

The Narrow Gauge Railway at Welshpool.

TO MONTGOMERY

WELSHPOOL

LLANFAIR
CABREINION



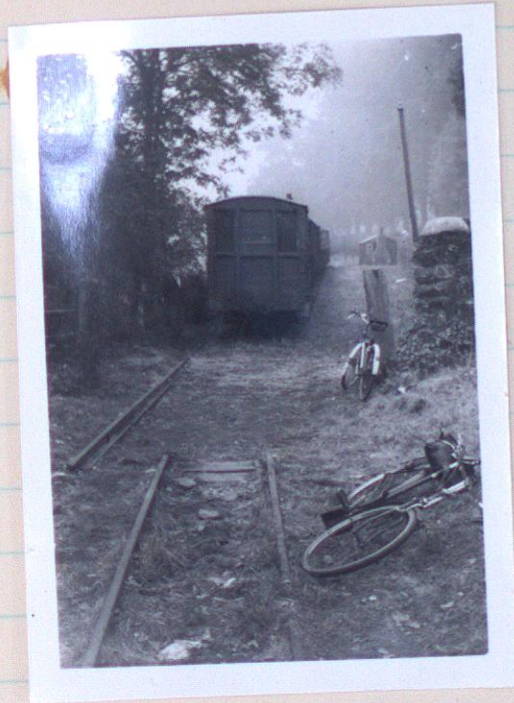
Description of Exploration - 1st time June 14, 1959

I went to this railway one Sunday on my bicycle. I remembered it vaguely from the time we had one gone to Bermonth in our old Austin car and I think, but I'm not sure, I remember seeing a train. I saw it first as it crosses the road and then went to the station. Unfortunately it was not open on Sunday so I could not see the platform into which the railway must have run. However, I saw where the railway ended - just before some new standard gauge sidings. I also saw some old trucks and animal vans on the other side of a road beside the railway - proper.

See overleaf.

I went up the railway a bit and then saw a man, who told me what he knew about the railway. He then gave me a drink of "fizzy" lemonade and told me that a keeper in a nearby house knew more than he did. I went to see him, and he told me that the railway had been closed to passenger traffic in 1931 or 2 and had closed altogether on the 5th of November 1957. He also told me that several people had been up to look at the track and who had been thinking of taking it over. The main difficulty is that the corporation of Welshpool will not allow the railway to reopen through the town. He said that the track would have to be removed of grass because the engines would spin on it because it is uphill. A Preservation society was set up in the Autumn of 1959, and progress is now being. The section through the town has been sold to a scrap merchant and only about ten trucks have been kept. The engines that have been bought are at Swindon and Oswestry. We went (Smith A.B. and myself) on a whole holiday (16th October 1959)

Photographs



and found, as shown above, that the line has now been cut off completely from the main line. Top right shows part of the condemned line through the town and below is the end of the line at Hanfair Cereision. An interesting feature of this photograph is the large coach. The station is now a coal depot - but we hope not for long. A difficulty is going to be the transport of the engines to the new starting point. The line is incidentally the only 2'6" gauge in England now. I went up again in Lent 1960 and as a result joined the preservation society which was set up, incidentally, in 1957. The two engines are both at Oswestry. See Scrap book.



HISTORY



CLEARING THE TRACK OF THE WELSHPOOL - LLANFAIR RAILWAY IN MONTGOMERYSHIRE

See letter: Clearing the Line

CLEARING THE LINE

SIR,—I was interested in your article, *Steam Among the Bluebells* (September 10). While one cannot help but admire the obvious enthusiasm of railway preservation

societies to get their lines restarted, it seems to me that their value to the community, particularly in the field of youth work, has not yet been recognised.

I am thinking particularly of the Welshpool-Llanfair Railway Preservation Society in Montgomeryshire. The line was opened on March 4, 1903, and was from the beginning operated by the Cambrian Railway, which in 1923 was taken over by the Great Western

Railway and, on nationalisation, by the Western Region of British Railways. Although passenger traffic ceased on February 9, 1931, goods traffic continued until November 5, 1956, when the line was closed. Since then the Welshpool-Llanfair Preservation Society has been trying to get it started again.

Over August Bank Holiday the young members of the Preservation Society started their task of bringing back the now overgrown track to serviceable condition; the enclosed photograph shows them at work. The Society hopes to re-start passenger traffic on a modest scale, leasing the line from the British Transport Commission. There is no doubt that money will be brought to a rural community in an area capable of considerable tourist expansion. It seems to me that there is a good deal in favour of the Government's giving its backing to such schemes.—C. H. BETTS, 80, Grove Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex.

The Welshpool and Llanfair Railway was at one time going to be the Llansymonech and Llanfair Railway.

See p 72 Vol II R.N.B.