



Welch West Highlands Railroad

PORTHMADOG TO FFESTINIOG

History

- ▶ Established by Act of Parliament in 1832
- ▶ First authorized to use 600 mm Gauge - 23.5"
- ▶ Original line built as consistent grade gravity incline as main use was for Slate mines
- ▶ Horses used to haul empty carts back to top
- ▶ Horses rode down in "dandy wagons" where they were fed and watered

Passenger Service

- ▶ In 1846 an act was passed in parliament mandating all Steam powered railroads must use standard gauge track
- ▶ But, because their founding date was prior to the act, Welsh Highlands were grandfathered in to carry passenger traffic on narrow gauge
- ▶ Thus, they became the first narrow gauge authorized for passenger service in 1863, and began service in 1865

Introduction of Steam power

- ▶ First steam loco was put in service in 1863
- ▶ It was an 0-4-0t+t called Topsy
- ▶ It is still operational and is used on special occasions
- ▶ Became the testbed for Robert Fairlie's Double Engine design
- ▶ These engines are not only still in use but are still built in their Boston Lodge shops
- ▶ An attempt at electrification was aborted by WWI and never resumed

Trouble arrives

- ▶ Following WWI things went reasonably well until 1939 and WWII
- ▶ Slate production fell off as most of the mines closed
- ▶ Passenger service was totally cut off so as not to be targets of opportunity
- ▶ Much of the lines were dismantled during the scrap metal drive for WWII

Tourism saves the Day

- ▶ In 1951, a small group of devoted railroaders formed the Ffestiniog Railway Trust to restore the line
- ▶ A major issue arrived in 1955 with the Tanygrisiau reservoir being built that flooded part of the original trackage
- ▶ by 1965 the group had rebuilt the line over the Great Deviation
- ▶ The massive boost in electric power that was promised by the reservoir has never come to reality









Boston Lodge

This is the shop area for the line and
the foundry for building and
restoring locomotives



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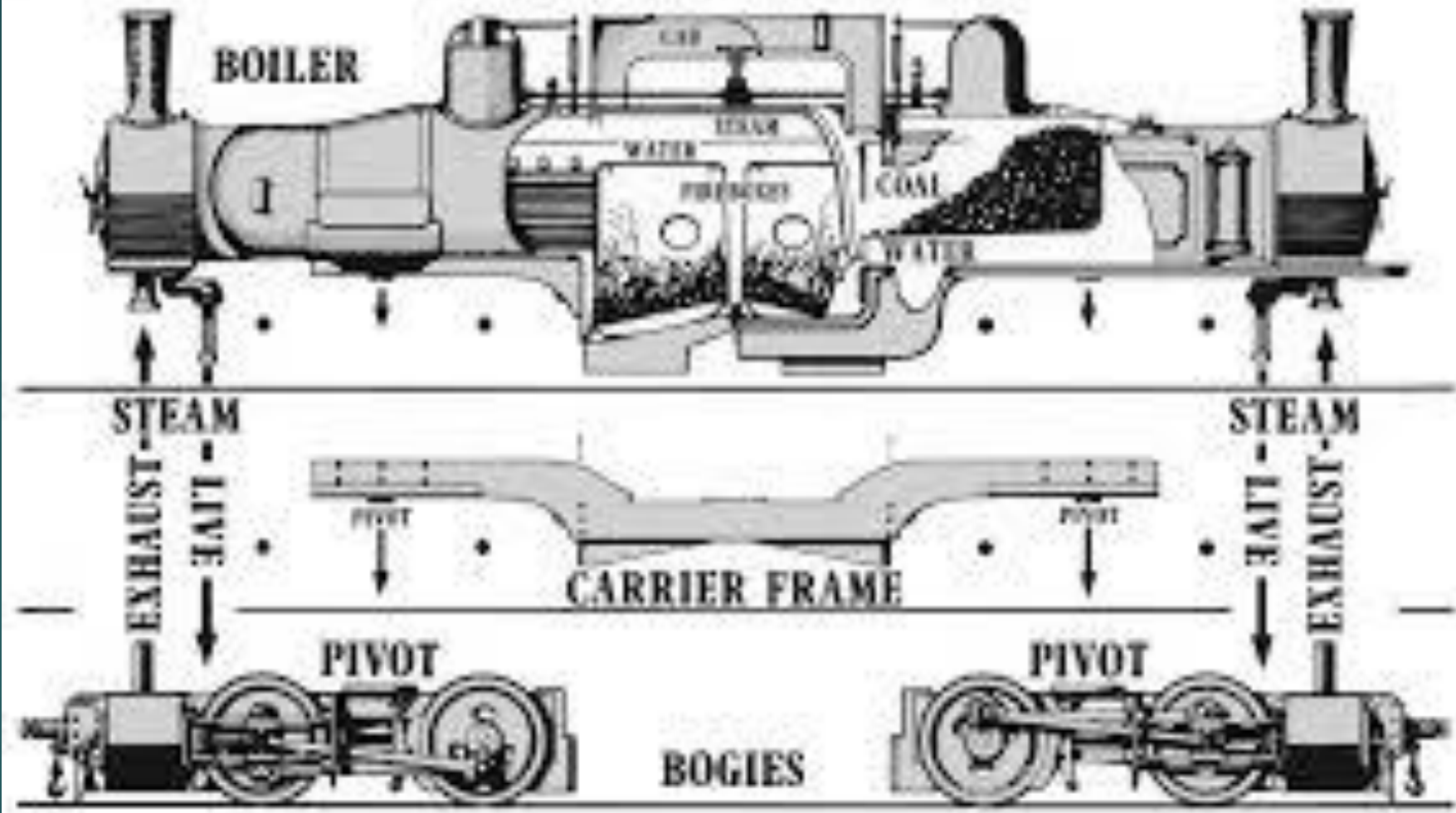


Fairlie's Locomotives

- ▶ Available as double ended or single ended
- ▶ The double uses 2 articulated power bogies, one boiler, with the crew in the middle goes around sharp curves efficiently
- ▶ Is about 32' long
- ▶ Was first built in 1866
- ▶ New versions have been completed in 1992, 2002, 2013, 2020, and there are 2 in production currently
- ▶ Bachmann Europe makes models in N Scale



FAIRLIE'S PATENT











BOSTON LODGE
BUILT
1992
WORKS















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