts that the line would continue, but fortunately these have now subsided.

A line along Lake Padarn following the Padarn Railway route was planned in 1966, and finally opened in 1971 after initial teething troubles. Again Dinorwic equipment was used, together with locally built carriages. In 1972 track was extended from the original terminal to Penllyn, giving a 2 mile run. The Rheilffordd Llyn Llanberis is probably the most attractive of the new railways.

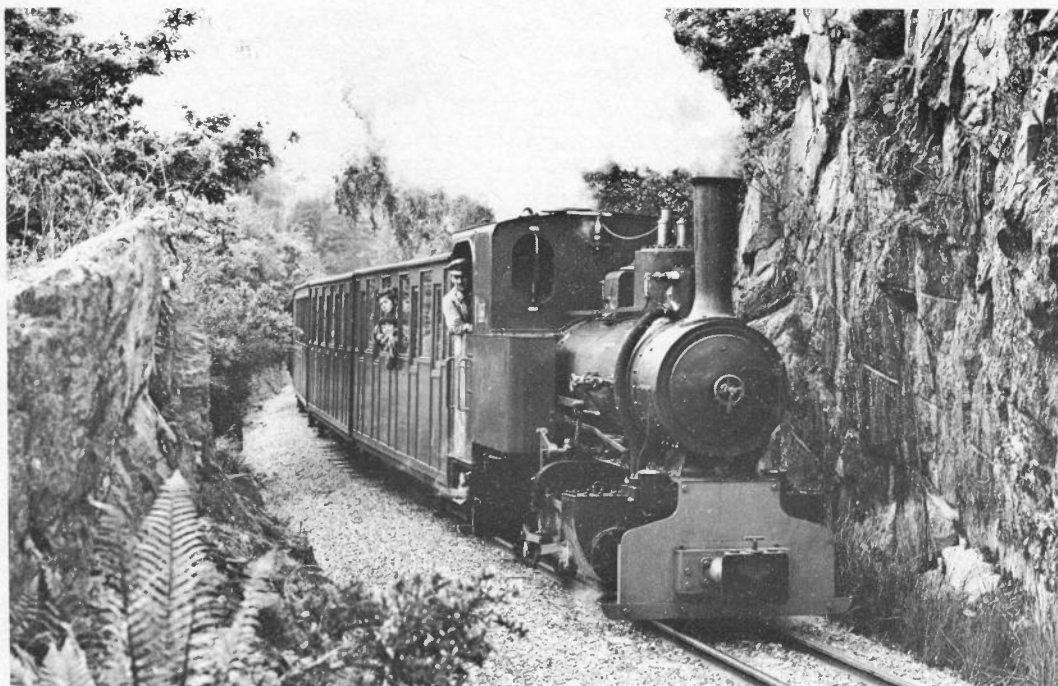
In Ulster the Shane's Castle Railway, a 1 ½ mile 3ft gauge line serving a nature reserve on the banks of Lough Neagh, also opened. This line is extremely well equipped, with Peckett TYRONE, originally preserved by W.P. McCormick in 1960, and SHANE, a Barclay from Bord na Mona. Diesel power includes NIPPY, a "Planet" formerly at the Safety in Mines Research Station at Buxton. Carriages were built on former peat railway wagon underframes.

The story of the Bala Lake Railway, opened in 1972, was told in a recent "Narrow Gauge", and completed the group of new steam operated lines. However, since then a number of short diesel worked lines, mainly 2ft gauge, have opened, and may be followed by others. Probably the most ambitious is at Cotswold Marina, latterly converted to metre gauge and using former tramway trailer cars from France. Finally, a novel new line was opened in 1972 by Quarry Tours at Llechwedd. This deservedly became an instant success, giving visitors a unique insight into an unusual narrow gauge industrial railway operation.

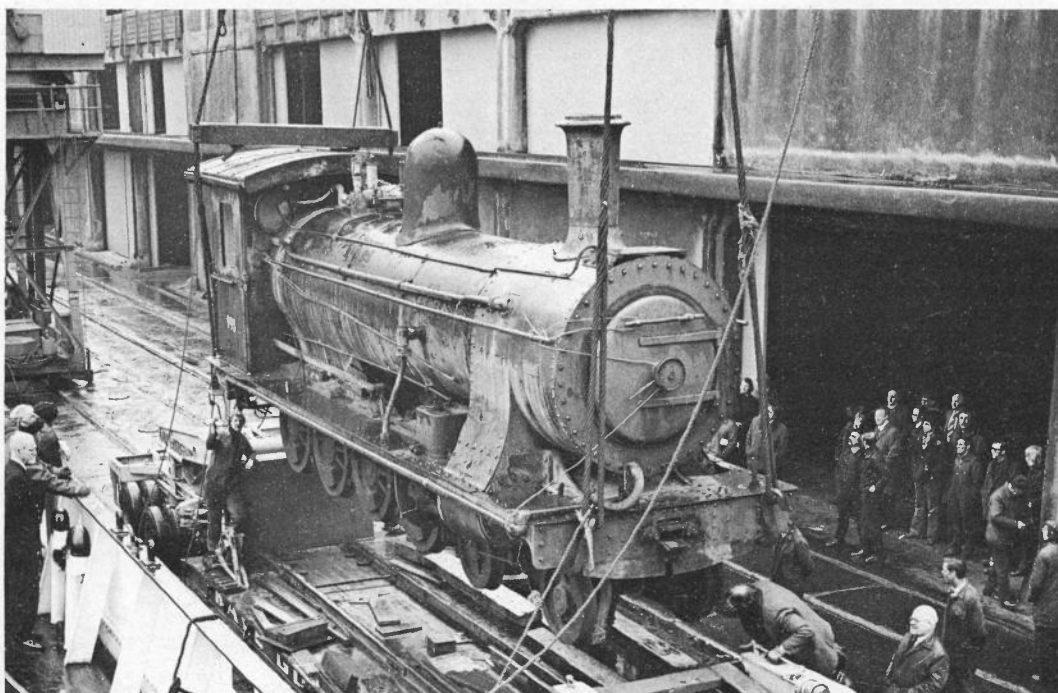
Turning now to Museums, some fine collections are now on display. The first was Belfast Transport Museum, opened in 1955, and including many 3ft gauge exhibits. This includes pioneer electric tramway cars from Giants Causeway and Bessbrook, and a Portstewart Tramway steam locomotive. Closure of the Caven & Leitrim and County Donegal railways in 1959 enabled steam locomotives and stock to be added, and a former Clogher Valley Railway diesel railcar. The industrial scene is represented by 0-4-0 tank engines from British Aluminium and Guinness.



Latter days on the Festiniog Railway. The miners confer on the task ahead outside the new Moelwyn Tunnel in October 1975. In the foreground stand the Wingrove & Rogers battery locomotive and rock shovel.
(P.J.G. Ransom)



*It is hard to believe that this view of Arn. Jung 7509/1937 on a Rheilffordd Llyn Llanberis train from Penllyn was taken in July 1975, only four years after the line was opened.
(L.A. Nixon)*



*Back in Britain after eighty years in Africa, David Shepherd's 7th class from the Zambesi Sawmills Railway is unloaded from the "Tactician" at Manchester Docks on 25th March 1975.
(Alltransport International Group).*

In 1955 the Tallyllyn Railway opened a small display at Wharf station, since enlarged into the most comprehensive display of narrow gauge relics in the country. Welsh lines are naturally well represented, but the collection includes exhibits from all over the British Isles.

The National Trust recently extended its activities to industrial archeology, and its first major development was the Penrhyn Castle Industrial Railway Museum. Opened in 1965, this includes a varied display of Penrhyn equipment, and items from Dinorwic and Penmaenmawr quarries. FIRE QUEEN, the 1848 locomotive from the Padarn Railway, and Lord Penrhyn's saloon are the gems of this collection.

Recognising the part industrial railways played, several local museums now include narrow gauge exhibits. The long established Birmingham Science Museum received the unique Bellis & Seekings locomotive from the Furzebrook Railway, and examples of Bagnall and Kerr Stuart 0-4-0 tanks. Doncaster have an early Hunslet mines diesel, and Lincoln an early Ruston & Hornsby diesel. The new National Railway Museum at York received the 18in gauge WREN from Clapham, and more recently the pioneer Garratt.

Railway preservation societies have mushroomed during the past twenty years, some devoted to establishing museums of narrow gauge equipment. The Brockham Museum Trust, one of the earliest, developed from the preservation of TOWNSEND HOOK by the N.G.R.S. in 1960, and leased Brockham Quarry in 1962. This site has since obtained several steam locomotives and a variety of i/c locomotives representing most British builders. Poor access prevented Brockham from developing on commercial lines, but the planned move to Merton will make the collection available to a wider public.

In the Isle of Wight, the Albany Steam & Industrial Museum collected several Ruston diesels, and recently acquired a Kerr Stuart 0-4-0 tank stored at Bromsgrove for many years. Although the East Anglia Transport Museum is mainly devoted to road vehicles, a 2ft gauge line provides rides at weekends behind diesel locomotives, and several groups primarily devoted to preserving standard gauge equipment also include static or operating narrow gauge exhibits. One of the best is at Lytham Creek, where the Hunslet JONATHAN, beautifully restored, hauls passengers in former Groudle Glen carriages.

The West Lancashire Light and Cheadle Moseley School railways are examples of ambitious projects undertaken by small groups, and have recently featured in "The Narrow Gauge". Also in the north west, the Rossendale Forest Railway Society have gathered a collection of 2ft gauge locomotives, including two interesting Baguley products.

Ireland has the Stradbally 3ft gauge line, where a Bord na Mona Barclay 0-4-0 tank operates on a ¾ mile line started over ten years ago, and in 1974 the Foyle Valley Railway brought its County Donegal and Lough Swilly railway exhibits to Londonderry. A diesel railcar now operates over a short section of track.

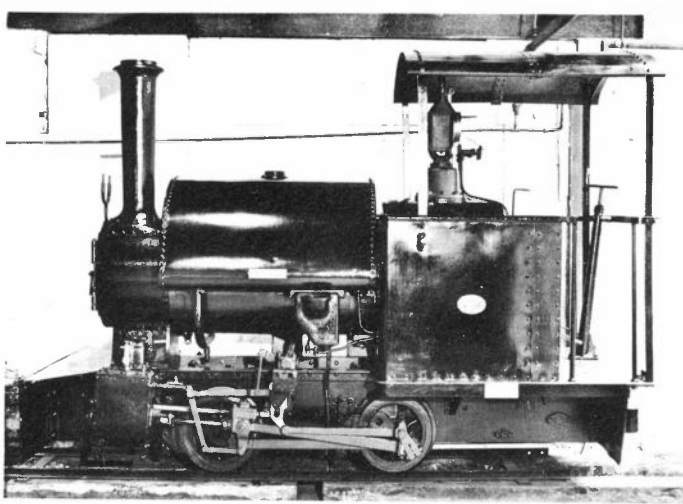
There have been many schemes to reopen lines closed years ago, and the Welsh Highland Light Railway (1964) Ltd. has been collecting locomotives since 1963. In 1974 the first developments took place in Wales when a depot was up at Porthmadog, but recent interest by the local authority indicates that reconstruction of the section from Rhymdydd could go ahead. Apart from RUSSELL, which was presented to the Society following ten years of display at Tywyn, steam locomotives were outnumbered by diesels. However, the Society recently acquired Orenstein & Koppel 0-6-0 well tank PEDEMOURA, and a 1942 Peckett 0-4-2 tank imported from Rhodesia. The Corris Railway Society have set up a small museum at Corris, and last year moved a Simplex diesel here which may operate on a short 2ft 3in gauge line.

In other parts of the world many locomotives have been preserved out in the open in parks, childrens playgrounds and stations. However, this approach is uncommon here because weather conditions are seldom favourable for exposed metals. A few diesel locomotives rest in playgrounds, and of course PENLEE has stood on its plinth at Newlyn since 1951. C.I.E. restored the West Clare Railway 0-6-2 tank in 1961, placed it on a plinth at Ennis station in 1961, and protected it by a canopy. In 1963 after many years on display at W.G. Bagnall Ltd., ISABEL was moved to a plinth outside the new station in Stafford.

Narrow gauge locomotives are — or at least were — relatively cheap to buy and maintain, and can be housed in a domestic garage. When the preservation movement developed it was natural that enthusiasts wanting a locomotive or railway of their own should turn to narrow gauge equipment. The supply of steam locomotives in this country was rapidly exhausted, but the past few years have witnessed an increasing number of imports, sometimes of British origin. As a result, the total number of narrow gauge steam locomotives in this country has increased rather than declined.

The first locomotive preserved privately was TRIASSIC, a Peckett 0-6-0 tank from Rugby Portland Cement. J.B. Latham moved this to his Surrey home in 1957, later adding WILLIAM FINLAY from Betchworth Quarries, and LILLA from Penrhyn. LILLA and TRIASSIC are now at Knebworth, but WILLIAM FINLAY remains.

The earliest complete restoration project was a Kerr Stuart "Wren" 0-4-0 saddle tank which lay in a Worcestershire farmyard for many years. Alan Maund purchased this in 1959 and spent much time and effort



*Birmingham Science Museum
LEONARD, Bagnall 2087/1918
(City of Birmingham).*

bringing it back into good order. It occupied a thatched barn at his home near Worcester, and was occasionally steamed on a short stretch of track. Later the same year Ian N. Fraser purchased a Dundee gasworks "Pug", and following a complex legal battle which finally involved the Secretary of State for Scotland, built an impressive building beside his home to house the "Pug" and his traction engine. These locomotives have now passed to new owners, the "Wren" to R.P. Morris, and Ian Fraser's "Pug" to the Ravenglass & Eskdale, which proposes to rebuild it into a steam railcar.

The longest lived 2ft gauge garden railway is the now famous Cadeby Light Railway of the Rev. E.R. Boston. PIXIE arrived in 1962 and works on a track around the perimeter of the rectory grounds. The collection here has been enlarged by other steam and diesel locomotives, including early Baguley and Hudswell Clarke products. Another early line was started by J. Buckler at Morley in 1965. ALAN GEORGE, purchased from Penrhyn in scrap condition, was beautifully restored and now operates on a line incorporating some impressive engineering works, including a girder bridge.

During the early 1960's most of the remaining steam locomotives in Welsh slate quarries passed to new owners, and several impressive rebuilds emerged from what had previously been little more than piles of scrap. G.J. Mullis of Droitwich started with ELGIAU from Penrhyn, and tackled others later, but his collection was disposed of in 1970, mostly to A.J. Hills who already had SYBIL and a De Winton from Penyrsedd. The standard of Tony Hills rebuilds is well known, and may soon be appreciated more widely when his proposed line in the Brecon Beacons is constructed.

In 1963 R.P. Morris obtained an interesting Ruston Proctor paraffin locomotive dating from 1915, which lay derelict at a St. Austell china clay works for many years. This started a large collection of internal combustion locomotives which is reported to form the basis of an industrial railway museum at Nantlle in Wales. During the past few years large numbers of diesel locomotives covering every British builder have passed into private hands, and some individuals have acquired substantial collections. In particular, the restoration carried out on several Ruston & Hornsby locomotives, mainly 2ft 6in gauge, by Cliffe and Doreen Lawson equals the best steam rebuilds in excellence.

Peter Allen started a trend in 1964 by importing an Orenstein & Koppel from Spain, followed by P.J.G. Ransom the following year when his Alco arrived from Pithiviers in France. Both now work on passenger carrying railways, but there are still many locomotives from abroad in private hands. Spain, France and South Africa are particularly well represented, with the largest single collection secreted away at a farm in Hambleton, Surrey.

Importing locomotives of any size is an expensive and hazardous business, and the task of David Shepherd in bringing back the 3ft 6in gauge Sharp Stewart 4-8-0 was undoubtedly the most complicated. This locomotive from the Zambesi Sawmills Railway is a particularly fine example of British design for African main line railways, and is now appropriately on display at Whipsnade.

In this brief review it was impossible to cover every preservation venture, and inevitably some reader's favourites were omitted. Although much has been published recording progress during the past quarter century many projects have received little mention. Perhaps those who have been directly involved will be spurred to set down their experiences in future editions of "The Narrow Gauge".

Finally, the greatest benefit is clearly derived by the general public, by travelling on a preserved railway or visiting a museum they can obtain some of the pleasure those who helped to carry it through enjoyed. The time and effort spent has been well rewarded.

INDUSTRIAL NARROW GAUGE 1951- 1976

FRANK JUX. who contributes this article, was one of a small group of enthusiasts who pioneered interest in non steam as well as steam industrial narrow gauge and has since studied and visited such lines throughout the world.

How many narrow gauge locomotives have there been in the UK in the last twenty-five years ? A difficult question to answer, for information available is not comprehensive, although a study of the published "Industrial Locomotive Pocket Books" gives a good idea. Sufficient here to say that the number is substantial, with steam far outnumbered by diesel. Undoubtedly the quarter-century has been one of irrevocable decline in narrow gauge railway usage in the face of competition from rubber-tyred transport. Older members must regret the passing of an era when nearly every enthusiast had a narrow gauge line of some sort nearby which could be studied at leisure. The many preservation schemes have saved many of the locos., but can never completely replace the interest of the diversity of settings in which they worked. To capture the atmosphere of a Glasgow gasworks system nearly twenty years ago needs more than a description of locos. It needs the clamour of trams, the rattle of carts over cobblestones, the smell of industrial smog — in short more than a brief review such as this can set down on paper. So a few notes will have to suffice to chart the way with apologies to those whose favourite line has escaped mention.

1951. Formation of the NGRS. Not very fashionable to take an interest in industrial lines, especially if they do not operate steam locos. Information difficult to come by as "Industrial Pocket Books" cover only half of England, and entries regarding diesel operated lines sparse. Possible to discover unrecorded locations if one keeps ones eyes open and can read an Ordnance Survey map. Festival of Britain in London displays beautifully finished Planet diesel loco for Guinness of Dublin, and Ruston and Hunslet mines locos as examples of British narrow gauge locos. For full measure a metre gauge Wickham inspection car is shown.

Guinness at this time still operated a fascinating railway at their Dublin brewery. It was one of the pioneer loco operated lines of its type, and several old steam locos of unique design were still in use. They were soon to be replaced by Planet diesels, and several found good homes with museums.

1952. Visits to Penrhyn and Dinorwic slate quarries could be arranged without much trouble, before the management found that too many visitors were coming to view the delights of small antique steam locos fussing along the mountain ledges and along their private railways to the ports. Both quarries were large and had made half-hearted attempts at dieselisation, but steam performed much of the work, and did so until closure of the quarries, and the auction of the locos — which really set the preservation ball rolling. The smaller slate quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog were diesel or electric powered, and it may be significant that it is the smaller quarries that survived. No technological breakthrough in production of slates was made, and the labour intensive industry was unable to compete with the machine made tiles. or simpler forms of roofing. Similar rail systems, with a wealth of rope-worked inclines (very tiring to climb in the blazing sun) existed at granite quarries at Penmaenmawr, where a vertical boilered De Winton loco (WATKIN), was posed near the seawall out of use, and a familiar sight to passing holidaymakers. A feature of Welsh slate quarries were the small loco sheds on each working level, where locos were sometimes completely walled in when the level was out of use, presumably to protect them from the damp mists and marauding sheep.

Sand and gravel pits were large users of internal combustion locos on fairly light "Jubilee" track. Most had Ruston or Simplex locos, but there were examples of many different types, Orenstein and Koppel diesels (often known as Montania locos) being particularly common in the Home Counties. The wagons used were usually standard side tip skips, but several firms had more substantial hopper wagons. Nearly all operated over two feet gauge track, but a few such as the Uxbridge Flint Brick Co. had other gauges. Some quarries had 20 inch gauge track, almost certainly bought as 50cm gauge material, while others had a multiplicity of gauges like the 3ft 2 ¼ in of the Dorking Greystone Lime Co's system. Visitors to the present day Brockham Museum can imagine the heyday of the system at Betchworth, a short distance away, and it was certainly a delightfully rural industry in 1952, the hum of activity blending with the sounds of the countryside. Modernisation of the rail system extended only to the use of an Orenstein & Koppel diesel at the working face, hauling the old timber bodied wagons to the head of an ingeniously designed incline, the motive power for which was provided by the narrow gauge steam loco hovering at its foot. The line succumbed to dumpers in 1955, and both narrow gauge steam locos went into preservation in 1960.

1953. G.W. Bungey Ltd. moved from Hayes to Heston at this time. The British diesel loco manufacturers hadn't caught up with demand, and there was an opportunity for a firm to specialise in the overhaul and sale of second-hand locos. A large number of Government surplus locos were available from stocks built up in wartime, many not used, and these were bought at auctions and held in stock by various dealers. A 20hp loco would cost you about £1300 new and £650 secondhand. Scores of locos passed through Bungey's depot, where they were

stripped and overhauled: as there was no track, demonstration runs had to be made on the loco's flanges over the concrete floor. Bungey supplied a Simplex loco to Pike Bros., Fayle & Co. Ltd at Furzebrook in Dorset in 1951 and the tale was told of how its delivery vehicle suffered a puncture en route. The late arrival found the works deserted, and no-one to help in unloading, so the only option open was to build a pile of sleepers to the level of the lorry, manhandle the loco onto it, and leave it on its pedestal to be found by the new owners the next day; their comments were not recorded! Pike Bros. still operated a fine collection of antique locos over their 2ft 8ins gauge tracks, including SECUNDUS, now preserved in Birmingham Museum, and examples from Picketts and Manning Wardle, both manufacturers renowned for elegant products. One of the Picketts was earmarked for a projected preservation scheme which failed to get off the ground, and the loco was scrapped at Picketts where it had been sent for overhaul. On Pike's 2ft 0in gauge line at nearby Corfe Castle, RUSSELL of Welsh Highland fame was in regular use. This too was destined for preservation, and became the property of the Birmingham Locomotive Club after an early preservation appeal. By 1955 Pike Bros. Fayle & Co. Ltd. had decided to abandon its ageing rail transport system and rely entirely on road transport, so eliminating one of Southern England's most pleasant systems.

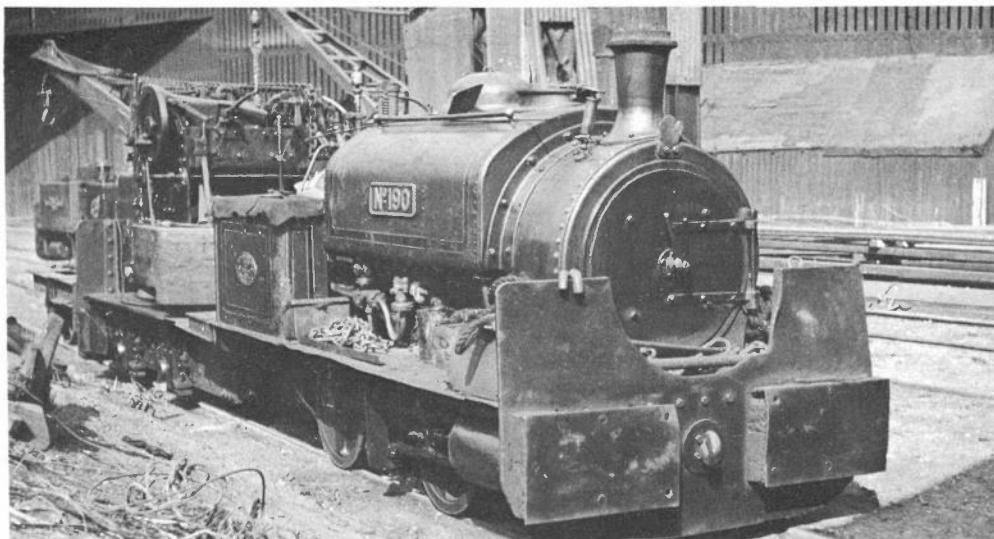
1954. Most **sewage** and brick works still operated railways with internal combustion motive power, and were still acquiring new locos. The London Brick Co. at Stewartby had several Sentinel steam locos out of use, and the same firm had working examples at Peterborough. Elsewhere they had a fleet of diesel locos, but the trend was advancing towards replacement of these by dumpers or conveyor systems. Contractors still used narrow gauge diesel locos extensively for placing concrete, and most large firms had a few locos, skips and track in their yard. Locos are still used for tunnelling, but the last major contract with an extensive narrow gauge system was the driving of the new Potters Bar railway tunnels by Charles Brand in 1955/56, when a fleet of Rustons operated an intensive service hauling spoil for dumping. London's Old Kent Road gasworks had two Bagnall 2-4-0 tanks reminiscent of the Rye Camber out of use and available for preservation at £30 each — no takers! Railway society tours could still find plenty of interest in the Midlands ironstone area, where a wealth of 3ft 0in and metre gauge steam operated, and had a few more years to run before closure. In 1953 Bagnall had delivered the last narrow gauge steam locomotive built for the home market. An unusual loco for a British line, MONARCH was an articulated loco of a type designed for use in South African sugarcane fields. It went to Bowater-Lloyds system

at Sittingbourne to join one of England's most efficiently maintained fleet of steam locos. Across a creek from the Sittingbourne papermill was the small Smeed Dean cement works and brickworks owned by the Associated Portland Cement Co., whose varied lines obviously dated from earlier days. Their 4ft 3in gauge line with its



Industrial narrow gauge railways have been used in a wide variety of locations. Surely one of the most unsavoury was the 1ft. 8in. gauge system at the Royal Borough of Kensington's Wood Lane destructor works, where Lister petrol loco 40011 is seen propelling two loaded skips up the steaming rubbish tip on 26th. August, 1954. Note that the loco has been rebuilt with the engine of a Scammell lorry. (Frank Jux).

steam and diesel loco lasted until closure of the works in the 1960's, by which time it was all diesel. While no other narrow gauge steam locos were built for the home market, a small number of steam locos were built for export, the last being a Hunslet for Java in 1971. In the West Country PIXIE (an example of Kerr Stuart's "Wren" class) was out of use at a Devon County Council quarry at Tavistock, but interest in preservation was increasing, and this found a new owner a year or two later in the Industrial Locomotive Society — still its owners, though it is on loan to the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway. At Lee Moor the two locos slumbered in their shed in the mists of Dartmoor; these too were owned by an enlightened firm, and were saved for later preservation.

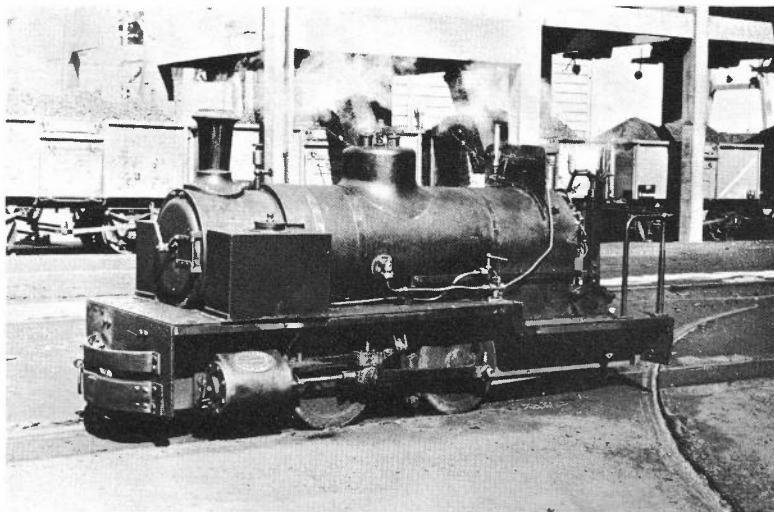


The unusual metre gauge Black Hawthorn 0-4-0ST + crane at Swan Hunter's Carville yard, Wallsend. (Frank Jones).

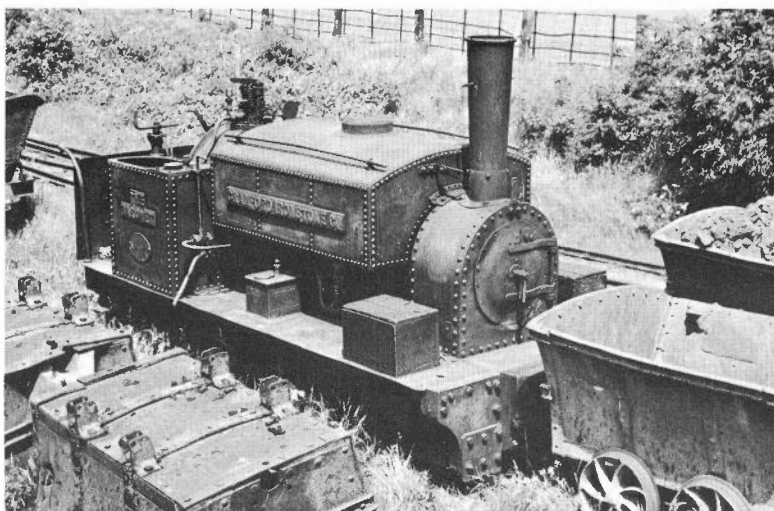
1955. The North East was still a very steamy area centred on coal mining, shipbuilding, and heavy industry, but railways were mostly of standard gauge. The NCB were large buyers of underground railway equipment and locos., some of which, of increasing horse powers, appeared on the surface on local lines to drift mines, or on service tracks around the pithead. Swan Hunter and Wigham Richardson had the remains of a metre gauge line around their shipbuilding yard at Carville, but the increasing size of plates used in constructing supertankers had meant its replacement by standard gauge, and its unique Black Hawthorn 0-4-0 saddletank plus four wheeled crane combination was scrapped within a year. Scottish gasworks were being modernised and older works closed. Three works in Glasgow, one in Edinburgh and one in Dundee still had old-fashioned vertical retorts in use, the coke from which was drawn out from underneath over narrow gauge tracks on which diminutive four coupled steam locos were employed. Edinburgh and the Provan works in Glasgow used Barclay locos., somewhat larger than the others, who operated a more or less standard design that had been produced by a number of builders. They were all very basic locos., with very few unessential fittings; their water and coal capacity was minimal, and a hose was near at hand to top up the water supply after a foray under the retorts. Happily a few of the locos are preserved, and the latest one to be built (by Barclay in 1946) is now in magnificent condition on the Welshpool line. Also operating in Scotland was the electrified 2ft 6in gauge line serving the oil shale mines at Winchburgh. These had some interesting locos., including two Baldwin built locos from the turn of the century. The shale-oil industry was long established in Scotland, but was unable to compete with imported oil; most works were being run down, and all production ceased around 1960.

1956. Enthusiasts were fortunate in being able to join a special train for a trip over the Chattenden & Upnor Railway **behind its Drewry diesel** - now on the Welshpool line. The last of the line's steam locos was lying out of use awaiting scrap, although another, CHEVALIER, found new employment with Bowater-Lloyd at Sittingbourne, eventually going to Whipsnade to face the white rhinos. As the C & U.R. was built by the Royal Engineers it was a substantially built line, a prominent feature being the girder bridge over a main road, on which the train was posed for photographers. *Scheduled services ceased in 1961 and the line was lifted some years later.*

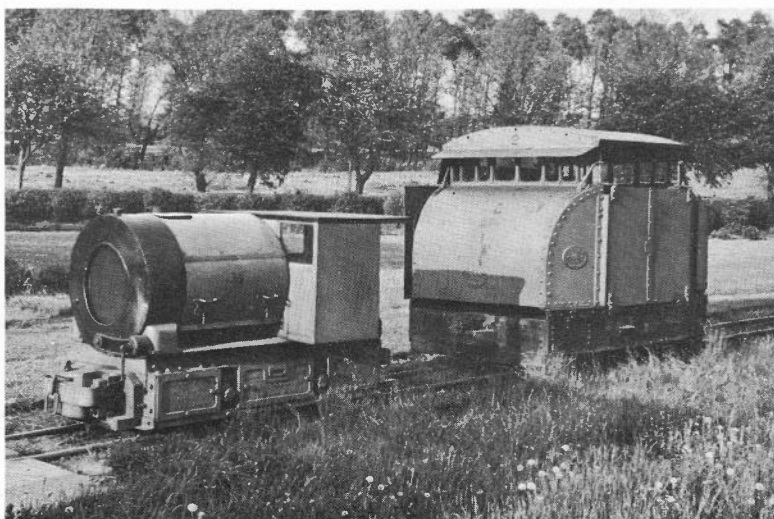
Probably the peak year for narrow gauge interest, with few new systems opened later, and an increasing number of lines abandoned each year. In the Midlands, a sad loss was the closure of the quarry tramway at Southam Cement Works, where some delightful little Picketts had been employed.



Many Scottish gasworks used these diminutive 0-4-4ot's built by a variety of firms. The last one in service was Granton Gasworks No.9 (Andrew Barclay 1871 of 1925), seen here simmering in the sun on 1st April 1962. (F. Jux)



While not the prettiest of all the narrow gauge locos that have worked in the Midlands ironstone fields, THE BARONET nevertheless had its own particular aristocratic charm. Built by Markham of Chesterfield in 1889, it lay derelict at Waltham ironstone pits, Leics., for many years until cut up on site some time after the delightful metre gauge tramway's 'temporary' closure in February 1958 proved all too permanent. (Frank Jones).



Knostrop Sewage Works, Leeds has been a firm favourite for Society visits. This view shows one of the 'protected' Simplexes and the unusual James Kay paraffin loco. (Vic Nutton).



The Hunslet slate quarry saddletanks were probably the most well-known industrial narrow gauge steam locos in Britain. The last one to remain in active industrial service was HOLY WAR at Dinorwic, which finally ceased work late in October 1967, although this particular picture was taken eleven years earlier. (Ivo Peters).

1957. Government auctions still putting more narrow gauge diesels on the market. Closures continue, including the 4ft 0in gauge line of Parish & Co., at Erith, which had a long history, typical of the old-established family businesses which were being taken over by more aggressive competitors.

1958. Public Works Exhibition includes stands of Motor Rail and Robert Hudson, showing their standard locos., and ME Engineering, showing a Lister Blackstone loco. A sign of the trouble in the loco building industry was the production of the last Peckett steam locomotive, a 3ft 0in gauge loco for overseas. The only market with any prospects in the UK was for standard gauge shunters, but this became extremely competitive. Peckett's built **their last loco in 1959, and many of Britain's best known builders of industrial (and main-line) locos closed in the next few years.** Some tried to widen the range of products, but generally without success.

1960-70. Closures all the way. The Padarn and Penrhyn main lines in 1961/2 and the quarry lines by 1967, part of the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway in 1967; all the remaining ironstone lines; Bowater-Lloyd as late as 1969, completing the eclipse of steam for industrial use. By then many steam locos were being acquired for preservation, and the last two lines were taken over for pleasure use. During most of the decade a wide range of industries used I/C operated lines, but many of the industries were becoming dominated by larger groupings and re-equipment without rail usage often followed.

1971-1976. Extensive narrow gauge loco usage is now confined to underground lines, where the advantages of tracked vehicles in restricted tunnels is obvious. On the surface, peat mosses and sewage works, brickworks, and other users continue to use diesel or electric haulage with the occasional new loco produced by one of the remaining loco builders, who include Baguley, Barclay, Motor Rail and Hunslet producing diesel locos., and a number of firms building battery and electric locos. More activity was evident in the preservation field, where numerous private and society lines have sprung up using ex industrial locos, and any kind of narrow gauge loco is in demand. Most preserved industrial locos, if they work at all, are pressed into passenger service. What would be interesting to see in the future would be a preserved **working** industrial railway — perhaps we will !

THE EUROPEAN NARROW GAUGE SCENE 1951 - 76.

London Area Secretary PETER LEMMEY, contributor of several European articles for THE NARROW GAUGE, looks at the European narrow gauge scene.

The story of the narrow gauge in continental Europe over the last twenty-five years is predominantly a tale of increasing operating costs and the rise of private motoring. The majority of European narrow gauge lines were born of an attempt to open up rural areas and difficult tracts of country where their comparative economy in construction and ability to cope with hilly terrain could be exploited to best advantage. All the time such country districts looked only to the nearest market town as the focus of their economic activities, and so long as their inhabitants were not overly concerned at how slowly they were conveyed there, the narrow gauge in general fulfilled some sort of transport need. However, in the years following the Second World War most European countries, whether of the East or West, became more and more industrialized and less agrarian in character; motor transport which had been a force to be reckoned with even in the Thirties was now almost universally available, offering a more convenient service on nearly all but the longest journeys. Narrow gauge railways subject to such road competition and without the support of specialized (often industrial) traffic so became in the main increasingly uneconomic. Profits turned into deficits, or more often lines which had never paid their way on the books required larger and larger subsidies from local or national governments to meet their running costs. Of course, some systems remained reasonably solvent, often benefitting from restricted competition or cutting costs with devices like the standard gauge transporter, while others were deemed to provide a useful service and were underwritten accordingly, but for many railways the result of it all has been the grassy and overgrown trackbeds which, all over the continent, mark where the narrow gauge runs no more.

It is, I suppose, a truism that many of the light lines that have now disappeared seem in retrospect to have had a fascination that those remaining cannot match. I suspect that this is due in part to old photographs, almost invariably taken on balmy summer days; but though nostalgia's tinting may in some cases be over-rosy, few enthusiasts will deny the qualities of many of these vanished railways, at any rate on grounds of wayward charm if not perhaps of efficiency.

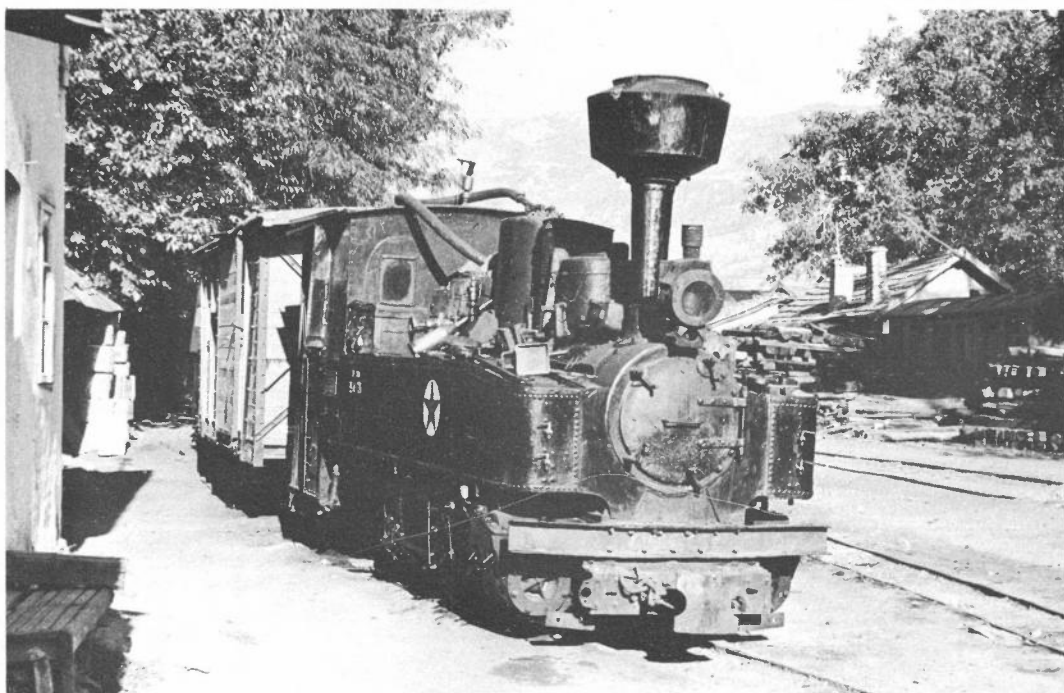
One of the best-loved of all European narrow gauge lines was the now almost legendary *lokalbahn* which trundled through the valleys of the Salzkammergut. Its little 0-6-2Ts last ran between Salzburg and Bad Ischl in 1957, but even today at St Lorenz and down by the Wolfgangsee they will still sell you postcards celebrating the line. Very different in atmosphere but certainly no less picturesque were many of Spain's narrow gauge railways. One of the most interesting, the 750mm concern which ran from Onda to Castellon, closed in August 1963. Much of its motive power, neat 0-6-0Ts and 0-6-2Ts, had been supplied by Krauss, and these little green tanks were much photographed as they pottered to and fro between Onda and the coast, particularly where they mixed it with the traffic in the streets of Castellon. Gone now too is the jolly line which linked Bari with Barletta down on Italy's Adriatic coastline, whose impossibly crowded trains feature in many war-time memories.

France was once narrow gauge territory *par excellence*, but only a handful of lines remain today. The C F Cotes-du-Nord route up the breezy Brittany coast to Paimpol, with its sturdy Corpet Louvet tanks and electric fleet of autorails, must have been a real gem. The last section of the once widespread Cotes-du-Nord network, it eventually succumbed in 1956, and the years that followed saw the closure of several other French lines of great character, among them one of my own favourites, the P.O. Correze system down in the wooded hills of Limousin. Whether in a lively Billard railcar or behind a Blanc Misseron mallet, a ride on the P O C was always fun. In West Germany too the narrow gauge once flourished, and the last twenty-five years have seen a great thinning of the ranks, both among the D B branches and the private *schmalspurbahnen*. Of the latter, one of the finest must surely have been the Kreis Altenaer Eisenbahn away to the south of the Ruhr. To judge from the photographs, its smart little trains must have made for some memorable journeyings along the fringes of the Sauerland hills.

In what is now Yugoslavia, the 760mm gauge was no branch line expedient, but the standard to which were built the main lines of communication through Bosnia and Hercegovina. An enormous system south and west of Belgrade with a most varied collection of locomotives survived more or less intact until the late Fifties, and some sections are in operation even today. As recently as 1972, I spent several enjoyable days in the Sarajevo area attempting to photograph the chunky J Z eight-coupled tender engines working in double harness along the scenic Drina gorges and pounding round the spirals which led up onto the Serbian plateau and Titovo Uzice. Unfortunately, 1972 was too late for me to catch up with another Yugoslavian railway which caught the imagination of many enthusiasts, the 600mm route from Gostivar to Lake Ohrid. This entailed over one hundred miles of Feldbahn haulage in what I imagine must have been conditions of remarkable discomfort. Further southward in the Balkans, that idyllic line which climbed away from Volos through the olive groves to Mileai



*Sierra Menera (Spain). North British 4-8-0 No. 10 MARIA, built in 1907, rolls a long train of hoppers past Mora on the way up to the mines at Ojos Negros — 2nd. October 1963.
(D. Trevor Rowe).*



*600mm gauge Gostivar — Lake Ohrid railway (Jugoslavia). A Feldbahn 0-8-0T, No. 99.4.126, on shed at Ohrid, the southern terminus of the line, 27th August 1961.
(D. Trevor Rowe).*

faded from the timetables at the end of 1971, and I doubt whether the old S P A P network around the Peloponnesus is much fun now that the 2-6-0Ts have been retired.

It has not been entirely a story of wholesale closure and scrapping, however, over the last twenty-five years. Many lines are still with us, some albeit much changed in character since 1951, and it is worth looking briefly at the reasons why they have fared better than their less fortunate brethren. In a number of places, national transport policy appears to have favoured the retention of unremunerative routes, anyway until economic conditions in the country concerned improve enough for alternative methods of transport to develop. Portugal would seem to be a case in point. The hilly northern provinces still support a considerable metre gauge mileage and although the oldest of the 2-6-0Ts have probably gone by now, steam still powers many of the trains. There have been some radical changes since the dictatorship was ousted two years ago, but the narrow gauge seems likely to remain for some time to come (indeed, sections of the old Vouga valley line have recently been re-opened), although there may be some problems in keeping the steam engines running until more of the long-awaited diesels eventually arrive. In Spain too, another country still poor in many areas, several major metre gauge systems soldier on, though much changed in atmosphere from the days when the magnificent Alsacienne 4-6-2s of the Ferrocarril de La Robla used to work out of Bilbao up onto the high Sierra, and the burnished tanks of the Cantabrian and Asturian railways drew numerous admirers from north of the Pyrenees down to the Biscay coast. Diesel power is now the order of the day on almost all the remaining Spanish narrow gauge operations, with the notable exception of the Ponferrada — Villablino line north-west of Leon which is chiefly a coal-carrier and appropriately keeps a smart stud of coal-burners, Engerth-type 2-6-0s and Baldwin 2-6-2Ts, to haul the trains.

At the other end of Europe, the narrow gauge can also be found working over large tracts of country, one of the reasons again being the lack of much private competition. The metre and 750mm gauge lines of Poland are still quite numerous, and have received plenty of new equipment since the War, as have several lines in East Germany. A series of 65-ton ten-coupled tanks for the metre gauge entered service on the D R as late as 1954-56, and with the easing of travel restrictions they now afford enthusiasts from the West some fine runs through the Harz mountains. East Germany too has a number of 750mm branches, these last chiefly in the Dresden area, and here again modern 2-10-2Ts are much in evidence. The Iron Curtain countries still harbour a variety of interesting agricultural and forestry lines, not least in Rumania, where for instance in the mountains behind Deva there runs the splendid Orastie logging railway and very likely other forestry systems as well.

In a number of cases, narrow gauge lines have survived because, like the Orastie operation in Rumania, they deal with some specific and often industrial traffic for various reasons not easily transported in other ways. The coal-carrying Ponferrada line, already mentioned, falls to a great extent within this category, although it does not disdain to run a handsome green passenger train once or twice a day. A heavy mineral pay-load did not save the long Sierra Menera metric line far to the south, which lost out to the **broad gauge** despite some superb Scottish 4-8-0s, but it has almost certainly ensured the survival up to now of one of France's most scenic but least known metre gauge railways, the C F de la Mure, near Grenoble; heavy Secheron electric locos have here been working rakes of coal hoppers up and down the Drac valley since the Thirties. Electric narrow gauge lines in Europe are, of course, by no means rare. Some can be counted little different from town trams, but many others live on another form of specialized traffic which is in its own way very much an industry. Switzerland has a good claim to be Europe's premier tourist playground, and the sinuous tracks of the narrow gauge net the map of the country as tightly as ever. One has only to stand on the mountain slopes above Zweisimmen and watch the comings and goings of the B O B's tourist-filled electric trains on the branches to Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen to see that the operation fairly exudes metre gauge prosperity. And one understands why the B O B and its Alpine neighbours thrive so as soon as one asks the price of a ticket. Nonetheless, the scenery on these mountain electrics is often superb, and the rolling stock generally very modern. There is one notable and elegant exception to this last rule, the train which climbs from Nyon on Lake Geneva up into the Jura range — a beautiful and lonely ride in a stately *automotrice* dating from the Twenties or earlier and not at all typical of the Switzerland of today.

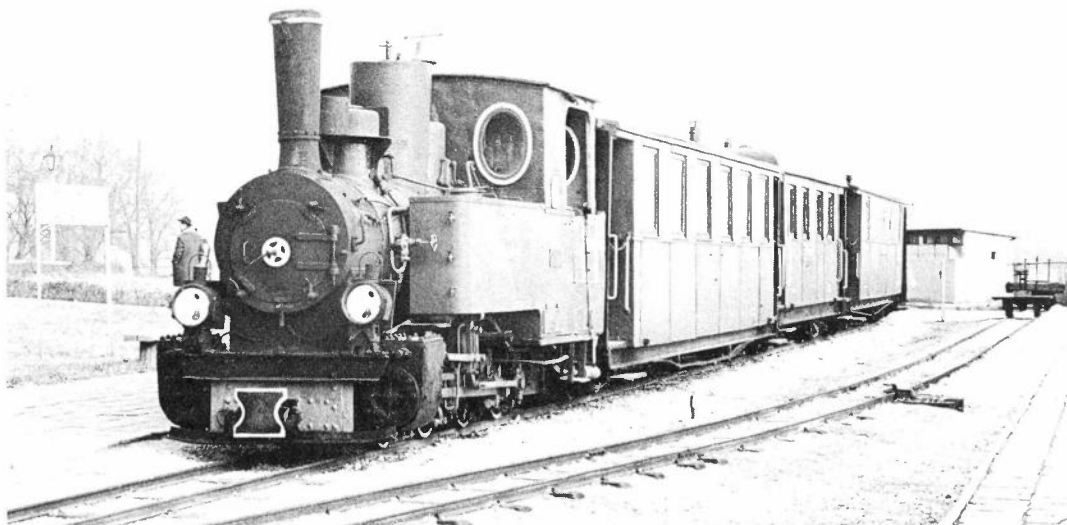
Tourists have almost certainly been responsible for several railways remaining faithful to the steam engine in some degree. Having only one engine, a little Krauss 0-4-0T tram loco, the Chiemseebahn in Bavaria is a model of such fidelity, while not far away over the Austrian border, the Achenseebahn is all steam too, and has secured its reputation by employing little rack-and-adhesion tank engines more unusual and intricate than even tourists have a right to expect. And also in Austria, and still all steam, is one of the most unlikely survivors of them all, a line relying on turn-of-the-century 0-6-2 tanks which no review of the current narrow gauge scene can possibly overlook. I do not believe that tourists, or really anyone else for that matter, contributes much to the Steyrtalbahn's continued existence, as it seems only to carry a few school children and the occasional railway enthusiast. Nevertheless, its trains are still threading their way through the meadows and past the orchards and farms on their journey up the pastoral Steyr valley, an exquisite journey that few lines can rival anywhere in Europe.



Salzkammergut Lokalbahn. An 0-6-2 tank pauses at Aigen Voglhub with the 15.45 train from Bad Ischl to Salzburg on 27th. August 1956, a year before this famous Austrian 760mm line was closed. (Lance King).



P.O. Correze (France). Forges station on the Argentat line, with Blanc Misseron 0-4-4-0T Mallet No 10L and special train, 30th August 1969. Both the locomotive and the coaches have since been preserved. (V.W. Blake-Dyke).



European Preservation; :600mm gauge 0-6-2T Tx2 355 and train at the PKP Wenećja Railway Museum, Poland on 4th. March 1975. (H. Nishimura).

Most people think that railway preservation is a good thing — and no doubt they are right, only it seems to me to have everything to do with machinery, and little to do with railways. What made so many narrow gauge railways so fascinating was not so much the exact width of the rails nor the provenance of the rolling stock *per se*, but more the general atmosphere of the undertaking, usually rural and often leisurely, with a general feeling of being at one with the countryside through which it ran. Trains often jolted along grass-grown track, made lengthy stops in deserted country stations, ran at unlikely times of the day or night, and seldom carried more than a few local inhabitants. Although making for interesting travel, such habits also made for hefty deficits, the sort of thing preservationists must try to avoid. However, there have been some brave attempts at putting the shine back on rusty rails in recent times, and no summary of the last twenty-five years can really get by without recording some of them.

French enthusiasts were among the first in the field of narrow gauge preservation, although their two earliest ventures at Cap Ferret and Meyzieu were actually new lines for old stock to run on. These trailblazers were followed by two rather more ambitious efforts to save parts of the Tramway de Pithiviers a Toury (600mm) and the Abreschviller forestry line (700mm), both today well established tourist ventures, the former having a particularly interesting collection of locos from old agricultural and industrial systems. A number of rather larger engines from defunct metre gauge railways used to be preserved at various sites in France, and several of these have now found a home on the erstwhile C F T A Somme system, which has in recent years been partly revived by an amateur group. While down in the Cevennes, France has what is probably Europe's most prosperous metre gauge preservation scheme, the C F du Vivarais, which took over the Doux valley line lock, stock, and mallets from the C F D, and now fills trains of fourteen bogie coaches several days a week during the summer.

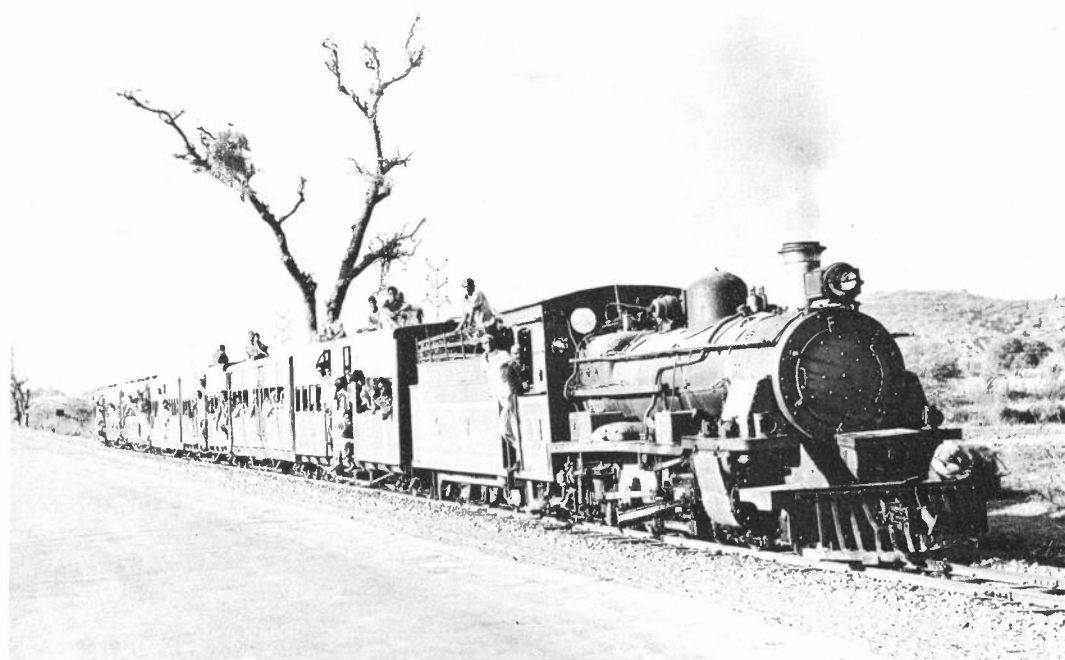
In Belgium, a section of the old S N C V system in the Ardennes supports a pleasant week-end line complete with steam tram engines, a breed which has also been making a come-back on a short section of the R T M at Hellevoetsluis in Holland. Enthusiasts in West Germany have several lines running or planned, while in Austria and Switzerland a number of otherwise diesel or electric railways steam an old engine or two during the summer, with various degrees of assistance, encouragement and arm-twisting from amateurs. Scandinavia was also early off the mark in the preservation game, and up in Sweden there is by all accounts one of the finest 600mm enthusiast lines, laid on an old standard gauge trackbed between Mariefried and Laggesta, and with some choice locomotives including a Hudswell Clarke 0-4-2T dating from 1889.

Any attempt to summarize the recent history of Europe's narrow gauge in but a few paragraphs must perforce deal with only a few broad themes, and omit much of interest. I have not tried to be other than subjective; the lines I have touched upon are those I know from my own travels, or those I particularly regret not knowing. My thanks go to V.W. Blake-Dyke, Lance King, and D. Trevor Rowe for kindly providing the illustrations, and indeed to all those who in the past have published material on this subject, and by so doing have lured so many of us across the Channel to see for ourselves.

NARROW GAUGE AROUND THE WORLD



CEYLON — A few of these V2 class Sentinel steam railcars still survive on the Ceylon Government Railways No. 331 nears Tiriwaraketiya on the 14.00 Ratanapura — Oparake train in March 1974. (L.A. Nixon).



INDIA — 2ft 0in gauge NM class pacific 763 (Bagnall 2458/31) approaching Gwalior on the Gwalior Light Railway in February 1974. (L.A. Nixon).



INDONESIA — 3ft 6in gauge contrasts at Kepiri Station, Java on the PNKA Wood burning 2-12-2T F10.12 and 0-4-0 steam tram B17.06 in October 1973. (L.A. Nixon).



ANGOLA — Typical of so many little sugar cane plantation locos throughout the world is this Orenstein & Koppel 0-6-0WT (OK 111.12/25) at Companhia do Assucar di Angola. (J.G. Lanham).

BRITISH MINIATURE RAILWAYS 1951-1976

Author of several books on miniature railways and an acknowledged authority, Society Miniature Records Officer **ROBIN BUTTERELL** reviews the miniature scene.

The Narrow Gauge Railway Society was founded in the year of the Festival of Britain, which I remember well for I was, at that time, completing my architectural training and spending a period working in the Chief Architect's Office of British Railways at Marylebone. I paid several visits to the Festival Gardens at Battersea to see the 15" gauge Emmett Railway and remember being extremely disappointed that the locomotives were not steam-operated. Although the past 25 years have seen the disappearance of the steam locomotive from British Rail and those heady days of the fifties have declined so that we find ourselves living in depressing times, the miniature railway scene has been extremely interesting and, if anything, has been on the up and up.

1951 was also really the start of the railway preservation, with the take-over of the Talylyn Railway by an inexperienced bunch of amateurs becoming a milestone in more ways than one. I think one of the reasons that miniature railways have prospered is because, with the disappearance of mainline steam locomotives, there has been an opportunity to recapture steam days in miniature.

I had my first experience of miniature railway operation between 1951 and 1953 when Brian Rogers, the founder of the 7 1/4" Gauge Railway Society, and I, who were then students, ran a 7 1/4" gauge railway at Bridlington. This was a fascinating, and at many times traumatic experience, but was valuable in that it gave me a good background for my pursuit of the hobby in later years. Probably the most interesting single development has been the increase in popularity of the 7 1/4" gauge, particularly public lines with more people modelling narrow gauge type locomotives. This has meant that by having motive power with greater hauling capacity, the railways have become much more viable commercially because of the possibility of greater loads being pulled. Three lines in this gauge come immediately to mind, the Hilton Valley Railway, opened in 1957 and more recently, the Forest Railway at Dobwalls and the Great Cockrow Railway at Chertsey.

The latter line is a reincarnation of the late Sir John Samuel's Great Central Railway and relies almost entirely on scale motive power. It is a highly complex layout skilfully organised and controlled and operated by a group of dedicated enthusiasts. The Forest Railway, with its North American slant, has, with the increased loading gauge, some extremely powerful locomotives and there are plans in the pipeline for even more interesting developments. This line has gone from strength to strength and it has established itself as a very popular tourist attraction, particularly because of the attractive way in which the ancillary amenities have been laid out. The Hilton Valley Railway, started by the late Michael Lloyd and now operated by his son, Dan, is another example of a line which has increased in length and stature over the years due to its popularity. Both scale and over-scale locomotives operate here and, again as at the GCR, there is a highly efficient system of operation.

Among the oldest of 7 1/4" lines, mention must be made of Alex Schwab's railway at Saltwood, near Hythe, which has been running since 1925. Although no longer steam operated, it is a great achievement that this line has now run for over half a century.

The 9 1/2" gauge has tended to be eclipsed by 10 1/4" and there has been little progress in this field although reference should be made to John Hall Craggs who is now, with his line near Newbury, probably the leading exponent of this gauge.

A number of new and impressive lines have appeared in 10 1/4" gauge, the foremost amongst these being the Stapleford Miniature Railway, near Melton Mowbray, opened in 1958, which is at present being lengthened to give a run of three miles, and the Audley End Miniature Railway near Saffron Walden. Other older lines worthy of mention must include Kerr's miniature railway at Arbroath, which was originally opened as a 7 1/4" gauge line in 1935. The Hastings miniature railway, opened on its present site in 1948, has recently changed hands, but its future seems assured. It is interesting to note that many of the 10 1/4" gauge locomotives, built by the late Mr. Bullock before the last war, are still operating, albeit some of them having been extensively rebuilt.

Some of the new locomotives on the 10 1/4" gauge have been particularly impressive, such as the Berkshire for the Stapleford line which should have more opportunity to show its capabilities next year when the new track is opened.

Although enthusiasts tend to be less interested in diesel or petrol locomotives disguised as steam, there have been some notable models of diesel locomotives which are quite attractive in their own right. In particular, I would mention the design by David Curwen based on the Western Class diesels, a good example running on the Minehead Miniature Railway, which was opened in 1965.

On the 15" gauge we have seen the consolidation and rehabilitation of the three main lines, the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, the Ravensglass and Eskdale Railway and the Fairbourne Railway. All have

passed through difficult times in the last twenty-five years, even to the extent of being threatened with closure, but, happily, their futures now seem assured in their new controlling bodies. All of them have added new locomotives and rolling stock and have improved their lines and lineside facilities.

One regretted closure was the Rhyl Miniature Railway which, until it closed, was the oldest operating 15" gauge line in the country, having been opened in 1911. The 15" gauge line at Southport was opened in the same year, but is not now running on the original site. Another old stager which is still going is at Dreamland, Margate, opened originally in the 1920's. Belle Vue, Manchester, opened in 1928, has gone through a number of changes of location and layout but is still operating.

A number of new lines have opened, among these being that at Longleat, opened in 1965, Whorlton Lido, opened in 1974, The Lappa Valley Railway on part of the old Newquay to Chasewater Railway in the same year and last year a short line at Blenheim Palace. The 15" gauge, with its unique position in miniature railway history, has given the opportunity for a number of old locomotives, which might well have been consigned to the scrap heap, to be restored. These have included a number of Bassett-Lowke Little Giants and, in fact, the original "Little Giant" itself, which would otherwise probably have been scrapped.



Rhyl Miniature Railway. One of the 15in gauge Barnes Atlantics in service about 1955.

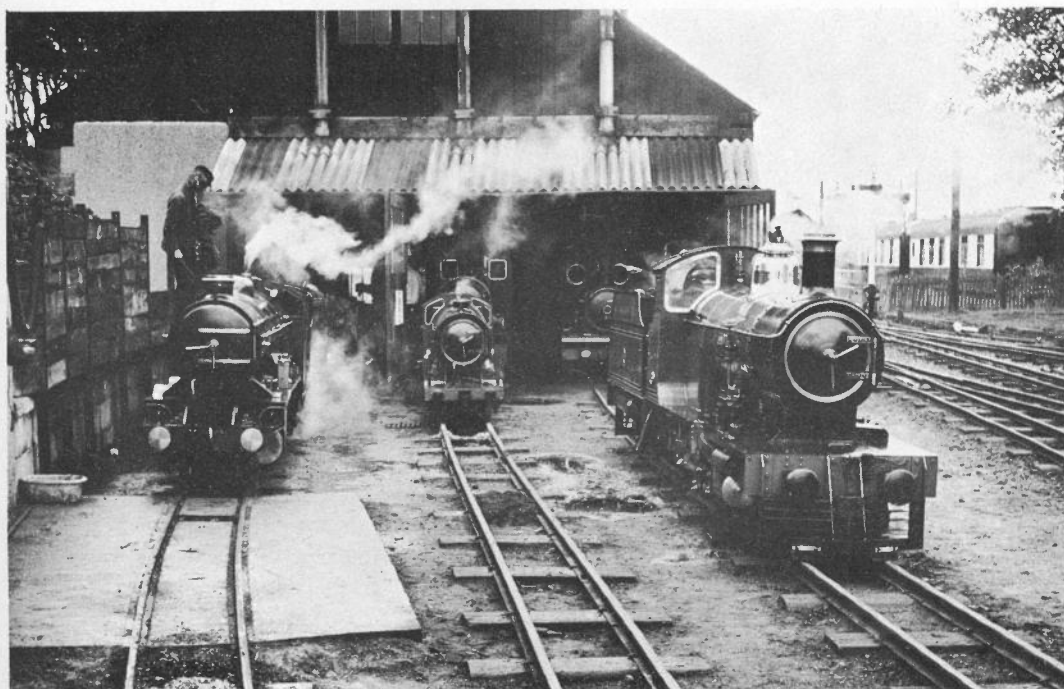
(Ron Redman collection).

At the other end of the scale, we have the diesel lines with locomotives built by Hudswell Clarke which have been operating since the 1930s. Originally they were to be found at Scarborough, Leeds and Blackpool, but the stock and line at Leeds now operate at Morecambe. One curious point about these lines is that the gauge differs by 1" between Scarborough and Blackpool and no one has ever been able to tell me why this is so. Other locomotives were built for the 21" gauge, similar to the Blackpool "Princess" for Butlins, which, after running at the Empire Exhibition in 1938, operated subsequently at a number of their holiday camps. Butlin policy now appears to be to run narrow gauge railways with suitably rebuilt ex-industrial locos rather than miniature railways so they would be classified under a different heading. Mention should also be made of the Baguley locomotives which are steam outline petrol and diesel locomotives for the 2 ft. gauge and have operated at Wicksteed Park, Kettering, Alton Towers, Staffordshire and Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent.

With the disappearance of such locomotive builders as Bassett-Lowke and Davey Paxman from the miniature railway scene, new constructors have appeared; noteworthy among these are Severn-Lamb of Stratford-upon-Avon, Coleby Simkins of Melton Mowbray, Minimum Gauge Railways (Roger Marsh) of Hinckley and Milner Engineering of Chester. David Curwen has designed a number of locomotives which have been built by several different firms, but latterly most of his larger designs have been carried out by Severn-Lamb Limited. Trevor



15in gauge Bassett-Lowke "Little Giant" KING GEORGE was rebuilt by Barlow while at Southport and is now in service at Whorlton Lido. (Robin Butterell)



Contrasting 15in. gauge designs at the cavalcade at Ravenglass on 25.9.76. From left to right are: RIVER MITE (1/3 full size), COUNT LOUIS (1/4 full size), and SIAN (of "narrow gauge" proportions?), with NORTHERN ROCK and RIVER IRT visible behind.

(Robin Butterell).

Guest, in conjunction with Twining, designed and built a number of 15" gauge locomotives, most of which were constructed by Guest Engineering and Maintenance Limited.

Many smaller locomotives have been built as one-off projects by private individuals and, as mentioned previously, there has been considerable advance in the field of narrow gauge locomotives on the 7 1/4" gauge. Most of these have been modelled on quarry locomotives which operated in the North Wales Slate industry. In the purely commercial field, Cromar White are wellknown manufacturers of locomotives, rolling stock and permanent way.

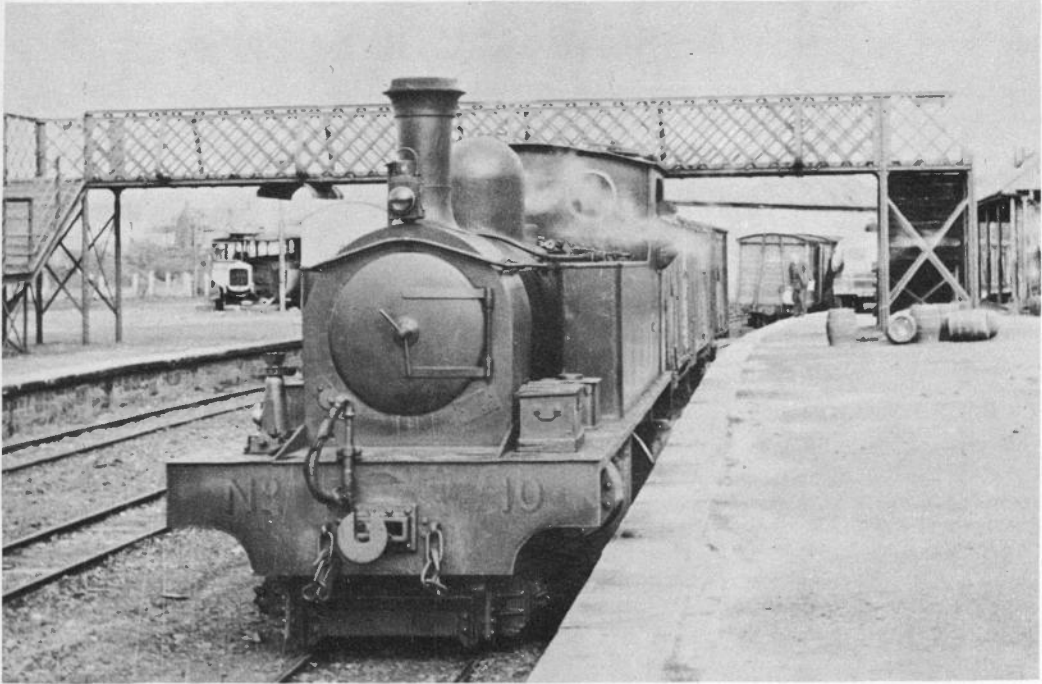
Even in these difficult economic times, the future for miniature railways is quite encouraging. One or two have gone to the wall, but this has generally been because the promoters have failed to assess the commercial aspects with any realism; one has to realise that to be viable commercially it is not sufficient to lay a track with superb locomotives and rolling stock and expect to make a fortune. Preferably the line should run from A to B and perform some definite transport function, maybe in association with other attractions at either end of the line and it should never be possible to see one end of the line from the other in order to maintain the element of surprise. Several interesting schemes for quite ambitious lines are now in the pipeline, but it might be tempting fate to mention them at this stage !

Let us hope that the next twenty-five years will be as interesting and as productive as the last.



Severn-Lamb 'Rio Grande' class 15in gauge 1-8-0 in use at Longleat in July 1976. Severn -Lamb Ltd. have built a number of these internal combustion engined locos in both 10 1/4in and 15in gauges over the last few years. (Robin Butterell).

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST



One sad closure of the early 1950's was the Londonderry & Lough Swilly. Here Kerr Stuart 4-6-2T No. 10 waits at Tooban Junction. (N.G.R.S. Library).



Although much of Europe's finest narrow gauge has disappeared over the last 25 years one delightful survivor (albeit in truncated form) is Austria's Klaus-Garsten line. Very early one bright July morning in 1965, Krauss 0-6-2T's 298.05 and 298.56 prepare for the day's work. (Andrew Neale).

THE NARROW GAUGE SCENE

The Editor of The Narrow Gauge, **ANDREW NEALE**, gives a personal view of "what it's all about"

An article such as this should, I assume, begin with one's first memory of the narrow gauge and I certainly remember mine clearly enough. Out walking with a school friend one day in May 1960, we climbed into the upper levels of Betchworth chalk pits and almost immediately found a derelict diesel loco and skips on a length of track. Rushing over to examine this find, I immediately sunk up to my ankles in the glutinous chalk 'porridge' that surrounded it. A prophetic experience really, for I am told that regarding narrow gauge matters I have been putting my foot in it ever since It was prophetic in another way too, for I little realised then that some years later I would help restore this loco at the nearby Brockham Museum, the end result being illustrated in Ron Redman's article in this issue.

Actually, my enthusiasm for the narrow gauge had already been fired by reading Rolt's classic **Railway Adventure** and I now set out to read all I could. Reading Whitehouse's **Narrow Gauge Album**, the various industrial loco pocket books and Frank Jux's booklet listing extant narrow gauge steam locos made me realise that although much had gone there was still plenty to see, and I began visiting the survivors as fast as parents and finances would allow. Joining the Society early in 1962 gave me access to accurate, current information and warning of many impending closures while there was still time for a visit.

I soon realised that a brief loco list in the pocket book could give no indication of the variety of the individual systems. I recall with pleasure bumping across the Northumberland fells on the lengthy **Harecrag** Quarry tramway, or riding over genuine ex-Lynton & Barnstaple rails on the equally lengthy china clay line at Torrington Marland, where the brand new Ruston diesel made a sharp contrast with the 80 year old wooden wagons that comprised its train. Every system had its own peculiarities, such as that at Murston Brickworks, Kent which retained a vintage Planet petrol loco to 'bump start' a recalcitrant Ruston, Smokejacks **Brickworks**, Surrey, where the two Koppel diesels could just squeeze into the ancient carriage that formed their shed, and Bristol's Cattybrook Brickworks, where a single length of track could include anything from B.R. bullhead and ex Bristol tramway rails to 20lb Decauville. Memories too of the Midlands ironstone lines — Mannings and Black Hawthorns in the driving rain at Kettering, Scaldwell cold and silent following closure, lines of mines locos awaiting the torch at Lrthlingborough and a scorching hot day at Wellingborough, when in one trip up the line in No. 86 we started half-a-dozen fires in the corn stubble and had to keep stopping on the way down to put them out. Down in Kent steam was well represented by the magnificent fleet at Bowater's and the little oil-fired Bagnalls at Belverdere while other narrow gauge included the Chattenden & Upnor (derelict by the time I knew it, but oh to have seen it when steam was still alive !), Sittingbourne cement works where a battered ex std. gauge Planet pulled rakes of truly prehistoric chaldrons over the 4ft 3in. gauge and all the little brickworks, clay and sand pit lines.

But best of all were the North Wales slate quarries. I was too late for the Penrhyn and Padarn main lines but have many happy memories of the rest. Scrambling over the Penrhyn derelicts and squeezing past all those others in the semi-darkness of the 'long shed', crawling up the inclines at Dinorwic to see HOLY WAR performing in splendid isolation, exploring the mass of fascinating lines around Blaenau, walking the Nantlle tramroad and seeing DOROTHEA lying amongst the ruins of her shed on the mountain top, and above all the marvellous friendliness of the quarrymen, who would press tea, food and shelter on you to the point where it was almost embarrassing, as well as letting you drive their loco when the boss was looking the other way. Of all the visits I have made to this area, my first visit to Penrhyn stands out. Having seen the other locos we climbed right to the top. As we clambered over the edge the wind was whipping across the flattened mountaintop right at us and away in the distance the sun was glinting on the dome of an ancient, tiny steam loco. It was WINIFRED, the oldest member of the Penrhyn fleet still in service, and as we stood there watching she gave a long plaintive blast on her whistle and started towards us, a long string of slate wagons in her wake. Truly marvellous !

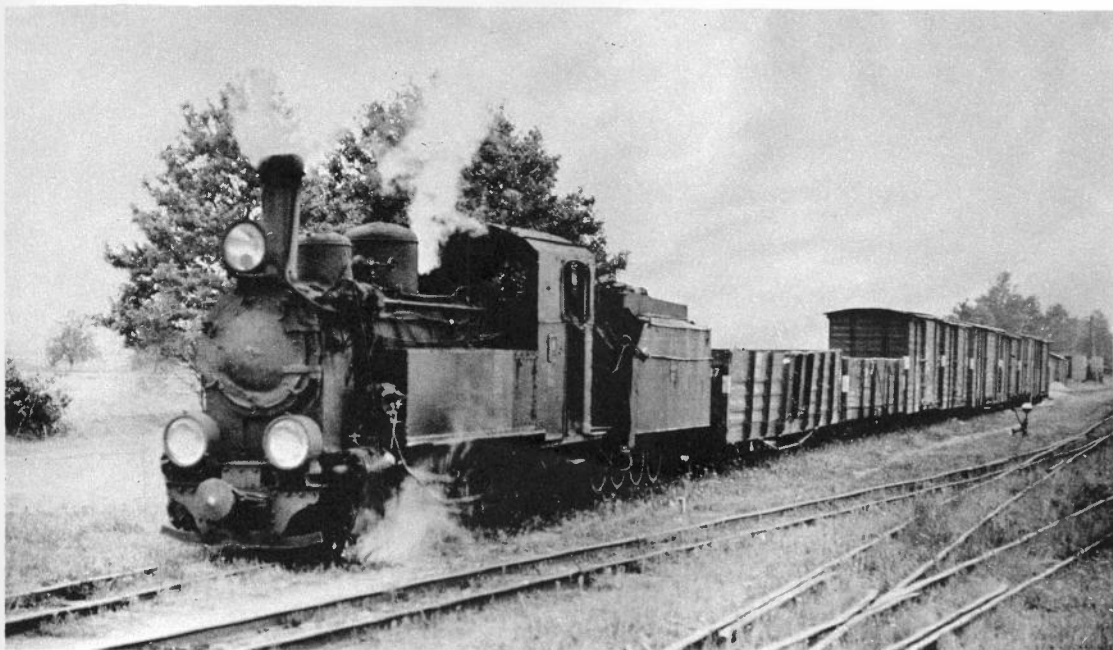
Like so many enthusiasts, reading Messrs. Allen & Whitehouse's **Narrow Gauge Railways of Europe** opened my eyes to the charms of the continental scene. A 1963 visit to the Shafberg rack line (then 100% steam) wetted my appetite for Austria and two weeks with a Rail Rover in 1965 enabled me to visit most of the narrow gauge, then in a much healthier state than now. Six months later a very wet week in Northern France caught much of the surviving narrow gauge, the miserable weather being matched by the sight of many fine locos dumped. Luckily, the one sunny afternoon of the trip coincided with a visit to Variscourt gravel pits to see the Feldbahns then still working there.

Stupidly, I didn't visit Europe again until 1972, so missing many good things, but since then I have been lucky enough to get to Spain, Portugal, Poland, East Germany and Switzerland, the undoubted highlight being the two days spent visiting the remote forestry lines on the **Soviet-Polish** border which included a hitherto unrecorded Anglo-East German-Polish attempt on the World Feldbahn Speed Record (Flying Kilometre - backwards) and a visit to Czarna where we were given a Feldbahn, coach and crew and given our freedom of the 150km system for the day !

One of the joys of overseas trips is the chance, so rare in Britain, of discovering some previously unknown loco or railway, and here I have been lucky several times, such as the occasion when we were visiting the Langreo Railway sheds at Gijon, Northern Spain, in 1972. Looking for a suitable place to unload the previous evening's somewhat excessive consumption of alcohol, I stumbled (literally) across a little 75cm. gauge Koppel welltank lying in a derelict workshop. I suppose there must be a moral in this tale somewhere.

Of all the lines that are left, which one would I most like to visit ? Well, there are still many nice things to see in Latin America, Southern Africa and so on, but given the money and time there is no doubt where I would go. Anyone who has read Michael Satow's marvellous article **Harry's Engine** in **NARROW GAUGE 56** will surely agree that the two foot gauge colliery line at Margherita, Assam, where little Bagnall saddle tanks of the 90's work alongside ex-Darjeeling Himalaya locos, takes some beating. A combination of the best of British passenger and industrial narrow gauge loco designs.

And so to end this special 25th. Anniversary issue, one last memory. Late one dull wet afternoon in May 1974, three enthusiasts, two English and one East German, wait with their cameras by the lineside near Witaszyce, Western Poland. All three of us, Martin, Helmut and I, have done this sort of thing many times before, but for me at least, this was rather special. For the Witaszyce line is one of the last 60cm. gauge common carrier lines left in Europe and we are waiting for the daily mixed train, the only regular steam working. Time passes, and then, just as the sun begins to break through, there is a whistle in the distance and the train comes. A gleaming Hanomag tender tank heads a string of bogie opens and vans loaded with goods such as coal and fertilizer for the local farms, followed by an ancient bogie coach for the handful of passengers. We take our pictures and then with a farewell wave from the guard it is gone, a little local train once so typical of hundreds throughout Europe, which still runs not for the entertainment of enthusiasts like you or I, but because the local community it serves still need it. And that's what it really is all about



Tx4-565, a 1923 Hanomag 0-8-0TT, with a freight train at Sucha, on the PKP 600mm gauge line from Witaszyce in September 1974.
(Helmut Pochadt).

THE END OF THE LINE



One June morning in 1973 the remaining tracks of the Snailbeach District Railways slumber on in the sun nearly twenty seven years after the last train ran over them.
(C.G. Down)