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AMBER LIGHT FOR TRYFAN JUNCTION Betws Garmon on Hold

Water Towers



Tryfan Junction

*1948 shot of Tryfan Junction station building
by Bill Rear*

A meeting has been held to discuss the aspirations of the Heritage Group. High on the list was the future of both Tryfan Junction and Betws Garmon station buildings. In the case of Tryfan Junction it was suggested that it might be possible to accommodate the dual requirements of both restoring the building and of making it useful to the railway. This could be achieved by restoring the exterior to its original condition, and by converting say two thirds of the interior to become volunteer accommodation.

It was suggested that the specification might include a couple of bunk beds, together with cooking, showering and toilet facilities. The Heritage Group have agreed to progress these suggestions with the help of a 'volunteer' architect. Planning permission would be necessary as the alterations to the building would constitute a 'change of use'.

The section of the building not used for accommodation could become an infor-

mation centre in conjunction with the proposed Bryngwyn Branch permissive footpath.

Betws Garmon

The Heritage Group have also expressed the wish to rebuild Betws Garmon station. Here the situation is a little more complex. Mike Schumann explained that to restore the building on its original site would lead to considerable embankment extension. Under current safety legislation the distance between rail and buildings needs to be at least two metres, therefore the track would have to be slewed away from the building to meet this requirement. Heritage Group officers were not convinced by the engineering problems posed and will be making alternative suggestions. However the building will be mothballed for the time being and made safe.

Snowdon Ranger

There is a requirement for a passenger facility at this location. The Heritage Group have agreed to give some thought to the design of a building here, in the style of the original NWNG buildings.

One of the distinctive features of the NWNG was its random-granite built water towers. There were three in all, located at Dinas Junction, Snowdon Ranger and Bryngwyn. The Heritage Group is anxious to ensure that this feature is reflected in at least one of the new water towers which will be required. The Group have therefore agreed to produce drawings of a stone clad water tower for possible use at South Snowdon (Rhyd Ddu). The Group understands that the South Snowdon tank would need to have a higher capacity than the one at Waunfawr and is advised that 'high quality' water could be available from a nearby stream.

As the proposed tower would have to be larger than the original structures it was also suggested that the interior could be made to be 'railway functional'.

It also has to be born in mind that any structure here will need the approval of the National Park and would rightly need to be in keeping with the Park.

NWNG gates

Some of the original NWNG field gates, which were recovered from various sites along the line have now been refurbished. It has been agreed that these could be used at Level Crossing 36 (Salem) and just to the north of Level Crossing 45 (Old Cwellyn).

Betws Garmon Road Overbridge

Gwynedd are to rebuild and strengthen this structure. The RSG which supports the road is stamped with the words "De Winton Carnarvon 1871". The Group have expressed concern that this original jack arch bridge should be preserved, but if it has to be widened as seems likely then at least this beam should be saved for used elsewhere.

Bryn Gloch Bridge

This bridge which is in the caravan park is to be demolished as the new line of the railway will pass it. The stone could be used in the refurbishment of Tryfan Junction.

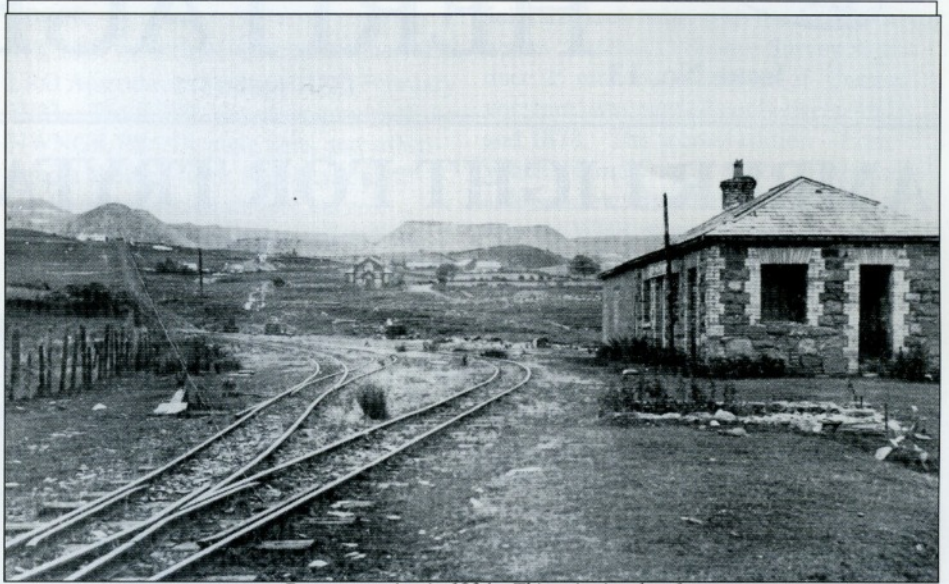
*See inside for more fascinating detail on
Tryfan Junction from E. Pennant Jones*

A Glimpse of the Early Days of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway

My grandfather, John Williams, was born in the village of Rhostryfan 1872. He lived within 200 yards of the spot where the station of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway was built in 1877. In 1943 he published his autobiography *Hynt Gwerinwr*, (The Story of a Country Man), which begins with a description of his early life in Rhostryfan. He left school at 13 and like his father and grandfather went to work in the quarry on Moel Tryfan. His book tells the story of how he left Wales for Liverpool at the age of 17 in 1890. He worked in the Liverpool area for ten years then moved to London to work in a roofing business, first as a foreman and later a manager. In 1923 he started his own roofing contractor business which prospered greatly in the 1920s. The business was run successfully by him with his two sons, who continued the business after his retirement. In addition to his success in business he became well known in Wales by writing a regular column from London to a Welsh newspaper and also through being a co-editor of a London Welsh monthly journal, *Y Ddolen* (The Link). He was also a poet of some standing. In the early chapters of his book he makes several references to the railway which throw light on how it worked and its impact on the community. I can also recall other things he told me about its operation. In 1997 I translated his autobiography from Welsh and what follows is based on extracts from this translation which refer to the railway.

He records that:

About 1877 the narrow gauge railway was built from Dinas through Rhostryfan to Bryngwyn, and that was the main connection between the area and the world outside. It was only on Saturdays that a bus ran along the road to the town - Caernarfon - it was a horse-drawn carriage carrying eight to ten people. As a rule the men had to walk up the hill on the way home, leaving the women only for the load. Most people used to walk the four miles to the town and back. There was nothing to carry travellers home after seven in the evening and it was only in summer that a train ran as late as that.



Bryngwyn station in 1934. This print is taken from Roger Kidner's original photograph

In its first years, after 1877, the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway worked to strict rule, a Master was kept at every station, signals were operated when trains came up or down. The station was kept clean and tidy and woe betide any child who went there without reason. But degeneration came soon. The Rhostryfan Station Master, (who also worked as a cobbler in the generous free time he enjoyed while waiting for the trains), was moved away. The station was then

fan station before the train came

down from Bryngwyn, to issue tickets to the travellers. After this he would rush back to Tyddyn y Gwydd ahead of the train. To enable him to do this he had a little wagon, commonly called 'the trolley', and as there was an incline all the way from Bryngwyn to Rhostryfan and on to Tyddyn y Gwydd no engine power was needed to drive the trolley down, but it had to be drawn back to Bryngwyn at the tail of the train. Because of Owen

Thomas' good nature the local boys were welcome to ride on the little trolley from Rhostryfan to Tyddyn y Gwydd. Although the little truck, in our minds, travelled fearfully fast and there was neither arm nor side to keep us from falling

E. Pennant Jones treats us to a rare insight of life in and around the Bryngwyn branch

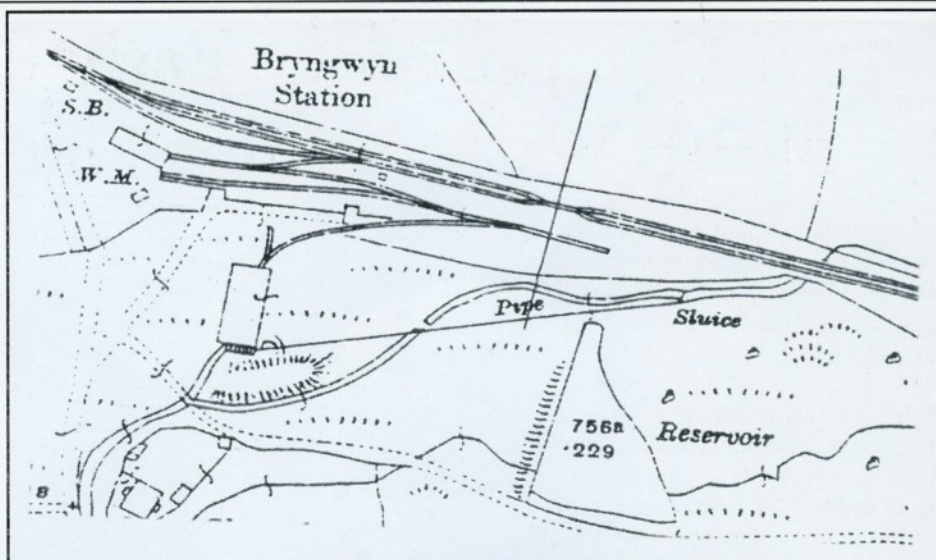
chiefly cared for by a man who worked as the guard on the train from Tyddyn y Gwydd (Tryfan Junction) to Bryngwyn. His name was Owen Benjamin Thomas. I first remember him at Caer Moel and he used to come up to the chapel at Rhos. He was kind and full of fun. When he married he came to live at Bryn Hyfryd, Rhostryfan. Between one thing and another he was pretty busy all his days, but in between times he had leisure to care for the large number of birds he kept at Tyddyn y Gwydd station. As he had to work as Guard and as Station Master at both Rhostryfan and Tyddyn y Gwydd it was essential that he arrived at Rhostry-

fan station before the train came down from Bryngwyn, to issue tickets to the travellers. After this he would rush back to Tyddyn y Gwydd ahead of the train. To enable him to do this he had a little wagon, commonly called 'the trolley', and as there was an incline all the way from Bryngwyn to Rhostryfan and on to Tyddyn y Gwydd no engine power was needed to drive the trolley down, but it had to be drawn back to Bryngwyn at the tail of the train. Because of Owen Thomas' good nature the local boys were welcome to ride on the little trolley from Rhostryfan to Tyddyn y Gwydd. Although the little truck, in our minds, travelled fearfully fast and there was neither arm nor side to keep us from falling off, I have no recollection of any mishap to any of the boys on those rapid rides. Of course a trip on the trolley required the young travellers to make themselves useful in doing little jobs for Owen Thomas, as far as I remember they were all willing. Every boy had to be alert, especially when Owen Thomas said something or other. One day a fairly credulous lad came into the station and Owen Thomas asked him with a serious face, "Did you hear about the big trouble yesterday?" "No", said the boy. "Llanberis lake caught fire." said Owen Thomas seriously again. When the poor lad returned home and reported on the "great trouble" to his

mother, he was scolded for believing Owen Thomas' tall story! When the trolley was on its way from Rhosiryfan to Tyddyn y Gwydd it sometimes happened that mountain ponies had wandered onto the track, and if he had any boys with him Owen Thomas would yell "Lions, lions! Bears, bears! Help what shall we do?" One of the Foty farm dogs had the habit of running after the trolley barking - "Guns, boys, guns!" OT would shout and on the word would start pelting the dog with stones already placed on the trolley for the purpose. When with one thing and another a busy time came, Owen Thomas would say to the lads "It's very busy here today. Two huge loads of cockles just in from Llangernyw." We knew nothing of the geographical location of that place, as far as we knew it could have been the best place for cockles in the whole land!

Once when one of the mothers of Rhostryfan was intending to go to Caernarfon by train, a boy was sent to the station to ask Owen Thomas not to let the train go until his mother had arrived. At the sound of the train approaching, Owen Thomas asked the boy "Where is your Mam?" "At home" he said. "Well, what was she doing?" he enquired again. "Starting to dress!" replied the boy. There was enough good nature in Owen Thomas to meet the mother's request, and rarely did he tire of waiting although sometimes the wait would be long. Owen Thomas pretended that he could speak many languages and many a lad listened to him with great amazement talking like the people of East Africa, when it was only empty babble!

On Saturday mornings a number of us used to go to the station to meet the ten o'clock train that would bring some travellers from afar. Owen Thomas fulfilled all the duties while the train was in the station. The train usually consisted of about a dozen slates wagons and one or two passenger coaches. I remember once that after the train had started, with a thunderous roar as usual, the Guard stood at the door of his carriage and yelled "Hey, Tommy, go to the bottom shop and tell them there's a chest of tea at the station for Lowri Thomas." Because of the noise of the train the message was not correctly heard and so the lad went to the shop and announced "Owen Thomas says there are steaks of beef for you at the station!" He moved from Bryn Hyfryd to Cae Garw and brought up a houseful of children, but early this century he moved again to Ty'n-y-Coed in the area of Nant y Garth and it was there that he spent the rest of his life. On account of his willingness to do a favour, his wit and his



Bryngwyn station layout taken from the 1915? OS map

kind words, a whole generation remembered him with high regard and affection. Because of the advent of the motor car, the trains stopped carrying passengers after 1914. I think it was the LNWR Time Table of 1913 that was the last to give train times for Rhostryfan

This concludes the first part of the translation of John Williams' autobiography and Pennant Jones now comments "John Williams' memory of the opening of the line was good. Records show that the first section of the line to open was from Dinas to Bryngwyn. This was opened for mineral and goods traffic on 21st May 1877, and passenger traffic began on 15th August the same year. The Bryngwyn branch left the main line at Tryfan Junction and was busy with slate traffic from the quarries above Bryngwyn, the main revenue earner for the railway. It is interesting to note that Tryfan Junction is called Tyddyn y Gwydd (Weaver's Cottage). Clearly this is what the local people called this isolated station. Llangernyw is a small inland village in Denbighshire (Clwyd) and is certainly not famous for cockle fishing!

Discreetly John Williams relates the story about a mother asking the train to wait without identifying who the mother was. In fact some years later his own wife did the same thing! When on holiday from London with the family in Rhostryfan he sent Arthur, (my uncle), to the station asking the train to wait. And it did! The trolley was clearly a device to enable Owen Thomas to staff the whole branch. He used to attach it to the tail of the train and travel with the train all the way up to Bryngwyn. There he would issue tickets to any wanting to travel before scooting down the incline to Rhostryfan to issue tickets to any travellers there. It was on

the next section from Rhostryfan down to Tryfan Junction that the boys enjoyed their thrills on the trolley. Frequently there was only one engine available at Dinas to run the trains and when this was the case the custom was to put the coaches for the Bryngwyn branch in front of the engine. The train then ran from Dinas Junction to Tryfan Junction, where the main train was uncoupled, while the engine pushed the front coaches up to Bryngwyn before running light back to Tryfan Junction to pick up the rest of the train for its journey to Waunfawr and beyond. The Guard on the Bryngwyn coaches would release the brake when it was time for the return journey to Dinas. He would halt the train at Rhostryfan and at Tryfan Junction, but since there was a gradient all the way to Dinas no motive power was needed.

In 1877 a new house called Talybont was built for John Williams' family in Rhostryfan but the builder was delayed and it was not ready until October. Since the family had committed to leave their old home at Chapel House, they went to lodge for a time with Owen Gruffudd through whose land the brand new railway line passed"

John Williams takes up the story once more.

Owen (Gruffydd of Tan y Gelynen was a man born in 1797 and who, throughout his long life, retained many of the characteristics of the 18th century. He was reputed to be one of the men who established the Methodist Chapel in Rhostryfan in 1820, but another common opinion about him was that he had spent the early part of his life in licentious and loose living. He used to boast about his work as the head slaughterman at Menai Bridge market at one time. After his



Bridge carrying the Rhostryfan road over the Bryngwyn branch. Photo D.W. Allan 1st April 1998

Christian conversion, however, he became somewhat milder and he would be very penitent on his knees at prayer meetings. He held family prayers every morning while we lived with him. When the train happened to pass through his land, and he was in the middle of prayers, he would cut them short so that he could see how many were travelling and to count them. After they had gone by he would return and as a rule say, "They all look down-hearted", and then he would go back on his knees to finish praying. He died in 1884, 87 years old. At school no one moved up until after the annual visit of the "inspectors" in December. The whole work for the year was in preparation for the "visitation", the days of climax when everyone had to "give account of his works" and take the test; days of fear and terror. It was the fear of failing to pass and having to bear the disgrace of remaining in the same class for two years and the terror of being exam-

ined by two men, who so far as we could judge by what we heard from their mouths, were totally English. There was need for neither almanac nor calendar to tell us children that the great and dreadful day of the "inspectors" was busy approaching. There were plenty of signs and tests at hand to remind us, because for weeks before the examination day the cane would be at work, morning and noon, lesson after lesson, from one end of the school to the other. No one dared to think of taking a break to go out to play mid-morning, on the contrary the set time for the school was extended by keeping the children there until five o'clock in the afternoon. Among the children kept behind were those who had not had a bite to eat since early morning, and if their clothes were wet there was no provision to dry them apart from body heat.

Mr Watts and Mr Roberts were the two examiners at the time when I was at school. They would arrive at the school by the ten o'clock train from Caernarfon. Since the station was only the width of a field from the school everyone knew they were approaching when the train was heard moving on. The children would sit in their 'best clothes' as anxious and subdued as if they were waiting for the judge to enter the court. To please the 'judge' the children were ordered to rise to their feet when the door opened and then to sit and remain quiet as mice to observe the ceremony of opening the handbags' and withdrawing the papers, like breaking the seals of our destiny. Then the work of examination would begin. I remember well the fear of not being able to answer correctly, of getting a sum wrong, or of misreading a word. Then there was the release and peaceful sleep of the night when the two days of the 'Exam' had passed.

Pennant Jones concludes.

"My grandfather's brother, Gilbert Williams, continued to live at Talybont, Rhostryfan until he died in 1966 at the age of 92. During visits to him when I was a boy in the 1940s I used to wander around the old station at Rhostryfan. It was falling into dereliction but still largely intact and round the station yard were many bits and pieces left behind by the railway. There were one or two wagons still parked in a siding. On one occasion I wandered down the line to Dinas station and found the engine and carriage sheds. They were open and I crept nervously inside and gazed in wonderment at the sleeping locomotives, climbed into the old carriages and tested out their wooden seats. Even then I hoped that one day the line might run again, and that hope has not died!"

The Problem of the New Line Beddgelert to Rhyd Ddu

"One authority claims that there are about 400 persons working now, along the different sections of the line. There are some more months of hard work yet, before the route through the Nantmor and Cwmcloch cuttings can be completed. In a few days, the arched bridge that crosses the road near the Goat Hotel, will be completed, and it looks firm and handsome. Digging continues on the 'bed' along the meadows past the dog-martyr Gelert's sleeping spot, and on to the banks of the river. Heaps of soil and earth are raised".

This extract from Y Genedl (Welsh Newspaper) of the 27th June 1905 has been researched and translated by Will Williams of Pwllheli.

John Keylock comments

This extract dates the well-known photograph of the PB&SSR bridge over the road near the Goat Hotel to 1905. It is reasonable to assume therefore that other photos of PB&SSR construction work – in several instances showing the same group of people – were also taken in 1905. It seems certain that the central character featured in these photos is G.C. Atchison.

FREIGHT TO BEDDGELERT

The survival of much documentation for the period 1923 – 1927 gives us an excellent insight into goods traffic coming to the village on the railway from both Dinas and Porthmadog.

Just as empty beer barrels were a major outgoing, so the full ones arrived in abundance from Marstons, Worthington, Bass, The Wrexham Lager and Beer Co., Ind Coope and Allsops. Still with drink, mineral waters came from Schweppes, Whites and Perrier – even then. Cider, spirits and liqueurs also arrived by train

In the 1920s Beddgelert had many more trades people than today. Groceries came mainly from manufacturers - like jams from Hartleys, who had a private siding at their Liverpool factory.

Cakes came from Lyons, conveyed at their 'pastry scale'. Fish came to the Royal Goat Hotel from Grimsby, and one can only speculate upon the use of a barrel of vinegar at the Prince Llewelyn Hotel!

Livestock had to be fed as well so there was a substantial traffic in animal feeding stuffs, medicines and sheep dip – in buckets or barrels. Also for the farmers came fertilizers – more often referred to as 'manure' and basic slag.

Until mid 1924 Fred Clare – a Manchester man – traded from the Riverside Garage in bicycles, (was Beddgelert station-master Mr H.D. Jones, a cycling enthusiast living in Sygnun Terrace, one of his customers?), motorcycle tyres from Dunlop, oils and carbide for cycle lamps. In this context one is reminded of the enamel Raleigh Cycle advert which stood near the Cambrian crossing at Portmadoc 'New' 1923 station. Deliveries of coal were covered in a separate article, (see 'Coals to Beddgelert' WHH Newsletter No 11). But much more came to Beddgelert by rail - wire netting and barbed wire, some of which must have been used by the farmers to keep their sheep off the line of rail, even though this was the obligation of the impoverished railway.

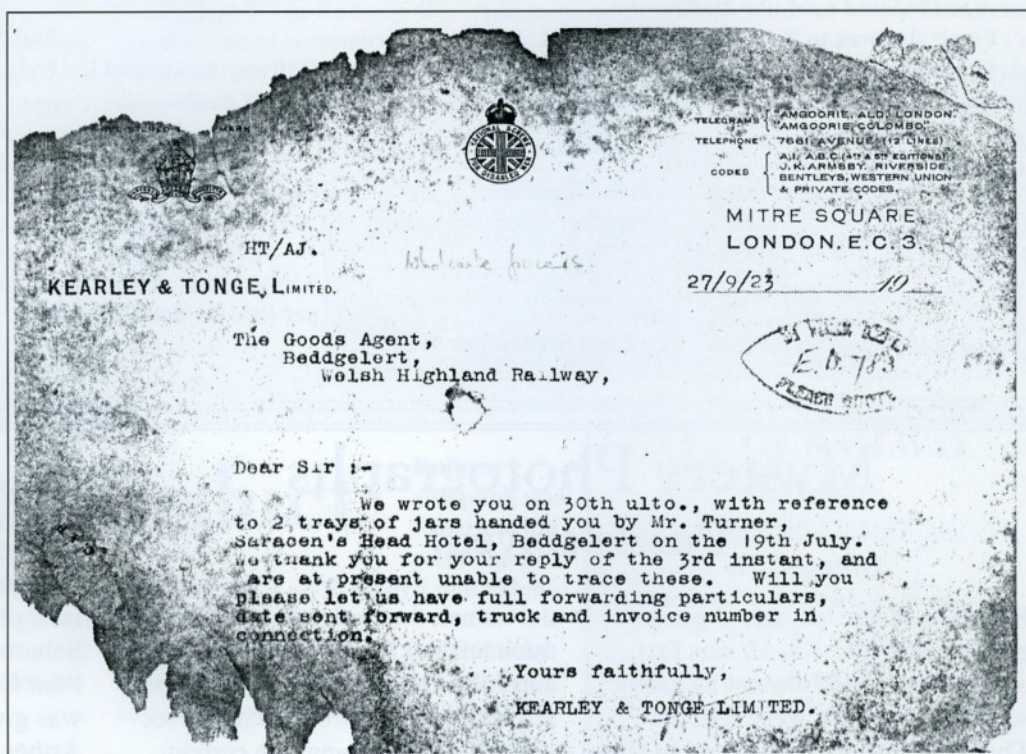
Bundles of empty wool 'sheets' for the ultimate dispatch of the fleeces, cement, pipes from Britannia Foundry, timber, a garden shed and a host of other everyday items including furniture, bed-

More Freight Trains from John Keylock

steads, mattresses, carpets, china, seeds and, certainly in the early thirties, bread from Porthmadog. Porthmadog was also the source of fish and chips -

letters. Jars of jam and bottles of liquor were broken in transit; was it the W.H., G.W. or L.M.S. railways that were guilty of such breakages?! Machinery – such as scales and lawn mowers – also suffered damage in transit and the extent of such damages justified a specific heading of expenditure – Compensation.

Mr Jones also handled PLA at the station which, not surprisingly, he kept in tidy order. Witness to this are the stores requisition notes to Harbour for paraffin, matches, soap and towel, bucket, brush, cotton waste, polish, dusters, twine and black lead and shovel



kept warm on the footplate of the last train from Portmadoc. *Problems for the 'goods agent' at Beddgelert - only three months after opening!*

All this traffic – except the fish and chips – was meticulously documented by Mr Jones, who ensured that the consignee, description of the goods, weight and amount to pay were all included. Their origin – in WHR terms – was invariably Dinas or Portmadoc. Inevitably perhaps this inwards goods traffic was not without its problems which generated more memoranda and

for the stove. Finally he would requisition carriage axle oil and Colza oil for locomotive headlamps and carriage lights. Perhaps with all the paper work it is fortunate that he would have plenty of time between trains!

The editor welcome articles, photos etc. for publication in Welsh Highland Heritage

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WHR CHRONOLOGY 1931

17th January

Portmadoc Urban District Council suggests economies of railway operation.

- a) Limit service - Dinas to South Snowdon only.
- b) Reduce staffing until 31st March.
- c) No need for audit accountant *and Receiver.*
- d) Reduce transshipping charges at Dinas - into LMS wagons - to 8d per ton

17th March

Meeting of representatives of investing authorities at County Offices - Caernarfon. It was resolved to:-

- a) Arrange circular tours from 13th July to 30th September in conjunction with the Festiniog railway and 'main railway lines'.
- b) One engine to be put in working order to meet anticipated summer traffic.
- c) Fresh sleepers to be laid where required.
- d) Company buildings to be repaired as necessary.

April

No slate traffic was envisaged for some months.

Deposit of £1259 for Dinas to Caernarfon extension valued at about £700 due to depression.

20th June

'Russell' returned to service. (see 22nd September 1929).

20th July

Summer service began, with one through train to Portmadoc and back.

Trains officially terminated at Portmadoc New (1929). Cheap Day tickets and Circular Tours advertised by the GWR.

12th October

All train services temporarily suspended.

23rd October

Colonel H.F. Stephens died. J.A. Iggulden, the audit accountant at Tonbridge took over as Receiver and Manager for six months, with W.H. Austen becoming Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent. Evan R. Davies became Chairman and Managing Director of WHR/FR.

2nd November

Railway re-opened for freight and parcels on a twice weekly basis.

3rd December

Goods traffic ceased, apart from coal deliveries.

December

Annual loss - £742. Number of tickets sold - 2463. Passenger income less than £100.

Mystery Photographs Puzzle solved?

Reaction to the 'mystery' photographs in WHH No. 12 was fast and furious, with almost as many solutions as there were letters!

The following is a summary of the ideas offered.

Photo No. 1

Jim Hewett contends that this is taken in Beddgelert Forest on the Coed Mawr embankment - Derek Lystor remembers the sheep creep from trackbed survey days. Graham Howland initially agrees that it was on the Coed Mawr embankment, but with a second opinion suggests that it may have been taken from the road below Cwm Cloch isaf farm, north west of Beddgelert station, and that the bridge shown spans Afon Cwm Cloch; certainly the bridge appears to be a larger opening than necessary for a sheep creep! A further school of thought suggests the southern end of

the tunnel, the bridge being over the track leading to Cwm Bychan. Chris and John Padley conclude that it was at Portmadoc New but then in a second letter, confessing to a certain 'loss of confidence' they put it possibly at Nantmor. Everyone agrees that the locomotive in both photographs is 'Welsh Pony'. Wherever the location, an unscheduled stop is suggested.

Photo No. 2

John and Chris Padley have obviously given the location of both photos much thought. On photo No 2 they 'feel reasonably sure that it is at Ynysfor station', and ask us to compare this shot with photos No 39 & 40 in Vic Mitchell's "Branch Lines around Portmadoc 1923 - 46". They suggest we compare 'the same relative positions of the seat and siding opposite, and the row of trees and

bushes behind the siding'. They add 'The corrugated iron station building which appears in Photo No. 39 of "Branch Lines around Portmadoc" has been removed by the time the later photographs were taken'. Mike Schumann comes down firmly for Pont Croesor. When photo No. 2 was given to John Keylock by the late Arthur Rimmer many years ago he said that it was taken at Hafod-y-Llyn and that the lady in the foreground was his aunt. However that would seem an unlikely - and perhaps not very accessible location in 1924. Today's considered thinking comes up with either Pont Croesor or Ynysfor - the latter being favoured.

Perhaps the last word on this one should go to Arthur Rimmer himself. Arthur's scrap book (perhaps compiled some years after the photo was taken), has recently come to hand thanks to his son, Philip. Against the small original contact print in the book Arthur has written "WHR train at Ynysfor" and again "Aunt Dora on seat waiting for WHR at Ynysfor".

100 YEARS AGO

In 1901, under the heading "Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway", there was published an "Estimate of the Expense of the Undertaking - in the Counties of Carnarvon & Merionth". Two railways were estimated for - which were described as 'Railways No's 1 & 2'. This article takes a glance at Railway No.1.

Railway No.1 comprised three separate sections and estimates.

The first section was the line from the FR's 'Harbour' station to Borth (y Gest). This was to be 3 miles 0 furlongs and 6.7 chains long (yes six point seven - a splendid early example of mixing decimal with imperial!), with a station at both ends, each costing £150.00. A 120-yard long tunnel was to cost £1632.00 or £13.12s. a yard. The cost of procuring nine acres of land for the Works was put at £557.10s. The major cost would be the permanent way, plus fencing, rolling stock and 'electrical equipment'. The latter would have comprised the trac-

tion poles, overhead catenary wires and Bruce Peebles electric locomotives. The estimate for the complete railway was £34,593.11s.5d.

The second section covers the cost of purchasing the 'Croesor Railway' which at this time was more fully enti-

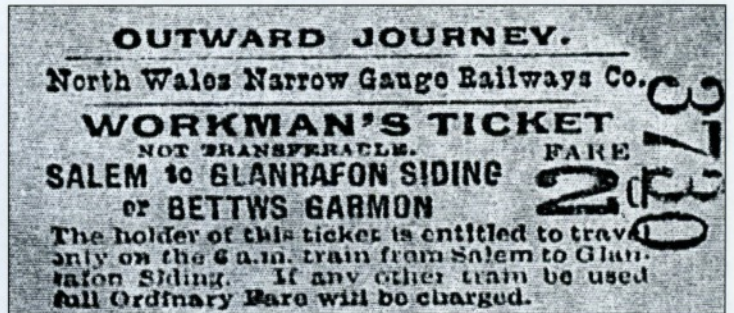
John Keylock looks back a century

itled 'The Portmadoc, Croesor & Beddgelert Tram Railway Co. Add to this the cost of reconstructing it and providing the same electrical equipment and rolling stock - plus yet another £150 station at Portmadoc! This was all at a total cost of

£49,538.6s.10d.

The third section is described as a "Railway Extension from the Queens Hotel to join the Croesor Railway" - (See Boyd - "Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caerns" (1972) P255). This includes a costing of £211 for a bridge over 'y cyt' (Madock's Tremadoc Canal), permanent way, fencing, electrical equipment and rolling stock all at £4614.4s.6d, and yes, another £150 station at Portmadoc! This line would have been five furlongs and one chain in length. The total cost for this section was estimated to be £8004.11s.8d.

One can envisage a station at the junction of the Croesor & Borth y Gest Extension on the slate wharves, and also one near the Queen's Hotel, but where might station No 3 have been?!



Glanrafon Viaduct

Further to Bill Rear's excellent article in Newsletter 11, some further information concerning the viaduct and the rail link to Glanrafon Quarry has come to light.

The opening of the NWNG to Snowdon Ranger in 1878 had made the development at Glanrafon

Quarry justifiable on the grounds of improved transport facilities, carting to this nearby railhead being achieved quite easily. However, the quarry owners hankered for a direct connection, but this was prevented by the 'Ceunant Mawr' or Big Waterfall on the Afon Treweunydd. As a consequence, the owners of Glanrafon, Clogwyn y Gwin, and Bwlch Cwmllan quarries subscribed toward the cost of the NWNG viaduct and rail link. Although obviously in the quarry owners own interests to do so, it may suggest that the

Derek Lystor provides additional information

special difficulties on the Rhyd ddu extension.

In the case of Glanrafon, this financial help took the form of a share purchase. In a Heads of Agreement document of

16th August 1879, the owners agreed to purchase eighty £10 First Preference shares, with the money expressly to be used in "the construction of the line from Snowdon Ranger to Glanrafon Quarry and the works associated therewith". For their part, the NWNG agreed to provide the necessary link to the quarry sidings and to stop certain trains at Glanrafon for the convenience of the management and workforce. Reduced rate Workman's Tickets were also to be introduced.

My thanks to Gwynfor Pierce Jones and the National Archives of Scotland for this interesting information.

Railway company was experiencing some finan-

SALE OF RAILWAY LINES

COUNCIL DISAGREE WITH PROPOSAL

At their meeting this week the Deudraeth Council disagreed with the proposal to sell the rails of the Welsh Highland Railway. Mr Clough Williams-Ellis wrote expressing the opinion that there was a future for Croesor slate and that some transport facilities would be needed to bring it down from the mountain.

Sir John Evans, manager of Rhosydd Quarry, Blaenau Festiniog, who had been invited before the Council, expressed his firm opinion that there was every prospect of a bright future for the district's quarries, and Croesor and Rhosydd had contributed greatly to the upkeep of the railway. Mr Alun Roberts said there would be no objection to raising the rails from Croesor Junction to Dinas, near Caernarvon, leaving the track from Croesor to Portmadoc intact.

The Council decided to explain the position to the investing authorities and to inquire what they wanted for the railway from Croesor Junction to Portmadoc. It was decided to oppose the sale of this particular section, and a deputation was appointed to seek the support of Portmadoc Council.

1941 Newspaper cutting

THOSE OS MAPS

The OS maps referred to by Jim Hewett in WHH No 12, are photocopies of the standard OS maps as sold to the public. Not all have been taken from "clean" copies; some, south of Pont Croesor, seem to have been taken from ex land agent's copies with boundaries for a sale indicated. The maps were not produced, or compiled, in connection with any of the 'old' railway schemes.

The "numbers" on the maps are merely the standard OS land parcel numbers and acreages.

Vic Mitchell

seems to have erased these in his book ("Branch Lines Around Portmadoc 1923 - 46" - Middleton Press). The approximate route of the WHR south of Ty'nycoed has been inked in where necessary, except for Madoc St to Britannia Bridge. The words "under construction" following "railway" have been erased in places, and certain roads have been altered where they were re-routed at crossings or bridges. The 'West Bank Alternative' is the partly constructed Beddgelert Railway (Standard Gauge) of 1865 - an alternative briefly considered for the current scheme. [See footnote by Ernie Preston].

As Jim says, the maps do need accurately dating. The equivalent edition in my part of the world is a "1905 revision" of the "1886 survey"; however the North Wales area may have been revised a few years later. Sheets 3,4, & 5 are mostly the original 1880's edition - (older style typeface, etc.). Boyd's description of the work completed by the PBSSR is obviously based on perusing this 1900's edition. I wonder, was work halted by the time of the map revision? Incidentally, the 1880's edition will show the NWNGR before the '1891' money was spent on extra sidings, goods sheds, etc., and must be equally interesting. What, I wonder does it show of the remains of the Beddgelert Railway at that time? [See footnote by John Keylock.]

Hafod Ruffydd Ganol to the Afon Cwm Cloch

The route shown on the maps between Hafod Ruffydd Ganol and the Afon Cwm Cloch is not the route of the WHR which was actually built and which exists today. It is in fact the intended route of the NWNGR Beddgelert Extension LRO of

3rd November 1900, as adopted by the PBSSR.

The LRO to which Jim refers, is the WHR LRO Amendment Order of 7th February 1923. The WHR abandoned most of the NWNGR/PBSSR route here, and substituted a cheaper route with lesser earthworks at the cost of sharper curves. Indeed, the famous part-completed em-

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John Padley sheds more light on those maps

own on the map near the Afon Meillionen, was not used but was borrowed away to the revised route, and in fact has not existed since 1923. The horseshoe curve here seems to be about 4½ chains radius, but on current maps the WHR curve seems to be about 3 chains radius.

The OS maps (of all scales) continue to show the proposed NWNGR route instead of the as-built WHR, right up to the new metric editions of the 1980's. Careful comparison between Imperial and Metric OS maps show significant differences, except for a modest length through the forestry caravan park. The "Outdoor Leisure" maps (1:25000) will do, but larger scales are better.

The WHR as built was surveyed for the Transport and Works Order application with modern equipment. A pull out supplement is included with this issue which shows the differences between the two routes.

Footnotes

Ernie Preston adds "The so called West Bank route shown on the maps is nothing other than an illustration of a suggestion by my son, Ernie, to try and use the old earthworks which exist on the west bank of the Glaslyn to save about ¾ mile and to eliminate the rebuilding of two Warren Girder bridges".

Ernie goes on to say "The maps were obtained from Gwynedd Archives and the information regarding survey, correction printing and publication dates is, as suggested by Jim Hewett, shown on all the sheets held at Caernarfon. In one in my possession I have written "CARNARVONSHIRE XV 16 Issue of 1918". On some of the original sheets the track is marked as "under construction"

John Keylock helps with the dating. John writes "the first Ordnance Survey to produce 25 inch to 1 mile maps of 'Caernarvonshire' was carried out between 1873 and 1878. The second edition - from which the majority of sheets in the available sets featuring the NWNGR and subsequent WHR routes are copied, was started in 1910 - according to the 'catalogue' of Ordnance surveys. Notice of a meeting in the Parish Hall, Beddgelert on 21st November 1944, refers to the '1915 edition' so it is reasonable to assume that the bulk of surveying was done prior to the 1914 - 18 war, by which time work on the PB&SSR alignment had ceased".

THE WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY

A SUCCESSFUL TRIAL TRIP

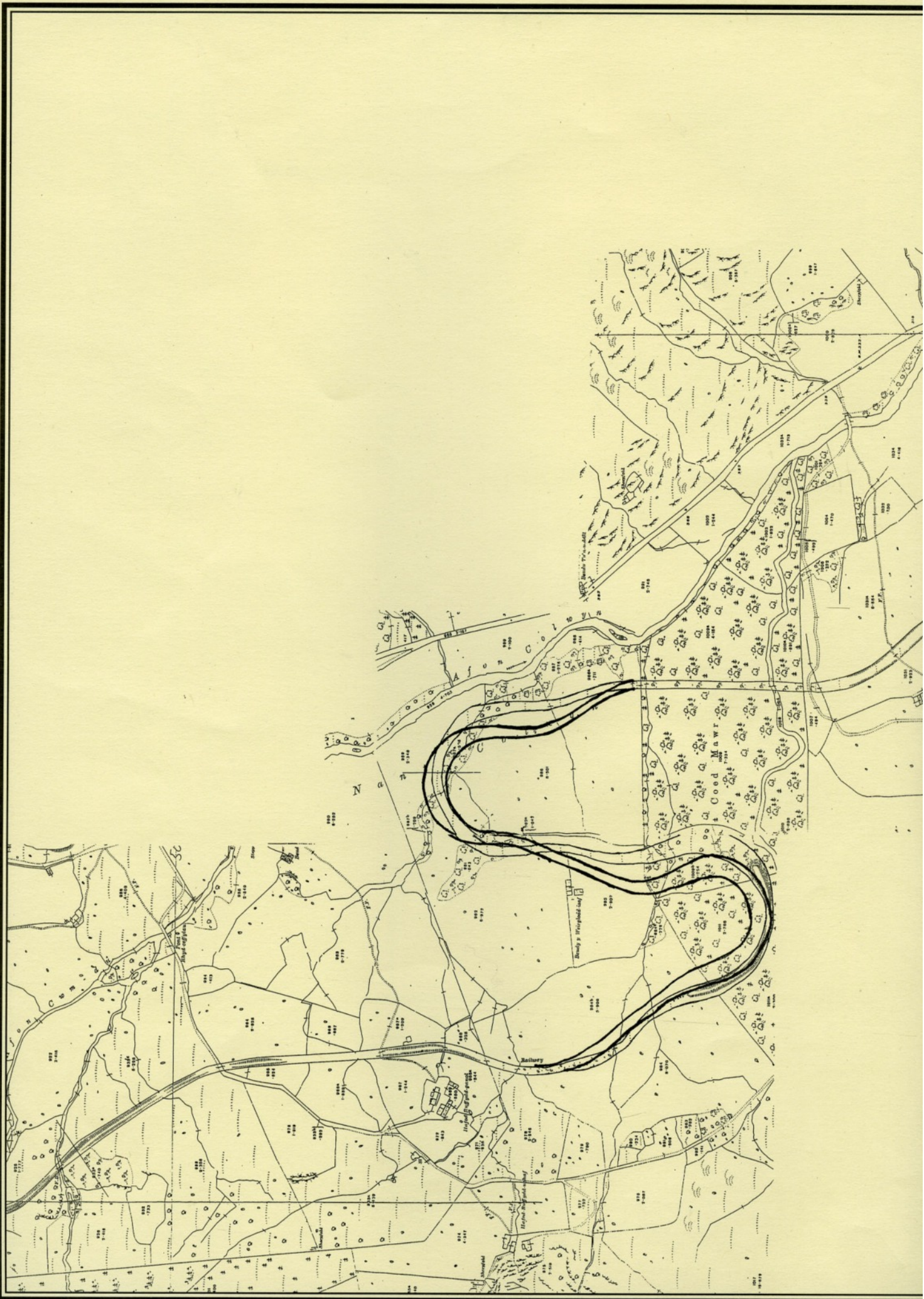
The construction of the Welsh Highland Railway, which runs through the heart of Snowdonia. Begun eleven months ago, is completed, and a successful trial trip was made over the line on Saturday with a Fairlie locomotive and three coaches.

Those on the train included Mr H.J. Jack, chairman of the company; Mr Evan H Davies, a director; Mr S.E. Tyrwhitt, general manager; Mr Alfred McAlpine, of Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons, the contractors; and Mr Prendergast, of Sir Douglas Fox and Partners, the engineers.

The new railway extends from Dinas Junction, on the London Midland and Scottish Railway, to Portmadoc on the Great Western, its total length being twenty-one miles. The stopping places include stations at South Snowdon, Aberglaslyn Pass and Beddgelert. Connection is made at Portmadoc with the Festiniog Light Railway, thereby bringing the total length of the mountain railway to thirty-five miles.

The Ministry of Transport inspection takes place next Thursday, and it is intended to inaugurate the passenger train service on June 1st.

The above is a cutting from the (Liverpool?) Post and Mercury of the 21st May 1923





Welsh Highland Railway

Hafod Ruffyd Ganol to Afon Cwm Cloch

Route of the line as constructed is in bold

Route of the proposed Beddgelert Extension is in feint