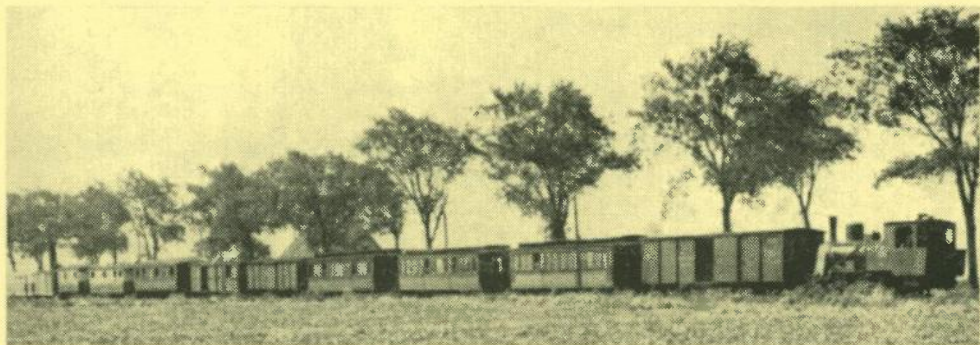


THE NARROW GAUGE



**Special Number on
Closed European Lines**

THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY

No. 27 Winter 1960

THE NARROW GAUGE

(Official Magazine of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society)

Editor : W.J.K.Davies, 126 Hughenden Road, St. Albans, Herts.

No. 27 (*)

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We are very grateful to all those who have helped to produce this magazine, especially to Ian Allan Ltd., and Cleaver Hume Press for the loan of blocks; and to all those who helped with information.

Cover photo : Saturday Train on the now dieselised Emden - Pewsum - Greetsiel line.

(*) original cover printed "No. 20" in error

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Editorial

So many small lines overseas have been closing in the last few years that it seemed to us that some record at least should be preserved - if only to emphasise the frightening rate at which they are going. Austria and Spain seem fairly safe but almost everywhere else the minor railways are definitely on the way out; even the last Irish line, the West Clare, will have gone by next summer.

This issue, therefore, is being devoted entirely to such lines and if the vast majority of those covered appear to be French it is only just; for the remaining French systems are dying fast, whether for reasons of politics or just because they are worn out. That is not to say that other countries are not acting in a similar manner; in Germany for example, the Leer-Aurich-Wittmund is down to goods only, the Mittelbadische system has been almost overcome by slow bus poisoning and the Plettenberger Kleinbahn has gone completely - a sad loss - while the Kreis Altenaer is reduced to one branch. But it is not so easy to get information on these or other lines, so if your favourite is not here, please bear with us.

In the space available I have tried to be fair; there is a detailed study of what might be called "the closure of the year", a fairly detailed one on a representative "secondaire", and short notes on a few of the lesser-known lines. For help in compiling the latter, I would like especially to thank Mr. E. K. Stretch.

What, you may ask, has happened to the promised tribute to the County Donegal? So much material has come in that I am holding it back and hope to devote a whole issue to it in the near future.

Lastly, to those who prefer the smallest Welsh tramway to the largest French reseau; or even prefer a Ruston diesel (in the right spot) to a Henschel Mallet, I must apologise; but I would point out that, while editorial policy is to preserve as good a balance as possible, the final choice rests with you. When this magazine went to press, only one article on a British subject was available.....

France - V.F.I.L. lines

Reseau du Pas de Calais (Calais - Lumbres - Fruges -Rimeux - Montreuil - Rang du Fliers - Berck).

Gauge : 1 metre. Operating Co. : V.F.I.L. Works : Lumbres.

Dates : 1881 to 1956.

History

This system, one of the biggest secondary networks in northern France, was originally built by three different companies. The C.F.d'Anvin a Calais (A.C.) opened in 1881 and covered 94km. The C.F.d'Aire a Fruges at de Rimeux a Berck (A.F.R.B.) opened between 1891-3 with 88km. of track, and the Tramway a vapeur d'Ardres a Pont d'Ardres, 6km long, opened in 1902; this latter was always worked by the A.C. The original Calais terminus was at Calais St. Pierre, a little north of Calais Fontinettes, but at some time after 1909 a mixed-gauge extension was laid over S.N.C.F.track into a bay platform at Calais Ville, and St. Pierre was closed.

In 1921 the A.C. and the A.F.R.B. were amalgamated to form the Compagnie Generale de Voies Ferrees d'Interet Local (which later acquired a number of other lines in N.E.France and is still in existence as the Compagnie d'Exploitations Ferroviares et Routieres). The system was then at its peak and remained intact until 1953, when passenger services were withdrawn from the sections Anvin - Fruges and Aire - Fruges, and the whole system followed soon after, being closed entirely about February 1955.

It was by this time being worked in virtually separate sections, the branch from Rang to Berck being the only one with a reasonable service (Ardres - Pont d'Ardres was by this time reduced to a twice-weekly service running 'if required!'). The whole network was soon dismantled, a fair proportion of the stock finding its way to other railways. Few traces except the earthworks remain now, although the traveller passing through Rang on the main line may still catch a glimpse, in what now appears to be a field, of fast-fading placards urging passengers to 'change here for Berck Plage'.

The branch from Bonningues to Colombert was closed to passengers in the late 1940's, and to all traffic in about 1953. There is some doubt about its original ownership, but it seems that

V.F.I.L.

RESEAUX de:

- V.F.I.L.
- SNCF
- other lines (all closed)

PAS de CALAIS



WJTD

fig 9.

it was once a through line from Bonninques to Boulogne, owned by the C.F.Economiques du Nord, and this portion was handed over to the V.F.I.L. when the rest closed about 1946.

Locomotives and Rolling Stock

Little information is available about the early stock, though the locomotives included the usual 2-6-0T's and 0-6-2T's and there were some rather squared-off looking railcars, lettered ACX or ARBX according to their original ownership. In 1949, however, the system acquired some 1937-vintage 80hp. Billard railcars of standard type, from the C.F.D.Dordogne line, together with at least three 180hp. diesel locomotives rebuilt from steam engines (they very soon re-sold these to the C.F.D.Ardennes - which see); and at about the same time some of the Company's own steam locomotives were converted to very neat-looking double-ended 0-6-0 diesels, the conversion being done at Lumbres Works. When the system closed, two of these, 351/52, were sold to the S.E. de la Somme, while two railcars went to the Tramways de la Correze.

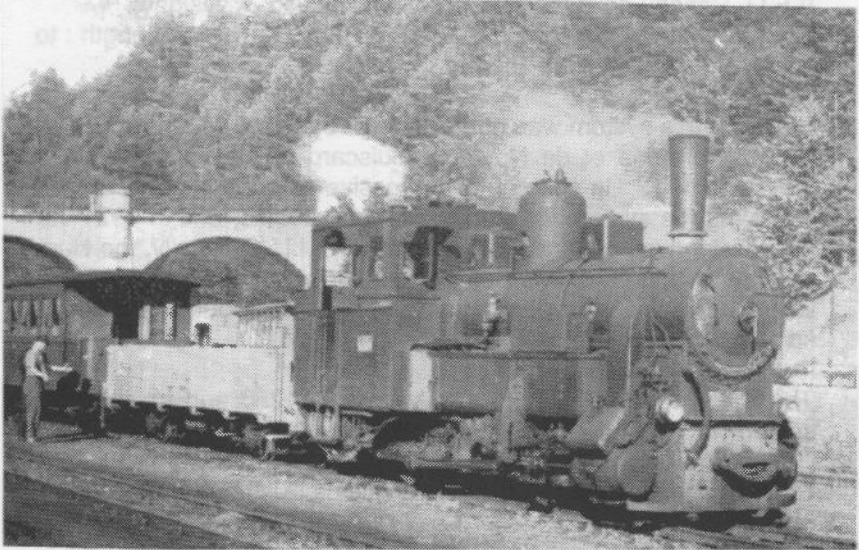
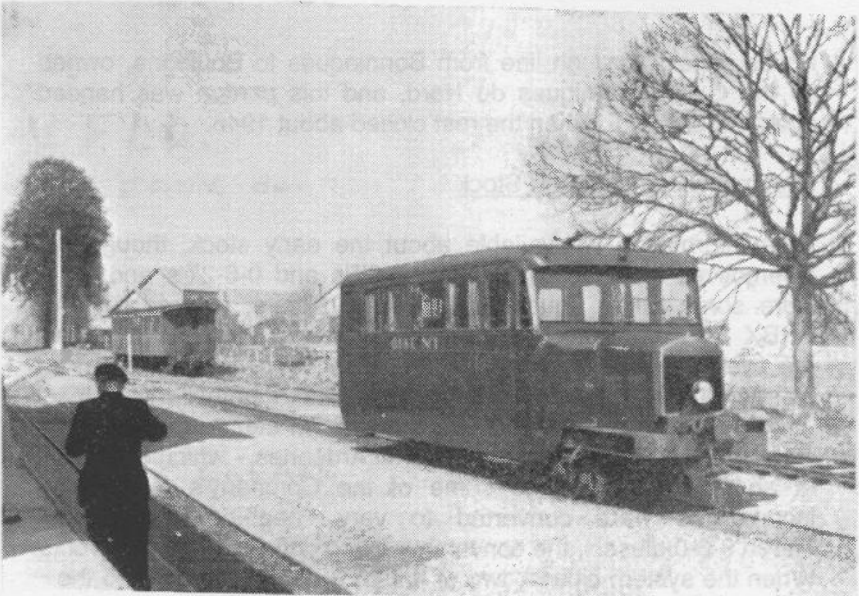
V.F.I.L.Reseau de l'Oise (Noyen - Ham; Noyen - Lassigny).

Gauge : metre. Operating Co. : V.F.I.L. Depot ; Bussy. Length : to Ham 25km, to Lassigny 15km.

History : this system was originally built by the "Chemin de Fer de Milly a Formerie et de Noyon a Guiscard et Lassigny" between 1894 and 1912. In spite of its impressive name, this concern was operating the system for the Department of Oise, and in 1921 the concession was granted instead to the V.F.I.L. Originally, the Ham line ran only to Guiscard, being extended about 1910, whilst there was an extension from Lassigny to Montdidier about which little is known.

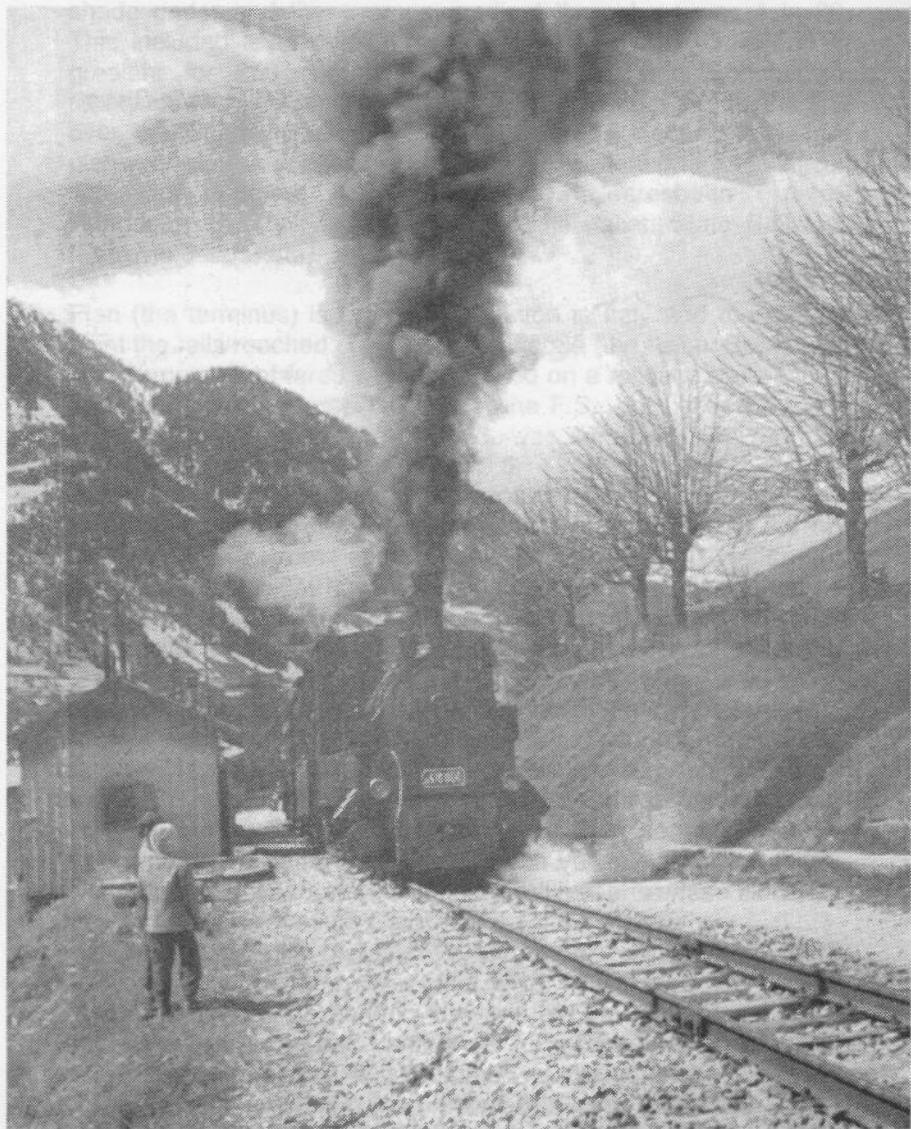
The system was closed to passengers in 1956 and to all traffic soon after. It is now completely lifted.

Stock. Nothing known, save for the railbus illustrated and a similar one, No. 3.



(top) : railbus at Noyon, on the Noyon - Ham line of the V.F.I.L.
(Clever Hume Press)

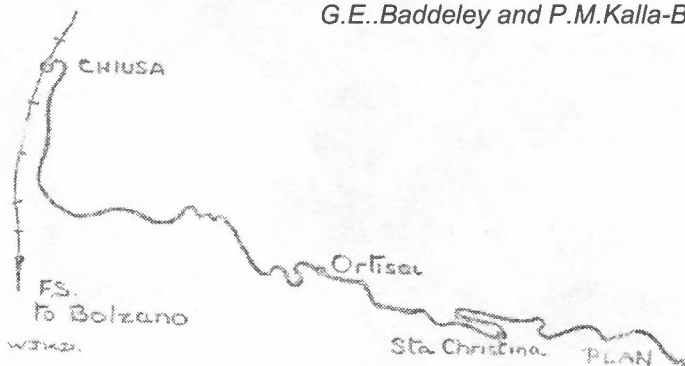
(bottom) : 0-8-0T R410.003 of the Val Gardena Railway at Chiusa.
(photo - J.R.Davidson; block - Ian Allan Ltd.)



(above) : train leaving a wayside station on the Val Gardena Railway. (photo - F.S.Italia; block - Ian Allan Ltd.)

THE VAL GARDENA RAILWAY

G.E..Baddeley and P.M.Kalla-Bishop



General Note. Pre-1919 place names were in German for halfway up the Grodental, and Ladin (a cross between Latin and Italian) thereafter. From 1919, all place names were in Italian and the German names were expunged. Since 1945, both Italian and German names have been quoted in all official publications, including timetables, and on station name-boards and notices.

The Italians joined the war against the Central European powers in 1915, and a front was stabilised roughly along the Italian-Austrian frontier, in part passing through the Dolomite mountains. The great valley leading down from the Brenner Pass to Verona in Italy was for three-quarters of its length in Austrian territory, and from the upper part of this valley, the Eisacktal or Val Isarco, a light railway was built eastwards into the Dolomites from Klausen (Chiusa).

The railway was of 760mm gauge and laid with 39lb/yd rail, thus limiting its permissible axle load. Construction commenced in September 1915 and the line was opened on 6th February 1916. Technical advice was given by Austrian State Railways engineers, supervision was by civilian contractors, and the work was done by troops or labour corps. The maximum number employed at any one time was 10,000, made up of 5% civilians, 65% labour corps and 30% military. Oberst (Colonel) Julius Khu was in charge of the Military Works Company involved.

Nine tunnels were built, some describing near semi-circles, with a total length of 1,110 yards. The ruling gradient was 1 in 20 or a

shade under and the average gradient throughout was 1 in 29. This included level parts through stations, and a 1 in 83 down gradient for 250 yards between S. Pietro and Roncadizza, otherwise the line rose all the way. The viaduct taking the line over the Chiusa Station yard is 110 yards long and there are plenty of similar and higher viaducts. This tortuous and difficult line was operated first by the K.U.K.Heeresbahn (Austro-Hungarian Military Railways) then by the Italian State Railways (Ferrovie dello State).

Plan (the terminus) is the highest station in Italy and the highest point the rails reached. The Oraria Generale (the Italian Bradshaw) smugly notes that fares were calculated on a mileage basis in just the same manner as on the rest of the F.S., but omitted to state that the timetable mileage, at 27.3, was some eight miles more than the real distance, which was 19.5.

Mileage		Station Names		
Altitude				
actual	timetable	Italian	German	in feet
0.0	0.0	Chiusa	Klausen	1700
4.2	5.6	Novale di Laion	Laion-Reid	2560
8.2	11.2	S.Pietro	St. Peter	3400
	13.6	Roncadizza	Rungaditschen	3780
12.4	16.8	Ortisei	St.Ulrich	4025
	19.2	Soplases	Soplases	4300
15.6	20.5	S.Christina	St.Christina	4590
	21.7	Castel Gardena	Fischburg	4780
	23.0	La Pozza	La Pozza	4900
	24.8	Selva	Wolkenstein	5130
19.5	27.3	Plan val Gardena	Plan	5223

The Route

G.E.Baddeley

(Note :- this description was written before news of the closure came. To avoid clumsy alteration it has been left in the present tense).

To visit the Val Gardena line, we must travel from Bolzano in one of the electric trains of the F.S. northwards along the Brenner line. This section is still electrified on the three-phase system and our

train will probably be pulled by a yellow-painted 2-6-2 locomotive, banked behind by two 0-10-0's - the overhead wiring resembles a trolleybus layout and all electric locomotives have bows at each end. They move along at a steady speed of about 25mph up hill and down dale, and emit large volumes of steam from the cooling apparatus.

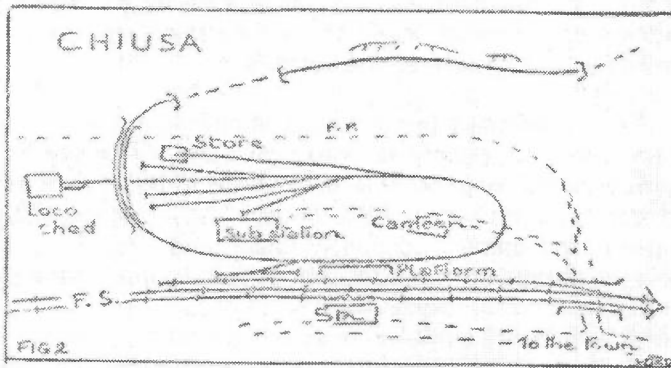
On leaving Bolzano, we will see the rack-operated section of the Ferrovia del Renon climbing steeply on our left and disappearing over the mountain. We follow the raging torrent of the River Adige into the valley leading up to the Brenner Pass, and are hemmed in on either side by forbidding rocky slopes. On the way up, we pass through several small stations and stop at Ponte Gardena (Waidbruck). Although this is the point where the Gardena valley branches off at right-angles to the main valley, we do not alight here but carry on to the next station 6km. further on. This is Chiusa or Klausen (the name meaning lock, in both senses and in both languages), a small town which is typically Austrian, even to the costumes worn by the local people on Sundays. The town is passed to the left just before entering the station; it lies below the railway and has a bridge across the river.

When we alight here, we will notice that there are three tracks comprising a loop and siding, with a substantial building on the left, adjoining the road leading into the town. On the right there is only one of those precast concrete fences, favoured by continental railways. There is a small gap in this fence, opposite the station building, and over this hangs a board inscribed "Linia Chiusa - Plan Val Gardena" and its equivalent in German.

A single narrow-gauge track runs along the far side of the fence and there is a rudimentary gravel platform with a seat. This is the passenger terminus of the State Railway's only narrow-gauge line on the mainland of Italy.

The most interesting part of the line begins even before the passenger terminus is reached, for down in the valley just beyond the station is to be found the locomotive shed, a concrete building in the form of a house, with overhanging roof eaves. Minor repairs are carried out here but when a locomotive requires a major overhaul it is taken away to Verona Workshops.

In front of the loco shed are a number of sidings on which may be seen a variety of small four-wheeled trucks and vans, a few bogie open trucks, and two or three bogie carriages which show obvious signs of long disuse. A red cross can be seen faintly painted on their brown sides, and it is said that they were brought by the Germans during the recent war, to carry wounded up the line to various Hostels (*compilers note - Hotels?*) which had been converted into hospitals. Nevertheless they are said to be so rough-riding that they were not considered worth rebuilding as ordinary passenger coaches after the war, and several have already been broken up.



Our train will comprise about three match-boarded four-wheel coaches with open platforms, and a van to match. Although offering spartan comfort, this is the stock which has always been worked on the line and it rides reasonably well. The vacuum brake is fitted, and in this respect the line is probably unique in Italy; there are also compression brakes as fitted on the Snowdon Mountain Railway.

Between the loco shed and the 'platform' the line describes a tight curve, almost a circle, through the meadows and crosses a footpath, with warning notices in Italian and German. Within this loop, as well as the sidings, there are two buildings, a sub-station for the main line railway and a staff canteen. On leaving the station, the circle is completed as we pass almost at once onto a substantial concrete viaduct which carries us over the beginning of the line, just in front of the locomotive shed.

Once over the viaduct, we are facing due south and running on a ledge on the mountainside, amongst the trees. Almost

immediately, we pass through two short tunnels and, climbing steeply, follow the contour of the mountainside, with steeply sloping green fields below us and trees above. We climb thus for the next four miles, passing through more tunnels and over several small viaducts crossing ravines.

The line is continually twisting to left and right, and there is not a straight stretch anywhere. From time to time we catch a glimpse of the main line and the river in the valley below, and the whole scene is reminiscent of the Festiniog below Tan-y-Bwlch. At last we have a fleeting glimpse of Ponte Gardena Station and then bear left round a headland into the Gardena Valley, having already climbed to a considerable height above the valley floor; as we turn we can see a ruined castle on the far slope.

Soon after this we make our first stop, at Novale di Laion Station. The train comes to a stand on a narrow ledge as we are on the outer track of the loop and the loco takes water from a straw-lagged standpipe set between the tracks. There is a small station building with the name inscribed in Italian and German, but the village is out of sight down a narrow path through the fir trees.

Another four miles of similar country is traversed before the next station, S. Pietro, is reached, and on this section there is another tunnel and a high viaduct, the largest on the line, set on a sharp curve. S. Pietro station also boasts a loop and water column. On this part of the line, the track runs along a narrow ledge above a sheer drop of hundreds of feet; however, between S. Pietro and Roncadizza, the floor of the valley rises suddenly to the level of the railway, and instead of running on a ledge on the northern slope we cross over and run along the right-hand, or southern side, of the road which runs up from Ponte Gardena. On this, the only section of favourable gradient on the up journey, we run beside the road between open meadows.

However this happy state cannot be maintained for long, and we are soon back on the northern slope, climbing away above the road and a small torrent of a river. On the other hand, on the upper sections of the line the dizzy heights of the lower part are never attained. Ortisei, the only place large enough to be called a town that is served by the railway, is reached after twelve miles. The station has a small building, passing loop and a couple of sidings.

Immediately after it we make an un-gated level crossing with a road on a blind corner - where, naturally, the locomotive whistles furiously - and we pass almost at once into a short tunnel under the cathedral. A further two miles brings us to Soplases, where a short stop is made, and then on again to S. Christina, a large village and the second largest place served by the line. Here again there is a sudden change in the level of the valley floor, and the track threads its way through the village in a double hairpin bend. The station itself lies in the middle of the 'S' and, like Ortisei, consists of a loop, siding and a small building.

From here on, the villages are more straggly, comprising scattered chalets and hotels with the railway running little more than twenty feet above the winding road and the rushing stream below. There are halts at Castel Gardena, La Pozza and Selva, but it is difficult to determine where one village ends and the next begins. Near Selva there is a side valley with a sheer rock face of pinkish colour, to our left.

We have hardly got under way after leaving Selva when we stop again, for what appear to be the last half-dozen houses in Selva are in fact the village of Plan Val Gardena; this is the head of the valley and the end of the line.

Plan Station, which consists of a small building with booking office and waiting room, and a separate convenience close by, is set on a wide ledge no more than ten feet above the road. It has a run-round loop and a spur line leading to a single-track loco shed, built in brick and concrete, and of ample proportions. Both it and the adjacent water tank are clad in timber to make them look like a chalet. One of the larger houses just beyond the end of the track is being rebuilt as a rest centre for railway staff.

Thus this delightful little line has a slightly more pretentious end than its beginning. Without doubt however, the most breathtaking view obtained on the whole trip is not the end but that seen as we round the curve out of the main valley into the Val Gardena, just below Laien Reid Station.

There is no signalling, and with mixed trains, such a steep gradient and the continuous sharp curves, speed is necessarily not great. On the downward journey, this is just as true, in fact the very large

ejector of the compression brake, set inside the cab, is blowing off continuously.

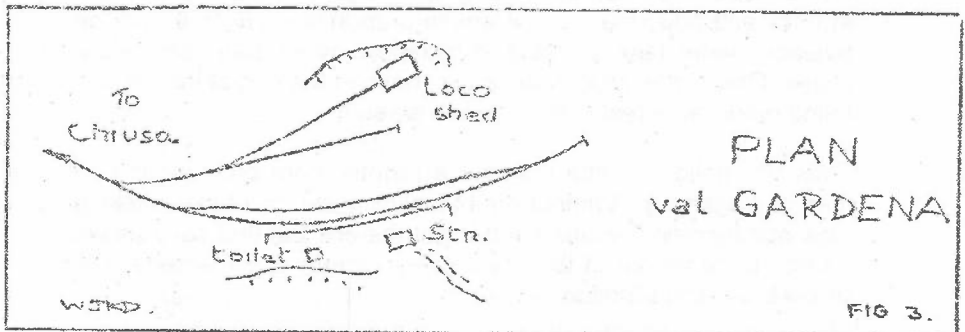
Locomotives

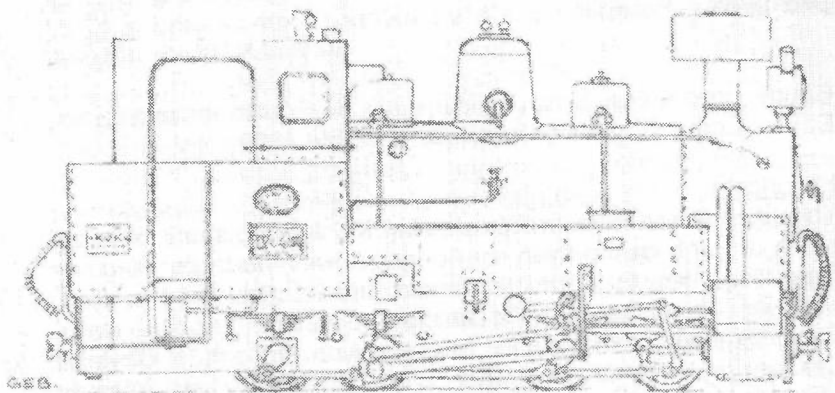
Ten locomotives have been used during the life of the line :

K.U.K. No's -?-, F.S. No's 3051-52 0-6-0T by Krauss, Sendling, (Wks. No's 6859 and 6981 of 1916); a similar loco K.U.K. No. 3521 /F.S. 3103 (Wks. No. 7011/16) - all three were scrapped during the 1930's.

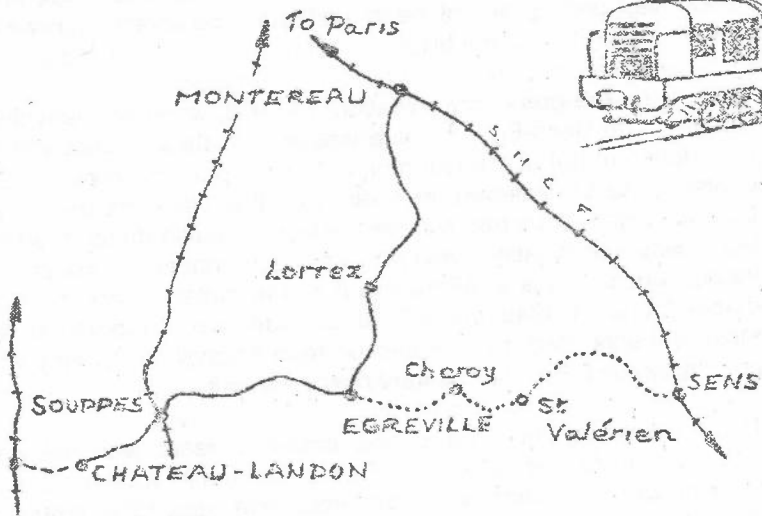
Austrian State Railways Type K 0-8-0WT by Krauss, Linz - K.U.K. No's IVc.4151-57/ F.S. No's 4151-57 (Wks. No's 7171-77/16). 4152 and 4157 were sent to Yugoslavia about 1942; the rest are still in service albeit renumbered about 1950 to R.410.001/3-6.

Main details are : Boiler Pressure 185psi; cylinders 12½" x 13 3/8"; coupled wheels 2'6" dia.; weight in working order 25t.12cwt. They have Klein-Linder trucks at each end and are fitted with vacuum and compression brakes. Early photos show that under Austrian administration they were fitted with large spark-arrester chimneys.





C. F. D.



Reseau du Gatinais

(Montereau - Egreville - Chateau Landon)

W.J.K.Davies

Gauge : metre. Operating Company : Cs.de F.Departementaux.
Depot : Egreville. Dates of operation : 1887 - 1959.

Historical

This line was opened in 1887, joining Montereau, some distance south of Paris on the main line to Lyons, with the large village of Egreville, 31km. to the south. It was intended to extend the line westward from here to Beaumont-in-Gatinais but, like many English lines, it never reached its destination, stopping at Chateau Landon (51km) with a further S.N.C.F. junction at Souppes (45km.); here was also a large sugar refinery for this is a great beet-producing area.

In 1906, another line reached Egreville, the Chemins de Fer d'Interet Local de l'Yonne, coming in from Sens, some 41km. to the east. Both lines used the same station and were run almost as a single unit. In fact the C.F.D. took over the Sens-Egreville line along with other Yonne branches, in 1923, as the latter's operating deficit was getting out of hand and the 'ratepayers' concerned were unwilling to foot the bill.

Then came the great "co-ordination" of 1938, when so many lines closed. The Sens-Egreville line was one of those scheduled for abandonment but at the last moment it was purchased by the Co-operative de St. Valerien, who ran it as the "Chemins de Fer du Gatinais". Both lines had a huge upsurge in traffic during the War but, alas, inevitably without an appropriate increase in maintenance. Thus in 1945, much of the material was "au bout d'usure" and in 1949 the C.F.du Gatinais was forced to close. Most of it was lifted, but the section from Egreville to Cheroy was bought by the C.F.D. to augment their beet traffic.

The increase in motoring during post-war years was followed inevitably by further closures. Passenger traffic was withdrawn from the Egreville-Chateau Landon section in June 1952, though a daily goods still ran, and in 1956 the Egreville-Cheroy section, completely worn out, was forced to close. Diesel tractors replaced

the locomotives, but only to enable the line to be run to death with the greatest economy. Buses had already taken most of the remaining passenger traffic and no renewals were made to track or rolling stock, which were in such bad condition by June 1959 that the line had to close.

Since then, all track has been lifted except a portion of mixed-gauge at Montereau which is still used by S.I.L.E.C., an electrical firm; and the section between Souppes and Chateau Landon, now owned by the sugar refinery. Two Billard cars, 705 and 801, have gone to the C.F.D. du Tarn; 803 and the trailer, which belong to the Departement, are dumped at Montereau. Two of the locotracteurs have been sold, and the third taken away after being used by the C.F.D. to lift the section from Montereau to Lorrez. The rest of the line was lifted by a contractor who also cut up the remaining rolling stock.

Locomotives and Rolling Stock

The locomotives used on this line were part of the large stock of the C.F.D. concern, which transferred locos from line to line as required - hence the widely-spaced numbers which at first sight have no known pattern! When the Sens line was taken over, the locomotive stock came with it, retaining the old C.F.I.L.de l'Yonne numbers. (These would appear to have been scrapped when the Gatinais concern closed). During the last years of the line, a total of four diesel 'locotracteurs', rebuilt from steam locomotives at the C.F.D.Montmirail Works, were used on the system. Details, as far as they are known, are given below.

Rolling stock was almost all four-wheeled, and included some fourteen coaches with end balconies, half a dozen luggage vans and a large assortment of vans, flat wagons, open wagons (some of these converted from flat wagons) and some special vans for transporting sugar. There were also several pairs of bolster wagons and a mobile crane. At Souppes and Montereau the narrow-gauge locos were often required to shunt standard-gauge trucks on the mixed-gauge tracks, and there were three special coupling wagons for this purpose.

The first railcar was a four-wheeled Renault, delivered in 1924, but no details of this are available. The three in service when the line closed were all delivered new in 1939, being of the standard

Billard 100hp. type seating 32 passengers with standing room for fifteen more. 801 and 803 were originally intended for this line, while 705 was ordered for the Tramways de la Vendee but, not being needed there, was diverted to Montereau on completion. There was also one Billard trailer, similar in size and shape to the railcars and numbered R1.

Locomotive List

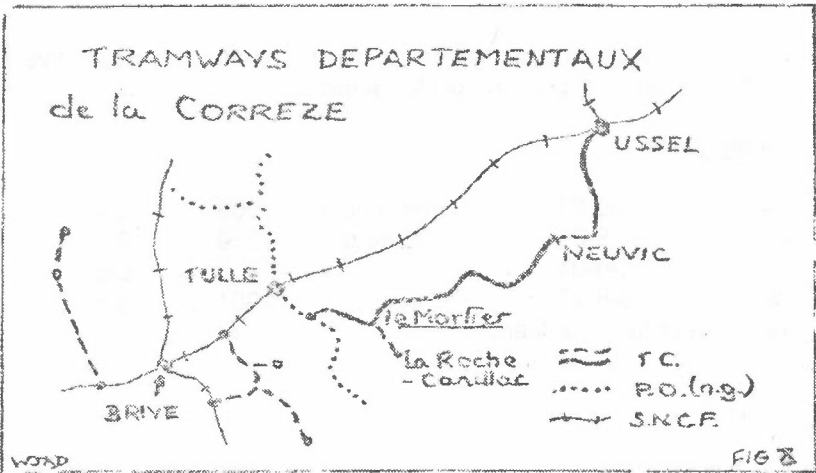
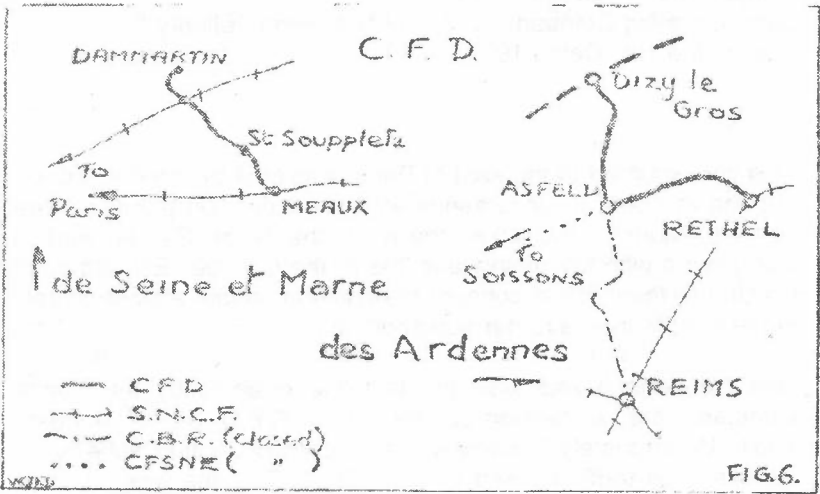
No.	Type	Maker	Year	Remarks
11	0-6-2T	Cail	1886-7	(a) scr. since 1956
14	"	"	"	New. " " "
19	"	"	"	New. Note 1
27	"	"	"	New. Note 1
42	0-4-4-0T	S.A.C.M.	1889	New. scr.
43	"	"	"	New. scr. since 1956
44	"	"	"	New. scr.
82	0-6-0T	Pinguely	1902	New. Note 2. Scr.
83	"	"	"	(b) scr. since 1956
581	0-6-0D	CFD Montmirail	-	(c.) Note 3
582	"	" " "	-	(c.) Note 4
13	"	" " "	-	(d) Note 5
14	"	" " "	-	(d) Note 6

- (a) ex La Ferte-Montmirail line, to replace 19 and 27
 (b) ex CFD de la Dordogne owing to increase in traffic
 (c) converted from steam locos (?)
 (d) ex CFD de Saone et Loire (Digoin a Etang)
 (1), (2) lent to Tramways d'Ardeche (under CFD management) from 16/3/28 to 16/1/30; returned on closure
 (3) sold to Sucrierie Ouvre /59
 (4) damaged in accident 4/10/55, returned to Montmirail
 (5) returned to Montmirail /60
 (6) sold to S.I.L.E.C. /59

C.F.I.L. de l'Yonne locomotives used by CFG and CFD

No's 2,3 - 0-6-0T Pinguely - presumed scr. /49

No's 22, 26-28 - 0-6-0T Corpet Louvet 1913 - presumed scr./49



France - Other C.F.D. Lines

C.F.D.de Seine et Marne

(Meaux - St. Soupletz - Dammartin)

Gauge : metre. Length : 31km.

Last Operating Company : S.A.A.M.N.A. sugar refinery

Depot : Meaux. Dates 1905 - 1960

History

This line, situated to the east of Paris, was built by the C.F.L.L. de l'Yonne in 1908, in accordance with a concession granted three years previously, and linked the main line of the C.F. du Nord to Compeigne with the main Paris line of the C.F. de l'Est; although granted to the l'Yonne concern the line was in fact almost entirely in Seine et Marne, a rather odd anomaly.

Oddly enough it was also the last line retained by the Yonne Company, the concession passing to the C.F.D. on 16th January 1931. Unfortunately it came under the co-ordination scheme of 1938 and all traffic ceased in April 1939. The line was however acquired by the S.I.A.M.N.A. sugar refinery for use during the beet season and continued in service between Meaux and St. Soupletz until recently.

It is now closed and as far as is known, lifted. All locomotives have disappeared, presumably for scrap.

Locomotives

1-4	0-6-2T	Corpet Louvet	1909	Scr.
5	0-6-0T	St.Leonard	1889	Scr.
05	2-6-0T	"	-	Scr.
79	0-6-2T	"	1901 (a)	Scr.

(a) - ex Lagny - Montcerf.

C.F.D. des Ardennes

Rethel - Asfeld - Dizy le Gros. Gauge : metre. Operating Companies - CFD (Asfeld - Dizy); C.F. de la Banlieue de Reims (Rethel - Asfeld); latterly Regie Departementale des Transports des Ardennes (new title of CFD from 1947).

Depot : Rethel, with shed at Asfeld. Length : 25km + 23km.

Dates 1903/04 - 1960.

History

These two lines, worked in their last years as a single unit, were the last remnants of a once extensive system in the working of which no less than three companies had a hand - in fact all three of them at one time met up at Asfeld. The third, the C.F. Secondaires du Nord Est, worked in from Soissons. These remaining lines have, for some ten years, been open for freight only, and the Dizy - Asfeld section was closed to all traffic in 1959. Rethel - Asfeld has been operating a very irregular goods service "according to requirements", the position being reviewed every three months. It is believed the concession has now lapsed.

Locomotive Stock as at 1st August 1960

301	0-6-0D	VFIL Lumbres		(a) (1)
650/51	"	CFD Dordogne		(b) (2)
652	"	" "		(b) (6)
13 "N.E."	2-6-0T	Corpet Louvet	1396/12	[c] (4)
52	0-6-0T	" "	959/03	[c] (3)
59	"	" "	1075/05	[c] (3)
61 "Sissone"	2-6-0T	" "	1168/08	(d) (5)
71 "Rocroi"	"	" "	1636/24	(d) (3)
77 "Le Chesne"	"	" "	1642/24	(d) (4)
79 "Le Tramblois"	"	" "	1644/24	(d) (3)
81 "Chatillon"	"	" "	1646/24	(d) (4)
82 "Le Chatelet"	"	" "	1647/24	(d) (5)

Notes :-

(a) ex V.F.I.L. Pas de Calais

(b) sold by CFD to VFIL who resold to CFD Ardennes

(c) ex CFS du NE

(d) ex CFD Ardennes

(1) sold to SE de la Somme

(2) for sale at Rethel

(3) stored in open at Rethel

(4) derelict at Asfeld

(5) stored in shed at Asfeld

(6) in service 1st August 1960

Tramways Departementaux de la Correze

Tulle - St. Bonnet d'Avalouze - Le Mortier Gumond - Neuvic d'Ussel-Ussel; branch from St.Mortier to La Roche Canillac.

Gauge : metre. Operating Company : S.C.E.T.A. Depot and Works : Le Mortier. Length 74km. (originally 101km); branch 4.5km.

Dates : 1912 - 1960.

History

The most recent of French closures, if indeed the Cambresis is still running, is that of the Tramways de la Correze, which ran from St. Bonnet d'Avalouze on the Argentat Branch of the P.O. "Lignes de la Correze" to Neuvic d'Ussel up in the hills to the east; that is, in theory at least. In practice, all trains ran through, to and from Tulle some 10km. north of St. Bonnet and the centre of the P.O. narrow-gauge system.

The Tulle - Neuvic line was the last survivor of a Departmental system comprising three isolated lines, two of them with branches (brief details are given later). Its history is typical of departmental concerns; the original concession was taken up by the Compagnie des Tramways Departementaux de la Correze (T.C.), which opened it in 1912 and ran it until 1925 when the Departmental authorities bought it back and leased it to a P.O. subsidiary. In this fashion it passed thence to the S.T.A.P.O. (1st January 1932) and finally to S.C.E.T.A. (1942). By this time it was the only line still being worked and had already lost its branch, closed to all traffic in 1939.

In 1946 the Neuvic - Ussel section was threatened by a new hydro-electric scheme at Doustres, but was saved at the expense of building a 5km deviation which included a long steel viaduct across the new lake; ironically enough, this was the next section to go, being closed to all traffic in 1952. Unfortunately the line had two disadvantages - it did not tap nearly enough traffic to pay for its upkeep, and it was never properly modernised. No diesel tractors replaced the ageing Piguets, experiments with railcars were half-hearted, and the track received little attention.

In consequence, by 1959 things had got into such a state that even two Billard railcars, rather belatedly purchased from the Pas de Calais system of the old V.F.I.L., could save it; the track was so bad that their potential could not be realised. So, on 1st January 1960, the line closed for good; by August the track had been lifted and all remaining stock was stored at St. Bonnet, waiting for the breaker's torch. There is one ray of hope, however, for one of the locomotives may be saved.

Locomotives (at closure)

3, 4, 7-9 0-6-0T Piguët 1905 (first series, 18t.)
(formerly also 5,6 - identical; and 13,14,17, of 17t.)

Railcars

Originally (1928-on) two Saurer 6w.cars; two Tartary 4w. cars (scr.)

Two De Dion 4w. cars.

Introduced by S.C.E.T.A.: three De Dion ML type; two Billard 80hp. bogie cars - the latter are at Tulle in good condition (numbered TCX1/2). Several of the older cars are dumped at St. Bonnet.

Other Lines of the T.C.

1) La Riviere-de Mansac (10km. west of Brive) - Juillac.

Gauge : metre. Length : 26km. Depot : Juillac. Dates 1914 - 1931.

2) Aubazine (between Brive and Tulle) - Beaulieu sur Dordogne, with a branch from Le Bospios to Turenne. Gauge : metre. Length : 38km + 18km. Depot : Le Bospios. Dates : 1912/13 - 1933.

C.F.de la Camargue

Arles (Trinquetaille) - Salin-de-Giraud. Gauge : metre. Operating Company : C.F.de la Camargue. Depot : Arles. Length 38km.

History

This system was originally composed of three lines built between 1892 and 1901, radiating from Arles - north to Nimes, south-west to Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, and south to Salin, having a total length of 116km. It does not appear to have had connections with any other lines, and closed piecemeal, the first two lines going in 1950 and 1953 respectively, and the Salin branch on 31st August 1958. The system was originally steam-worked, being electrified between 1922 and 1930 at 6,600v. 25cycles.

Stock

Steam - unknown. Electric - tram type. In 1950 new aluminium trailers were bought, being hauled by impressive-looking locomotives, which in fact were mainly luggage space.

France - Other Lines

Chemins de Fer Economiques du Nord, Reseau de la Haute Savoie

Annemasse - Sixt, with branch from St. Jeoire to Marignier.
Gauge : metre. Length : 49km. Dates : 1891 - 1959.

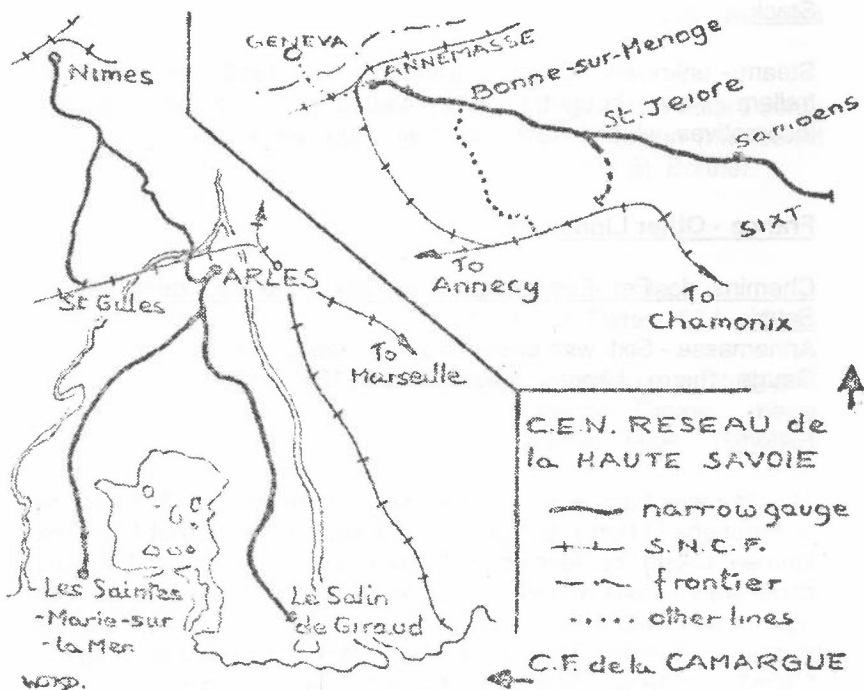
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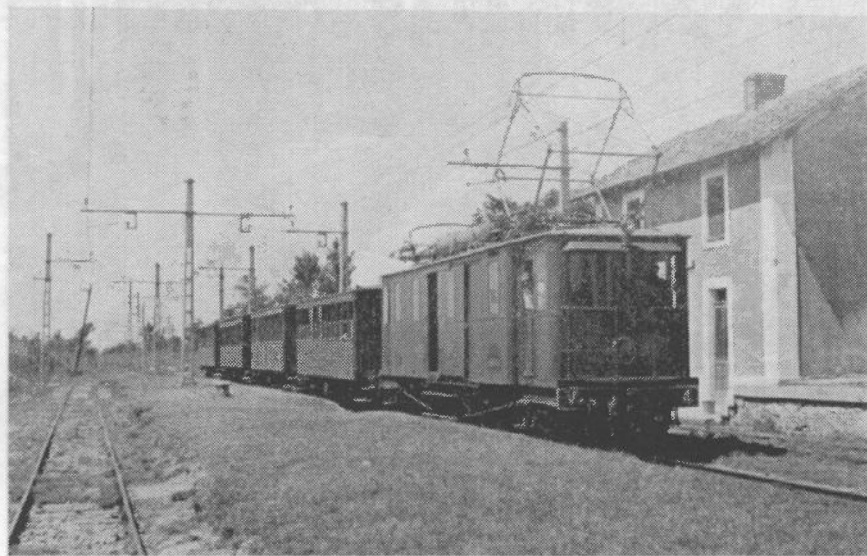
This line was built as a roadside steam tramway from Annemasse to Samoens (44km.) but did not give satisfaction in that form, the journey taking no less than three hours. As a result it was completely reconstructed in 1928 as an electric railway on its own right of way with a vastly improved alignment. Gradients did not exceed 30mm/m. and the excellent track allowed speeds up to 60km/hr. In 1930 it was extended a further 5km. to Sixt, but only the first mile or so was electrified, the rest being abandoned. (It may be of interest that, besides the branch already mentioned, a line from Bonne-sur-Menoge to Bonneville (12km.) was said to have been built but never opened).

The line was popular with tourists and indeed, had through running at weekend with the Geneva tramways at one period in its career. Nevertheless it was closed in 1959, though not without a struggle, an amateur group making an attempt to resuscitate it with camping coaches and new trailers (from the Lyon - Neuville line).

Stock

Seven motor cars of B-B wheel arrangement and having two saloons seating 24 people. 16 trailers each seating 32.

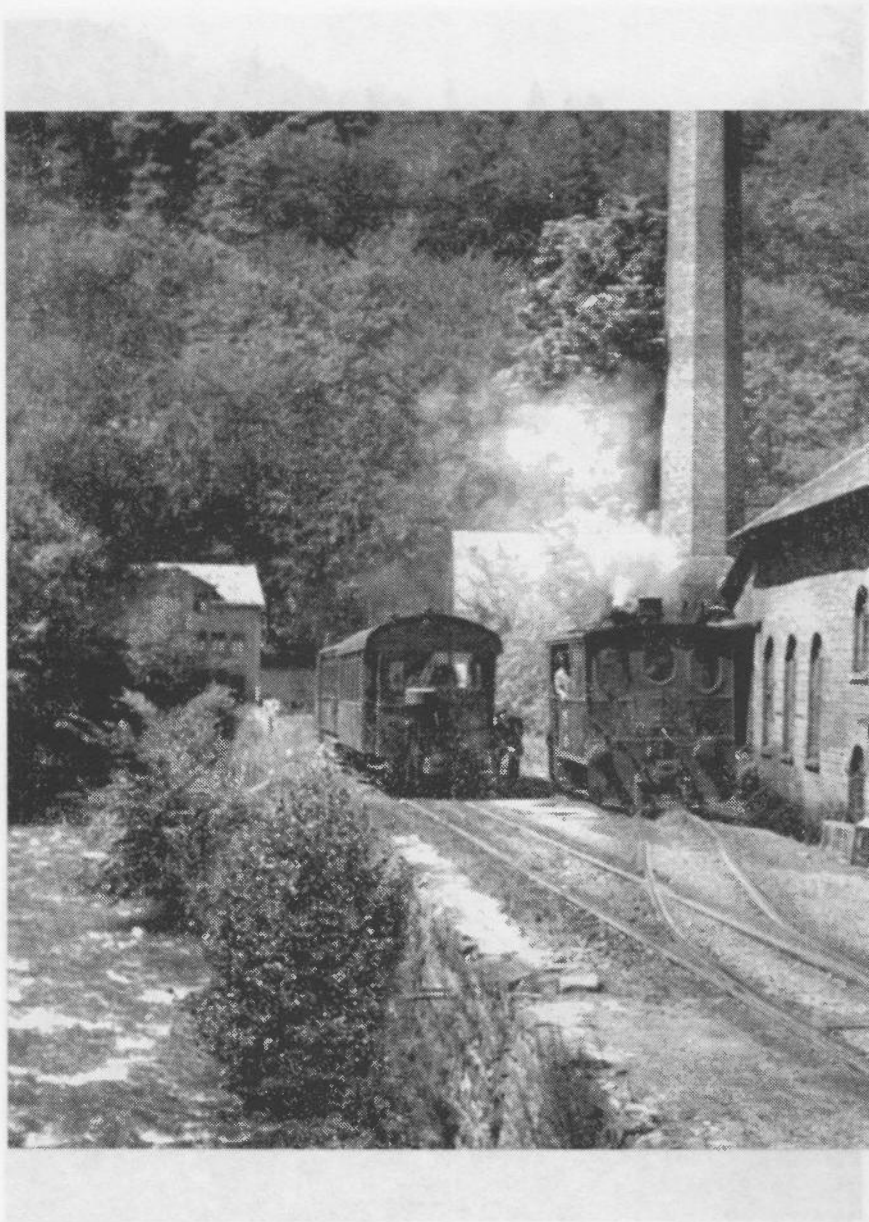




(upper) : Annemasse - Sixt line; a C.E.N. train leaving Tines Tunnel en-route to Sixt.

(lower) : Locomotive-hauled train of the C.F.de la Camargue on the line south of Arles

(both blocks courtesy Cleaver Hume Press)



Train at the Wiesenthal terminus of the Plettenberger Kleinbahn (closed 1/59), showing one of the Henschel tram engines on a passenger train. An article on this line and the Kreis Altenaer appeared in "Railway World" in March 1960.