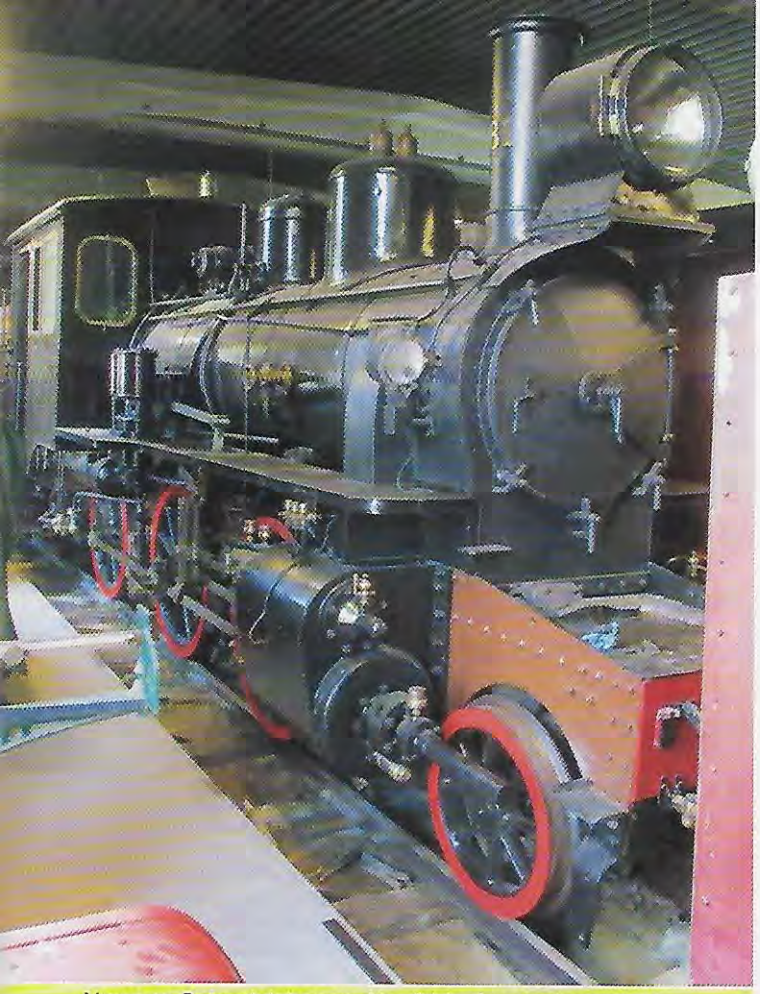
Narrow Gauge News

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Norway: Setesdalsbanen. No. 81 in the carriage shed.
Photo: Graham Fairhurst

ROMANIA

Sibiu-Agnita Railway (760mm gauge)

The New Europe Railway Heritage Trust (NERHT) has long had an interest in the narrow-gauge Sibiu-Agnita Railway project in Transylvania, central Romania, and was glad to participate in its recent acquisition of one of the original steam locomotives. This is No.764.158, an 0-8-0 tank built by the former Malaxa Works in Bucharest in 1949 and which had been on display in front of Sighisoara mainline station. It was reasonably complete but there was some deterioration and missing parts.

The SAR preservation society (Asociația Prietenii Mocaniței) in Sibiu found out over the weekend of 7-8 August that the locomotive would be put up for auction in Bucharest two days later (together with other narrow-gauge items) following the insolvency of Societatea Feroviara de Turism, one of the successor state-owned companies established on the division of the former state railway corporation, CFR.

Although the pandemic travel restrictions prevented volunteer working parties travelling to Romania from the UK, Asociația Prietenii Mocaniței is assisted by a close network of British supporters, many of whom are well-known in the UK heritage railway sector and one of whom is Neil McGregor, an expatriate commercial lawyer in Bucharest dealing with the legal aspects of the project.

Following calls and messages between Sibiu, Bucharest and the UK, support from the various parties in the UK was co-ordinated and Asociația Prietenii Mocaniței received offers of financial support which allowed a successful bid for the locomotive to be made in the auction in Bucharest on 10 August. The purchase price of the locomotive was contributed in equal parts by the UK supporters' group SARUK and Bill Parker of the Flour Mill (Bill is also a member of SARUK), whilst the transport costs from Sighișoara to the current operating section of the SAR between Cornățel and Hosman were funded by NERHT.

The Flour Mill has provided support and know-how for the restoration of the Sibiu to Agnita railway since 2006.

Abandoned by the state railway company in 2001, the railway has been saved from scrapping by being listed as a historical monument. However, its revival faces many challenges, especially in a country like Romania, hence the need for advice from abroad is significant.

Further information at www.sibiuagnitarailway.com

NERHT Eastern Star

SOUTH AFRICA

Sandstone Heritage Trust

It has been decided to move 3' 6" assets off Transnet property at the old Bloemfontein steam loco depot and relocate them to Sandstone Estates at Ficksburg. The first locomotive moved was the rather forgotten "other" GMAM, number 4114. This locomotive was purchased from Randfontein Estates Gold Mine at the same time as number 4079 *Lyndie Lou* which saw a great deal of main line use up to a few years ago.

4114 had been cared for by Lukas Nel before he retired in April 2019 and was moved on August 19 from its parking space next to the old loco shed in Bloemfontein Depot for loading on road transport to Ficksburg. It is believed that this is the largest locomotive ever moved by road in South Africa and unusually the GMAM has not been split into its component parts.

Some clever logistics by Mercor Transport and Munro Transport enabled the loco to be placed on a massive multi axle trailer in one piece. Avoiding the use of heavy and expensive cranes was key and by utilising a second gooseneck lowbed trailer as a loading ramp, 4114 was safely loaded on to the multi axle trailer without damage to any of the pivots which is always a risk when moving Garratt locomotives. 4114 weighs 160 tons devoid of coal and water



South Africa: Sandstone Estate Garratt 4114 was loaded onto the multi axle trailer by using a conventional gooseneck lowbed as a loading ramp and avoided splitting the Garratt into 3 sections which would have entailed considerable extra expense as large cranes would have been needed.
Photos: Sandstone Heritage Trust





South Africa: a view of 4114 loaded onto its trailer.
Photo: Sandstone Heritage Trust

and is just under 29 metres long.

The trust was also preparing to move all its 3' 6" locos from Germiston to Sandstone Estates. Security is a major reason. The items include:

Class 25NC 3488 NBL 27348/1954; Class 15F 3052 "Avril" - was David Shepherd's loco - NBL 25591/1944.; Class GMAM 4079 - the first loco acquired by Sandstone in 1997 - BP 7677/1956; Rhodesia Railways DE2 Diesel Electric RR No. 1207 English Electric 2238/1955; Cowans and Sheldon steam crane 355/1965 SAR No. 578.

Dave Richardson and *Sandstone Heritage Trust*

Vandalised infrastructure

The South African Government intends to spend Rand 1.9 billion (£110 million) to repair vandalised infrastructure after the lockdown to contain the spread of Covid 19.

The impact of the restrictions exposed the vulnerability of the network resulting in occupation of railway property by people building illegal settlements on the tracks and elsewhere. There has also been wanton destruction and vandalism.

Left unguarded, thieves descended on stations in cities including Johannesburg and Cape Town stealing electric cables, tracks, handrails, doors, windows and staircase railings. About 80% of the Passenger Rail South Africa (Prasa) fleet was vandalised during the lockdown. The government blamed Prasa for failing to implement contingency plans following the termination of contracts with private security companies.

Branch Line News

USA

Maine two-footers

All five surviving Maine two-footers will be in operating condition at the same time for the first time in the preservation era when two of the locos are restored. The Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. & Museum and Maine Locomotive and Machine Works are teaming up to undertake the work.

Monson Railroad 0-4-4T 4 and Bridgton & Harrison 2-4-4T 8 are the locos involved. The three Maine two-footers currently operable are Monson 0-4-4T 3, B & H 2-4-4T 7 and Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway 0-4-4T 9.

Plans are to start with Monson 4, built by Vulcan Iron Works in 1918 for the slate hauling road in the northern part of Maine, followed by B&H 8, built in 1924 by Baldwin and the largest of the surviving two-foot gauge locos.

Railfan & Railroad

East Broad Top (3' gauge)

The EBT, the only surviving common carrier railroad east of the Rocky Mountains, is being reinvigorated following purchase by a non-profit foundation.

FEBT (Friends of the EBT) volunteers and EBTF (EBT Foundation) employees completed tie replacement between Rockhill Furnace and Colgate Grove on September 14, with a "golden spike" ceremony held on September 16. Track work continued during the work week with joint bolt tightening and replacements. Ballast work will continue before the remaining tourist era main line to Colgate Grove will be returned to operation, but the FEBT members who have spent countless days participating in this process have made a significant contribution to the return of the East Broad Top. The railroad estimates that 10,000 ties have been replaced by the collaboration of both entities.

Trackwork will continue with some bolt replacement where needed, which the FEBT track crew has been steadily contributing to during each recent work session. Ballast work will then be accomplished during the week, and then the line will be tamped and leveled using the East Broad Top's new tamper, which was announced as being available the day before the Golden Spike ceremony. There are currently roughly 3.5 miles of operable track.

FEBT volunteers also made great progress on multiple other restoration projects in September.

FEBT newsletter via *Stephen Wiggs*

Publications Received

The Lineside Club newsletter October 2021. Some interesting information about lockdown conditions in Australia in addition to other material. There are intersting photos including from the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway in Maine (see right) by John Browning.

Two Foot Topics, Number 131, newsletter of the golden Valley Light Railway Association. Twenty-four pages of news and technical information.

Welsh Highland Heritage No 92 September 2021. If you are interested in the history of the WHR, this is a must.

HaRakevet: a quarterly journal on the railways of Israel. A wonderful ng picture of the 105cm gauge in Lebanon in c1962 adorns the front of this comprehensive publication.

Irish Railway Record Society Journal Vol 29 October 2021, No 206. This is mostly concerned with the Irish standard gauge but contains wonderful details of a jouney on the West Clare as well as one or two other narrow references.

A Correction
Narrow Gauge News 366 (September 2021) - Page 40

The Newby Hall Miniature Railway photo caption on Page 40 was incorrect. The locomotive featured was not *Lady Mary* but was in fact *Countess de Grey*. Apologies to Philip Champion for the error.

