

# THE LAST DOMED HAYCOCK FIREBOX TO BE USED

THE Redruth-Chacewater Railway was opened on January 30th, 1825, and although it was not the first railway in Cornwall, it had an interesting and varied history, being finally closed during the first world war. In this article Mr. Fred G. Barnett, of Frogpool, Cusgarne, gives some interesting facts based on an article written for the "Locomotive" by the late Mr. W. Mitchell, of Redruth.

Of 48in. gauge, the line ran from the Smelting Works at Devoran, up the Carnon Valley to Bissoe, Twelveheads, Hale Mills, Carharrack, Pennance, top of Lanner Hill, to Redruth. A branch from the top of Lanner Hill continued to Basset Mines and Seleggan Smelting Works, in all about 14 miles.

The rails were laid on stone blocks, bought from all and sundry at 1s. each delivered where required, about 50,000 in all. It is thought that many crosses and stones of historic interest were cut up for rail blocks.

For almost 30 years the trucks were hauled by horses, kept at Devoran and Carharrack. At Carnon, near Devoran, there was a weighbridge and a water feed tank, and a tank also at Carharrack.

Two tank engines were purchased in 1854, being named Miner and Smelter. They were made by Messrs. Neilson, of Glasgow, of 0-4-2. Then, in 1859, a third engine, Spitfire, was put into use, 0-6-0. All the engines had outside cylinders. Steam pressure was 110lb. per square inch, cylinders 12in. diameter, 18in. stroke, and the driving wheels 42in. diameter; weight of engine and boiler, 16 tons.

The line rises to about 600ft. above sea level at the top of Lanner Hill.

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In 1869 the engine Miner was re-built at Devoran engine

sheds, with a new boiler, and in 1902 larger cylinders were fitted, but the rest of the engine ran for 46 years, speaking well for the design and material. It was probably the last domed haycock firebox to be used in this country.

The railway was run by Messrs. John Taylors, of London, who so successfully managed the Consolidated Mines in Gwennap for 21 years. Mr. Fred J. Tyacke was the local manager for the last 30 years. Mr. Clare, the guard, was provided with a uniform. The railway paid handsomely when the mines were in full working order.

The main traffic was coal from Devoran to the mines and the various private coalyards along Point, below Devoran, through the route, as well as the Redruth Gas Company's works, and ores from the mines to the various smelting works at Redruth, Seleggan Hill near Carn Brea, Bissoe and Point, and the blocks of smelted tin from the works to Devoran for shipment to the buyers, and probably bricks from the brickworks at St. Day and Pennance, Lanner Hill, coal to the arsenic works at Bissoe and arsenic from the works to ships for shipment.

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There were numerous crossing gates—one pair is in use at Carnon as a fence—and their operation employed a number of women who lived nearby; if no one lived convenient, the rail-

way provided a masonry or wood building for the accommodation of the gate attendant.

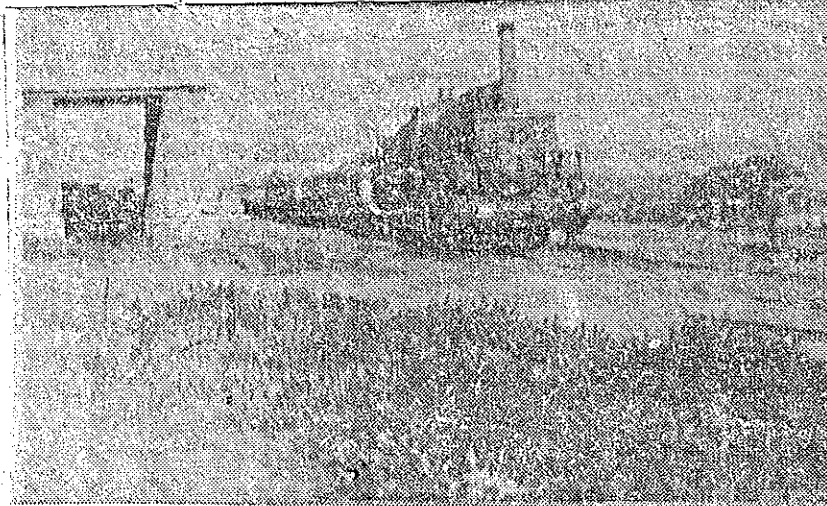
The railway was a part of the life of those who lived near, as they knew the drivers, stokers and guard, and many used the trucks as a means of transport. In many places the rails ran along very close to houses and gardens, and children used to put a pair of crossed pins on the rails, and the train, passing over them, formed a type of scissors.

The silting up of the Devoran river and the consequent difficulty in ships getting to the quays except at high tides, and the decline of mining, coupled with the growth of road transport by motor lorries, made the line and its upkeep an uneconomic proposition, and it was closed in 1915.

The rails were taken up as scrap for the war effort, and part of the track was turned into roads, Point to Devoran, Carnon to Bissoe, while other portions were turned into gardens or fields and some stretches abandoned, one long piece remaining from Crofthandy Twelveheads.

Although called the Redruth-Chacewater Railway, the track never reached Chacewater. A branch was proposed to join with the Poldice Railway and an embankment with tunnel under to carry the Crofthandy-Hale Mills road was constructed, but no rails were laid.

The engine sheds at Devoran are now used as a Women's Institute.



A train on the old Redruth-Chacewater Railway pulls up at the Carharrack water tank.