

WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

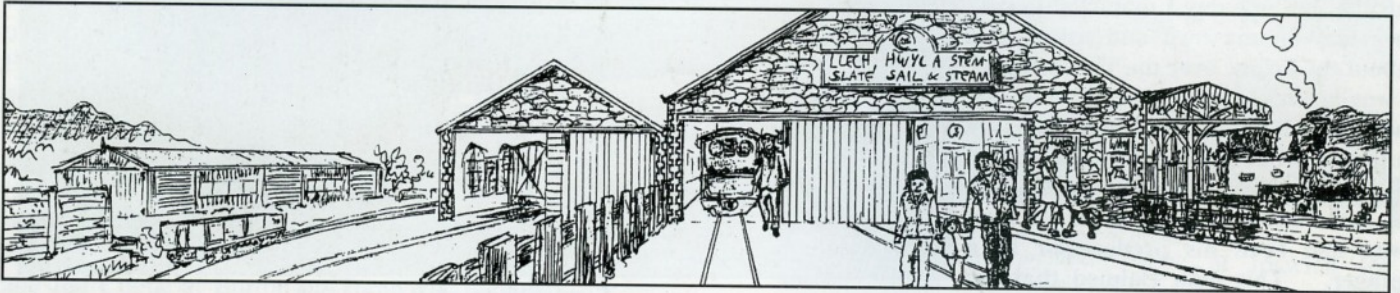
£1.00

Issue No. 11

ISSN 1462-1371

March 2001

MUSEUM PLANS REVEALED



A seminar held at the Royal Sportsman Hotel in Porthmadog on 4th February heard ambitious plans for a narrow gauge museum in the town. It was explained that the concept had arisen as a result of a clause in the legal agreement between the FR and the WHR (Porthmadog). This clause allowed for the two organisations to get together to establish a "Rails to Porthmadog Heritage Facility" within the current operation at Gelert's Farm. The WHR (Porthmadog) are concentrating on re-creating the WHR operation as it ran in the 1920s and 30s, with nostalgia featuring high on the agenda. The company owns and runs *Russell* the 1906 built original NWN (or was it PB&SSR!) locomotive. The company's fleet of working steam locomotives include the Peckett *Karen* and the Bagnall *Gelert*. The company's rolling stock includes the beautifully rebuilt NWN Gladstone carriage, the Vale of Rheidol guard's van and the relatively new Eistedfodd coach built to a traditional design. Under reconstruction is a replica of the extraordinary Hudson Toastrack coach and the buffet carriage. The proposed museum is designed to complement this service and to do so in such a way that it will both educate and entertain the company's passengers. The provisional name for the project is "Slate, Steam and Sail" and this theme

James Hewett's interpretation of the proposed 'Slate Steam & Sail' complex.. The seminar was advised that the proposal should be seen as a 'railway entertainment with educational and heritage overtones'!

Ambitious Scheme for Gelert's Farm

encompasses the movement of slate from the remote valleys of the Principality to the quays at Porthmadog and its onward transhipment by sea.

The seminar was reminded that Porthmadog is very largely built on the success of the railways which served the town, and indeed that the area could

rightly lay claim to being described as 'the cradle of narrow gauge railways'. The articulated

narrow gauge locomotive was developed on the Festiniog Railway and the idea was exported all over the world to the great economic benefit of those areas whose mineral wealth required the flexibility of the narrow gauge to transport the material relatively cheaply.

This is a story that *has* to be told and because of its international implications could be used to attract visitors to the area worldwide. It was a concept that would build on the redeveloping Welsh Highland Railway and provide a new impetus to Porthmadog to the benefit of all business in the area.

But this wasn't only to be a railway concept, it would also include linkages to other enterprises such as the Maritime Museum, The flour mill and even

Portmerion and Tremadog, and outside the immediate area to the slate mines, quarries and other projects which touched on the general theme. It was suggested that Madock's shamefully neglected canal - "Y Cyt" - which had linked Tremadog to the sea, and was now little more than a drainage ditch, could be restored. There was also the possibility of a replica of the horse drawn Croesor Tramway being rebuilt to provide passengers with the practical experience of yet another form of rail transport.

Not only would the project provide a matrix around which living history could be demonstrated in both an educational and entertaining way but also the project would include substantial archive space for storage, research and exhibition as well as a sophisticated Information Technology centre open to all the residents of the area.

The proposal would devote a large amount of space to showing the many artefacts from the extensive archive of Festiniog Heritage as well as the ever increasing collection of Welsh Highland material. Sections would be devoted to the other local lines which formed the web of narrow gauge rails around Porthmadog. The project would aim to become a centre of excellence - in the top echelon of its class.

The all day seminar received the details of the project with enthusiasm which should encourage the organisers to move on to phase two - a full scale feasibility study.

THE BUILDING OF GLANRAFON VIADUCT

John Bailey Williams was the Church Warden for St. John's, Waunfawr in the 1940s. He acted as a sidesman and, when pressed, would also act as a Sunday School teacher over us rowdy lads! On one occasion he let slip that he once worked for the Welsh Highland Railway as a ganger. He was somewhat reluctant to tell us of his life, but one day I managed to corner him on my own and asked him about the bridge over the Treweunydd. I was curious to know if he could tell me how this viaduct, high above the river and somewhat inaccessible, was built.

He told me that he had once asked the same question to an old man who had been his predecessor as a ganger. This man claimed that the bridge was delivered in several sections by the makers/suppliers. These were carried from the works, over the London and North Western Railway, to Dinas Junction. From here they were transferred to the narrow gauge wagons on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway which was then in the course of construction and conveyed as far as Snowdon Ranger. From there the sections were transferred to horse and cart and taken up

the road to Rhyd Ddu and thence down the contractor's track to Glanrafon Sidings where they were off loaded. Here they were riveted into their final form to make the two girders that exist today.

They would have had temporary lifting gear on either side of the river to lift stone to make the abutments of the bridge, but the lifting gear was not strong enough to take the full weight of each completed beam. Therefore the beams were assembled on a form of rollers and were joined together with temporary, but substantial plates, held in place with bolts to make one extra long girder. Extra weights were placed on the extreme end of the beam on the Rhyd Ddu side, whilst the lifting gear on the Dinas side of the bridge was attached over the river, acting as a guide. The whole assembly was then slowly rolled across the ravine until one section was in place. When the Engineer was



*Glan yr Afon viaduct from below.
D.W. Allan. - Date 30th April 1997*

satisfied that it was in the correct position the beam was very gradually lowered until it was resting in its proper place. Possibly the weighted end at the Rhyd Ddu side was gradually relieved of its load, the second lifting gear taking the weight. Once all was correctly aligned and the beam was supported underneath,

the temporary joining pieces were dismantled.

The second girder was then raised above the level of the first and rolled on top of the first girder using the two lifting gear to act as guides. Once the crossing had been made, the second girder was moved sideways clear of the first and when in its correct position, lowered onto the bridge abutment.

I have no corroborative evidence to support this statement, but John Bailey was not an untruthful man, and he told me the story believing that his informant was telling him a factual account. I have heard that this method of assembly was used elsewhere and it sounds perfectly plausible. Does any other reader have any conflicting information?

Bill Rear relates a handed-down tale

A Fascinating Acquisition

The Group has recently obtained an original copy of a six page foolscap document relating to the PB&SSR entitled 'Estimate of the Expense of the Undertaking'. The estimate covers Railway No. 1 from Portmadoc to Borth (y Gest), the purchase of the Croesor Railway and Festiniog Railway Siding, an extension from the Queens Hotel to join the Croesor Railway, and Railway No.2 from what would become Croesor Junction to Llyn Gwynant. Railway No. 2 contains provision for stations at Beddgelert, Llyn Dinas and Llyn Gwynant.

In all cases the estimate covers 'permanent way, fencing, electrical equipment and rolling stock'. It is interesting to compare railway construction costs 100 years on. In the first years of the century cuttings in rock were costed at 5/- per cubic yard; work on soft soil and marl at 1/6d per cubic yard and tunnels in the Aberglaslyn Pass at £13-12-0d per linear yard.

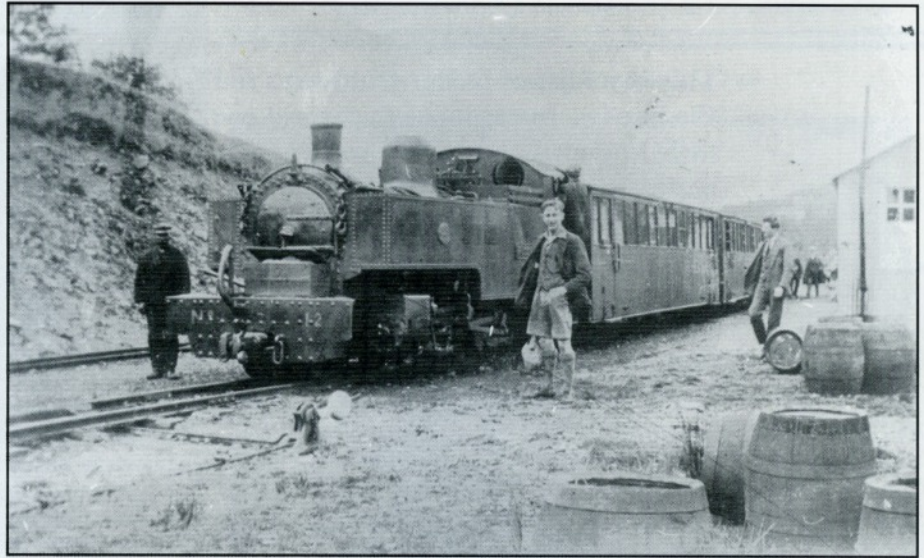
The estimate also includes the cost of 'Electric Lighting of Beddgelert, Portmadoc and Criccieth' at £37,055-10-0d indicating the close links between the PB&SSR and the North Wales Power & Traction Co.

An altogether fascinating document. Copies are available from John Keylock at £1.50 inclusive of Post and Packing - cheques payable to the Heritage Group please.

WHR - GOODS OUTWARD

Thirty years ago the writer was still partial to a pint, or more, of draught bitter; he was therefore familiar with the pin, thrum, firkin and hogshead. However it took the 'Treasure Trove' (see Newsletter No. 8) to remind him that 'kil' was an abbreviation for 'kilderkin' - 'a cask for liquid containing sixteen to eighteen gallons'. Carriage by the railway of coal inwards and slate outwards is well documented, but this article expands the range of outwards goods - starting with 'kils'. Beddgelert and Rhyd Ddu both had their hotels all of which remain today - many will be familiar to readers! These hostels, having received their beer by rail, the empties - invariably kils - were returned by rail. They were consigned to the brewers Bass, Samuel Allsopp and Ind Coope at Burton-on-Trent, via Dinas Junction 'for transhipment'. Every barrel carried a branded serial number and consignment notes diligently recorded each one. Carriage was paid by the consignee. Allsopps - before the days of the combined Ind Coope and Allsopp - had a store in Bangor, perhaps the other major brewers also had local agents in the 1920s.

North Wales is well known for being sheep shearing country and after the annual shearing bales of wool would be dispatched - particularly from Beddgelert - to wool merchants in Halifax. Most of this business was dealt with by D. Meridith and Son of Pwllheli - 'Wool Merchant & Fellmonger'. Consignment notes refer to 'sheets' - as opposed to bales - of wool and the favoured wagons for transport to Dinas were the bogie



'Russell' poses with crew member and a passenger at Beddgelert station in 1926, with beer barrels, presumably empty, awaiting collection. Photo: Abel

bolsters. (One wonders

whether they were sheeted up to keep them dry?!)

Other empties besides 'kils' went out over the railway; crates of empty jam jars to still well known manufacturers, pop and

whisky bottles all for refilling before the 'throw away' age. Other crates contained 'fowls' or eggs which were generally destined to either Liverpool or Wigan. Empty oil drums were also returned to their suppliers.

There was a small amount of P.L.A. (Passenger's Luggage in Advance) business - portmanteaux and bicycles were favourite items. From a horticultural point of view some wry amusement is afforded by the return of a lawn mower in a crate to Ransomes, Sims & Jeffries

at Ipswich for repairs and the

subsequent correspondence relating to a claim by the sender, in Nantgwynant, for damage during the return transit.

Most interesting from a railway perspective are some consignments relating to the fact that the North Wales Narrow Gauge section had been refurbished in preparation for re-opening to Rhyd Ddu in 1922. In June 1923 a quantity of 'wheels, axle boxes and chairs' were sent by the contractor, McAlpine to 'Gelert' (Beddgelert Sidings - Portmadoc) for Transhipment. It is the chairs which are particularly fascinating - perhaps a PB&SSR relic from Parry's timber tramway and sidings? A year later Mr C. Humphreys of Clogwyn sent fourteen tons of scrap rail to Portmadoc for collection by - or onward delivery to - Williams, the Harlech scrap metal merchant. A further four tons and four hundredweights of scrap rail were consigned to the Ruthin Limestone Quarry.

All three of these consignment notes were issued from 'South Snowdon'.

This can only cover a small proportion of the goods outwards. The imagination can only speculate as to for example how often the covered vans were used in the trains and what goods did they carry?

John Keylock Investigates

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY.

CONSIGNMENT NOTE Beddgelert STATION April 26th 1927

The Company hereby gives notice that their Consign and Liability in respect of the undermentioned Goods is for carriage on their own Railway only, and for the purpose of their own Company, and that the Consignee accepts, receives and acknowledges the liability on the Railway of the Goods from station to the other side, that their liability is as limited, and that the quantity, number, and weight as checked and ascertained by the Company in delivery or receipt, is accepted by the Consignee as a correct statement of the quantity, number, and weight delivered or accepted by him, in the Company's possession.

The Welsh Highland Railway Company are requested to receive and forward, as per address and particulars on this note, the undermentioned Goods, on the conditions stated above and on the other side, to all of which I agree.

Signature of Sender or his Representative Walter S. J. Young Address Royal Coat Hotel, Beddgelert

CONSIGNEE	ADDRESS	Number of Packages	Description of Goods and Marks	WEIGHT				Charges paid on	Who pays the Charges
				T	C	P	L		
<u>Ind Coope</u>	<u>Dinas for Transhipment</u>		<u>7 Empty Beer Kils</u>						
			<u>20 96 59</u>						
		<u>53761</u>	<u>20 41 78</u>						
		<u>209798</u>	<u>22 75 05</u>						
		<u>225899</u>	<u>50 6 76</u>						

Completed

QUARRY FEEDERS

This brief list of feeder tramways to the quarries and mines served by the line is in response to several requests for information about this little known aspect of the railway's activities. The editor welcomes any new information on this subject. All distance given are measured in miles from Dinas

Bryngwyn Area

All served by feeder tramway from Drumhead. 5 miles from Dinas to the top of the Bryngwyn Incline

Alexandra

Slate quarry served by NWNG, later WHR. Worked sporadically, later in association with Moel Tryfan quarry. Still open at time of WHR closure.

Moel Tryfan

Slate quarry served by NWNG, later WHR. Still open at time of WHR closure.

Braich

Slate quarry served by NWNG. Connected to Drumhead circa 1877 - closed after 1915.

Fron

Slate quarry served by NWNG, later WHR. Connected to Drumhead circa 1881 - closed during 1930s.

Cilgwyn

Slate quarry served by WHR. Connected to Drumhead in 1923. Still working at time of WHR closure.

Waunfawr

Dudley Parc

(3¾ miles from Dinas)
Granite quarry. Opened in 1926 connected by a siding to the south of Waunfawr station. Still working at time of closure.

Treflan

(4¼ miles from Dinas)
Slate quarry served by NWNG, later WHR. Connected with a siding between Waunfawr and Betws Garmon - closed circa 1928

Garreg Fawr

Slate quarry served by the same siding as Treflan - closed early 30s. Siding still in situ at the time of the FR lease (1934).

Betws Garmon

Hafod y Wern or Victoria

(4½ miles from Dinas)
Slate quarry developed with the coming of the NWNG. Served by a branch from Betws Garmon station. Closed in the mid 20s, but with some sporadic working in 1935.

Garreg Fawr

(5 miles from Dinas)
Ironstone mine served by NWNG. Connected by a loop and branch south of Bryn Gloch. Closed 1920 with the loop lifted in 1922.

Salem

Salem Quarry

(5½ miles from Dinas)

Slate quarry. This was the source of the railway's ballast. It was connected with a siding in WHR days.

Plas y Nant

Plas y Nant

(6 miles from Dinas)

Slate quarry served by NWNG. Connected by a loop on the main line south of the later Plas y Nant halt. Quarry closed in 1886.

Glanrafon

Glanrafon

(8 miles from Dinas)

Slate quarry served by NWNG, later WHR. Connected by loop and incline from the main line. The quarry was developed with the coming of the NWNG. Closed circa 1915, but worked sporadically during WHR days (see WHH Newsletter No. 8).

South Snowdon

Rhos Clogwyn

(8¾ miles from Dinas)

Slate quarry served by NWNG, later WHR. Served by a loop on the main line with a wharf and incline. Developed with the coming of the NWNG. Siding and incline closed before 1890. Siding reconnected in 1903. Worked sporadically in WHR days - served by aerial ropeway and new siding nearer South Snowdon. Closed during the 1930s.

Croesor Tramway

Serving various slate quarries in the Croesor valley. Remained in situ, after quarries (and the WHR) had closed, in hope of a slate revival.

Parc	- closed 1920
Fron Boeth	- closed 1930
Pant Mawr	- closed 1930
Croesor	- closed 1930
Rhosydd	- closed 1930

Porthmadog

Sand siding - siding facing Porthmadog serving small sandpit on west side of line. In situ by October 1926.

QUARRY FEEDER PHOTOGRAPHS



Girders over the Afon Gwyfrai which had once carried the rails to Treflan and Garreg Fawr slate quarries. Just beyond the end of the girders there was a junction with one line of track carrying straight on and the other curving sharply to the right on the slate built embankment visible in the background of the photograph

Photo D.W. Allan - Date 2nd June 1990.



John Keylock examines the trackbed of the Hafod y Wern branch near its junction with the loop at Betws Garmon station. Photo: D.W.Allan. - Date 30th April 1997

Below : Sleeper marks to the left depict the site of the loop which served the transhipment wharf for Rhos Clogwyn. To the left are the sleeper marks of the main line.

Photo : D.W. Allan. - Date : 12th April 2000



Below Original granite gateposts for the gate which protected the road between Waunfawr and Beddgelert from the Hafod y Wern quarry branch. The gate itself may also be original, it certainly uses the original hinge pins.

Photo D.W. Allan - Date 1st November 2000.



WIN A COPY OF JOHN BOOTH'S WHR VIDEO

New Updated Second Edition

John Booth has generously donated four copies of the second edition of his superb video 'Lein Bach' to the Group. To capitalise on this donation you will find enclosed with this Newsletter a set of '20 questions', the answers to which can be found in Newsletters 1 - 10. To enter the competition simply answer the questions using the questionnaire and send it completed with a £1.00 coin to Michael Davies, Lyndo, Vicarage Lane, Bowdon, Cheshire, WA14 3AS. To arrive no later than the 30th April. Please mark the front of your envelope 'competition'. Senders of the first four correct entries opened on that day will receive a copy of the video in the post. Unsuccessful entrants can always purchase a copy of the video from the shop at Gelert's Farm!

The first edition of the video had been an account of the history of the line. In the second edition this has been supplemented with live footage of the engineering achievements that made the re-opening possible. Told by the men who made history happen, the second edition includes everything from site survey work, laying the first track, works trains and the all important first steam train to run from Dinas to Waunfawr on 4th August 2000. Garratt 143 is seen en-route at Tryfan Junction and arriving at Waunfawr. Five weeks later the arrival of *Russell* behind *Mountaineer* at the same location shows how quickly miracles are wrought..

This is a well researched, up-to-date, hour long programme that will please all who enjoy the magic and mystery that is the Welsh Highland Railway.

Welsh Highland Railway Coaches - With reference to this article which appeared in edition No. 10 of WHHG Newsletter we must retrospectively acknowledge the contribution of John Padley in preparing this synopsis and apologise to John for omitting his name in the first place!

Editor : David Allan, 132 Eastham Village Rd, Eastham, Wirral, CH62 0AE, Tel 0151 327 3576, e-mail DW@allan89.fsnet.co.uk

WHHG Secretary : John Keylock, Weathervane Cottage, Childswickham, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7HL Tel : 01386 852428

COALS TO BEDDGELERT

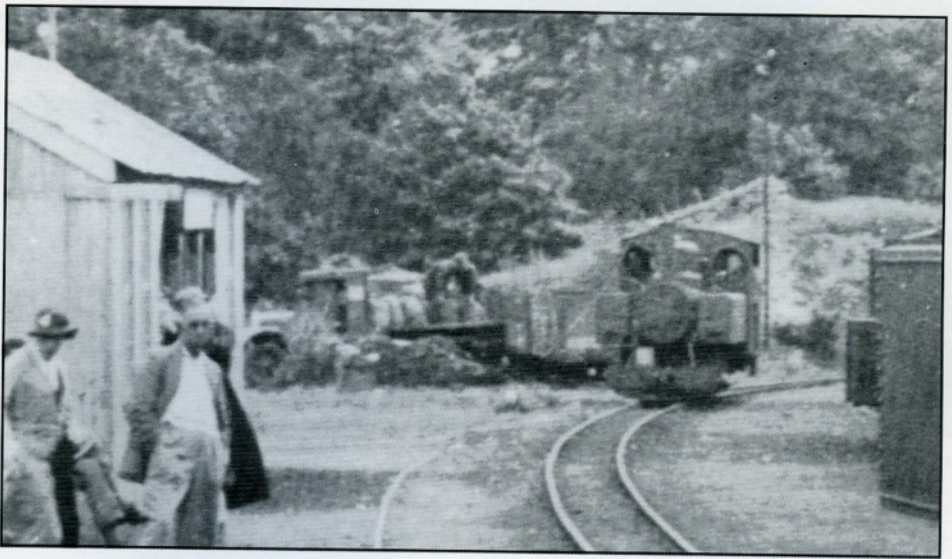
In his article on "Harp & Buses" published in WHH Newsletter No. 10 John Keylock strayed a little from strictly railway matters. In it he made mention that W.S. Jones, bus operator, was also a Beddgelert coal merchant. It is not certain when he established this business but the likelihood is that he was prompted by the coming of the railway in 1923. He had contacted the railway as early as the 19th June in that year requesting a stock yard, only to be informed that this was not possible at the time, but that "arrangements were being made for the installation of a coal siding and when done we shall be glad to give him a yard". The station master, H.D. Jones, was informed that he could allow W.S. Jones to hold a truck of coal in the goods shed (ref. Memo from S.E. Tyrwhitt to H.D. Jones of 22nd June 1923).

Thus the siding at the southern end of Beddgelert station became the coal siding. An interesting memo from Colonel Stephens has recently come to light. Dated the 17th November 1923, it instructs H.D. Jones to "Fix a place for coal yard near siding and get platelayers to form same".

That the coal traffic was considered highly important is clearly revealed in a further memo from Tyrwhitt to H.D. Jones, dated 27th September 1923. This reveals that W.S. Jones (coal merchant) was experiencing delays after the arrival of his coal

at Dinas. This was taken up with D.O. Jones at Dinas with Tyrwhitt insisting that "we should do everything possible for the expeditious handling of this traffic". Jones (the coal) paid the railway £64-14-8d (getting on for £2,000 in today's money) for the first six months of 1924, a tidy sum just for the haulage of the product. However Jones the Coal's 1923 request for his stock yard was finally answered on the 22nd February 1926 when Robert Evans wrote to H.D. Jones enclosing a coal wharf agreement for him to sign and return.

In the same year (1926) W.S. Jones decided somewhat speculatively to expand his business interests. He was now



delivering 'goods and parcels' on a free gratis basis from Beddgelert

station to within the railway's delivery area. He decided to chance his arm and in March 1926 he asked the company for 10/- a week to provide this service. The company's response was that this was 'unaffordable until further traffic develops'. However his

This greatly enlarged print shows (just!) a coal lorry backed up to a wagon in the coal siding at Beddgelert with two men filling and stacking sacks of coal. Date 1936, print from the A.E. Rimmer collection

persistence paid off and following further memos between H.D. Jones and Robert Evans it was agreed on the 13th April 1926 to pay him 6/- per week 'to

act as delivery agent'!

A little later, the redoubtable Col Stephens became both Engineer and Managing Director, not only of the WHR but also of the FR, and being a former military man had a distinct weakness for ex-War Department equipment. With the coal-carrying business of both railways in mind, he obtained a number of ex-WD bogie wagons of five tons capacity. Four were purchased in October 1925, purely for the Beddgelert trade and a further five were acquired in March 1926, for Brookes' Quarry traffic at Blaenau, three of these also found their way to Beddgelert.

John Keylock examines the life and problems of two of Beddgelert's coal merchants

Confusingly, W.S. Jones was not the only coal merchant in Beddgelert

with the name of 'Jones'! A second merchant, W. Watson Jones, operated from Riverside Garage. It is known that in 1924 he was receiving his supplies from 'The G.J. Eveson Coal & Coke Co. Limited of 134 Edmund Street, Birmingham. This would have come by the standard gauge wagon load to Dinas for transhipment. Further light is shed on W.W. Jones' activities by a memo of 22nd February 1926 in which Robert Evans writes "that instructions have been given for the construction of a coal wharf for this merchant" and he too was to have received coal wharf agreement forms. However by May 1927 correspondence suggests that W.W. Jones appears not to have taken the wharf. Perhaps by that time he had lost patience with the WHR who in June could not pay him monies owed stating "that as they were in receivership nothing could be done without the authority of the court". His outstanding account was settled two weeks later!

Consignment notes make clear that other supplies of coke or coal were delivered to Beddgelert for the 'Education Department', presumably to heat the school, but there is no record of who carted it from the coal siding.

A NWNG invoice of January 1926(!) reveals that at least 32 tons of coal arrived at the station for distribution by the two known merchants, the carriage rate from Dinas to Beddgelert being 5/6 per ton (the rate to South Snowdon was 5/-). Although the Agreements stipu-

WHR CHRONOLOGY 1929

lated a minimum tonnage, the WHR were prepared to waive this as long as all their coal traffic went over the railway. By April 1927 the demand for coal and coke in the village had increased substantially with over 72 tons being delivered.

It is possible that some of Beddgelert's coal supplies came from the Porthmadog end - certainly those for Nantmor did. The rate to this halt was only 2/10d plus 1/- for transshipment. The recipient at Nantmor was John David Jones (another Jones!) who was not only the village grocer but extended his repertoire by dealing in animal feeds and paraffin. Much of his bulky stock was kept in 'cwt coch' - the red shed - a photograph of which appeared in WHH Newsletter No 7 (page 3). Presumably coal from the Porthmadog end destined for Nantmor, or indeed Beddgelert (rate 4/1d plus 1/- for transshipment) was transhipped at Minffordd exchange sidings most likely into a Festiniog wagon.

To end at the beginning with W.S. Jones, 'bus operator and coal merchant', In July 1936 his outstanding coal carriage account with the WHR stood at £13-4-8d, the largest sum owed to the railway at that time. We know that he was 'pushed' to find petrol money for his buses on Eryri Harp Choir outings - could it be that he spent too much time in the Prince Llewellyn or the Saracen's Head, or both?!

The writer is indebted to Mr Idris Evans of Nantgwynant, the Beddgelert Historical Society and to Derek Lystor for help in compiling this article.

29th March

Kerr Stuart Diesel transferred to Festiniog Railway.

20th May

Winter train services re-extended to Portmadoc, (Mon/Wed/Fri only). One train a day in each direction. Third class Holiday Contract Tickets issued - one week 15/-, two weeks 25/-.

1st June

Cheap Day Return Tickets issued - from Dinas only. Buffet Car advertised as being "fully licensed" - ran on the 12.30pm from Dinas and on the 2.36pm from Portmadoc.

8th July

Summer service began. One through return journey daily (Saturday's excepted). Use of Cambrian crossing by passenger trains ceased, services terminating on the north side of the main line. First use of Portmadoc (New) 1929 station.

21st September

End of summer service.

22nd September

Russell out of use; wheels sent to Hunslets for re-tyring. This work was ultimately paid for by Carnarfonshire County Council.

October

Service reduced to one train, Mon/Wed/Fri only. This was to be the last year of winter passenger services.

December

Total tickets sold - 5104; annual loss £52.

From the Archives - A 1925 Accident at Beddgelert

"I beg to inform you that a boy named Ifan Anwyl Williams, Beudy Newydd, Nantmor, met with an accident about 30 yards from the small tunnel, STATION end through playing with the platelayer's trolley last night. I had gone home for supper about 7.00pm and came back to meet the 7.10pm train from Portmadoc. I was at the station about 15 minutes before the arrival of the train. The train whistled for the small tunnel about 8.10pm and a few seconds latter (sic) I heard a loud bang. I immediately went out and found that the train had stopped. The Guard and Driver called me down. When I arrived there I found the Driver and Stoker holding the above named boy on the plateplayer's trolley. I found that he was injured about the face. With the Driver and a passengers help we got him to the station on the trolley. Another passenger went for Dr. Thorpe. When he

The text of a letter of 22/8/25 from the Beddgelert Station Master to R Evans - Portmadoc. H.D. Jones' words have not been altered

arrived he instructed me to get the boy down to his surgery where he was attended to and later in the evening was taken to Portmadoc hospital by his father and mother. Dr Thorpe informed me that he was suffering from injuries to his face and concussion of the brain. It appears that another boy named Griffiths Jones Hughes, Conloch Isaf Farm, Beddgelert was with him but he managed to get clear and I did not see him, but Guard E. Jones saw him running pass (sic) the Guard's Van and down through the tunnel. Ganger J.O. Thomas in-

formed me that he had taken the trolley off the permanent way when going off duty at 4.30pm. The trolley was by the siding near the water tank, and the points were locked, so they must have dragged the trolley from the siding on to the main line. I may add that I had warned these two boys to get off the Station Premises on Thursday last the 20th inst. There (sic) ages are I.A. Williams about 13 years old, G. Jones Hughes about 10 years old.

There (sic) fathers names are Mr John Williams, Beudy Newydd, Nantmor, Farmer. G Jones Hughes, Mr Tommy Hughes, Church St. Beddgelert, Farm Labourer.

PS - I understand today (Saturday) that a women had seen them playing with the trolley, some time before the train, below the tunnel (Pass End). I have not seen this women yet to confirm this."

LETTERS

RHYD DDU STATION

Having been "mentioned in despatches" I thought perhaps I ought to contribute a little to the discussion on the buildings which formerly stood at Rhyd Ddu station.

As regards the infamous 'stationmaster's house' - I know the house now hidden among the trees to which Derek refers, but I'm afraid that I am not entirely convinced it was provided for the stationmaster and his wife. J.I.C Boyd seems to me to be suggesting that the couple's accommodation was in at least part of the stone "cottage", and the well known shot of Moel Tryfan bringing in a train from Dinas does show what looks like domestic curtains at that buildings windows. The building is also devoid of any signs or notices, which suggests it might have been residential. The house to the north of the site also strikes me as a little over-specified for a station where there wasn't really sufficient work to justify the full time employment of more than one person (I believe - though I could be wrong - that the station master's wife worked only part time for the railway, and ran the refreshment room for its franchisees). It's also in quite a different style to anything else the railway built (though that could also be said of the brick building at Rhyd Ddu). We know from photographic evidence that the station opened in or about 1881 with the brick building and the goods shed; there would have been a waiting room, ticket/parcels office and toilets, and probably a ground frame, so it seems likely to me that the stone building might well have been erected shortly after opening to provide staff quarters. However I am nothing if not open-minded, so I am prepared to be persuaded!

A fellow 7mm NGA member and I have been doing quite a bit of research on South Snowdon and believe that we have pinned

down the extension of the brick building to 1896/7. We have accumulated quite a substantial file on all the buildings and some of the signalling at South Snowdon and arrived at some conclusions which may illuminate some hitherto obscure area and possibly challenge a few commonly accepted theories - or stir up a few hornet's nests!

We intend to publish all this first in the 7mm NGA magazines "Narrow Lines", but once it has appeared there we will be happy to make our findings and drawings available to the WHHG, possibly for publication, at least in part, in this Newsletter. The Editor of "Narrow Lines" will certainly agree - because that's me!

**Graham Spencer
Solihull**

TRYFAN JUNCTION - I

Whilst I would support Michael Davis' hopes that Tryfan Junction be eventually re-opened as a request halt (WHH Newsletter No. 9 p4) it is of interest to note that the Ordnance Survey already regard it as reopened! Their "Landranger" sheet No. 115, Edition 'C' purchased in August at Porthmadog shows a station at this site as well as all the others between Caernarfon and Waunfawr including Bontnewydd. The line between Waunfawr and Rhyd Ddu is shown without stations and noted as 'under construction'.

With regard to the uniqueness of Tryfan as a narrow gauge junction with a branch line, much depends on how 'British' is defined. In the context of 'British Isles', surely Ireland had ten which includes one in Northern Ireland. And closer to mainland Great Britain, there is one in the Isle of Man with St John's.

Not that this detracts from what I found to be a most enjoyable article which as well as raising hopes for the future also raises all sorts of interesting questions as to op-

eration of and usage of the junction in the past.

**Stan Berry - Kendal
TRYFAN JUNCTION - II**

I greatly enjoyed Michael Davies's article on Tryfan Junction. The junction, in its possession of a passenger station serving both lines, is indeed unique. Croesor Junction is a rather different case and Glan-y-pwll Junction did not possess a passenger station. However in the matter of its being a junction and possessing a branch line, Tryfan Junction, far from being unique, shares with Glan-y-pwll Junction and also with Croesor Junction a most remarkable coincidence. - at all three locations, that which was built as the main line, later became the branch!

**Noel Walley
Newcastle-under-Lyme**

"PORTRAIT OF THE WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY"

Last year I purchased a copy of Peter Johnson's "Portrait of the Welsh Highland Railway". What a superb publication it is, with lots of photos that I had not seen before. The winter evenings have given me the chance to study the book in more detail and as a result, I have several queries with which the readers of this Newsletter may be able to help.

First the picture at the bottom of page 27, supposedly of a NWNG train, I think this is not the case. I believe the location to be near Pont Cae Gors, (almost in the same place as the train at the top of page 65) with a Dinas bound train heading towards Pitt's Head. As for the locomotive hiding behind a cloud of steam, I think it is the Baldwin before it was fitted with a wooden rear cab panel. What do other readers think.

Secondly, can anyone tell me the location of the England loco headed train at the top of page 64?

I would thoroughly recommend this book to anyone interested in Welsh Highland history.

**A.G Howland
Brecon**

THE SPOONER GRAVES - UPDATE

Whilst visiting Beddgelert Churchyard during the Christmas/New Year holiday just passed, Peter Jarvis decided - most admirably - that if C.E. Spooner thought so much of his servant Elizabeth Preece as to provide her with an elaborate grave next to his own then perhaps 'we' should think likewise.

In consequence he has made a commitment to bring her grave into a state of presentability equivalent to the adjacent Spooner graves.

On Saturday 17th February Lewis Epsito, Graham Howland and John Keylock applied the last 'Hammerite' to the eighty railings surrounding the Spooner graves. Peter Jarvis's task will not be half so daunting!

To remind readers Elizabeth Preece was the nanny to the Spooner children. Mary, Charles Easton Spooner's daughter, died of bubonic plague at the age of five and Elizabeth Preece died two days later. It would be reasonable to assume that she too died from this dreadful disease.

The Spooner graves are covered in Issue 2 (March 1998) of Welsh Highland Heritage News.