

NARROW GAUGE NEWS

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EDITORIAL The point of the Editorial this time is to bring a rather strong reminder to our Members that the time has come to renew Subscriptions! As you will probably be aware, the fee this time is only 5/-; due to the re-arranging of the financial year. This will then bring it up to March 31st, 1959. From then onwards the Subscription Rate will revert back to the 10/- per annum; and will end on March 31st, 1960. It would be greatly appreciated if ALL our members would make a special effort and endeavour to have his sub. in the hands of the Hon. Treasurer by the end of September, as, to be quite candid, the financial situation is not exactly what it should be at the moment. So do your best chaps will you, and let's see the 'kitty' in a little better shape than it is.

The Treasurer's address is: P.S. Halton; 18, Eden Crescent, Leeds 4.

Thank You. -- Ed.

NOTES FROM KEITH DAVIES Vale of Rheidol: 1957 passengers total about 28,100; (this not counting the 50,000 carried during the Llanbadarn Show). In spite of this, the future of the line is not as bright as it could be; there being rumours that, following the economy campaign, the V of R is now regarded as just another branch line, and unfortunately, it is to be treated as such.

Standards are as high as ever, but advertising has deteriorated, particularly in Aberystwyth itself. Due probably to this lack of publicity, the morning train on Bank Holiday Saturday was running only half full.

A further economy measure is that there is no longer a spare engine in steam on the days that only one afternoon train is running.

TAL-Y-LLYN RAILWAY Both the Glyn Valley coaches are now in service, albeit with certain inaccuracies in painting of the livery, and with the 3rd class one fitted out as a 1st class coach. They are vastly superior to the other coaches running on the line however. One more 'Standard' open 4-wheeler has been put on to the frame of Penrhyn 'C', whose body has been scrapped. Parts for another 'Standard' 4-wheeler were observed in Pendre Station. A Corris van was undergoing drastic re-building in Pendre Works, where No. 3 is out of use.

New carriage shed framework is almost complete at Pendre, and there is room for two roads and extension, is necessary.

The Kerr Stuart bogie coach has been broken up, and the frames and bogies, modified to suit, are to be used in the construction of a new coach.

FESTINIOG RAILWAY This is now very impressive, with 'Taliesin' regularly taking seven bogies up to Tan-y-Bwlch. The new observation car is very neat.

There is much work going on at Boston Lodge, with works yard now being altered, a fence now taking the place of the original wall, so that locos, etc. are now more readily discernible from the road. The new loco shed is nearing completion.

Both locos are now in steam daily, to guard against the failure of 'Taliesin'. In order to cope with the coach parties, who only go from Portmadoc to Minnfordd or Penrhyn, and so leave the train half-empty beyond these points, some of the old four-wheeled knifeboard coaches are being renovated. Three are almost ready in Boston Lodge Works, and it is intended to make a train of four coaches and a van, hauled by 'Prince', which will cope with short workings to Minnfordd and Penrhyn.

They were due to come out on Bank Holiday Monday, for the first time, and if the idea proves a success, they will be completely re-built for next season.

The Peckett is now stored in the old four-road carriage shed.

CORRECTIONS: In the March - June issue of the Newssheet, some typing errors crept in to an article which had been sent in by member Paul Myatt of North Harrow. To Mr. Myatt, we offer our apologies. So here goes with the corrections; spotted, needless to say by himself.:-

In Items of Interest ...Metro Gauge should be 80cm gauge 'No.2' should read No. 2 class 120 Ton should be 102 Ton 30 inch gauge model should be $3\frac{1}{2}$ gauge.

Further News Items from our friend are as follows:-

Model Engineer, May 29th, Photo. of Tal-y-llyn loco No. 3 'Sir Haydn' at Abergynolwyn. Also a letter stating that locomotive haulage has been or will be, replaced by cable haulage on the 18" gauge railway at Woodville.

Model Engineer, June 19th; article, illustrated on Ravenglass & Eskdale locomotives, (15" gauge).

NOTES:

The following notes are more or less word for word out of a letter only just received from Member E.K. Stretch, of Newcastle, Staffs. during a recent visit to Ireland.

CAVAN & LEITRIM Locos. On the day of the visit (20th August), the following locos were in steam: Nos. 3T & 6T 2-6-0T Class KN 2.
 No. 4T 2-6-0T Class KN 1.
 No. 5T 2-6-2T Class PN 2.
 No. 10L 2-4-2T Class FN 1. (Formerly No. 4P)

Lying derelict in the scrap siding was 4-4-0T No. 2L (Class DN 2) and another of the same class - of which unfortunately, the number appears to have been un-noted, was standing outside the shed; and it was obvious that it hadn't been in steam for some time.

Coaches: There are only four serviceable coaches; as follows:-

Nos. 5L & 6L	Original tramway type brake composite.
No. 7L	'Bus type body, brake second.
No. 21L	(Ex. 42C; originally 18T) Composite.

Three or four other coaches of the original stock are standing about in various states of decay. A new coach, similar to 7L, is being built in the workshops at Ballinamore.

Traffic: Passenger traffic seems fairly light, particularly on the Arigna Branch; but general goods traffic, as well as the coal traffic, seems to be prospering. Many wagons and vans have recently been re-painted.

Track: This is in good condition on the whole, and well-kept. No grass or weeds are to be seen, except on a few sidings. Even the mineral line is weed-free.

COUNTY DONEGAL RAILWAY Though speeds are still high, and traffic heavy (except on the Ballyshannon Branch), the system is rather obviously being allowed to run down. The track is badly overgrown with grass, and even the best sections are suffering badly from dropped joints. On the railcars, the bogies absorb the worst shocks, but the cab, being attached directly to the driving axles can be seen leaping and rolling madly, and the motormen must, in consequence, have a very rough ride.

On the 21st August, the following railcars were noted in service: Nos. 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20.

2-6-4T No. 5 "Drumboe" was on the afternoon Strabane-Donegal goods working, and the diesel shunter No. 11 'Phoenix' was busy at Strabane. Neither of the two locos kept at Strabane for the working of the Letterkenny line goods were seen, as the writer's arrival there was unfortunately too late.

The steam passenger stock is in general, very shabby; even the ex-Ballycastle ex-Larne Boat Train coaches badly need a coat of paint.

A saloon coach of steam stock was seen in use as a railcar trailer. Apart from the small railcar No.10 (ex Castlederg & Victoria Bridge) which always runs with a four-wheel trailer, very few railcar trips need trailers during the week; but most railcar trips west of Stranorlar seem to tow a respectable amount of goods vans and wagons about with them.

cont....

Incidentally, on the 2.30 from Killybegs, on which Mr. Stretch travelled, the railcar, complete with passengers, shunted right across the turntable at Donegal, to drop off two vans!

At Letterkenny, about 200 yards of the Lough Swilly embankment half-a-mile out of Letterkenny, has been removed; and an excavating machine was at work in the L. & L.S.R. Station.

The Lough Swilly goods yard, however, is in full use, full of C.D.R. rolling stock - apparently traffic is so heavy that the C.D.R. goods yard, extensive though it may be, is rather inadequate. Presumably the L & L.S.R. still own their goods yard, so they still have a few yards of track to justify their 'Railway' title.

Mr. Stretch also included in his letter some lines of information on the Tal-y-llyn and the Festiniog; but as these have already been covered on page 1., I hope we will be excused for not including it.

Thank you Mr. Stretch. Ed.

LETTER from Mr. C.H. Betts, member from Romford, Essex:

In his letter, Mr. Betts draws attention to a film - 'Seven Wonders of the World' which has of course been mentioned in the News-sheet before. Of considerably more interest is a paragraph taken out of the I.C.I. Magazine and written by the Author of the book, 'On the Old Lines' - P.C. Allen, regarding a 2 ft. gauge Yugoslav line.

Quote: '..... a 2 ft. gauge line in Yugoslavia, which runs down to Lake Ohrid, near the Albanian border, taking about FIFTEEN hours for the journey of just over a hundred miles. The locomotives (he does not say how many) once served a German Military Railway in the First World War.' (Any ideas you members? - Ed.)

Arising out of Mr. Allen's article, Mr. J.F. Struthers of I.C.I. in the June issue of their magazine recalls memories of the time when he was serving as Third Secretary of the British Legation at Quito, Ecuador in 1943, which is 10,000ft. about sea level, and he and his wife took a holiday at Manta; which boasts one of the world's derelict railways, the Manta-Santa Ana.

Quote: 'The narrow gauge rolling stock has been reduced over the years to that of a single railcar; quite an amazing contraption it appears. An ancient Chevrolet engine had been built into a lorry chassis, on top of which was a wooden body containing wooden bench seats and a 'boot' for goods and extra passengers.

As the railcar bumped and swayed along, Mr. & Mrs. Struthers in the favoured front seat, sat in a shower of water leaking from two oil drums on the roof which were intended for replenishing the radiator.

There was little, if any, signalling system on the track, and a large number of unscheduled stops were made - the interested party merely stepping out of the jungle onto the line and holding up his hand. Bananas, and a Cockerel tied up in a Panama hat were amongst the freight.'

By the time the railcar creaked to a halt at Manta, the Struthers were battered and waterlogged. But they retain affectionate memories of the Manta-Santa Ana.

PARISH'S LOAM QUARRIES. Erith (Now owned by Talbot Estates (Hartley) Ltd.)

More notes from Keith Davies. viz: The above-mentioned line has been closed for goods, as lorries have been found more efficient and flexible than the railway. The track has been covered with gravel to form a temporary road surface, and is being lifted piecemeal. The boiler and frames of the 1881 Black Hawthorn have been cut up, on May 6th last year; but the pieces still lie around the wharf yard. No. IV is in the shed on a short length of track, and will probably be cut up soon. Some of the wagons still stand about in the quarry.

A relic of this line is to be preserved however, for the firm has kindly presented the plates from No. IV to the Society, and they will be put on show in the N.G. Museum at Towyn.

FESTINIOG PUBLICATION The Festiniog Railway Co. has published a picture history of the line, which includes a very short 'potted' history, and a considerable number of very interesting photographs, including quite a few that are little known. The price of this booklet is a modest 2/6d.

IN SEARCH OF THE UNUSUAL: (Or an account of how Mike Swift and Dr. R.P.Lee, both members living in Huddersfield, accompanied by Mrs. Lee and Daughter, visited N.G. lines in various places).

The first call was made at one of the British Moss Litter Co.'s peat railways on Hatfield Moor, near Doncaster. These relatively unknown lines are situated at: Chat Moss, Lancashire; Solway Moss, near Gretna (members about to elope please note!); by far the greatest mileage being on Thorne Waste; and Hatfield Moor, Yorkshire. There are three systems here, totalling about 20 miles of track, the majority of which is in regular use. Track is 3 ft. gauge, laid with 16 and 18 lb. flat-bottom rail, and the major part of the system is horse worked; although a petrol loco is used on one section near Goole. Details of this loco would be welcomed. The rolling stock consists of a number of timber-built open wagons with high sides, dumb buffers, and chain couplings. These run on very small plain bearing wheels.

'After leaving Hatfield Moor Depot, we made our way to Belton, Lincs., where the 1" Ordnance Survey Map indicated a mineral line, leaving the B.R. Axholme Joint Line at Ealand Depot, between Crowle and Belton, and running for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles into the fields. We arrived at Ealand Depot to find a siding from the main line serving a long leading ramp. From here a narrow gauge line ran out to a nearby farm, and also out to serve the various fields; mostly alongside a cart track. However, as with most of the Lincolnshire agricultural railways, it has now been abandoned, and little or no trace remains.

We then pressed on to another isolated line about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, running from Butterwick Grange by a circuitous route through the fields to the village of West Butterwick, on the River Trent. Again we found that the track has been lifted, and little trace remains.

After a long journey we finally arrived at Holmes Farm, North Somercoates, south of Cleethorpes; and guided once more by the map, proceeded in search of the line marked here. Expecting disappointment again we were most surprised to see an old 4-wheel wagon at the side of one of the farm buildings. Further investigation revealed a 60cm gauge track laid with light rails on timber sleepers, but deeply buried in grass. We followed the track for about half-a-mile to a point where there was a three-way junction, and then returned by a cart track which ran beside the line for most of the way. Conversation with the farmer revealed that the line was in use seasonally; the practice being to clamp the potatoes in the fields until required, then haul them into the farm via the railway. The rolling stock consists of a number of flat wagons, and horses are used as motive power; one horse being able to pull ten of these wagons, which carry approximately 30 cwt. of potatoes each. Even the farmer was unable to tell us where the line finally ended, but stated that the line was about 4 - 5 miles total length.'

This line was a rare find, and just proves what can be found if you go out and look.

MANCHESTER CORPORATION WATERWORKS. Davyhulme. Manchester. by Mike Swift:

One of the last narrow gauge steam locomotives in the North of England, the O-4-OT 'Hewlett', built by Avonside in 1923, has been disused for some time and is now lying derelict in its shed in a rather poor state. The 3 ft. gauge system here had about a dozen steam locos at one time, but the locos now at work are two O-4-0 diesels built by Hudswell Clarke in 1934 and named 'Dawson' and 'White'. However, the closure of the line is not too far away, and any information which can be given on the layout would be most welcome, before it is too late! (Any information can be sent to the Editor direct, who can easily pass it on to Mike Swift.)

C.E.G.B. TAN-Y-GRISIAU PUMPED STORAGE SCHEME: Blaenau Ffestiniog:

Although the Ffestiniog Railway track has been lifted in connection with this scheme, rail working in the valley has not ceased entirely. The contractors are building two tunnels to carry water from the upper reservoir to the power house, and a railway has been laid for construction purposes. It is of mixed gauge, 2 ft and 3 ft. and laid with heavy flat-bottomed rail on timber sleepers. The intention is the start the tunnels, using the 2 ft. gauge, and then use the 3 ft. gauge for completion of the work. Four locos are in use; Simplex 4-wheel diesels Nos. 10349 and 10350 on the 2 ft. line, and owned by McAlpines; and Ruston & Hornsby - O-4-0 diesels Nos. 374457/57 and 379092/57 owned by the Cementation Co. of Doncaster. These two are the 80 H.P. LMU underground type, weighing about 9 tons and fitted with automatic couplers.

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FROM OTHER SOURCES:

Trains Illustrated Aug. 58. Two page coloured shot of Tal-y-llyn Railway loco. No. 3. 'Sir Haydn' (ex-Corris Rly.) at Abergynolwyn. (Beautiful shot this! -
Ed.)

Railway Modeller. Aug. 58. 'For Narrow Gaugers No. 2' 4mm scale drawings of ex-Tralee & Dingle 2-6-2T No. 5T, and Cavan & Leitrim standard 4-wheel box van.

Model Railway Constructor. Aug. 58. Photo. of Isle of Man Rly. 2-4-OT No. 4 'Loch' Drawing and photo of Leek & Manifold Valley Light Rly. 3rd. Class cars Nos. 2 & 4.

Model Railway News. Aug. 58 Article and photo of New Zealand Govt. Rlys. 0-6-OST loco No. F.13 built 1873, by Avonside Engine Co. Bristol; one of a batch of 88, and oldest steam loco in existence in New Zealand. Photo of (what looks like to the Editor) County Donegal Diesel Railcar No. 12 on turntable.

Railway Modeller. Sept. 58. 'For Narrow Gaugers No. 3' 4mm scale drawings of Cavan & Leitrim Section, C.I.E. 4-wheel brake van and bogie brake-composite coach.
