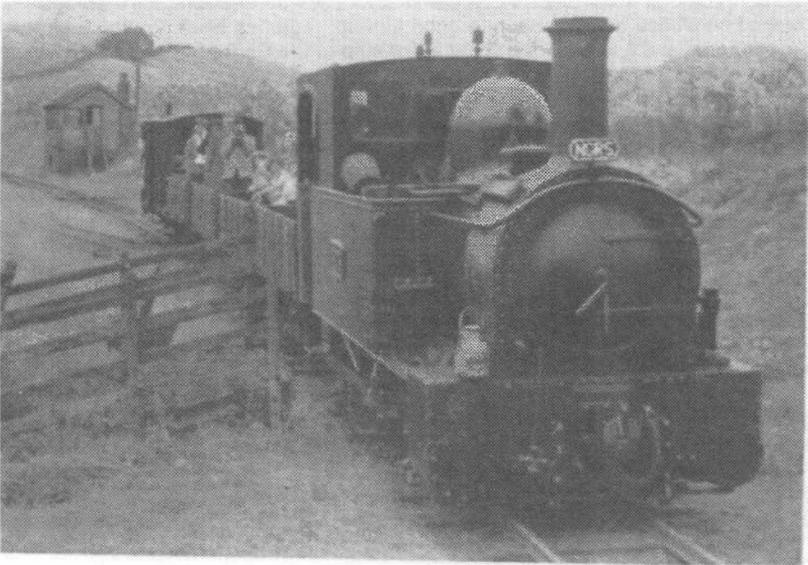


THE NARROW GAUGE



THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY

No.14 Sept - Oct 1955

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Issued by the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, Leeds, Yorkshire, England.

[No.14]

September/October 1955

Apologies..... The last issue of the magazine was certainly fated! First, a let-down over the printing of the covers; then B.R. took a hand in causing further delay, when the parcel containing the pages went astray. All this on top of the deliberate delay to bring you news from Festiniog! However we hope that this fiasco will not recur, as arrangements are to be made centralising the production and despatch of the magazine from now on. By the way, it's worth remembering that the magazine is, all-round, a spare time effort, and most people will appreciate how limited spare time can be these days!

N.G.R.S.News

A SPECIAL MEETING will be held in Leeds on Saturday 1st October at 2.30 p.m. in the B.R.Staff Recreation Club (next door to Canteen) on Aire Street (off City Square). ALL Northern members are urged to make every effort to attend this meeting as future policy affecting the Society in the north is to be debated. Also SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS for accommodation and meals have been arranged so please help to ensure a good turn-up. Tea has been arranged at the Majestic Cinema for 5.0 p.m. and it is hoped to show a film-strip of the Society's visit to the Nocton Estate Light Railway. (NOTE :- the inclusive charge of 4/- referred to in the last issue of the magazine will NOT now apply, owing to the variation in meal charges).

Members who intend to be present at the meeting should advise the Hon. Secretary by postcard, or phone (Horsforth 4086) any time up to 1 p.m. on the day of the meeting, stating if tea is required or not - this is MOST important. Any Midland, or other members who can get along to the meeting are earnestly asked to do so.

A.G.M.

The A.G.M. will be held in Manchester again this year, at the College of Adult Education in Lower Mosley Street on Saturday 3rd December. Unless members are advised otherwise, these arrangements will apply :-

Meeting commences 3.0 p.m.

Election of Officers for 1956, and discussion of NGRS matters.

Exhibition of members' models which will be judged during the meeting, for the award of the NGRS Cup.

Tea 5.0 p.m. to 6.0 p.m.

Film-strip (subject to be decided)

Meeting closes 8.0 p.m.

The College is near Central Station; if we have to switch to another venue, all members will be advised by circular. It will be of assistance if all members who intend to be present will advise the Asst. Hon. Secretary R.N.Redman, 11 Outwood Walk, Horsforth, Leeds as soon as possible. This is very important in view of tea arrangements.

Models :- in connection with the A.G.M., it is intended to have a private showing of members' models again. Last year there were some very fine models on show, and the NGRS Cup was awarded to David Lloyd, of Chorlton-cum-Hardy, for two excellent Festiniog Railway models. If any member is unable to attend the A.G.M., but would like to enter model/s for the competition, they should be sent to c/o P.S.Halton, Model Engineering Representative, NGRS., 18 Eden Crescent, Leeds 4, along with a covering letter and postage to cover return of the models after the

show. Unless members indicate otherwise, all models will be retained until after the Manchester Model Railway Society's exhibition in December.

Manchester M.R.S. Exhibition - negotiations are in hand for a stand again at the MMRS 'show' but no further information can be disclosed at this stage.

Badges are available from the Asst. Librarian, A.S.Dunning, 41 Longdon Avenue, Beaumont Park, Huddersfield, price 3/6 each, postage 2 ½ d. (Please note that the orange button badges are NOT, repeat NOT, to be worn; anyone who still has one MUST return it at once to the Hon. Secretary).

Photographic Competition

This will be judged at the AGM and members are asked to submit their entries now. Up to six photographs (minimum size - postcard) may be submitted by any one person. The entry fee is 1/-, in aid of the Preservation Fund; postal orders to be made out to the Society and crossed. Closing date is Monday 21st November. The following details MUST be entered on the back of the photograph :

Name and address; Membership Number; Date when photo was taken; details of camera used; details of subject.

NOTHING must appear on the front to indicate ownership of the photograph.. Photos should be sent to the Assistant Hon. Secretary, R.N.Redman, 11 Outwood Walk, Horsforth, Leeds, and will only be returned if an s.a.e. of suitable size is enclosed. A prize will be awarded for the best photograph, which will remain the property of the Society for reproduction in the magazine. There will be two 'runner-up' prizes.

Photographic Department

Anyone interested in narrow-gauge railways must, almost of necessity, be interested in photographs. Members of the NGRS must have in their possession an astonishing variety of photographs of narrow-gauge subjects. It is felt that many members do not wish simply to hoard their own efforts, but would welcome an opportunity to buy or exchange prints from other members.

To assist in this, one of our members, Mr. Richard Sharp, of 20 Greystoke Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire, has agreed to act as a 'central clearing house'. Any member who has photographs of which he would be prepared to do prints for other members, is asked to send a list to Mr. Sharp, with details of prices asked, size of prints., etc. Any member may then contact Mr. Sharp to enquire whether any subjects in which he is interested figure in the list, and the name and address of the member able to assist will be provided. Stamped addressed envelope please!

Members are asked, if possible, to be specific in enquiries at first, but if there is sufficient interest, and effort will be made to compile lists indicating the scope of the subjects. It is not intended, in the first place anyway, to start an NGRS photographic business, but if suitable negatives of interesting narrow-gauge subjects are given or loaned to the Society, then arrangements will be made to supply prints from these. If you are interested in this idea, then let us know. It's up to you!

R.S.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

The meagre turn-up at Welshpool may have been due to the unfortunate delay to the magazine; quite likely many members were on holiday (helping at Towyn or Festiniog?) and others would no doubt be deterred from attending owing to distance and the high rail fares. But we feel that apathy

had something to do with it. Once again it was the case of the 'faithful few' turning up - and there comes a time when the 'faithful few' get a bit 'cheesed off' at not getting support.

Those of us who travelled on the line enjoyed ourselves, however. There was quite a bit of excitement in various places when clearance between the loco and road vehicles parked on the lineside was almost negligible. A number of apparently derelict sheep wagons were observed during the journey, and the traction engine enthusiasts were rewarded by the sight of an abandoned one at Castle Caerinion. Loco No. 823 was used on the train, and No. 822 was observed to be undergoing repair in the shed at Welshpool, though whether it will ever run again seemed to be doubtful, according to local information. Needless to say the loco was spotless.

However, at least we had the satisfaction of holding up the 'Llanfair bus' whilst we crossed the road at the roundabout! Those of us who were privileged to ride on the train are indebted to B.R. (W) and their courteous staff at Welshpool for making the trip possible.

Narrow Gauge in the West

(concluded from March/April issue)

Passing on to Redruth, the terminus of the Redruth & Chacewater, which never succeeded in reaching the latter point, is within a few minutes of the W.R. station. This railway, on the 4'0" gauge, ran from Redruth to Penpol, some nine miles, with a branch from Lanner to Wheal Basset and another from Hale Mills to Poldice Mine, originally intended to reach Chacewater.

Three very antique saddle-tanks, "Miner", "Smelter" and "Spitfire", worked the traffic, which was almost entirely mineral. "Miner", originally an 0-4-2 but rebuilt after fifteen years as an 0-6-0, must have been one of the last locomotives in this country to have a Gothic-type domed firebox with safety-valves on top. Plain hook and link couplings and side buffers were used and none of the engines had cabs.

The remains of the engine shed may still be seen on Devoran Quay, also the General Offices of the company, now used as a house. The writer has walked over practically the whole of this line, and in most cases the route is easily traced. The stone sleepers may frequently be found and two footbridges over cuttings are still in use. At Devoran and Twelveheads the level-crossing gates may still be seen.

In the Carnon Valley the route passes through some very wild and desolate country but in the days when this district was a thriving mining camp at the height of a 'boom', things must have been very different, with tall engine houses and stacks on all sides, and literally hundreds of shafts dotted indiscriminately over the countryside. Coal and timber from Devoran Quay to the mines and ore out from the mines to Devoran formed the traffic of the railway, for passengers were never carried. Indeed a speed limit of 10 mph. was observed, and the long climb through the Carnon Valley must have been hard on the engines with a heavy train, while breakdowns were not uncommon. The railway was closed in 1915 and the rails lifted for use in France.

A very ancient line, the Portreath Tramway, was opened in 1819 between Poldice Mine and Portreath Harbour. Although principally employed for mineral traffic it apparently carried passengers also, as a passenger truck, reputed to have been used on the line, is still in existence. The gauge is not certain but would appear to have been about 4'0", as the Redruth & Chacewater, opened six years later, was of this gauge. It seems likely that it crossed the main W.R. line immediately west of Scorrier Station; traction was always by horses and the line closed in 1880.

One station west of Redruth, at Cam Brea, South Crofty Mine may be seen and here a short 2'0"-gauge line exists. It runs from the head of Robinson's Shaft to the tin-dressing mill, bridging a minor road on the way. Motive power is provided by an internal-combustion locomotive and traffic is confined to the ore raised from the mine.

Continuing our journey to Penzance, we are within a couple of miles of the Penlee Quarries at Newlyn. Here is a 2'0"-gauge line which connects the crushing plant with a tippler on the southern pier of Newlyn Harbour. Traffic is confined to occasions when a ship is being loaded, but at these times, trains of side-tippers are running every few minutes. Motive power is now provided by diesels, and on the occasion of the writers last visit he found no less than six in and about the shed. Outside, and now derelict, was the 0-4-0WT "Penlee", built by Orenstein & Koppel, in a very poor state.

(Ed.Note :- It may be that many other narrow-gauge systems exist in the area covered by Mr. Attwood's article - anybody know of one in the Lizard Peninsula?)

Ex-W.H.R. Loco "Russell"

"Russell" arrived at Towyn on Wednesday 24th August; Birmingham Loco Club are appealing for financial assistance to pay for the haulage. Offers to their Hon. Secretary, Mr. E.S.Tonks, 87 Sunnymead Road, South Yardley, Birmingham 26, from whom we have received the following interesting report:

Preservation of Locomotive "Secundus"

The 2' 8½"-gauge Furzebrook Tramway of Pike Bros, Fayle & Co.Ltd., near Wareham in Dorset, has long been of especial interest to railway and, more particularly, locomotive enthusiasts, to the latter the star attraction being "Secundus", a six-coupled well tank built about 1874 by Belliss & Morcom Ltd. So far as is known, it is the only Birmingham-built locomotive in existence, and in 1953 the Birmingham Locomotive Club initiated negotiations to have the engine preserved, on withdrawal from service, in the City's Museum of Science & Industry in Newhall Street, which project received sympathetic interest from all concerned. In the spring of this year, however, the owners decided to substitute road haulage for the tramway system, which was sold for dismantling to Abelson & Co (Engineers) of Birmingham. The latter firm, hearing of the hopes and plans for preserving "Secundus", very generously decided to co-operate wholeheartedly and donate the engine to the City, the B.L.C. agreeing to meet the transport charges from Dorset as their share.

On Monday July 25th, a handing-over ceremony was held in Messrs Abelson's Sheldon Yard, when the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Alderman and Mrs A. Lummis Gibson, received the locomotive on behalf of the City. Afterwards Messrs Abelson's were hosts at an informal luncheon, to which were invited representative of Pike Bros, Fayle & Co. Ltd., Bellis & Morcom Ltd., The Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Birmingham Locomotive Club.

The ceremony was reported in the local press and in the B.B.C.'s "What's Going On" item in the Midland Home Service. The locomotive was scheduled to be moved to the museum on Thursday August 4th, but it will not be on view to the public for some months, pending renovation.

Festiniog Railway

"Prince" has proved a tremendous attraction since it was introduced into the service, and up to 16th September over 11,000 passengers had been carried since the line re-opened between Portmadoc and Boston Lodge. Work is pressing on to get the track into reasonable shape as far as Minford, if not to Penryhndeuadraeth. "Prince" has been up to Minford for shunting duties.

The Annual General Meeting of the Festiniog Railway Society is to be held at Portmadoc on 8th October, and a special (public) train service will be operated during the afternoon. The Simplex is running again after repairs.

Subscriptions

All members (other than Life Members, of course) are reminded that Annual Subscriptions are due on November 1st, irrespective of date joined EXCEPT in the case of members who joined during this month and are paid-up to 31st October 1956. In accordance with Regulation 4, members are allowed three months in which to pay their subscriptions, and a further month after a reminder has been issued. After that time (end of March) they cease to be members of the Society. We have not been too strict on this up to now, but in order to try and improve (a) the magazine and (b) the Preservation Fund, it is essential that we get in as many subscriptions as possible at the beginning of November. NO FURTHER REMINDERS WILL BE ISSUED BEFORE THEN, SO HERE IS THE HON. TREASURER'S ADDRESS : J.M.Birdsell, 7 Broomhill Drive, Moortown, Leeds 17.

News Flashes

Mr. W.J.K.Davies, S.E.Area Agent, recently visited the Isle of Man; here are a few points from a letter we have received -

MANX ELECTRIC RAILWAY. Some of the track is rather overgrown, but in quite good condition. Cars very nicely kept. Permanent Way and electrical maintenance work is done during the winter using Cars 1 and 2. Some goods stock, mainly vans, is still in use but much is rotting away in Dhoon Quarry.

SNAEFELL LINE. All six cars serviceable and in use.

GROULDLE GLEN RAILWAY. Only four passenger cars appear to be used. These were under the station roof, painted black with red and white trimmings, "Sealion" has been cannibalised to keep "Polar Bear" serviceable, but even the latter, painted black and rather grimy (but 'black' might be through long wear) is in rather poor condition and apparently gets badly knocked about. Track is now used only to Seabeach; the rest is still in place but is overgrown and half-buried in places.

ISLE OF MAN RAILWAY. Locos No. 2 and 7 are officially in for heavy repairs but unlikely to run again and probably cannibalised - I did not see them. No's 6 and 9 in for wash-out (6) and genuine repair (9). No. 14 is sub-shedded at Ramsey, No. 11 at Port Erin, and No. 10 (in the absence of No.6) at Peel. "Caledonia" is in Douglas Shed, serviceable and in clean red livery. No's 1 and 14 still have bell-mouth domes and Salter valves. Some locos have lost their Beyer chimneys and chimney numbers, and No. 12 has her number on a wood block above the nameplate. All locos are in clean red livery, with brass domes. Coaching stock is in red and white and kept in good condition. A few coaches are still in the old brown colour and are used mainly for school-childrens trains.

Goods stock is unkempt and many wagons are just rotting away. There is a line of cattle wagons at St. Johns with all body panelling gone. The Foxdale Brake/compo stands in the yard in clean brown. M.N.R. six-wheel coaches are locked in shed. Foxdale Station is used by a local firm and the branch is very overgrown at lower end. Double scissors is still in place but siding to mines has been lifted.

Mr. Davies adds that if any points in his letter require amplifying, to let him know. His tour covered some of the past and present Welsh narrow-gauge lines before he went across to the island, and amongst other things he found the Festiniog Railway "Prince" in an undercoat of dull green paint, working the line between Portmadoc and Boston Lodge (as reported in our last issue). He also mentions a hasty visit to Fron Quarries where Caernarvonshire County Council operate a 2' 0 1/4" line (horse operated in part) from the quarry to an unloading point above a crushing plant. (We have not queried the 1/4" as we ourselves have recently discovered a 19 1/2"-gauge line in Leeds!).

If any member requires more concise details of Mr. Davies' trip, his address is Merton Court, Sidcup, Kent.

Cover Photo

This month's cover is by our Lincolnshire member Mr. W.Woolhouse, who also looks after the duplicating of the magazine. It was taken at Castle Caerinion on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, during the trip on August 20th.

Book Review

We have been presented with a copy of the Birmingham Locomotive Club's latest handbook dealing with Yorkshire (East and West Ridings). There are many interesting narrow and standard-gauge lines dealt with in the book, and there are one or two on our own doorstep that we never even dreamed of! Though not quite so well-illustrated as the others, the book is distinguished by a very fine line drawing of the Harrogate Gas Works locomotive "Barber" on the front, drawn by Mr, D.Clayton, who is a member of both the BLC and the NGRS.

Reminders

Leeds Meeting Saturday October 1st.
A.G.M.Manchester Saturday December 3rd.
Subs. are due for renewal November 1st.

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(Compilers Note : this volume covers Issues 11 -14 of THE NARROW GAUGE, which were covered December 1954, March/April 1955, August 1955 and September/October 1955, respectively. However, only Issue 11 actually carried a sequential number. L.L.)

