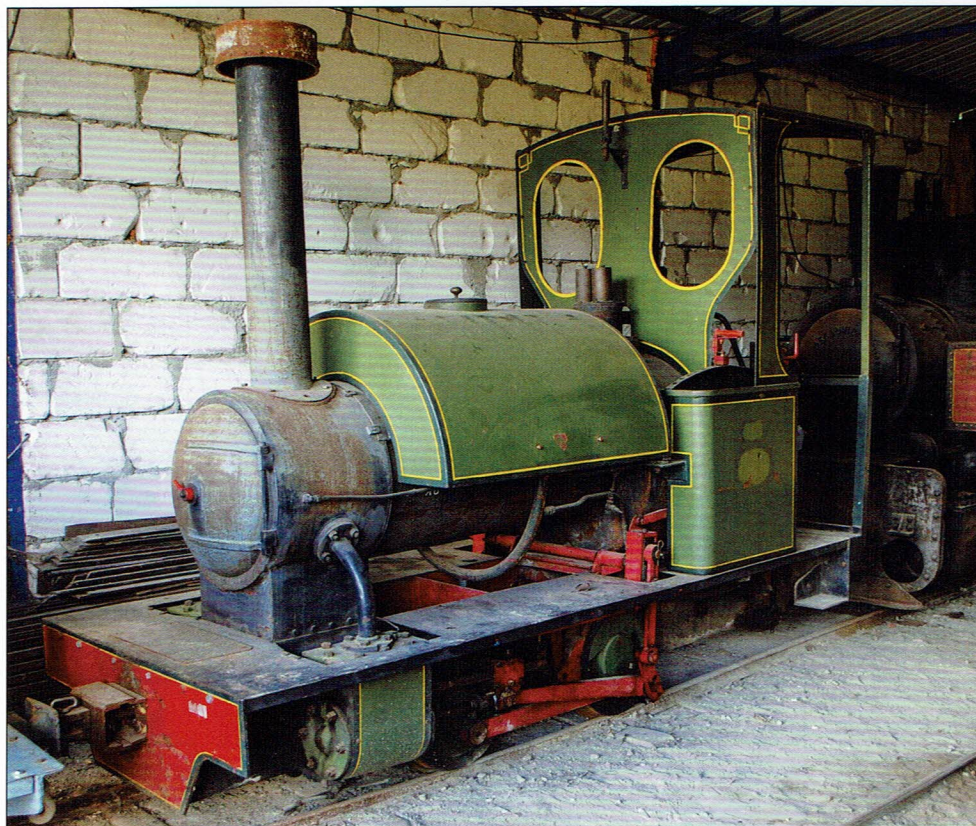




the winter of 1976. Trixie did not return and was put up for sale for £6000. No 21282 was repainted in a bizarre multi-coloured livery reminiscent of wartime 'dazzle camouflage', and returned to Dinas Mawddwy in early 1977. The carriage was sold to a buyer in France.

The end and after

The line opened at the beginning of 1977, with just the Simplex and one carriage as rolling stock. Trains ran over the Easter weekend, but those were the last services on the Meirion Mill Railway. It appears that the

railway inspectorate did not approve of the revised operation and ordered closure. The track had been lifted by late July, though the remaining equipment was left on site.

After closure the railway was put up for sale: 200 wooden sleepers and 14 tons of 25lb/yd rail for £2,900, the Motor Rail for £750 and the remaining Baguley carriage for £400. Some rail was donated to the Centre for Alternative Technology.

The Fairbourne Railway purchased the rest of the track, but it proved to be of limited use. The best of the rail was used in relaying the

Trixie at the Tacot des Lacs railway, France in 2013. The loco's plates were stolen while it was at Noisy-sur-Ecole. The counterbalance is also absent from the front footplate and she has acquired a slightly more substantial cab with Orenstein & Koppel-style oval spectacles. Photo: John Browning

line between the Old and New Ferry stations. Some of the sleepers were used between Penrhyn and the old Ferry Station in 1981, the rest went as firewood. The rail spikes were too small for Fairbourne and went into the scrap bin, and the remaining rail was used as fence posts and to reinforce stream banks.

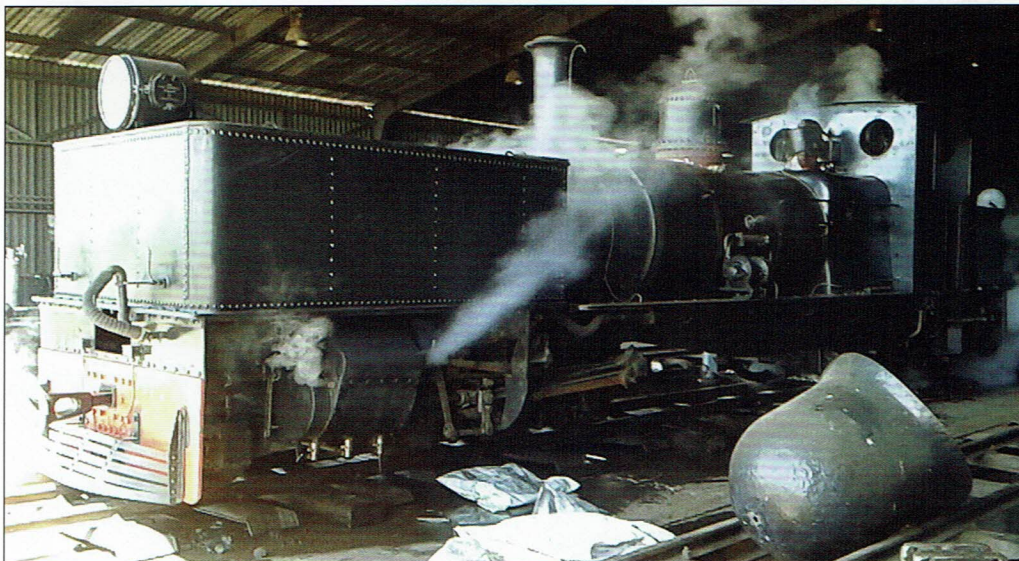
The Simplex was repurchased by Alan Keef and was hired to Scott's Cumberland Moss peat railway in October 1977, where it worked until 1989. It then undertook a number of short contracts, until it was sold to Lea Bailey mine in Gloucestershire in September 1993. It is now a working locomotive on the Lea Bailey Light Railway, almost unrecognisable from its Meirion Mill form having been substantially rebuilt twice.

Trixie was sold to Rail Rebecq in Belgium, renamed 'Paula' and worked the inaugural trains in 1977. She was not a success and at the end of that year was sold to enthusiast Jean Chapotel of Noisy-sur-Ecole who put her into storage. On 5th March 2001 she was moved to the Chemin de Fer Chanteraines just south of Paris with several other locos from Chapotel's collection. In 2012 she went to the Tacot des Lacs railway, also in France, where she remains in 2016.

All that remains at Dinas Mawddwy in 2016 are a few of the ex-Gartheiniog wagons. Two are on display on short lengths of track, while the rest are dumped behind the mill. A casual visitor wouldn't know that a fine, if short-lived, narrow gauge railway once ran here. **NGW**

■ Special thanks go to Bill Hyde, Donald Sills, Mike Woods, James Finister, Bob Harris, Kevin Prince, Peter Holmes, Ken Scanes and Tim Gregson for help with this article.

PICTURE EXTRA



■ It lives! This is the moment that every locomotive restorer dreams of when a fire is lit for the first time and the project comes alive, often after many years of effort. The loco in question is NGG11 Garratt no 52, built by Beyer Peacock in 1919 for work in Natal, South Africa, sold to Rustenburg Platinum Mines in 1956 and after retirement, preserved at the Museum of Man and Science in Johannesburg in 1974, passing through a couple of other owners before finally being acquired by Sandstone Estates in 2010. Restoration has been going on ever since and the loco was steamed on 28th September. Next stop, a starring role in the Stars of Sandstone event in April 2017. Many thanks to Dave Richardson of the Sandstone Heritage Trust for the photo.