

WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

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WAENFAWR DISAPPEARS



Wednesday the 9th of September dawned wet and windy. A small group of Heritage members gathered at Waenfawr station. Working under the eagle eye of John Keylock it was with mixed feelings that they began the difficult task of the 'constructive demolition' of the remains of Waenfawr station building. However so wet and so windy was it that work was soon halted and the shell remained standing for another day! Architect, and Heritage member, Graham Cartland-Glover had

already drawn the building and each block on his drawing was numbered so the opportunity was taken to carefully letter and number all the random granite blocks on each elevation to match those on the drawing.

The next day was warm and sunny, and the task began in earnest. As the blocks were dismantled they were carefully arranged on the pallets which had been allocated to each panel within each elevation. The yellow Ruabon edging bricks were laid on separate pallets and each pallet was lettered and

numbered. The whole process was photographed for posterity and also to help in the accurate reconstruction of the building on its new site. Slate slabs, which had formed the threshold to each of the doors fronting the platform elevation, were unearthed and recorded before being laid on a separate pallet. These were a 'find' because their existence had not been previously appreciated, however close examination of old photographs confirmed their position. Other items which were recovered from the building and which will be preserved included the remains of the wooden window frames and a couple of track spikes which had been embedded in the mortar. At the end of the day the only wall which remained was that which faced Dinas. This was eventually 'deconstructed' by a gang from the WHRS after their AGM. So after about 120 years of existence Waenfawr station building was no more. Its 'deconstruction' seems to be the anti-thesis of 'preservation' which is the aim of the Heritage Group, but at least the chance now exists for it to rise Phoenix-like from the ashes and continue, in part, to serve the Welsh Highland Railway.

TRYFAN JUNCTION REAPPEARS

The 50 year tangle of prickly shrubs and seedling trees which cloaked Tryfan Junction has been stripped away. The ivy festooned building is once again exposed to the elements and to the photographer. This remote and rather grandly named railway junction, which at best could only have served a couple of houses, is not required for operational purposes and will provide a splendid opportunity for the Heritage group to restore it to its original condition.



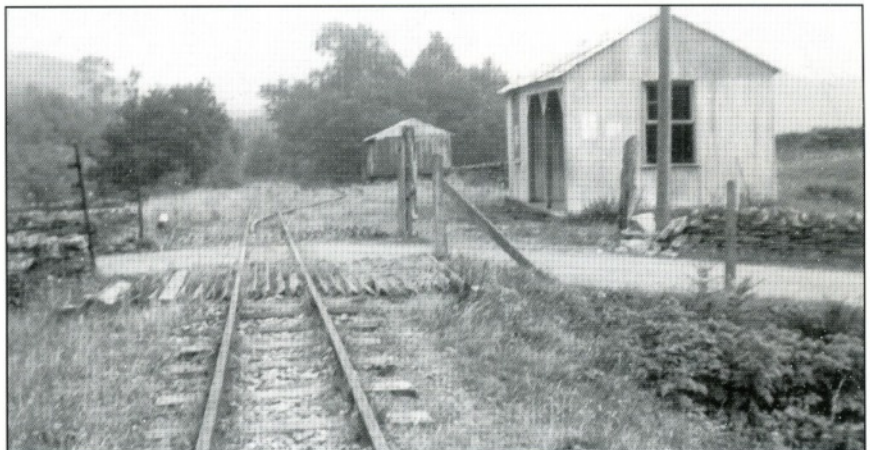
WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY HALTS

DEREK LYSTOR CONTINUES HIS FASCINATING INSIGHT

NANTMOR

Nantmor was the largest of the Welsh Highland halts. Located 15 miles and 43 chains from Dinas station building and with a gradient of 1 : 40 through the halt, it was opened on 1st June 1923. It was renamed "Aberglaslyn" on commencement of the FR lease as from 1st July 1934. The station building comprised a corrugated iron shelter measuring 27ft x 12ft. It was located on the west side of the track and to the south of a gateless level crossing over the Nantmor road, protected by cattle grids. The halt was built on a rubble foundation which brought it up to rail height. The building was divided into one third office and two thirds waiting shelter. Barge boards and gutter were not provided.

The office was provided with twelve pane, top opening windows on the front, back and end, whilst a door was located in the southern elevation. The bottom half of the front window was whitewashed. A solid fuel stove was fitted in the office, this was similar to the one at Beddgelert. It was later removed perhaps on the withdrawal of winter services.



Nantmor - goods shed beyond, cattle grids in foreground. Photographer unknown.

was hung on the inside wall. The nameboard was fitted below the eaves and painted two tone to give the appearance of depth - this was hung after passenger services had started.

The goods yard was situated at the southern end of the station and was enclosed by stone walling. It was served by a 40ft siding with a buffer stop of two curved rails and it was protected by a trap point located in front of the station building. In later years two ex FR 4-wheel coaches were placed in the goods yard to serve as a goods warehouse. Photographic evidence shows a corrugated iron structure at the end of the siding, this may have replaced the two coaches. A coal

HAFOD RUFFYDD

Hafod Ruffydd halt was opened on the 1st June 1923. Located 11 miles and 20 chains from Dinas station building, it too suffered from a gradient of 1 : 40. Passenger accommodation was provided by a corrugated iron shelter measuring 12ft x 6ft located on the eastern side of the track. The platform was marked out, presumably with slate edging, but there is no direct confirmation of this. The halt was provided with a 40ft stabling siding complete with trap points facing Dinas. The halt was located to the north of an ungated level crossing over a road or track which served Hafod Ruffydd Ganol. There are no known photographs of the halt.

HAFOD Y LLYN

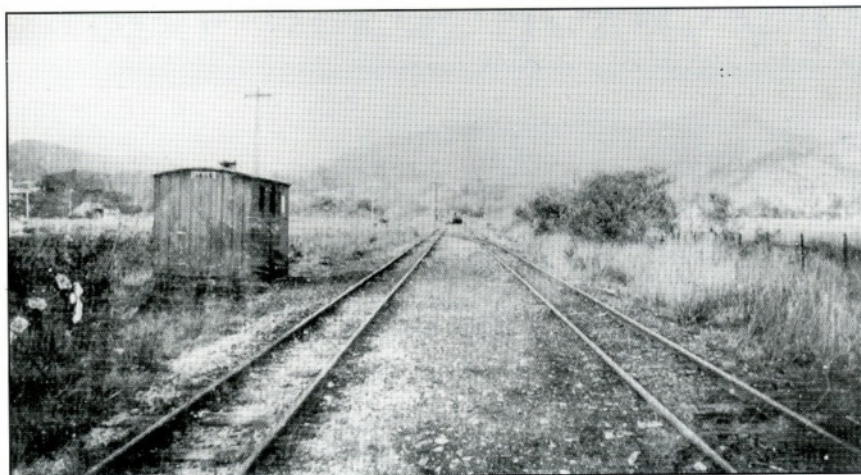
Opened on the 1st June 1923, it was located 16 miles and 25 chains from Dinas with a level gradient through the halt. It was situated on the southern side of the level crossing which had wicket gates for pedestrians. No passenger accommodation was provided but the halt had a 40ft stabling siding, facing Portmadoc and protected by trap points.



Nantmor - showing station sign & nameboard. (Lens)

The passenger accommodation was provided with slatted benching on three sides, whilst twelve pane, top opening windows were fitted in the back and side. A timetable board

yard was opened by a Mr Roberts but lasted for only two years, closing in 1925.



HAFOD GARREGOG

This halt was located 17 miles and 5 chains from Dinas (Boyd) with a gradient of 1 : 400, however it was not included in the working timetable. It was used as an unofficial stopping place adjacent to the Hafod y Llyn Riding School. The name was transferred to Ynysferlas (q.v.) when that station opened.

YNYSFERLAS

The name was changed to Hafod Garregog on opening! It was located 17 miles and 25 chains from Dinas with a gradient of 1 : 200 and opened on 1st June 1923. Passenger accommodation was stated as being one small railway carriage (ex FR?) which was located on the western side of the track and on the southern side of a level crossing (gated across the railway) over the minor road serving Hafod Garregog House. The halt was provided with a 40ft stabling siding, protected by trap points and facing Portmadoc. The nameboard was attached to two lengths of flat bottomed rail on the eastern boundary (extant). (See photo in Heritage Newsletter No. 3)

CROESOR JUNCTION

In common with others this was opened on 23rd June 1923. The gradient was level and it was located 17 miles and 77 chains from Dinas. This was the Welsh

Croesor Junction with ex FR 4-wheel vehicle as station shelter. Photographer unknown. (Collection Mowatt).

Highland's junction with the horse-worked, slate carrying, Croesor tramway. Whilst it was shown in the working timetable of 14th July 1923 it didn't appear in the public timetable until the 26th September 1927. A 142 yard passing loop was incorporated in the layout, whilst potential passengers enjoyed the luxury of an ex FR 4-wheeled coach body to provide shelter from the elements in this rather exposed position. Perhaps more important than the passengers the 'station' also provided shelter for both the telephone and the train staff tickets! The halt was referred to as Tan Lan in early documents and was also known to the locals as Erw Fawr.

YNYSFOR

At 18 miles and 27 chains from Dinas with a level gradient, it was opened on 1st June 1923. Ynysfor was provided with a corrugated iron shelter located on the east side of the track with dimensions of 12ft x 10ft. A twelve pane, top-opening window was located in the southern end, whilst the northern end incorporated a small office with entry via a door from the waiting area.

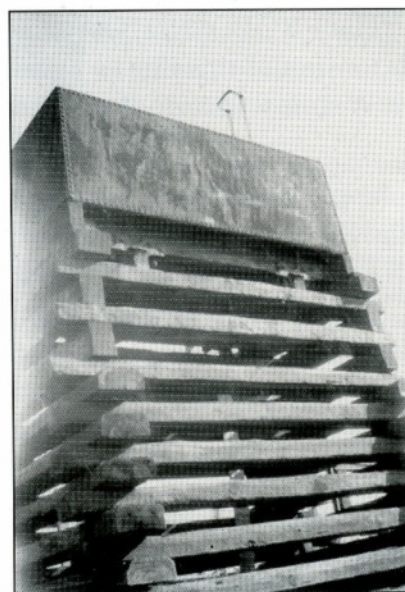
The halt was situated on the south side of the level crossing to Ynysfor House. The station nameboard was mounted on wooden posts to the left of the building (faced from

the track). Below it was a bench with the name of the station on the backrest. The timetable board, headed "Ynysfor" was probably kept inside the station shelter. The platform was probably gravel or crushed slate waste. The original Croesor tramway siding was located on the south side of the crossing facing Dinas. In the autumn of 1924 it was lengthened to 40ft and trap points were fitted. The buffer stops were made of bent rail.

An ex FR 4-wheeled coach body was situated on the northern side of the crossing and on the west side of the track - this was used for goods. Milk was dispatched from this halt.

PONT CROESOR

At 19 miles and 27 chains this was the furthest halt from Dinas. Opened on 1st June 1923, it had a gradient of 1 : 655. It was provided with a somewhat bigger passenger shelter than Ynysfor, but again made of corrugated iron and measuring 15ft x 10ft. The original Croesor tramway siding was lengthened to 300ft and a trap point was fitted facing Dinas. A sleeper built water tank was situated on the northern side of the river bridge and on the west side of the track. The tank itself was actually the brine wagon as used on the FR and it survives today.



Water tower at Pont Croesor. FR brine wagon acts as tank. Photo R.W. Kidner.

WELSH HIGHLAND CHRONOLOGY - 1925

<p><u>1st January</u> H.F. Stephens became Chairman and Managing Director.</p>	<p><u>July</u> An Austro-Daimler rail tractor was purchased by Stephens.</p>
<p><u>16th January</u> The Treasury declined to appoint a Receiver even though no interest had been paid on the Government's Debenture Shares.</p>	<p><u>21st September</u> A reduced timetable was introduced which was to continue throughout the winter period.</p>
<p><u>30th January</u> A Friday only service for Portmadoc market was introduced. This service ran from Beddgelert to Portmadoc and a special handbill was printed to advertise the facility.</p>	<p><u>October</u> Four, 5-ton, ex war department, open wagons were purchased from Honeywill Brothers of Ashford, Kent. These were destined for WHR coal traffic. A new coal siding was laid in at Beddgelert.</p>
<p><u>7th March</u> A Saturday only service from South Snowdon to Dinas was introduced. This was in association with Carnarfon market and again a special handbill was printed to advertise the service.</p>	<p><u>1st October</u> New Working Instructions were introduced covering both the WHR and the FR.</p>
<p><u>25th May</u> E.H.R. Nichols resigned as General Manager.</p>	<p><u>2nd November</u> Collapse of the Eigiau Dam at Dolgarrog. (Jack was Managing Director of The Aluminium Corporation).</p>
<p><u>1st June</u> Passenger services were reinstated over the whole line. Some of the card ticket series were reprinted by Williamson.</p>	<p><u>19th November</u> The Baldwin - '590' reported a broken spring.</p>
	<p><u>31st December</u> The Annual Receipts showed a total income of £5068, with £3939 from goods and £1139 from passengers. The loss was £742. The number of passengers carried was 24,653.</p>

FROM THE ARCHIVES

EXTRACT FROM THE "SALE OF THE GOAT HOTEL, BEDDGELERT - 1903"

"The PROPOSED NEW LIGHT RAILWAY STATION and the junction of the proposed Extension of this line to Snowdon Station, should greatly add to the Trade of this Hotel, and it is almost certain that a further extension of the Railway will be made to Portmadoc in a short time"

"The portion of the Property Edged Green on the plan of Lot 1 has been conditionally sold to the Promoters of the NEW LIGHT RAILWAY about to be Constructed from SNOWDON STATION to BEDDGELERT, and this portion of the Property is sold subject to and with the benefit of the Agreement which has been entered into by the Vendors, with the Promoters, regarding the purchase of such land for the purpose of Constructing a portion of the Railway and for the Erection thereon of the NEW BEDDGELERT RAILWAY STATION, but all purchase money payable by the promoters under such an agreement shall belong to the Vendors."

"It is anticipated that when this Railway and its Station are Constructed, that THE BUSINESS OF THE "GOAT HOTEL" WILL BE VERY MATERIALLY INCREASED, as the Main Approach to and from the Station will pass the Side Entrance of the HOTEL and the TAP ROOM"

SOME P.B. & S.S.R. OBSERVATIONS

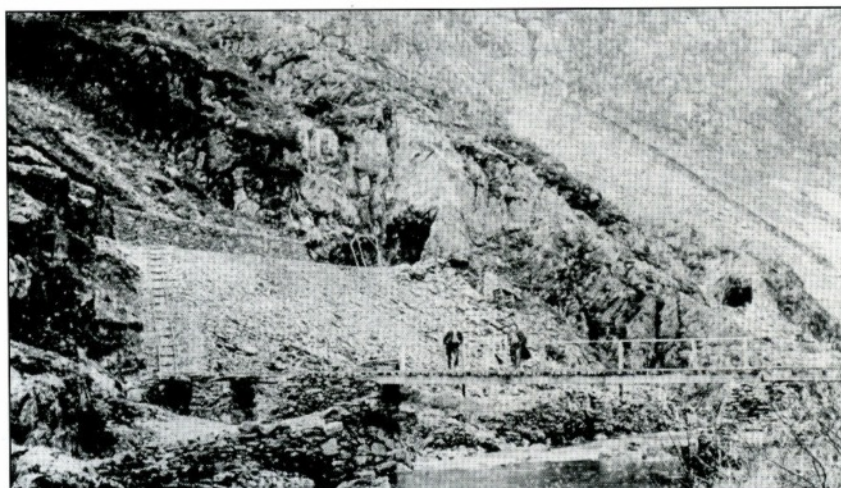
These notes result from Jim Hewett's study of the circa 1910, 25 inches to the mile, Ordnance Survey maps covering the trackbed, together with a recently discovered 1906 photograph which shows a previously unknown bridge across the Afon Glaslyn in the Pass. By virtue of the date, the maps show the complete NWNGR and the abortive works carried out for the Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway. It is essentially the latter which concerns us at this stage - progressing from north to south.

The map shows track in situ from South Snowdon (Rhyd ddu) to a point just south of the Afon Cwm ddu, a tributary of the Afon Colwyn. There appears to be a siding at Pont Cae'r Gors and a run round loop at the end of the track. This section was used unofficially for timber extraction up to the time of the Welsh Highland opening.

Timber merchant, Parry - with a yard at South Snowdon - would probably have used a locomotive on this section.

An interesting point here is that the WHR Amendment Order of 1923 had powers to abandon the PB & SSR route from "three chains south of Hafod Ruffydd Ganol (roughly where an incomplete earthwork is shown to finish) to six chains north east of Cwmcloch Isaf" (where the two routes rejoined just before Beddgelert station). However for approximately the first two miles - to Tyn-y-Coed - it appears to have retained the original PB & SSR route. The proposed route is clearly shown, the land having been bought and possibly even fenced. The main earthwork is the half completed, high embankment in Coed Mawr.

Just south of Tyn-y-Coed, the embankment and cutting work becomes apparent again and contractor's track is laid on the alignment coming up from a point on the Beddgelert to Tremadog road - near the cemetery gates - before leaving the alignment in a north



Temporary bridge across the Glaslyn. Photo by John Pritchard - C1904.

west direction and climbing steeply into woodland. It is likely that this track was also used for the extraction of timber. South of Beddgelert, the familiar bridge over the road is shown, followed by the route past Gelert's Grave to the proposed crossing of the Afon Glaslyn. Surprisingly, the section

"Unknown wooden bridge across the Glaslyn"

of trackbed from here to Bryn y Felin bridge does not show track laid even though photographs of the period clearly show this to have been the case, albeit contractor's track. The formation is shown running into the Pass of Aberglaslyn with a retaining wall at the end of the first tunnel. A photograph taken during construction shows both this and a loading gauge jig at the tunnel mouth. But the most interesting feature of this photo is a previously unknown wooden bridge across the Glaslyn. Contractor's track is laid on the bridge itself, and from the bottom of the embankment a length of inclined track gives access to trackbed level for rail worked wagons. In the rock face - on the eastern side - is an adit in which it can be assumed there was a winding device for winching the loaded wagons up this steep section of track.

What material was being brought up to trackbed level in this way?

This brings us to 1999 and the requirement for 'a detailed survey of the rock faces in the vicinity of the Aberglaslyn tunnels'. This survey has revealed that behind the high retaining wall at the northern end of the long tunnel was a most substantial thickness of concrete - a buttress against the danger of rock sliding onto the trackbed. The retaining wall(s) are therefore purely cosmetic, and because of the mass of concrete behind, they have shown no sign of bulging in over 90 years. So one might reasonably assume that the PB & SSR preceded 'Concrete Bob' McAlpine by over 20 years and that the temporary bridge over the river was used as a means of getting concrete, or the ingredients to make it, to trackbed level in the Pass.

At the southern end of the long tunnel the map clearly shows the broad embankment south of the road underbridge. Thereafter the alignment is shown as 'Railway under Construction' until the Afon Dylif is reached. From here to Croesor Junction the track is shown as 'laid'.

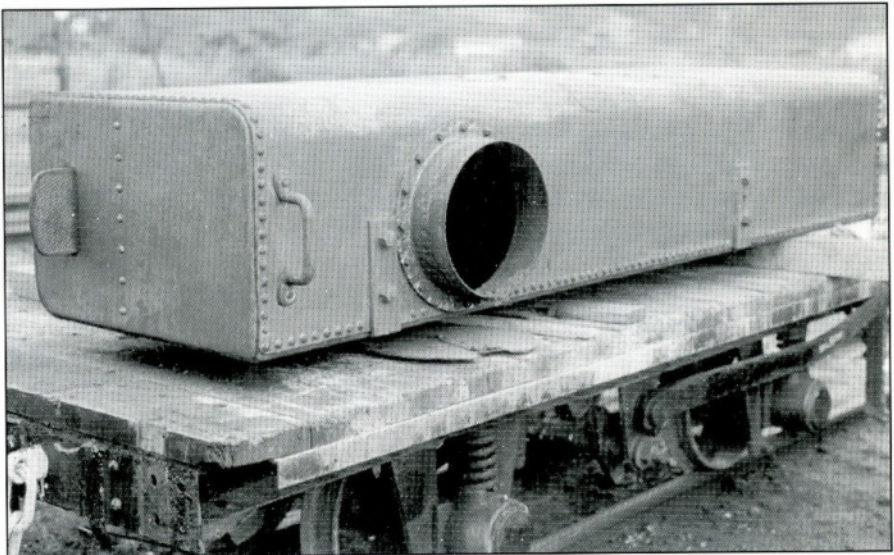
The maps actually start at Caernarfon station (LNWR) and finish at Britannia Bridge. They are A3 sized and priced at £17.50. An A4 set, inevitably to a smaller scale, is available at £9.00. Either can be obtained from John Keylock.

WELSH HIGHLAND REMINISCENCES OF THE LATE FORTIES

A VERY PERSONAL VIEW BY GEORGE HEARSE

I was a regular visitor to Portmadoc after the war. I used to walk up the WHR to Pont Croesor and beyond. It was in December 1949, with sleet falling, that I found all the track in situ from Harbour Station almost to the GWR crossing. A siding there ran off to the left, it was all that remained of the Gorseddau Tramway. Three wagons were standing on it, one of which it was pointed out to me belonged to that Tramway. Beyond the crossing there were large piles of rails which had recently been lifted, and in the gorse was the remains of a Simplex machine gathering rust and with some parts missing. I was told that the track had been sold to the Snowdon Mountain Railway, but I don't if that was correct. What I do know is that the same scrap man removed rail from the quarries served by the Tal-y-llyn Railway. It appears that he took track to which he was not entitled. So, in return, he gave the Society two sets of Welsh Highland points which were laid at Towyn Station! Also in situ, near Beddgelert Sidings, was some Croesor track from under which I was able to extract a cast iron chair - which I still have.

Being a railwayman myself, I had 'entree' to Robert Evans, the FR manager. The poor man regretted that the GWR had not taken over the FR, if it had then he said, he would have had a proper pension. Some months went by when he never got his salary from the FR office in London. He was most insistent that the FR should have only taken a lease of the WHR as far as Beddgelert, which in his view, was the only part of the WHR which could be made to pay. I also had many a long talk with



Baldwin '590' side tank - preserved at Gelert's Farm. Photo D.W.Allan - 1996

Thomas Davies of Bron Madog. He was for many years an FR employee and he was also the last driver, with his brother as fireman. He was also a regular driver from Portmadoc to Dinas. He recalled rocks coming down on the engine cab roof in the

“The track from Croesor Junction was spongy, and the engine rolled alarmingly”

tunnels due to engine blast. The track on the Croesor Railway section was poor because the contractor, to save money, had turned many of the Croesor railway sleepers upside down! The track from Croesor Junction was spongy and the engine rolled alarmingly. One day in a blizzard, I think it was 1949, I was walking up the WHR towards Pont Croesor when I came upon a man pulling up railway sleepers. I passed the time of day

with him to which he replied with what sounded like grunts. He then put a rope sling around about six sleepers, mostly half rotten, slung these over his shoulder and walked off into the blizzard.

In the shed at Boston Lodge was “Moel Tryfan” minus many parts. These however I found in the yard at Boston Lodge works. The scrapping of this engine was an act of vandalism no better than the scrapping of the Great Western Broad Gauge engines at Swindon in 1906. Those who instigated this crime deserve to be pelted with horse manure!

How wonderful to see one of the Baldwin's side tanks preserved (in the carriage shed at Gelert's Farm). Rumour has it that in 1917 a whole shipload of American 60cm engines went down to Davy Jones' Locker near the northern Ireland coast. Does anyone have further information please?

Copies of the Heritage Group Constitution, as agreed at the AGM, can be obtained on request from John Keylock.

Congratulations and thanks to all who spotted the caption error in “the Demolition Trains” article in Newsletter No. 5. The station shown in the

NOTICEBOARD

background to the two ladies riding on a wagon chassis was of course Rhostryfan and not Bryngwyn. Not too many pictures of Rhostryfan exist.

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WHAT THE GUIDES BOOKS SAID

Baddeley and Ward's Guide 1902 -1908

"Carnarfon to Snowdon Ranger (Quellyn Lake) 10-1/4 miles. To Snowdon Station (Rhyd ddu) 12-1/2 miles. To Beddgelert 16-1/2 miles (bus). The stations called formerly 'Snowdon Ranger' and 'Rhyd ddu' are now called 'Quellyn Lake' and 'Snowdon' respectively".

"From Dinas Station the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway rises rapidly and affords the traveller a fine view of the triple-peaked 'Rivals' and glimpses of the peak of Snowdon. There is also a wide prospect of the Menai Strait and Anglesey, but the panoramic display is still finer

How the Guide Books of the time saw the Welsh Highland (or NWNG)

from Bryngwyn, to which a branch goes from the first station (Tryfan Junction - 2 miles). From Tryfan the line goes above the pretty little Gwyrfa stream to Waenfawr and Bettws Garmon (4 - miles), the nearest station for the much sketched Nant Mill, of which we get a good general view on the left hand from the rail. Quellyn Lake Station (Snowdon Ranger) is primitive and after leaving it behind, the line crosses a romantic little glen with a waterfall on the

left and affords an effective view of Llyn Quellyn. Then, persuing a snake-like course, it reaches Snowdon Station. (Refreshment Room)."

"Beddgelert" - "Time from London by train leaving about 9.30 is 8-1/2 hours (by Caernarfon). The 'Prince Llewelyn' has a good word from everyone and the 'Saracen's Head' is a comfortable house."
"Beddgelert to Carnarfon" - "By road to Snowdon Station (3-3/4 miles) and thence by train (12-3/4 miles). Total - 16-1/2 miles. Through communication 3 or 4 times a day. From Snowdon Station the Railway passes considerably east of the road, and from its more elevated position (than the road) affords better views."

Ward Lock - Pre 1908

"On Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays a motor bus runs between Carnarfon and Beddgelert. South of Waenfawr the road crosses the River Gwyrfa and the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railroad line which then keeps close to it for several miles. Llyn Quellyn soon comes into sight and close to Quellyn Lake Station is the Snowdon Ranger Hotel whence a well-known path leads to the top of Snowdon. (Refreshment Room at the Station)

*"Access to Beddgelert" - "Coaches run to Snowdon Station to meet every train. Fare 1/- single, 1/6 return. During the season a motor char-a-banc runs daily between Beddgelert and Portmadoc Station."
(An accompanying map shows the PB & SS route south through Beddgelert).*

Snowdon & Welsh Highland Holiday Book 1923

"The visitor will find in the District served by the Welsh Highland Railway all the means and conditions he may require for the enjoyment of a really delightful and useful holiday. The Welsh Highland Railway and its older neighbour the Festiniog Railway makes the Western Alps of Britain easily accessible to all. Passports, sea-crossings, night trains, strange menus and foreign coinage are unknown. A few hours journey will take the tourist from a congested city in any part of Britain to the beautiful sea coast of North Wales or Cardigan Bay, whence these toy railways penetrate to the very heart of the hills."

North Wales - The British Tyrol - 1924 GWR

"From Portmadoc's Great Western Station it is but a short walk to the narrow gauge railway to Festiniog and to the Welsh Highland Railway. The latter opened in 1923, takes the traveller through the famous Pass of Aberglaslyn and Beddgelert with the traditional tomb of Llewelyn's faithful hound, to Snowdonia."

Ward Lock - 1935

"Access to Beddgelert" - "By Welsh Highland Railway (when running) which passes through the village in its course between Portmadoc and Dinas Junction. Beddgelert is the centre of many charming walks, of which the chief is, or was, that past Gelert's Grave and along the river to Pont Aberglaslyn. But the hideous railway bridge at Brynyfelin and the track itself should never have been sanctioned."

NWNG BRIDGES



*Disused bridge at Bryn Gloch. Photo
D.W. Allan*

Although we will be rebuilding the bridge over the access road to Tan yr Alt farm to provide a rectangular opening we will also be restoring to use once again the similar bridge at Plas Bodadden. This bridge fell in to disuse because the farmer found it more convenient to create and use a level crossing once the railway had closed. In response to the farmer's claim that opening and closing crossing gates every time he left his farm would be a great inconvenience we offered to re-excavate the roadway to his original underpass so that it was passable by smaller vehicles. This would mean that he would only need to use the level crossing for lorries and large tractors. At Bryn Gloch caravan site we will be building a completely new bridge just south of the existing level crossing. The decision to do this was arrived at after a consideration of a range of options, taking into consideration in particular the question of safety in an environment where unaccompanied children would most likely to be at play. The bridge will be built to comply with the structure gauge for new works and to enable the safe passage of cars towing caravans. The original bridge has been out of use for a

number of decades and is too narrow to permit use by caravans. It therefore has no function to serve. It is not possible to lower the trackbed through the opening since immediately below formation level is a large water main. The design of the route through Bryn Gloch caravan site has not yet been finalised. However from our perspective the best way appears to be to lower the trackbed through the public highway overbridge, creating in the process a structure to protect the water main, the top of which will be circa 375mm below formation level. South of the highway bridge the track centre line will be moved up to three metre westwards to get it off the water main and to allow the track level to remain depressed below existing formation level up to the site of the new bridge. The effect will be that the water main will then be buried in the side of the cutting. South of the new bridge the railway will climb to regain its former level at a point where the water main has turned away from the WHR formation. We have agreed with Welsh Water to share the cost of protecting their water main at this location on a 50/50 basis. It has been a tricky exercise finding a

In the last Newsletter Michael Davies deplored the FR's decision to radically alter two of the original NWNG bridges.

Mike Schumann explains the FR's position

satisfactory alignment for the railway at this point, taking into account the water main and the gradient and curvature restriction of both the railway and the road. There is a possibility that Welsh Water may decide to totally re-route their main which would be very helpful but that is unlikely to have much influence on the alignment of the railway and the road.

Even if the railway could remain on its historic alignment at this point it is unlikely that HMRI would be amenable to a redundant structure that did not comply with the structure gauge remaining in position.

In Memorium

Alan Scott,

"Scotty", Saracen's Head
Hotel, Beddgelert.

John Turner,

Hafod y Wern, Bettws
Garmon

Trefor David,

Prestbury, Cheltenham.