

WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

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In Brief

The Heritage Group have agreed to design and supply cast iron bridge plates for all the railway's bridges. Cedric Lodge is progressing the design, which will be fairly simple, in keeping with narrow gauge ethos. Bridge plates are a requirement of the H.M.R.I.

A rusted iron vertical side stanchion, unearthed during alterations at Dinas has been identified as belonging to a N.W.N.G. two plank wagon. Anybody fancy a rebuild job!

Following an exchange of correspondence the Heritage Group have been invited to reinstate three of the stile crossings north of Waunfawr.

The Group have also expressed concern about the type of fencing to be employed on the line. It clearly must be stock proof, perhaps pig wire, or seven strand post and wire. Old photos show this type to have been in use during WHR days.

PROGRESS AT DINAS

*Photo D. Allan
December 1998*

The restoration of the exterior of Dinas Station building is almost complete. The roof has been completely re-slatted and as a final touch machined, slate ridging tiles which replicate the originals, have been added to protect the hipped roof joints. We are grateful to Mike Schumann for funding this expensive item. Some wedge-shaped yellow Ruabon brick was 'borrowed' from the window arches of Tryfan Junction to replace the concrete lintel which had been installed when the left hand door was replaced by a window during the Council's occupation. New yellow brick was purchased to

complete the job on the corners of what is now the platform side. Victorian cast iron guttering and downspout supplied by the Heritage Group has now been fitted.

In spite of meticulous attention to detail connoisseurs will observe that the original sixteen frame windows have been mysteriously converted to twelve pane ones. This has not been done for you to spot the deliberate mistake, but it was a genuine error which will be rectified!

Inside the building the southern half will be reserved for operational purposes. The northern half is being fitted out by the Heritage Group to recreate the atmosphere of a 1930's style waiting room. Already much of the plain wall area has been clad with 'tongue and groove' which will provide the backing for

wooden bench seating of the type once found in Welsh Highland station buildings. To enhance the atmosphere there will be a display of handbills, an authentic timetable, and other period items together with a selection of photographs showing the building in various conditions over the last 100 years.

A hanging 'waiting room' sign (bilingual) will be erected on the outside wall. Hopefully, all will be ready for public use for the start of the next operating season.

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THE CARNARVON EXTENSION 1923

With the recent opening of the first section of the new W.H.R. From Dinas to Caernarfon, it is perhaps appropriate that we give thought to the plans by the 1922 Company to reach the County Town - a goal that had eluded the N.W.N.G.R.

annum". Mails travelled by motor van, but with the Extension a service could be provided to Beddgelert - "estimated revenue £40.00 per annum". Most bulk goods would continue to be exchanged at Dinas, but flour, grain, groceries and provisions, which were distributed by

Michael Davies explores the fascinating efforts to justify an extension to Caernarfon in 1923

nearly 50 years earlier. In the late summer of 1923, H.J. Jack the W.H.R. Chairman in Dolgarrog, instructed S.E. Tyrwhitt, General Manager in Portmadoc, to arrange a traffic census on the roads radiating southwards from Caernarfon, and to obtain details from the L.M.S. of local passenger and parcels traffic between Dinas Junction and Caernarfon. Additionally, the bigger wholesalers and millers, such as Morris & Jones Ltd. were approached to verify tonnages of groceries, provisions, cattle feed and offal distributed in the area served by the W.H.R.. These returns make for some fascinating reading. Tyrwhitt replied on August 21st 1923, revealing "that all local parcels go by road motor due to the inconvenient location of the L.M.S. Station in Caernarvon. Our proposed station is in a much more convenient position and I would suggest the revenue from this source might be £100.00 per

road from Caernarfon "should be secured". The coastwise shipping traffic was declared practically dead, but its reappearance was anticipated, and if the 1913 slate tonnages of 5000 plus transhipped at Dinas returned, this would be carried to Caernarfon at a figure of 1/- per ton. Coal and fertiliser might also be imported via Caernarfon quay. Passenger traffic on the proposed Extension was estimated from figures obtained by D.O. Jones at Dinas. In the 12 months to 31st July 1923, 6901 passengers were booked at Dinas for Caernarfon - revenue £160. As this period covered only one month of trains running through to Portmadoc on the W.H.R., it was felt that 30% could be added for a full year. Traffic on the return journey was estimated the same, giving an optimistic £420 per annum. No thought seems to have been given to those passengers who might prefer to remain



Nantlle Railway bridge near Bontnewydd. This may have been the route of the proposed extension to Caernarfon.
Photo - P.Johnson

loyal to the L.M.S.! Traffic arising on the Extension itself was felt to be minimal. A quarter of Bontnewydd's 500 souls were estimated to be desirous of a weekly visit to town at a fare of 3d - revenue £50 per annum! "The traffic in the other direction would be negligible, as would goods traffic". At this stage assistance was sought from the Borough of Carnarvon (sic) who asked Mr Dan Kelly, their Motor Superintendent, to reply. His letter of 14th September 1923 lists the 'cars' plying between Caernarvon and the following places (*see table 1 opposite*) For the purposes of this survey it must be assumed that Kelly recommended a Mr W.D. Hughes. On September 15th 1923, S.E. Tyrwhitt wrote to W.D. Hughes at 10 Hole-in-the-Wall Street, Caernarfon, offering him £2.5.0 to make a traffic survey during the week ending September 22nd.

He was to station himself at the top of Pool Street outside the Eagles Hotel from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. (10.00 p.m. Saturday!) and record all passenger vehicles, as well as recording weather conditions! Mr Tyrwhitt hoped to make a couple of visits to the location himself during the week "to see how the count is getting on". Could he have suspected that Mr Hughes might stray inside the 'Eagles' had he thought no one would visit him! Mr Hughes' notebook has survived, despite all entries in pencil (no biros for outside work in 1923!) and even lists some vehicle registration numbers (CC 2478, CC 3721 etc.). It concludes "registered up to 10.10 p.m. Saturday night 22nd September 1923. There were about 30 persons still waiting in Castle Square". Another interesting footnote states "Jno Ogden, Haulage Contractor, C'narvon made two trips each day except Saturday and

brought down about 6 tons slates each trip from Treflan Quarry, Waenfawr. There is also a big amount of luggage and baggage, goods etc., picked up by the buses for intermediate stations".

To conclude this short account, I can do no better than quote the full text from Tyrwhitt's letter to his chairman dated September 26th 1923. (See full text of Tyrwhitt's letter to Jack on pages 4 and 5 - please read the letter and then return to this page for Michael Davies' concluding remarks)

Figure 1
List of 'cars' from Carnarvon to places mentioned

WAENFAWR	O.R. Williams	4 Cars
	Trevor Roberts	1 Car
RHOSGADFAN	J.W. Hughes	2 Cars + Dixie Bus
	J.T. Jones	1 Car
RHOSTRYFAN	H. Jones	2 Cars
	O.W. Owen	2 Cars
BEDDGELERT	Carnarvon Motors	2 Cars
CARMEL	Robt Hughes	1 Car
	Richard Hughes	1 Car
	Williams	1 Car
CAESAREA	H.G. Roberts	1 Car
DINAS DINLLE	Evans Bros	2 Cars

Concluding Remarks

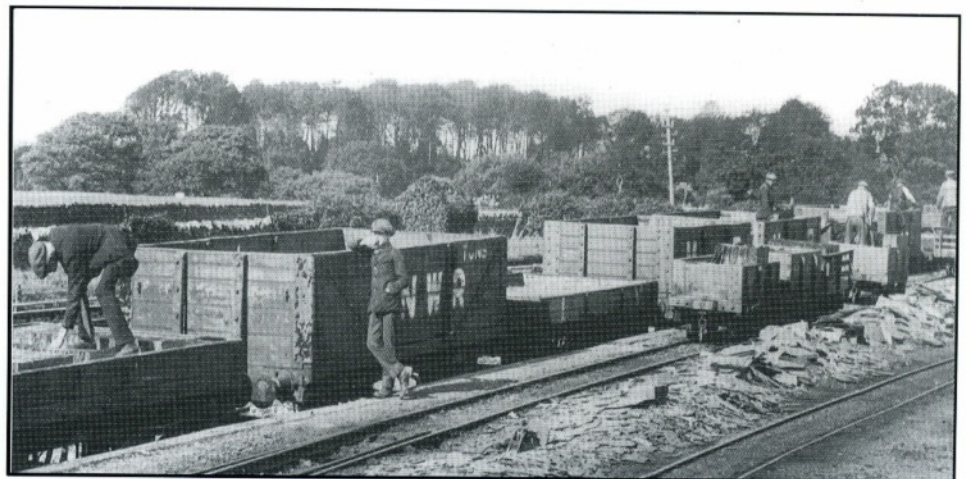
As we know, winter passenger services, commencing in October, proved an unmitigated disaster, with severe pruning of services by December 1923, and the only 'night time' services ever to run on the W.H.R., "8pm DINAS - PORTMADOC, and 8.35pm PORTMADOC - DINAS (arr. 11.10pm!) - 'SATS ONLY'", ran for no more than 9 weeks and were never observed to be carrying any passengers. It would seem a forlorn hope that the travelling public of the Caernarfonshire upland villages would have changed allegiance to the W.H.R. in 1923, even if the Bryngwyn Branch had reopened, and been extended to Carmel!*

Yes, the W.H.R. in 1923 was considering two extensions!!

* VIDE letter dated 27th September 1923 from E.R. Davies, W.H.R. Secretary's Office, Buckingham Gate, London SW1 to W.H.R. Portmadoc acknowledging copy of letter of 26th September - Tyrwhitt to Jack.



Above Caernarfon quays and the Afon Wen & Llanberis lines circa 1920. Might this have been the terminus of the proposed extension? Frith Post card.



Above. Transshipment sidings at Dinas Junction circa 1920. The proposed extension would have saved a lot of work, time and money. How ironic that 78 years later Caernarfon is reached, but only for tourists! Photo - Topical Press

Transcript of Tyrwhitt's letter to Jack dated 26th September 1923

Dear Sirs,

ESTIMATED REVENUE - CARNARVON EXTENSION

Passenger Traffic

I have had a count made during the week ending the 22nd September of the number of passengers travelling by public service motor vehicles between Carnarvon and the Bryngwyn and Waenfawr areas. The period covered included the Carnarvon Fair on the 22nd and the Bettws Garmon Sheep Dog Trials on the 21st and 22nd, and, in computing the annual number of passengers into and out of Carnarvon, allowance has been made for the special events.

The summary of the actual number of passengers carried for the week is as follows :-

Date	Weather	Notes	Waenfawr Area Total Persons	Bryngwyn Area Total Persons
Mon 17 Sep	Stormy	-	378	279
Tues 18 Sep	Fair to Showery	-	299	320
Wed 19 Sep	Rain	Early Closing Day	348	326
Thur 20 Sep	Dull	-	195	213
Fri 21 Sep	Fine	Bettws Garmon Sheep Dog Trials	449	395
Sat 22 Sep	Fine - Rain later	Beddgelert Fair Bettws Garmon Sheep Dog Trials Carnarvon Fair	1584	1637

3253 3170
 Grand Total.....6423
 Deduct for special events, say.....1423
 5000 x 52 weeks

I believe that the above count was taken properly and this figure represents a fair weekly average of the ordinary traffic.

Annual Total Ordinary Traffic.....260,000 passengers

Add for Fairs and Special Events throughout the year, say 50,000 passengers
 Seasonal Traffic. Estimated that ordinary)
 traffic is doubled during 10 weeks in summer) 50,000 passengers
 by charabanc, etc. parties)

I estimate that, at least, one half the above numbers of passengers would be diverted to the railway on the completion of the Carnarvon extension and the re-opening of the Bryngwyn Branch.

Goods Traffic

Messrs. Morris & Jones have told us that they distributed 134 tons of flour and groceries in our area during the three months ending 31st August 1923. This is at the rate of 536 tons per annum. They think that this would be capable of considerable improvement when railway facilities become available. I, therefore, estimate that the traffic from this firm would be 700 tons per annum.

Messrs the North Shore Mills have not given us any figures, but I estimate that they would do about half this amount, say 350 tons per annum.

Shipment Traffic

Coal and Fertilizers. I estimate that about 1000 tons will be carried on the extension when coastwise shipping traffic becomes normal again.

TOTAL ESTIMATED TRAFFIC ON CARNARVON EXTENSION

Based upon above figures and upon those given in my letter of the 21st August 1923 :-

		Annual Income	
<u>Passenger Traffic</u>	(1)	Local bookings between Dinas and Carnarvon	£ 420
	(2)	Ordinary Road Traffic One half diverted to Railway. 130,000 passengers @ 4-1/2d	£2,437
	(3)	Fairs and Special Events. One half diverted to Railway 25,000 passengers @ 4-1/2d	£ 468
	(4)	Seasonal Traffic. One half diverted to Railway. 25,000 passengers @ 4-1/2d	£ 468
	95)	Traffic arising on extension itself.	<u>£ 50</u>
		c/f	£3,843
		Brought fwd.	£3,843
<u>Parcels</u>	£ 100
<u>Mails</u>	£ 100
<u>Goods</u>	1,050 tons of flour and groceries @ 1/6 per ton		£ 79
<u>Shipment Traffic</u>	5,000 tons slates @ 1/- per ton		£ 250
	1,000 tons coal and fertilizer @ 1/- per ton		<u>£ 50</u>
		Total per annum.....	<u>£4,362</u>

This estimate has been made on a moderate basis, and represents the traffic that may be expected in the circumstances stated, viz. when the Carnarvon extension is completed, the Bryngwyn Branch reopened and the Carnarvon coastwise shipping re-established. It deals only with income that would be earned on the extension itself. There will also be a very great increase of traffic on the rest of the undertaking when the works mentioned are carried out, and this will be estimated from the information given.

Yours Faithfully
S.E. Tyrwhitt.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

There is so much fascinating W.H.R/N.W.N.G material lurking in Gwynedd Archives that a regular column depicting some of the material might be of interest to members. Here we must pay tribute to the splendid Archive staff for their patience and help.

This first document is a hand written letter from the Light Railway Commission to Carnarvon County Council. The letter is dated 22nd September 1904.

North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways
(Beddgelert Light Railway Extension) Order
Application of November 1903

Sir,

With reference to the above-named application I am directed by the Light Railway Commissioners to inform you that they propose to make an Order in the terms of the draft enclosed which is subject to alteration by the Commissioners upon their further consideration. The Commissioners before finally settling the Order will receive and consider any observations upon the draft which the Carnarvon County Council may desire to submit provided that they reach this office on or before Saturday the 8th proximo.

I am further directed to explain that it has been arranged that this Order is to be granted to the Portmadoc Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway Company and that the remainder of the application in question is to be the subject of a separate Order a copy of which will be forwarded to you for the information of the County Council when the same is submitted to the Board of Trade for confirmation.

This separate Order (to be called "the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways (Light Railway) Order") will confer powers on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways Company to electrify their Moel Tryfan undertaking (including powers to the Company to raise further money for that purpose) also to work that undertaking as a light railway under the Light Railways Act, 1896.

I Am Sir

Your Obedient Servant

Alan D. Erskine.

NOTICEBOARD

A.G.M. - The 2nd A.G.M. Will be held at the Saracen's Head Hotel, Beddgelert on Sunday 28th March, starting at 2.30pm. Agendas and balance sheets (to 31/12/98) will be available at the meeting. The main purpose of the meeting will be to approve a Group Constitution, a draft of which accompanies this Newsletter. Should any member have an item which they would like placed on the agenda please submit it in writing to John Keylock A.S.A.P.

Subs - Members whose membership ended on 31/12/98 are reminded that 1999 subscriptions are now due. Please send your cheque - payable to W.H. Heritage - for £7.50 to John Keylock at the address below. An SAE for acknowledgement/membership card would be appreciated!

W.H.R. Porthmadog are looking for someone to take charge of the Heritage displays at Gelert's Farm. Would any volunteers please contact the editor.

'Tickets of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways' - this is the first of several proposed W.H. Heritage publications. The book, which is now available, and is priced at £4.50, including post & packing has been researched and compiled by Group member Trefor David. Please send your cheque to W.H.H. Postal Sales, 5 Brockton Place, Arley Kings, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0LE. If you wish to order the book *and* pay your sub please send a cheque for the joint amount to John Keylock and he will arrange dispatch of the book.

Working Parties - There will be working parties in the 'waiting room' at Dinas station building on 27th & 28th February and 27th March.

Secretary - John Keylock, Weathervane Cottage, Childswickham, Broadway, Worcs, WR12 7HL

Editor - David Allan, 132 Eastham Village Road, Eastham, Wirral, L62 0AE

Copy Date - W.H. Newsletter No 5 - 30th March

LETTERS

DON'T KNOCK THE GARRATTS!

This week I received a copy of the '64 Co Journal and Welsh Highland Heritage Vol. 1, Issue 3, and in both publications I find that there are - in my opinion - disparaging references to the Garratt locomotives and their use on the WHR. It has been explained that these locomotives have the capacity to haul long trains, up to fifteen coaches if required, over the WHR at a speed that will give an enjoyable ride within a reasonable time schedule, this surely being a primary objective on the length of the railway for passenger ease and comfort.

My association with the WHR and the attempts to rebuild and reopen it go back to the very early 1960's and even then thought was given to acquiring 2' 6" gauge ex Czechoslovakian locomotives and smaller locomotives such as the "Doll" or "Sgt Murphy". At Gelert's Farm there are ex South African steam locomotives, large and small, - diesel locomotives from Poland, and the remains of an East German railway carriage, all alien to the WHR, but eagerly acquired for use on the WHR. Does it really matter from whence the locomotives and rolling stock originate, as long as they are providing a

comfortable service on the WHR? Many of us just want to see the WHR rebuilt and running again. It matters not who does it, so why do you feel justified in making criticisms of those who are making a first-class achievement of this project?

Heritage matters are fine and as you say "Recording yesterday for tomorrow" but do not let it lap over and hinder the rebuilding of the WHR.

ROY I.G. WEST
Bodmin

After an exchange of correspondence Roy and I still are the best of friends! - Ed

HAFOD GAREGOG

There must have been some traffic to Hafod Garegog; I went to the halt from Portmadoc New in 1926 and my ticket is numbered 329 (printed, not blank card). The booking clerk did not know where it was, but the driver seemed to. On arrival I could not observe any reason for having a stop there, and do not recall a name board. The stop had been chosen as offering a suitable walk into Beddgelert.

R.W. KIDNER
Bow Street.

PITT'S HEAD CRUSHER

With regard to Derek Lystor's letter in issue No 3 of the Heritage Newsletter, I have the following observations. Looking at the archive photograph I am certain that the machine is a jaw crusher, the two large wheels being the flywheels essential for this class of machine. These were made by a large number of companies such as Blake, Marsden, Hadfields, Goodwin Barsby etc. The best picture of this type of machine in use on a site is in Shire Album 134, Quarries and Quarrying, where the picture on page 29 shows a similar installation at Newlyn in Cornwall. This picture shows a jaw crusher on a massive base driven by a portable engine together with the associated screening plant in operation in 1906.

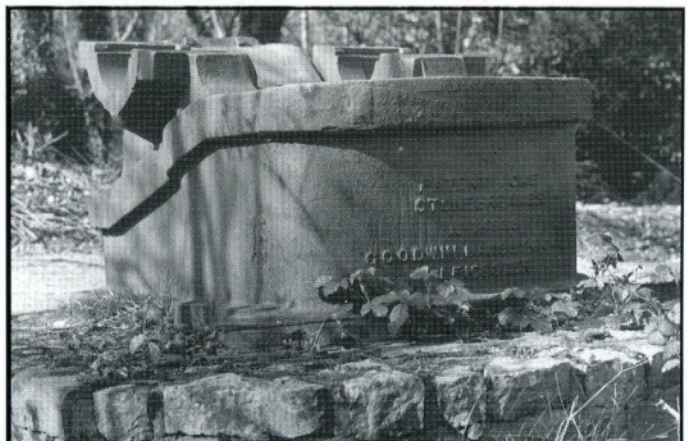
Jaw crushers were primary crushers used to crush raw rock into smaller pieces. I personally do not believe that the crusher base described by Mr Lystor is too large for a crusher, these machines were always constructed from massive castings to

withstand the forces required to break a rock. The large pile of rock in the picture to the right of the engine would have been rock waiting for crushing, or unsuitable for crushing, since the pieces are far too large to be crushed rock. There remains in a picnic site between Bettws Garmon and Waunfawr the cast frame of a rock crusher, this is on public display and may be the very one in the photograph. The site is at NGR 527586.

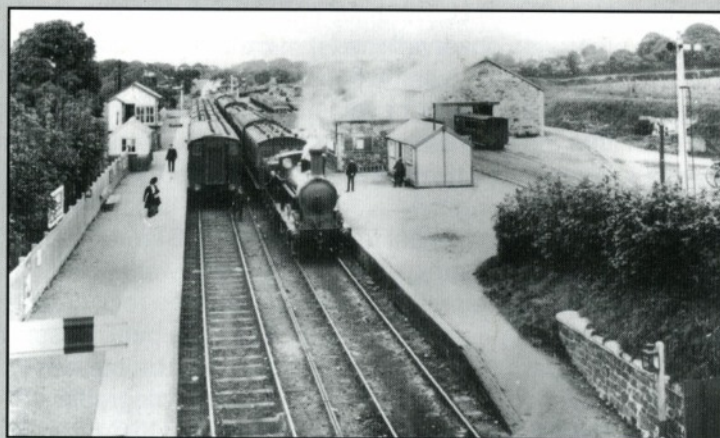
JON KNOWLES
Huddersfield

The picnic site to which Jon refers is the old Dudley Park Quarry. This had a connection to the Welsh Highland just to the south of Waunfawr station. The quarry produced granite setts used to construct roads and pavements. The former quarry has been turned into a nature trial by the Council, with many old relics to be seen, including the old winding drum at the top of the incline. A visit is highly recommended. - Ed.

Rock Crusher At Dudley Park



PICTURE PAGE



ASPECTS OF DINAS

4 views of Dinas Junction,
taken from the main line
overbridge, between 1909 and
1997

Above

Two trains cross in 1909. Are
they awaiting the arrival of
'Russell' from Rhyd ddu?
Photographer - unknown

Right

The narrow gauge has closed
and a sleepy atmosphere
pervades the main line - circa
1950's
Photographer - unknown



Left

Council occupation! - Note the
changes in the southern elevation of
the station building all through the
sequence. Taken on the 26th
January 1988.
Photo - D.W. Allan

Right

The rails return on a sunny
September day in 1997. The
untidy debris of the Council yard
has been removed and the
station building reverts (almost)
to its 1909 condition. Taken on
24th September 1997.
Photo - D.W. Allan

