

NARROW GAUGE

November/December 2010 £4.20

WORLD

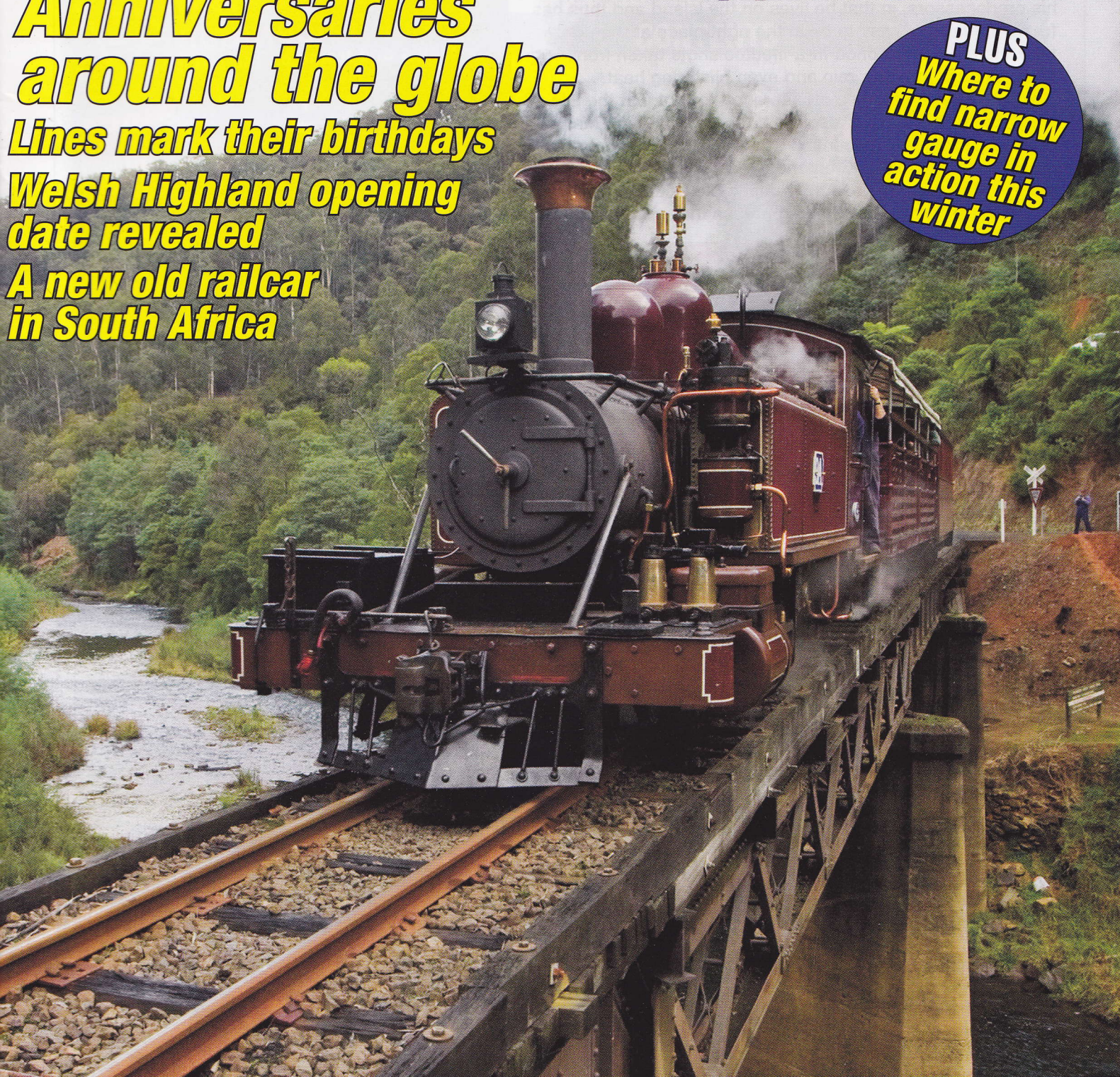
Anniversaries around the globe

Lines mark their birthdays

***Welsh Highland opening
date revealed***

***A new old railcar
in South Africa***

PLUS
***Where to
find narrow
gauge in
action this
winter***



**Polar Bear – not
to steam again?**

**Lyd hauls trains in
Wales and Devon**



Issue no 72

Atlantic
PUBLISHERS

PLUS: Latest narrow gauge, miniature, modelling news



An air of history...

The latest event featuring narrow gauge at Beamish had a unique aspect to it, as the museum's Keeper of Transport **Paul Jarman** reports.

Narrow gauge is continuing to make its presence felt at Beamish museum in County Durham. Following the successful 'Power from the Past' event, held in April and featured in *NGW* 70, the museum held its second 'Great North Steam Fair' over the long weekend of 2nd to 5th September, this time featuring a rather different narrow gauge line.

Dave Potter's 0-4-0 vertical boiler engine 'Paddy', which ran at the April event, was again present, joined this time by Roy Etherington's Lishman & Young 0-4-0 compressed air loco 'Issin Sid'. This is a replica based on a design reported in a paper titled *Compressed Air Engines* that was presented to the Cleveland Institution of Engineers at Middlesbrough on 25th April 1881. Using the surviving documents, an accurate replica of the engine was constructed at Statfold Barn by Roy with the assistance of the Hunslet Engine Company.

The air locomotives had been built by the Grange Iron Company in Durham, for use in the Earl of Durham's mines. They were of very simple design, with a slip eccentric (requiring the first foot of movement to be by hand in order to reverse the engine) and worked off air delivered into the mine by surface compressors. The aim was to replace the pit ponies which were in wide use, but by 1900 the idea had been dropped and the concept all but erased from memory in the Durham coal field.

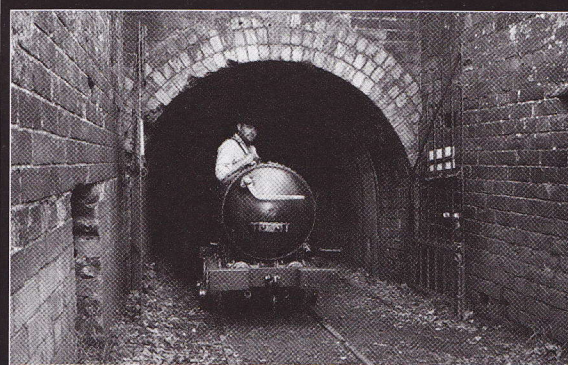
Air locomotives were used elsewhere in the world, so Issin Sid is an important reconstruction, typifying one of the many Victorian 'might have beens' that never quite delivered against expectations. The range of the locomotives was around 500 yards on one charge of air.

Paddy was built in 2004 by Dave Potter, Roger Lees and Ted McAvoy. It utilises a 1958-built Clarkson thimble tube boiler and the engine from a steam piling rig. Substantially constructed, it is capable of real work and visited Beamish in 2009. It recently featured at the Ffestiniog Railway's

'Quirks and Curiosities' gala, now sporting a cab roof and lettered for the 'British Steam Piling Company'.

Both engines were operated over the temporary railway laid down in the colliery yard. Beamish has acquired a quantity of heavier rail and three turnouts which may be laid as a more permanent line for 2011, forming the basis of a colliery stockyard and coke ovens system in due course. It will also enable heavier locomotives to attend at events.

On the evening of 2nd September Issin Sid was moved from the demonstration line to the museum's genuine drift mine entrance - now the entrance that visitors use on their tour of the mine there. Photographs were taken, the first air locomotive underground in the Durham coal field since 1900! Appropriately, throughout the event Issin Sid was stabled alongside the overhead crane.



Pictures on this page show 'Issin Sid' at the drift mine entrance and on the museum's temporary narrow gauge line. Photos: Paul Jarman

from Lambton Engine Works (where the air locomotives were maintained), which was also built by the Grange Iron Company.

Plans for the April 2011 event are well in hand and again will feature narrow gauge exhibits - watch the museum's online transport blog for more info: <http://beamishtransport.beamish.org.uk> **NGW**

