

WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

£1.00

Issue No. 15

ISSN 1462-1371

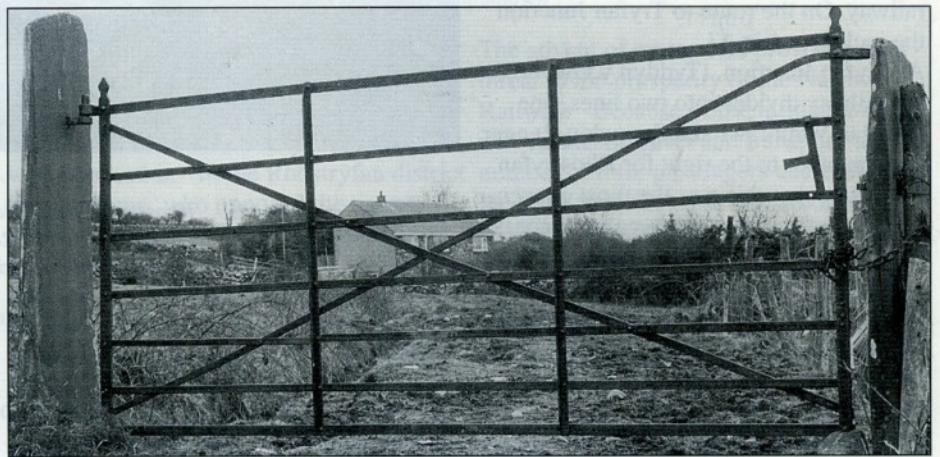
March 2002

BRYNGWYN FOOTPATH Works Starts

Plans to develop the old Bryngwyn Branch trackbed into a permissive footpath and cycleway have taken a big leap forward. Gwynedd council has secured funding from both the Slate Valley's Initiative Scheme and the Landfill Tax to assist with the finance, and work to clear the old trackbed has already begun. Cutting back the undergrowth on the Rhostryfan to Bryngwyn section will be the first stage in the programme and it is here that work began in the last week of February.

Discussions continue on the Rhostryfan to Tryfan section as work goes ahead on the upper reaches of the trackbed. There is a possibility that the funding could allow for the restoration of Tryfan Junction station and that a sympathetic use could be found for the building.

Welcoming the scheme, Rhostryfan resident, Councillor Elwyn Jones, a former chairman of Llanwnda Community Council and a director of the Welsh Highland Society, said "the footpath/cycleway will facilitate access to the railway for the residents of Rhostryfan and to the area in general, and will provide a valuable extra resource for the community". He hoped



Level crossing - Rhostryfan with original gates. Photo 4th March 2002 - David Allan

it would also encourage more visitors to the area who could

use the maze of footpaths from Rhostryfan to add to their enjoyment of the magnificent scenery. It is planned to provide a cycle park on the site of the old Rhostryfan station for the safe storage of bikes, together with a picnic area.

Heritage Group secretary John Keylock commented, "This provides just the impetus needed for the reinstatement of a halt at Tryfan Junction. It will help the rail-

way to take commercial advantage of this potential source of new traffic and at the same time will enable the reinstatement of one of the key features of the old North Wales Narrow Gauge. It is appreciated that all available cash reserves must be directed to finishing the line to Rhyd Ddu, but perhaps here the Heritage Group could help, possibly

together with the WH Society".

The way is now open

for all groups to get together to ensure that every interest is satisfied.

There is a wealth of railway archaeology to be explored in the section above Rhostryfan. At an evocative diagonal level crossing in the village itself, the original North Wales Narrow Gauge gates, which guarded the little lane, have been beautifully restored and hung on the original slate gateposts. A NWNG kissing gate still stands, isolated and forlorn, as the walls either side of it have crumbled. There is a splendid embankment bisected by a superb walk-through culvert. Rail-built stiles and fence posts together with slate gateposts abound. A fascinating level crossing where the line crossed what was once a cart track to a farm and is now little more than a 'green lane' is worthy of further exploration, here one of the slate post retains its original iron clasp. Above all there are the stunning views to be enjoyed over the Menai Straits and Anglesey. And to think - this was to have been the 'Main Line'!



Kissing gate "isolated & forlorn": Photographed on the 4th March 2002 - David Allan

YET MORE TALES FROM THE BRYNGWYN BRANCH

There were several buildings at Dinas Station that belonged to the NWNCR and the LNWR. In the NWNCR buildings worked a blacksmith and a carpenter. On leaving Dinas the railway faced the direction of Llanwnda and for a few yards ran alongside the LNWR. Then the narrow-gauge railway suddenly turned to the left and under the road. From here it followed a winding route through open fields, hillocks and groves for about two miles. About half-way between Dinas and Tryfan Junction the road crossed the line, but in 1923 a bridge was built to carry the road over the railway. On the route to Tryfan Junction the incline is 1 in 47.

At Tryfan Junction, (Tyddyn y Gwydd), the railway divides into two lines, one ahead to Waunfawr and Snowdon Ranger, and the other to the right for Rhostryfan.

It must be that this was the most convenient place for a junction because there is no obvious reason for having a station in such a place - it is well apart from the nearest village. (I heard it said that the people of Rhostryfan used to walk to near Wernlas Ddu to meet the train to save going to Tyddyn y Gwydd).

At Tryfan Junction there was a wagon siding, and it was from here that the line for Rhostryfan began. From Tryfan Junction the line rose at 1 in 39, but for the last part of the route to Rhostryfan - a distance of three-quarters of a mile - it rose at 1 in 48. The route runs through a wooded place - y Bicell - and, before reaching Rhostryfan, through an open area. At Rhostryfan there was a fairly spacious building, a siding and a signal box. (There was also one at Tryfan Junction).

Soon after leaving Rhostryfan the line ran under the road that links Rhostryfan with Rhosgadfan and it rose gradually at 1 in 48, through open and barren land for about two miles to cross the Rhosisa - Carmel road, and on past Bryngwyn farm where it rises at 1 in 39. Then it curved back in a kind of horseshoe to cross the road again (there used to be gates here across the road), and into the station at Bryngwyn. Here again there was a generous building for a station and several huts belonging to



Rhostryfan road bridge in 1948, photographed by Bill Rear. The cutting was filled in during the 1960's.

different coal merchants. They stored coal here until it was needed and then merchants would come to collect it.

Since the location of the four quarries - Cors y Bryniau, Moel Tryfan, y Braich and y Fron was too high for the railway to

I believe that the first Manager of the NWNCR was Mr R. Livsey (Manager was the title at that time, not Stationmaster). Then came another Englishman, called Mr Tanner. He lodged at y Cefn, Llanwnda, and then a house was built for him - "Fern Villa" between Dinas and

Dolydd. His children used to travel on the train to the school at Rhostryfan. The next one to arrive at Dinas was Mr Harold North and it was for him that the stationmaster's house was built that still stands at Dinas Station. Then for a short time, there was Mr John Jones and he was followed by his brother Mr Daniel Jones. He was there when the NWNCR was closed in 1937.

Among those who worked

in the carpenter's shop was Mr Lloyd, a man from Caernarfon, who was famous for being a total abstainer. Later there was David Roberts from Groeslon. In the smithy worked William Owen of Tyddyn Ganol, and John Roberts of Bryn Melyn. Thomas Richards was in charge of unloading of the wagons at Dinas. From about 1913 until the railway was closed, an Englishman from Bontnewydd was the engineer.

Among the engine drivers were Hugh Williams and John Williams, and the firemen

In 1955 Nesta Williams wrote an essay for an Eistedfodd competition. Drawing on contemporary experience she was able to record names and incidents on the Bryngwyn Branch of the railway. This is an edited version of that prize-winning essay. Our thanks are due to E Pennant-Jones for the translation

reach, an incline was built from the foot of Moel Tryfan down to Bryngwyn. The slate wagons were lowered along this, with the loaded wagons drawing the empty ones up. The four quarries were connected to the incline and the wagons were taken to its head to be lowered under gravity. The incline was connected to the four quarries with a kind of tramway. Each of the quarries had their own little engines to haul the wagons. Their names were - Kathleen, Efa, Floriander, Cadfan and Tryfan.

were William Hugh Williams and Daniel Robert Hughes of Maen Goch. For a period Robert Hughes was in charge of Bryngwyn Station and he worked as the Guard on the afternoon train from there. He was injured on the incline and as a result of this accident he died about 1903. He was followed by Dafydd Lloyd who was there until the closure of the railway. The first platelayers on the Tryfan Junction to Bryngwyn branch were William Williams (Williams of India) and Huw Gruffydd from y Collfryn. Then there were Wil Roberts, Jeff Limerick, Tom Ore, Sam Roberts (Saron) and John Jones (the Dinas bellringer).

Apart from their appointed tasks the crew were expected to load and unload slates and other goods, repair the track and work the incline. I don't know who erected the bridges over the line, but I realise that it was important work, for the bridges today show that the builder was a specialist in his work, e.g. Pont y Bicell and Pont Cae'r Moel.

In its first years the railway worked to strict rule, a Stationmaster was in charge at every station; signals were operated when trains came up or down; the station was kept clean and tidy, and woebetide any child who went there without reason! But degeneration came soon. The Rhostryfan Stationmaster, 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 chiefly cared for by a man who worked as the guard on the train from Tyddyn y Gwydd station to Bryngwyn. His name was Owen Benjamin Thomas who lived for a time in the Rhostryfan area. Since he worked both as Guard and as Stationmaster at Rhostryfan and at Tyddyn y Gwydd it was essential that he arrived at Rhostryfan station before the train came down from Bryngwyn, to issue tickets to the travellers. After fulfilling this task he again had to reach Tyddyn y Gwydd ahead of the train. He did this by means of a trolley - a kind of a little wagon - that ran down without any mechanical power but it had to be drawn back at the tail of the train. Apart from his work as guard and stationmaster Owen Benjamin Thomas had other work in his hours of leisure - he looked after a number of birds that he kept at Tyddyn y Gwydd station. Owen Thomas was a good-natured and kind man who was very popular with the village children. Sometimes they had the great honour of riding on the trolley from Rhostryfan to Tyddyn y Gwydd and that was quite an adventure in those days. There are some alive today who remember the railway in the days of Owen Thomas, and some stories about him are still



Rhostryfan station building. Date & photographer unknown

heard, especially how he would hold the train to await a late traveller.

As with everything new, and in spite of the benefit the development may bring to the people, there was always someone who opposed it. In the Rhostryfan district that someone, who opposed the narrow gauge railway, was Owen Gruffudd of Tan y Gelynen. He was opposed to it because the railway ran across his land. He was known as a religious man, and kept family prayers each day. If a train happened to pass while he was in the middle of prayer, he would stop short and go to the window to count the number of passengers on the train. Then he would say, "They look pretty downhearted," as he went down on his knees to finish his prayer!

The main purpose of the railway, was to carry slates from the quarries to Dinas. On the other hand it became a blessing to the country districts, especially Y Fron and Carmel, since it was the means of carrying goods to Dinas - such as food from companies in Liverpool, and coal and so on. Travelling became much easier for the people, and during its busiest years the train ran twice a day, and three times on Saturdays. One of the great days for the train was the Sunday school trip, when the children and people were carried to Dinas to meet a special LNWR train. An important day for the school children of Rhostryfan was the day of the arrival of the Inspectors to the school. They were always expected on the "Ten o'clock train". The engine on the branch was "Beddgelert" from 1877 to 1906. On occasions either "Snowdon Ranger" or "Moel Tryfan" worked in its place. After "Beddgelert" there came a much stronger engine "Russell". It is probable that trains then consisted of about six carriages, with two

classes, "First" and "Third".

The advent of motor cars proved to be a threat to the prosperity of the Narrow Railway. Because of the influence of the new means of travel and transport, the number of train passengers decreased. By 1913 the state of deterioration was such that passenger traffic was closed in November of that year. Soon after that came the influence of the 1914-1918 war, and though there were plans to reopen the service about 1924, there was no further development of the railway. However, trains continued to run back and forth to Bryngwyn to carry slates and goods, unofficial passengers were carried in the van! In March 1922 the NWNRR was united with the Welsh Highland Railway, so linking Dinas and Porthmadog. Early in the thirties the depression came and the effects were felt in the quarry areas forcing some of them to close. On top of this some of the quarries that continued to work began to send their slates to Pen-y-groes, so there was less need for the train to carry materials and slates. There was another fact - the most important perhaps - in the deterioration of the railway, the financial state of the company. On the first of June 1937 the Narrow Railway was totally closed. Gradually, particularly during the 1939-45 war, the line was lifted, and by today only traces remain. The stations crumbled almost to the ground and in several places it is not possible to walk along the old track for:

"Drain ac ysgall mall a'i medd
Mien lle bu mawredd."

"Thistle and thorn, in drunken blight,
And briar grow where once was might."

CAERNARFON EXTENSIONS

This is not the article that I set out to write! That was going to be about the differences between the N.W.N.G.R.'s Beddgelert Extension, the P.B.S.S.R. and the W.H.R. That will have to wait as I have not found all the information I need. Hopefully this will form the subject of a later article or maybe several articles. I came across the 1904 plans, erroneously labelled, at the Caernarfon Record Office but much of the rest of the information came from the Public Record Office at Kew. The 1904 proposals were not the first (or the last), as the N.W.N.G.R. had sought and received powers in 1885. Virtually the same plans were put forward again between 1904 and 1908.

It is generally thought that the proposed Caernarfon extension largely follows the route of the Nantlle Railway, but the maps make clear that that is not the case. At Dinas the extension obviously continued from the end of the existing N.W.N.G.R. Route, which was on the east side of the L.N.W.R. The Nantlle Railway lay to the west of the standard gauge line but very close to it where it goes under the Dinas road bridge, perhaps as close as a few feet. The extension would have remained on the east side of the L.N.W.R. all the way to Bontnewydd, whereas the Nantlle was almost entirely to the west. At Bontnewydd it would have crossed the Afon Gwyrfai at the same point as the Nantlle, although I assume the bridge would have been rebuilt, and then the narrow gauge line would have passed through the standard gauge embankment in a reverse curve. From there it would have remained on the west side of the standard gauge. Boyd infers that the extension would have used the Nantlle tunnel at Coed Helen but the map shows quite clearly shows that the planned route went to the west of Coed Helen Cottage, whereas the Nantlle was to the east. Once through the tunnel the Nantlle alignment would have been used for a few yards before the point was reached where a choice of routes was planned. One route would have kept to the west side bank of the Mon Seiont, terminating near the swing bridge opposite the castle. This possibility was discarded early on, even though it was not opposed by the Harbour Trust. The other possibility was to cross the Seiont on a new bridge, just beyond the Nantlle bridge.

Once on the east side of the river two further alternatives were planned. One would have been on a new embankment between the river and the riverside buildings. However this seems to have been discarded in favour of the second alternative, effectively a street tramway along St. Helen's Road. Both would have ended under the castle walls. No work was done on any of these proposals.

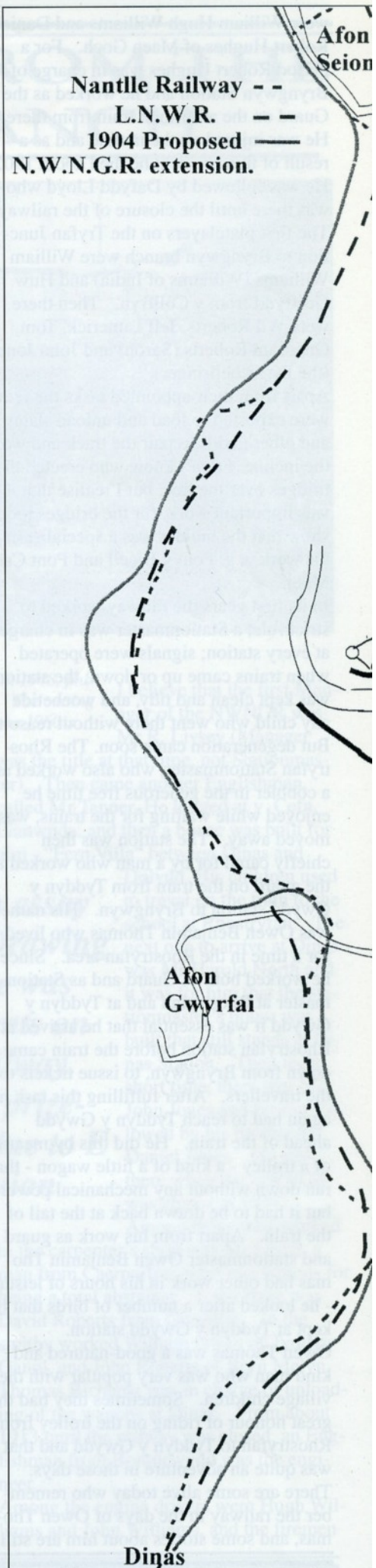
In 1908 another plan was put forward which mainly involved changes near the castle. There were two railways in this scheme. The document states that Railway No. 2 would start "103yds west of the northerly corner of the Harbour offices, running west and terminating 42ft north-east from the southern point of the Slate Quay at Aber Ferry" - this is little more than 100yds.

The plan shows no sidings or loops but the last 30yds or so appears to be dual gauge as it occupies the same space as the standard gauge quayside lines. The plan shows a station site 120 ft x 38 ft, with a booking office 20ft long on the western end. Whether the "station site" means a building is not clear. This was to be situated just about where the Castle carpark pay booth is now located. Railway No. 1 ran from a point 2 miles 58 chains from Dinas Junction, just about where the earlier scheme joined the St. Helen's road, and continued to an end on junction with Railway No. 2. Provision was made for the earlier route to be abandoned over this section. Of course it all came to nought - or did it?

It seems rather ironic that when the narrow gauge did eventually reach Caernarfon in 1999 it was without a connection to anywhere else, but now the WHR is growing from that proposed final destination it is rather like the tail wagging the dog! One final point which should be noted is that all these schemes were to have been worked by electric traction. This would have been 3 phase at about 600 volts with double overhead wires. Quite how this would have fitted in with the quayside lines, with standard gauge locos working under the wires, is intriguing. The whole subject of the electrical arrangements is quite fascinating and will be the subject of a future article.

Jim Hewett unearths the facts behind the 1904 - 1908 proposals

Nantlle Railway - - -
L.N.W.R. - - -
1904 Proposed - - -
N.W.N.G.R. extension. ———



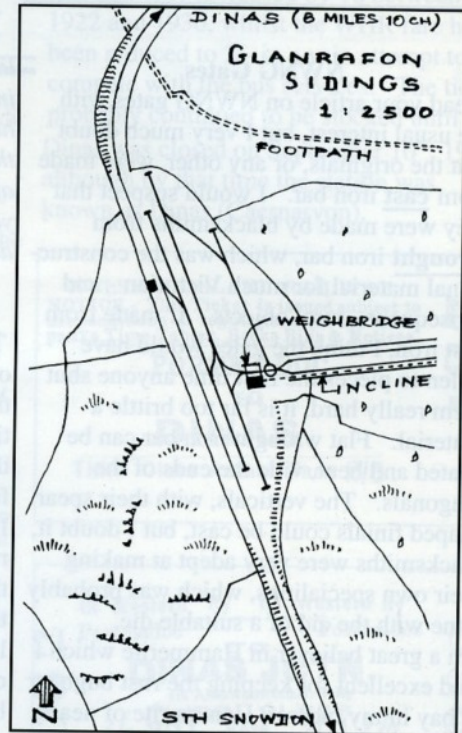
THE 1879 GLANRAFON AGREEMENT

A brief outline of the agreement between certain local quarry owners and the NWNCR was given in Newsletter 13. In this article, the agreement concerning the Glanrafon Slate Quarry is described in more detail. The Heads of Agreement were drawn up on 6th August 1879 between John Owen, Humphrey Owen, William H. Owen and Richard R. Williams collectively carrying on business as the Glanrafon Slate Quarry Co., and James Cholmeley Russell on behalf of the NWNCR.

The Quarry Co. agreed to subscribe for eighty £10 1st Preference Shares in the NWNCR and to pay for the same in four instalments of £200 payable to Russell and John Menzies at Messrs. Williams Co, Bankers, Caernarvon. Payment was due on the 15th of each month, on the condition that the money was used for no purpose other than the construction and works connected therewith of the Railway Co's line to a point whereby a junction could be made with the tramway from the quarry. The last instalment was not payable until the line was completed and suitable for goods and mineral traffic. The NWNCR agreed to a completion date of 31st January 1880 and also to construct, at their own cost, "a short connecting line with 'proper points' between their line of Railway and the siding of the Quarry Company", the working of the points to be under the sole control of the company. The quarry company was to be responsible for the construction of all tramway ap-

proach lines and the siding, to plans approved by the NWNCR. In the event of the NWNCR continuing to Rhyd Ddu and opening the section to passenger traffic, the Quarry Co. was required to contribute half the cost of any necessary signalling apparatus needed as a consequence of the connection between their tramway and the main line, to a maximum of £50. All signalling etc. was to be under the control of the NWNCR.

In consideration of such payments, the NWNCR agreed that when the line to Rhyd Ddu opened to passengers, it would stop "one train each way during the day for the benefit and convenience of the Quarry owners, Agents and Workmen". Notice was required to be given to the Guard at the previous station stop. The running of workmen's trains was also agreed, subject to a guarantee of a minimum of forty 3rd



Drawing by Lewis Esposito Feb 2002

class passengers using them daily, each holding a special contract or ordinary ticket from Dinas to Waenfawr and intermediate stations. These trains would either be special workings or ordinary services with adapted times, run to arrive at Glanrafon Quarry Siding between 6.30am - 7.00am in summer and 7.00am - 7.30am in winter. Departure times were set at between 5.45pm and 6.15pm or as near as possible that ordinary workings would permit. For use on these trains, reduced rate

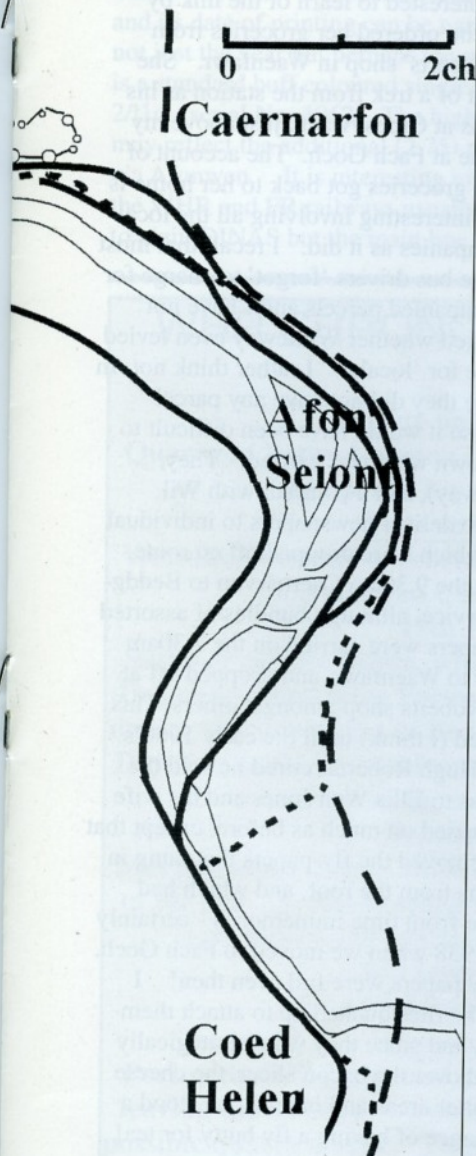
workmen's return tickets (see illustration in Newsletter 13) were to be made available at a single fare for a period of one month and less than single fare for six or twelve months.

This document was to remain in force for 21 years, subject to extension upon renewal of the lease held by the Glanrafon Slate Quarry.

Two Share Certificates were issued to John and Edward H. Owen. Certificate No 64 for 80 Shares was issued on 20th February 1880, whilst the other, No.66 for a further 5 was issued on 12th October 1881, presumably to pay for their half share of the signalling costs. The shares were later vested in the Glanrafon Slate Quarry Company by Agreement dated 17th February 1904.

My thanks to the National Archives of Scotland for their help.

Derek Lystor delves deeper into Glanrafon Quarry



LETTERS

NWNG Gates

I read your article on NWNG gates with the usual interest, but I very much doubt that the originals, or any other, were made from **cast** iron bar. I would suspect that they were made by blacksmiths from **wrought** iron bar, which was the constructional material for much Victorian - and subsequent - rural objects. If made from cast iron, I think the gates would have fallen to pieces the first time anyone shut them really hard, it is far too brittle a material. Flat wrought iron bar can be heated and bent, vide the ends of the diagonals. The verticals, with their spear shaped finials could be cast, but I doubt it, blacksmiths were very adept at making their own specialities, which was probably done with the aid of a suitable die.

I'm a great believer in Hammerite which I find excellent for keeping the rust bugbear at bay in my old car; Hammerite of nearly the right colour, after a little smoothing with coarse sand-paper, and then a spray with the proper colour keeps the rust down at the bottom of the doors and on wings etc. I also paint the tubular large gates around the garden with it, so the Waunfawr blacksmith has my full support!

Alan Garraway

HRA

Boat of Garten

My thanks to all eagle-eyed readers who wrote on this subject, including Ernie Preston, Peter Jarvis, John Padley and Graham Howland. Graham also indignantly pointed out that it he was he and others in a Heritage Group working party that applied the Hammerite!

Boston Lodge in 1948

With reference to Michael Davies' article in WHH 14. Is Michael referring to FR No.23 here? (Ex WHR 24; ex NWNG 12). This vehicle was painted "Welsh Highland Railway" (very large letters, title in full) in 1923/24, but this did not survive repainting. By 1948 it had carried no WHR lettering for about 20 years. (Did it acquire "FR 23" post 1936?). I mean did the "old" FR **ever** letter and number it as one of their own; not that they did, but when. The main point, of course, is that I am querying Michael's "one vehicle still lettered W.H.R.." The cast iron lettering (with some aluminium replicas) was only applied in 1992/3 by the FRHG.

John Padley

Market Rasen

Michael Davies comments - *I fear I was carried away with Welsh Highland enthusiasm and of course upon reflection John Padley is quite right and I am left with a red face! In 1948 carriage No. 23 languished in Boston Lodge with no lettering and probably no numbering at all. It had those enamel third class plates but I think that was the limit. No excuses, I'm afraid I was describing the events of 53 years ago, and my memory has let me down!*

Right of Way - Beddgelert station

There is an interesting point in the letter on the back page of WHH 14. It mentions the "right of way" through Beddgelert station. I have wondered for a while about this diverted "road" which runs from the footbridge at the south end of the station. It was obviously built by the railway as a road but has no access for vehicles from the south end. At the north end it crosses the Afon Cwm Cloch by a bridge of similar design to the railway bridges which cross the same river. But when was it built? I have recently been doing some research at Caernarfon and Dolgellau record offices and at the Public Record Office at Kew. Kew has a vast amount of documents on the WHR and its predecessors and it will take several more visits to go through it all. One thing I did find was a map of Beddgelert station showing this diversion, but that was for the 1906 PBSSR scheme. Was the road diversion done then, or in 1922?

Jim Hewett

(via e-mail)

More on that Right of Way

It would be interesting to know what, if anything happened as a result of the letter from Messrs Walsh and Howarth, (WHH No 14). Was the Goat's water supply restored?

The matter of the road is puzzling. The walled lane parallel to the station is presumably its replacement, but it is already in place on the 1918 OS map, as if built by the PBSSR. There is a footbridge, and (I think), a ford over the Afon Cwm Cloch, and a bridge over the cutting behind the Goat. The remains of the abutment at the Afon Cwm Cloch are concrete (i.e. WHR), and seem large for a footbridge. Perhaps the bridges (by then almost 20 years old) as existing in 1925 were inadequate or decayed? The road itself seems to have been made. Did the WHR provide better bridges to make the way suitable for motor vehicles? But we must not overlook the possibility that they were built by the landlord or even a tenant of the farms.

Sight of the 1880s 25 inch OS would be helpful to see what the road was like pre-

railway, and how it crossed the river. I suspect that end was unaffected by the coming of the railway.

Motor vehicle were common in the 1920s, but rare in 1906. Any ford may have been too deep for motors. Of course the railway would not be responsible for "upgrading" the road unless specifically contracted so to do in return for obtaining its land. This could mean that the only justifiable complaint concerning the road would involve the bridge over the Goat cutting and its approaches (strength, width, gradients, awkward corners, etc.)

John Padley

Market Rasen

There will be further revelations on this subject in the next issue - Mike Schumann has unearthed yet more of the fascinating Walsh/Howarth correspondence.

Bryngwyn Deliveries

I was interested to learn of the link by Nesta who ordered her groceries from Hugh Roberts' shop in Waenfawr. She had a bit of a trek from the station as his shop was at Croesywaen, just above my old home at Fach Goch. The account of how the groceries got back to her home is equally interesting involving all the local bus companies as it did. I recall that most times the bus drivers 'forgot' to charge for unaccompanied parcels and I have not discovered whether Whiteway even levied a charge for 'locals'. I rather think not. In any case they did not have any parcel stamps so it would have been difficult to track down what was carried. They, (Whiteway), had a contract with Wil. Smith to deliver newspapers to individual farms which were dropped off en route, usually the 9.30am Caernarvon to Beddgelert service, although bundles of assorted newspapers were carried on the 7.30am service to Waenfawr, and dropped off at Hugh Roberts shop amongst others. This persisted (I think) until the early 1960's. When Hugh Roberts retired he sold the business to Ellis Wyn Jones and his wife who carried on much as before, except that Wyn removed the fly-papers that hung in festoons from the roof, and which had done so from time immemorial - certainly from 1938 when we moved to Fach Goch. The fly papers were full even then! I think the flies queued up to attach themselves, and since they were strategically located over the bacon slicer, the cheese and butter areas and others, one stood a fair chance of having a fly butty for tea!

Bill Rear

Conwy

A TALE OF TWO TICKETS

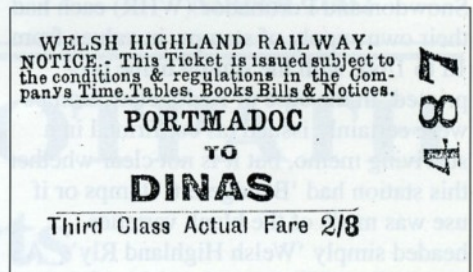
Michael Davies

Illustrated below are two third class single tickets from Portmadoc to Dinas Junction. The WHR ticket is one of the original issues of 1923 printed by Waterlow for the opening of the through route. Colour is medium green and the fare shown is 2/8d. I have a similar ticket (No. 972) which suggests a print run of 1000, but probably less than 400 were actually issued. After the closure of booking facilities at Portmadoc New in 1928 these tickets may have been transferred to Portmadoc Harbour, but most likely anyone making such a journey would have received a bell punch ticket from the guard. The GWR ticket is especially interesting and its date of printing can be narrowed to not just the year but perhaps the month. It is a standard buff coloured single priced at 2/11d - serial No. 4062. The higher fare may reflect the additional (2.75) mileage via Afonwen. It is interesting to note that the WHR and FR railways usually referred to plain DINAS but the main line compa-

nies gave it the full official title of DINAS JUNCTION, in this case abbreviated to 'JCTN'. It will be noted that the route is 'via Afonwen & L&NWRy' and so this dates the ticket after March 1922 when the Cambrian Railways were amalgamated into the GWR, but before January 1923 when the L&NWR became part of the LM&SR.

The conclusion therefore is that the ticket stocks at Portmadoc GWR were replenished in July 1922 in anticipation of additional traffic to Dinas Junction following upon the reopening of the NWNG section of the new WHR to Snowdon on July 31st. The fact that the serial number is 4062 suggests that a Cambrian version existed, probably ending at 3999, and the new stock commenced at 4000. The ticket illustrated was not in fact issued until August 1936, just one month before the last passenger trains on the WHR giving an average of only about four issues annually, a very disappointing figure after the

high hopes of 1922/3. Also note that the fare had only increased by 1d between 1922 and 1936, whilst the WHR fare had been reduced to 2/- in a vain attempt to compete with the bus services. The ticket probably continued to be stocked until Dinas was closed on September 10th 1951 although by that time the station was known as Dinas (Caernarvon).



WHR CHRONOLOGY 1933

Date unknown

Quarry at Betws Garmon (probably Hafod y Wern) re-opened for a short time.

Date unknown

Wernlas Ddu road overbridge rebuilt in concrete by Caernarvon County Council.

17th July

Summer service began, with similar service to 1932. Departure time from Portmadoc altered, thereby reducing the time spent at Beddgelert. LMS advertised Day Excursion Tickets from Bangor and Caernarfon to stations on the ex NWNG section.

September

Meeting of the Joint Committee to discuss the future of the line. It was decided to try and get the debenture holders to sanction the line's closure.

8th September

End of summer service.

November

Portmadoc UDC met and agreed the importance of leaving the Croesor to Portmadoc section in situ for possible quarry traffic. They also discussed the possibility that they would take over that part of the line.

31st December

Company suspends all services.

December

Tickets sold 7827. Annual loss £278.

W.H. Railway
Portmadoc
Sept 17th 1924

I trust you will pardon me for addressing this letter to you on behalf of my son Elfed Lewis, who is now 17 years of age, and was employed by the Welsh Highland Rly Co in February 1924 as Porter at Beddgelert Station. Previous to this he was apprenticed to a well known Draper at Portmadoc, but somehow or other he did not show the necessary aptitude for this trade, and was continually imploring for a job in the Railway service. I decided to apply for employment on the Festiniog or W. H. Rly and he was taken on by the Company as above indicated.

As you are aware, owing to unfortunate financial circumstances, a number of the Company's employees have received notices to terminate their services, and my son is among them. I do not for a moment dispute the justice of this. After his few months' experience he is now fully alive and very keen on Railway work. I venture to make this respectful appeal to you, realising the power and influence you possess in the high spheres of Railway circles, in the hope that you may see your way clear to utilise your good offices in securing employment for my son in the near future on the Festiniog, W. H. Rly or the Great Western Rly.

Again reiterating my deepest apologies for troubling you, I am,

Your obedient servant

Ellis Lewis

Guard

E H. R. Nicholls Esq

Managing Director

WELSH HIGHLAND PARCEL STAMPS

John Keylock

The use of parcel stamps as payment for the conveyance of small goods and parcels was commonplace on railways, and the Welsh Highland was no exception. From examples in private collections, it is known that Dinas, South Snowdon and Portmadoc (WHR) each had their own supply of stamps, in values from 1d to 1/6d, with the station name pre-printed. In the case of Beddgelert, stamps were certainly issued, as confirmed in a surviving memo, but it is not clear whether this station had 'Beddgelert' stamps or if use was made of the blank varieties, headed simply 'Welsh Highland Rly'. A memo, from HD Jones dated 21st July 1923, lists all the denominations of stamps held and used for the month of June 1923. 'Foreign' parcels to the value of £1-0-3d

were dealt with, using 1d, 3d, 8d and 1/0 stamps. A complete record of Weekly Traffic Returns has survived for May 1924, a month in which 15 parcels were dispatched using stamps to the value of £2-2s-9d

Among the other gems from the Snowdon Ranger hoard was part of a 'Parcels Received' booklet used at South Snowdon in 1924. In itself this is another example of the use of NWNGR stationery in WHR days, with most pages being rubber over-stamped 'Welsh Highland Railway' in purple. (The Ash Rubber Stamp Co. supplied these rubber stamps and an example is in the Group's possession, having been donated by a member).

However, among other interesting facts, this booklet gives evidence of the use of

parcel stamps for the carriage of 'smalls' from Dinas to South Snowdon. At this period, Tan y Craig was being run by the Owen family as one of at least two grocers in Rhyd Ddu. The business variously received by train from Dinas, yeast, 4 buckets and a box. Parcel stamps used and paid for were respectively 6d, 1/- and 1/11d.

In the same period the Williams family ran the Post Office at Garn View and received two boxes from Dinas for which they had to pay carriage in parcel stamps of 8d and 10d respectively.

W.H. parcel stamps were printed by Waterlow and Sons and it is recorded that in April 1924 the WHR paid this company £1-2s-0d for an unspecified quantity of parcel stamps; by 1932 one of Robert Evans' duties at Harbour included the safe custody of 1400 such stamps!

Any further information about these parcel stamps or the company that produced them would be much appreciated.

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

Richard Watson

My wife and I attended the WHR (Caernarfon) Vintage Weekend during September, 2001, and thoroughly enjoyed seeing "Prince" and "Taliesin" at work. Whilst awaiting a photographic opportunity on the stretch of line just to the east of Tryfan Junction level crossing, a gentleman came strolling along the road with some very young great-grandchildren in his charge. He stopped, and we passed the time of day. The gentleman told me that he had been a resident of Bontnewydd all his life, and could clearly remember the old Welsh Highland Railway from his youth. He had been in the habit, as a boy, of buying a single ticket from Dinas to Tryfan Junction — he recalled that the fare was one penny — and then walking back to Bontnewydd along the lane. He told me that he would often be accompanied in the compartment by a large hessian sack that would, from time to time, move and emit bleating noises. Evidently, that

was a good way for local farmers to take sheep to market! He was not beyond a little schoolboyish bad behaviour in those days, it would seem. The farm alongside Tryfan Junction station used to breed Welsh ponies for the pits — presumably, for mines such as Point of Ayr Colliery, or maybe for even further afield than that. On a Sunday morning, he and his mates would creep up to the field, away from the farmer's gaze, and "borrow" a couple of ponies for the day. The ponies would react like Wild West mustangs, trying to buck their riders off their backs, but the boys would manage to ride them down the lane to Bontnewydd. At the end of the afternoon, or perhaps when the novelty wore off, the boys would give the ponies a sharp slap on their flanks, sending them trotting off back up the lane to the farm. I imagine that a bewildered farmer would wonder just how they had escaped!

I didn't catch the gentleman's name — just as well, perhaps, although sixty years on it's difficult to imagine anyone wanting to take any action!

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Articles on all aspects of Welsh Highland Heritage welcomed.

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Membership enquiries to the secretary please.

Donation

The Group has received a donation of £200 from the Col. Stephens Society. The money has been donated for the exclusive use of the fund to help restore Waunfawr station. The Heritage Group is very grateful to the Col Stephen's Society for this splendid gesture.

Book Review

"Whiteway of Waenfawr"

Bill Rear

Written by member Bill Rear and published by Gwynedd Archives this excellent value-for-money book provides comprehensive coverage of the Whiteway fleet of buses from 1911 to 1959. Most of the coaches and buses owned by the company are illustrated; the routes served and the timetables also feature. Of particular interest are two photos of W.S. Jones Beddgelert & District (Brown Bus) Company's Daimler bus that was sold to Whiteways in the summer of 1939. Between 1926 and 1946 W.S. Jones was Whiteway's main competitor.

Copies available from John Keylock at £7.50 inclusive of post and packing. Review by John Keylock

Working Party

A Heritage Group working party will be held at Dinas on Friday 10th & Saturday 11th May. The tasks to be undertaken include the repointing of the Waunfawr end of Dinas station building, and the reinstatement of the original slate platform edgings together with the slate threshold doorway slabs on the original narrow-gauge side of the building. All welcome! If you can help please telephone Lewis Esposito on 01286 650397 for details of times etc.