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PLAS-Y-NANT REOPENS



Adjacent to the platform is a reminder of potentially hostile times in the form of a 'Blacker Bombard' mortar mounting. This cylindrical concrete block, weighing some three tons and having a central stainless steel mounting spigot, had been initially installed on the trackbed just north of the river bridge. A similar one exists between the two short tunnels in the Aberglaslyn Pass.

The official opening of Plas y Nant Halt was attended by over 100 people on Sunday 15th May. This was preceded by an excellent buffet at Plas y Nant Hall followed by a journey to Rhyd Ddu and back – all in glorious weather,

Photos - Left: Passenger, in appropriate attire, waits for the train at the 2005 Plas y Nant. Below: Bill Rear's 1948 Plas y Nant picture show the remains of the slate-edged platform on the 'other side' of the track - looking towards Rhyd Ddu

In keeping with 21st Century passenger demands, today's Halt is far removed from the 17 yard long, slate-edged 'platform' brought into use over eighty years ago. It is also on the other (west) side of the track. Nevertheless the past is echoed in the actual platform access. This is between two slate gateposts which originally defined an occupation crossing. On one of these gate posts is a brass plaque recording those – including the Heritage Group – who made major contributions to the re-instatement of the platform. The original station seat survived and has been beautifully restored by Group member Lesis Esposito and his wife, Gill.



Buffet Progress

This is the first of a regular series of updates on the restoration of the Welsh Highland Buffet Car. Phase One of the project will see the carriage restored to rolling chassis stage by September 2006.

The project took a major step forward when a new chassis for the Buffet Car arrived at Gelert's Farm at the end of May (left). Other jobs done so far include dismantling the original bogies for the frames and the wheels to be restored.

At Your Convenience



It was the keen eye of our secretary, John Keylock, who spotted it. A two inch piece of blue and white china approximately a quarter of an inch thick, patterned on one side and plain on the other.

During the course of our day a pile of this material accumulated on the wall at our

Lewis Esposito updates us on the Tryfan Junction 'facilities'

work party's assault on Tryfan Junction station building. Was it a piece of a jug, a wash basin, or even a W.C. pan?

John Keylock started the ball rolling by gluing together a few of the pieces that he later presented to my wife, Gill. As Gill restores gilt antique mirror and picture frames and is particularly good at jigsaw puzzles, she offered to take over the reconstruction. After two or three more work parties we had acquired a few dozen pieces and as the reconstruction progressed it became apparent that it was a flamboyant W.C. pan, ten inches high and with a distinctive lip four inches up from the bottom. It was obviously only half complete as it had no place for a water trap.

The Tryfan Junction station building had its toilet facilities along the right hand side of the back wall. The gents urinal was adjacent to the side door followed by, we presume, the gents W.C. cubicle. Next to this, but accessed from the waiting room, was the ladies toilet and it was in this area

of rubble that we found the china. These 'facilities' all discharged into a four inch diameter salt glazed pipe located outside but parallel to the rear wall and running towards the gateway to the right.

It looks as though the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway gave preferential treatment to its lady customers in 1877 by the provision of such a decorative toilet; gents toilets were normally very plain.

However it also indicates that there was a good water supply to the building together with a sewerage system.

We contacted the 'Gladstone Working Pottery Museum' in Stoke. They informed us that the bowl's printed pattern is called 'Panorama', this is a well known Spode print, used by them on large bowls. However the closet was made by 'Twyfords' in Stoke-on-Trent and decorated with this print.

Our toilet pan formed the ceramic part of a hopper or pan closet, which was developed by Joseph Bramah in 1778. It sat on a hollow cast iron base housing a hinged copper pan containing a few inches of water. An external pull lever tipped the contents of the pan into the sewer pipe below and activated a water flush in the rolled over rim of the bowl. The whole device generally was concealed within a mahogany cabinet. It seems that our bowl was in production from 1809

However, the mechanism encouraged blockages and allowed foul smell to penetrate into the room when the copper pan was tipped.

From the 1850's water-sealed 'S' bends were developed in ceramic by George Jennings based on a design of John Gaittait back in 1782. At the time of our station's construction in the late 1870's one piece ceramic toilets with water sealed traps were readily available. Unfortunately for the ladies the mahogany cased toilets were considered of a higher class despite their side effects!

So when ever you pass Tryfan Junction station, spare a thought for the ladies!

Credit:

'Ceramic Water Closets' - Munroe Blair
Gill Yorath, John Keylock, Gladstone Working Pottery Museum, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent



CORRECTIONS

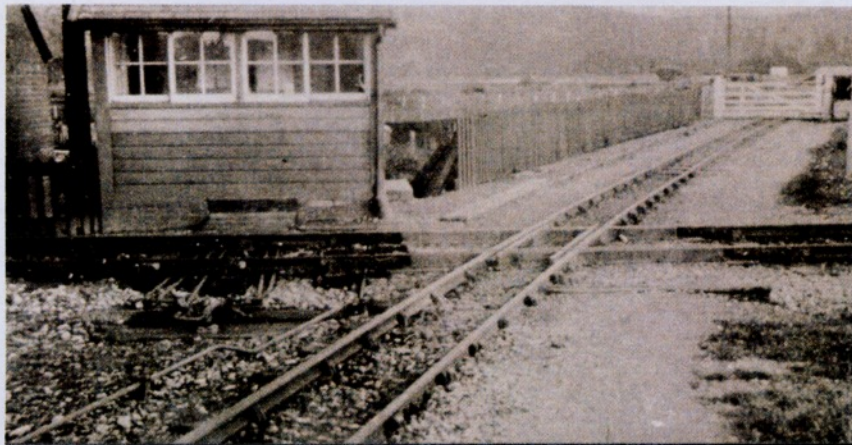
Contrary to popular opinion most of our contributors are human! They make mistakes, and as this is both a responsible Journal and an historic source we will endeavour to correct errors where they are brought to our attention.

Richard Maund points out that in the article on Winter Services (WHH No. 26) Derek Lystor repeats the error that the last freight traffic to Beddgelert was 8 tons of coal in July 1937. This must have been a clerical error at the time, as *Russell* had collected all the remaining freight wagons in June of that year and had joined 590 in the shed at Dinas. See WHH No. 21 p6 "Chronology 1937".

Bill Rear says that the Buffet car couldn't have been, "re-discovered by members of the WHR(P) in 1987" (WHH No. 27) as he not only photographed it in 1948, but actually witnessed its arrival by steam traction engine (he thinks in 1943)

Thanks to both of these contributors, and we are happy to correct the record.

Crossing on the Level



With the imminent reinstatement of the WHR's crossing of the Cambrian on the level adjacent to Gellert's Farm it is appropriate to look at the arrangements that existed for its operation when the railway opened in 1923. Furthermore a replica of the original crossing 'signal box' is planned for its original location; however rather than containing six levers it is more likely to be equipped with 21st century wizardry!

Reference to the operation of the crossing was

John Keylock plays it safe

made during Col Mount's inspection on 24th May 1923 and in 'WHR - Instructions for Working' dated May 1923 - 'Private and Not for Publication'. It ran to six and a half pages of foolscap and ended with the comment - 'The Instructions must be re-read not less than once every month'! Paragraph thirteen of said instruction is quoted in full as follows: -

REGULATIONS FOR CROSSING GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY AT PORTHMADOG

- (a) All trains approaching the Great Western Railway Level Crossing must stop at the Stop Board and whistle. A driver failing to comply with this regulation will render himself liable to dismissal.
- (b) When a train may cross the Great Western Railway the Great Western signalman will display a green flag by day and a green light by night as an "all clear" signal.
- (c) On receiving the "all clear" signal from the Great Western signalman, the driver, after seeing

that the points are set for his train to pass, will take his train over the crossing without delay.

- (d) Drivers must exercise the greatest caution in approaching and crossing the Great Western Railway line.
- (e) The Stationmaster, or person in charge of Portmadoc New Station must personally see each train in both directions over the crossing and report and irregularity in working.
- (f) The Stationmaster or person in charge must see that the lamps on the stop boards are lighted while trains are running during the hours of darkness.

The six levers mentioned worked the two Welsh Highland trap points, the main line distant and up and down home signals for the crossing with a slot on the up starter for Porth-

madog East box - which was at the end of the down platform and adjacent to the road level crossing where a gong was located. A GWR porter/signalman was in charge of the Welsh Highland crossing box even though a woman had displayed the necessary skills! A telephone line between the crossing box and Porthmadog East enabled the crossing keeper to ascertain that the main line was clear and obtain permission to operate the crossing.

Of the single tongue trap points that on the north side of the crossing was locked inside the gate on GWR property while that on the south side was outside the gate Col Mount required that the north side trap points be located outside the GWR boundary. Said gates were closed across the Welsh Highland line of rail - except when a crossing movement was taking place - but Col Mount requested that they be replaced with long cattle guards. There is no photographic evidence to show that these in fact were installed. 'Stop' boards were placed outside the trap points and these are shown on several photographs.

Photo No 1, (above), looking north, shows the signal box and point rodding to both trap points; the northern gate and stop board.

Photo No. 2, (below) is looking south showing the northern gate much closer to the main line and adjacent stile accommodating the public right of way. Also well shown is the heavy-duty chaired track used either side of the main line.

Albeit incorporating modern technology to comply with current regulations it is hoped that this scene will be recreated.

Copies of Col Mount's report are available from John Keylock for £2.00 inclusive of post and packing.



To See Ourselves.....

A little way down the track-bed a small group of men huddled round a collection of well-thumbed maps, old photographs, ex-army binoculars and various walking aids in the form of thumbsticks and compasses. Head gear ranged from bobble-topped woolly caps to the latest trend in baseball hats, and while each of them wore very good boots, the remainder of their apparel might, in some areas, give cause for alarm....

We were there to walk the track-bed between Rhyd Ddu and Beddgelert as part of a Survey before Formal Planning Application – that is, the other four men were – David and I were hangers-on; he to gather artistic impressions of the old track as it now is, and I to... hang on.

We had started from the railway station at Rhyd Ddu on a January morning the Weather Forecast reckoned would be cold and wet.

It was wrong. Six of us trailed away from the bleak, empty platform, pulling anxiously at our hats and glancing at the sky for trouble. But

as we climbed the rough and tumble towards Pitt's Head, the sun came out

lighting rusty bracken, pale moss-coloured hazel saplings, mean brambles and even some tiny scarlet elf cup. There was some easing of protective gear, and straightening of shoulders. We strode on. What exactly it was that we were looking for did not become clear, but our paths were strewn with glad shouts of "Look at this!... Accommodation crossing!" "Is it, by Jove!... Let's have a look. Is it

on the map?"

I wondered if this could be some ancient staging post where retainers waited patiently for travellers with pots of ale and discreetly-labelled commodes, but it seems that it was merely a level crossing point for pedestrians, cattle and perhaps the odd hedgehog. Pitt's Head does look like his picture at a certain angle. I was trying to find a less humiliating point to scramble over into what appeared to be dark marshland when my attention was drawn to the likeness. I remember growling that it looked more like Eric Clapton to me, and by that time, I had got over the fence, and sunk gently into a black mire. "Yes! – that's the bog alright" said some helpful bystander. I noticed then that most of us had chosen to ignore the track at this point, and follow along the parallel road. Ah well! There would be compensations later, no doubt.

Catching my boot in a rut made me turn back, and, with Pitt's intelligent gaze still to my right, I found myself looking straight toward the gentle magic of Mynydd Mawr – dark-peaked behind the radiant hills around her. What a country!



Above - Michael Davies, John Keylock & Dave Kent plot the route
Below - John Keylock examines the rotting remains of a rail lintel supporting a 'McAlpine' concrete bridge

Rachael Benbow Exposes the Myth

We came together again at a crossing in the forestry area, where discussion swilled back and forth about just where the line had crossed for the lower point of its journey. And this was the first mention I heard of "Would this be Before Parry.....or After?" The four heads bent together again around relevant papers and maps, and since I had no idea who (or what) Parry was, I walked slowly ahead – out of the trees and onto a lovely curve of track-bed. Raised and well-preserved, it swept through a truly magnificent rise towards Moel Hebog. Behind me the excited calls of "It must have been After Parry!" dwindled as I wondered about the passengers who had been borne along this slender track. Were there stove-pipe hats? Did the ladies have to manage those huge hooped skirts?. How many and how dangerous were the sparks as the fireman stoked his willing engine? But it was time to learn about Parry: A timber merchant in the first decade of the last century, Parry felled trees from Pont Caer Gors to Hafod Ruffydd. His plan was to install sidings where baulks of timber lay waiting for transport to his yard at Rhyd Ddu. Some to end up as pit props in mines, others to help support the endless miles of trenches in France during the period of the Great War. Parry worked on until 1921. So discovering traces of diverted track must help with the all-important dating of track and sleepers – "Before Parry... or After Parry!" Twenty years later, much of the now disused line was





Above - Trackbed here is a metalled forestry road as the party heads towards Hafod Ruffydd

Below - Panoramic view looking to Rhyd Ddu from Pitt's Head. Remains of the Pitt's Head crusher in foreground, behind the small tree

Photos : D.W. Allan January 2005

the old concrete slabs that once supported the station building and probably a Goods Shed. They headed off then to inspect the overgrown entrance to the tunnel which still exists behind the Royal Goat Hotel, while David and I made our way back to where we had left the car. I felt as though we had emerged from a great adventure, (my legs were suggesting something more in the order of bone-crushing marathonic lurch) though the others, when they joined us, seemed to feel simply that it had been a 'worthwhile jaunt!' Our

Leader, Dave Allan was still preoccupied with papers and maps, and clearly didn't notice that he'd walked any distance at all. John Keylock was still skipping round us in the most-darned- and- patched trousers in the world, with as much enthusiasm as when we had met hours before. Michael Davies looked serenely unruffled and as tidy as when he had started, but it was Dave Kent who won the Beddgelert Star by saying that his wife expected us for 'lunch' at their house back at Rhyd Ddu. The fact that it was nearly four o'clock seemed not to matter at all.

Bliss!

We drove behind Dave to their house, about a mile behind Rhyd Ddu station. A wonderful slate home, sitting sturdily in the boulder-strewn stretch between railway station and the fine sweep of Snowdon behind. Dave and Gina are used to mobs of walk-weary visitors, for they offer Bed and Breakfast, and I envied their guests as we drank home-made soup and ate huge slices of wonderful chocolate cake. David and I were staying locally, but I still managed to fall asleep before we reached our hotel.

Great day! I do wish the Railway well.



lifted to help the War Effort, though a short stretch remained. And what a sight that must have been, for on that stretch, targets were mounted onto old slate wagons and used for gunnery practice!

I wondered if anyone would suggest lunch. But no – we trudged on. By now my knees were complaining and David's enthusiasm for bounding up banks and traversing noisy streams was noticeably less boundless. He took lots of pictures though, sometimes at angles which surprised me, but which, when developed, turned out to be redolent of the railway as it had been. The others, oblivious of all but the track before them and the signs it gave up, trudged on. Parry still popped up now and then, but by now more physical evidence emerged of the line itself.

The track now led past a caravan site. It was quite obviously unoccupied, and sad evidence of bad weather rendered it derelict. We fell silent and averted our gaze with embarrassment. Which was daft really, for there was also evidence of much enjoyment – climbing frames, improvised pitches for all manner of games, and the careful arrangement of litter bins. Basketball nets were strung where ten year-olds could reach, and flower pots still piled artistically outside many of the vans.

I wondered what the coming of the railway once more would mean to those who holiday'd there. The discovery of three small shard-like pieces of wood embedded in the track were gazed at with near-reverence, which I thought at first was going a bit far. 'They're only a bit of sleeper after all' I thought. But as I too looked at the fragments, something of their importance to the history of the railway as well as the obvious pleasure they gave the small team of experts made me forget my knees and look, with eagerness for other signs in the

tangled growth at a crossing point at one time called Tyn-Y-Coed. Stone steps here showed that pedestrians had once

climbed towards the Halt. Hardly commuter country perhaps, but probably the more friendly for that!

Some way beyond, a cottage stood alone and exposed in the suddenly open expanse away from the trees. The track ran a short way through the fenced land around it, and our Leader went to explain our presence there. An exuberant collie came bounding at us – all muddy-pawed friendliness and demanding attention. He followed us, watching as we crossed his patch, then deciding that we were friends, danced round us, explaining that he knew a much better way through the fence we had lined up to climb. Unfortunately he also noted that I was the only female of the group, and as I waited my turn to climb, clamped himself to my left leg, making it very difficult to pretend he wasn't there. He let go only when I was half way over, then ran ten yards up the fence to a handy gap which he assured us he would have told us about if we'd asked...

The winter sun was going now as we reached the outskirts of Beddgelert. And here, the group fell upon the remains of the little track as it curved away from the village, though with plenty of evidence of the station that had once served the villagers there. The old water-tower is only really discernible to those who truly know their stuff – I thought it was just a lump near

The Pitt's Head Story

On the 9th July 1902 the NWNGLy served a 'Notice to Treat' on William Pierce of Ffridd Uchaf farm, Pitts Head. This led directly to the establishment of Pitt's Head Halt, which must have been one of the most remote railway stations in the British Isles. A bleak expanse of moorland dominated by a majestic sweep of mountains and an isolated lake provided the backdrop for this unlikely halt. But how did it come about?

The legal document was conventional enough - using the authority of the Light Railways Act of 1896, the company cited the Beddgelert Light Railway Extension

Transcriptions - Dick Lystor Story - David Allan

Order of 1900 to give notice to Mr William Pierce of Ffridd Uchaf that they require to purchase, or take, all lands which were delineated in red on an enclosed plan. An attached schedule described the land as 'Field', 'Field and Stream' and 'Field Bog Land' and confirmed the total area required to be 3 acres 0 rods and 21 perches. The legal document also confirmed that the company were willing to treat for the purchase of the land and make compensation for damage that may be sustained by reason of the works involved in constructing the line.

"Less £60 if you erect a station at Pitt's Head"

The documented went on to demand the particulars of the estate, and interest in the lands, and of any claims that Mr Pierce may make. It concluded by requesting "Mr William Pierce, immediately on receipt of this, to forward to the Secretary of the Company at Llanberis, the particulars of your claim".

The legal wording of this document, in English, would probably have come as something of a shock to the Welsh-speaking farmer in his remote farmhouse on that summer day in 1902. However, the company had thoughtfully provided a



*Cattle crossing abutments from beneath Pitt's Head Bridge
Photo - D.W. Allan 1st May 2005*

form, headed 'Schedule of Claim' with several columns with various headings ready to be filled in. The form also stipulated that it should be returned to Llanberis within 21 days of receipt. Mr Pierce's reply was about a week late, but on the 7th August 1902 he returned the form.

"Agree to run mail trains without stopping"

In the first column he described himself as 'a Farmer and owner' of the land. In the second column he confirmed the location of the land; the third column stated that it was "Freehold land, in fee simple - subject to £800 mortgages. No leases granted". In the last column, which asked for Particulars of Claim, he states - "Amount claimed for value of land & compensation, £203. Less £60 if you erect a station at Pitt's Head. Providing of course that it will be fenced, as I will be wanted and have every convenience to the fields etc. It goes rather close to the Cowshed & Hayhouse and if it happened to go on fire, you must be liable for the loss".

There then followed an exchange of correspondence between Mr Pierce and Gowrie Aitchison (then GM & Secretary of the railway). Unfortunately two letters are missing from the record - those of 10th December 1902 from Pierce to

Aitchison and Aitchison's reply of 12th January 1903.

However on the 16th January 1903 Pierce writes to Aitchison as follows : -

"Dear Sir

Yours of the 12th inst duly to hand. As you are aware I have offered the land for half price on the condition that you do agree, to stop all trains to all passengers wanted. I have met you afterwards by agreeing for you, to run mail trains without stopping; and I cannot see my way clear to meet you any more on this point.

If you cannot agree to Clause 4 as it is altered in the draft agreement, then I have nothing but to refer you to my letter of Dec 10th 1902."

(Aitchison has added a note in the margin referring to mail trains thus, " rubbish told him GPO could insist on mails not stopping".

Aitchison decided to refer all of to a higher authority and on the 19th January he sent a copy of Pierce's letter to his boss J.C. Russell accompanied by this letter:-

"Dear Sir,

I enclose the latest letter received from Wm. Pierce. You will see what he says. You must not think that he is accurate as regards his remark to the effect that he thought was ready to accept his terms



Site of Pitt's Head Halt - note stile, now moved a few yards from its original position
Photo - D.W. Allan 1st May 2005

as to stopping trains, that is only a bit of his natural craftiness. I told him I thought you might agree to stop trains for the owner & his family or for the owner plus public during term of his life either one or the other, but that if the stopping of trains was to go with ownership of land the general public would not be included or if included a legal question might arise.

Please instruct me what to do. I personally fear he won't give way in this matter.

Yours faithfully,
G.C. Aitchison

Kindly return letter enclosed.

(Reply from Russell written at foot of Aitchison's letter follows:)

Dear Sir, I think the best course is to put our foot down and fight the matter out. Will you fill in the blank & hand it on.
Yours truly,

J.C. Russell

That is the end of the file, and 20 years were to elapse before the company was able to accede to Mr Pierce's request for a halt to be built at Pitt's Head. The mail trains didn't stop - there were none! Ticket records show that between the 23rd June 1923 and 5th September 1924 seventy two adult and five halves were issued from Beddgelert to Pitt's Head, but mysteriously only eleven souls returned. There were no card tickets printed, and bookings were made using the large paper tickets filled out by hand. However the halt was included on eight of the original series of geographical punch tickets. (See illustration.) The rather patchy history of the halt and its environs continued. The PB&SSR agreed to construct an accommodation bridge just to the south of the road bridge to enable Mr Pierce's cattle to cross the

line in safety. The abutments were built, and indeed remain to this day as a mute testimony to the fact that the 18 foot span deck was never completed, presumably leaving the cattle in some difficulty and a rather long way round. But like all good stories this one has a happy ending as the current reconstruction includes a full reinstatement of this long forgotten crossing.

The draining of the flooded cutting at Pitts Head has been awaited with great anticipation. There were strong rumours that Allan Garraway and Co. had left some rail in situ when attempting a rail recovery operation in the 1950's. Sadly no laid track was unearthed, however several lengths of very light rail were recovered that had seemed to lie in a heap adjacent to the bridge abutments. Speculation has been rife. Were these perhaps the original rails used by Parry for his timber tramway? Could they have been associated with the ill-fated attempt of the PB&SSR? It is difficult to know when or how this question will be answered. To bring the story of Pitt's Head up to date, the writer had a very civilised conversation recently with the current owner of Ffridd Uchaf whose predecessor had negotiated the building of the halt all those years ago. The following are a few snippets from that conversation.

He related the tale of how his grandfather, who used to farm on horseback, on seeing the tail end of the train leaving South Snowdon station (Rhyd-Ddu) rode his steed to Snowdon Ranger and arrived there comfortably ahead of the little train.

He also said that the spoil from the Pitt's Head Cutting had been piled on the land behind Pitts Head rock, where it can still

be identified to this day, albeit covered with vegetation.

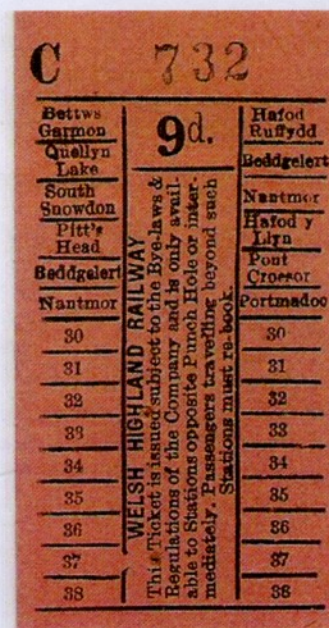
The railway had cut the line of the foot-path which ran from Ffridd Uchaf farm to the chapel and school at Rhyd Ddu, so a stile was provided, which remains in place to this day and can be seen just where the line approaches the road, to the north of the cutting.

Although the halt itself is but a hazy folk memory, it won't be long now before construction trains once again negotiate the 'bog land' that was once a part of Ffridd Uchaf farm

Historical footnote.

Local historian, Margaret Dunn, makes an interesting observation on Pitt's Head rock itself, which she describes as 'an important local feature'. "Collwyn ap Tangno was lord of Eifionydd and parts of Lleyn around 1100 AD. The rocks later called Cerrig Collwyn stood on the watershed which could have been the boundary of his territory with Arfon. The ancient route from Caernarfon towards Beddgelert passed along the west side of the lake (note the typical long straight stretches of these new roads), probably in the 1770's to 1790's, the route was much on the line of the present road. That may be when the rock got its name of Pitt's Head. I cannot find out if it refers to the politician Pitt the elder, or Pitt the younger."

I wonder if passengers in passing trains in the years to come will appreciate the footprint of history which overlies this remote spot?



The Bruce Peebles Estimate

I was most interested in the article on this subject in the last WH Heritage, so much so that I immediately contacted David Allan to ask what other information he had. He then very kindly sent me a full photocopy of the document which allows me to comment further. Firstly, we must remember that this is an estimate and details would probably have been changed later. We are told that there were to be 4 electric locos and 7 "double bogie motor cars". Elsewhere I have read that production of the locos was started, one source saying five, another saying ten, so it could be that some were the "motor cars". It can be assumed that all would have been powered by the same type of motor, the "Motor cars" having a higher gearing to give the higher speed. My impression is that they were stretched versions of the loco with seats between the driving ends. However, the "double bogie" statement was not what it at first appeared to be. They were only to use bogies if testing showed them to be unstable. The drive to the loco (and presumably the motor-cars) wheels was to be by outside chain. The statement about street running is surprising as none of the plans I have seen show anything like that. However, we must remember that at the time of this estimate, mid 1903 no plans to join the NWNCR and the PBSSR had been published (to my knowledge, at least). It could be that no formal plans had been made and that Bruce Peebles were relying on the surveys of the NWNCR (Beddgelert ext.) and the 1901 PBSSR and just making a guess for the bit in between. The document states "At Beddgelert will

be provided half a mile of standard street railway construction, that is to say, steel poles with ornamental bases and brackets for carrying the high tension wires". This could be interpreted as just using street type equipment for the section near the station but later it says "... excepting through the, half mile of street construction .. If there was to have been street

Jim Hewett takes a second look

ing where would it have been? The 1901 PBSSR plan (Gwynedd Archive, Dolgellau) was still alive in 1903 and I described that in an earlier article. From what I remember that was published later in 1903 (P.R.O. reference MT54/435). That line was to stay on the east side of the Glaslyn, going very close to the east side of the village. It would have made sense for the connecting line to stick to this route as far as possible. There is room for a station just south of where the Afon Colwyn meets the Afon Glaslyn. It could have crossed the Glaslyn where the footbridge in the village now is and then have run on the road alongside the Colwyn before turning south-west on what is now the A498. Approaching the "Royal Goat" it could either have turned right along what is now the entrance road to the village car park or taken the road which runs along the north side of the hotel and into what was eventually the station site. That would be about half a mile depending where you

start and finish. Some confirmation of this comes from the estimate which only mentions one, 700 yd, tunnel, i.e. no tunnel behind the "Royal Goat". It is interesting to compare costs with those of WHR Phase 4 as the two lines both cover the same area although not identical routes. The 1903 estimate for the railway (no rolling stock or electrics) was £57,000. Inflation has raised costs somewhere between 50 & 100 times since then, so taking the worst case of 100 that brings it up to £5.7M in today's money which is little more than half what is being allowed for Phase 4. Remember also that for £57,000 they had to buy the land, build all the earthworks and bore the tunnel, none of which will have to be done in Phase 4. Perhaps they intended to cut corners; the quantity of ballast to be used gives a clue. The estimate was to use 1,200 cubic yards which spread out over 13 miles and 4 feet wide, gives a depth of a mere 1½ inches! There has been much speculation as to what sort of current collectors were to be used. Trolley poles were the favourite as it was thought that twin bow collectors could not work. However just recently someone suggested that they would work if the overhead wires used points at junctions to switch the current. According to the estimate, bow collectors were to be used so that ends that argument. One final point of interest is not what the estimate says but rather what it does not! It does not include electrifying the rest of the NWNCR which was the plan a couple of years later.

WHEN?

Inevitably some of our members are modellers of some aspect of the Welsh Highland

So it is not unreasonable that they should come to us for help. Have we a drawing of 'this', a photo of 'that', the length and colour of the other and "when was *Russell* cut down?"

It is recorded that in the winter of 1923 *Russell* went to Boston Lodge for the fitting of vacuum brake equipment. In May 1924 another visit was made for

'various repairs'. In July there was correspondence between Stephens, Nichols and Williams regarding indecision over the cutting down of *Russell*. The year ended with the acceptance of Hunslet's quotation for supplying the parts necessary to reduce *Russell*'s loading gauge. On the basis of this it would seem that the deed was done during the winter of 1924/5 - at Dinas. Following on is the well-known Humphrey Household photograph of *Russell* at Harbour station - 'recently cut down'. Can anyone provide the definitive answer please; 1923 or winter 1924/5?. Please contact John Keylock

New Members Welcome - Sub is just £10 per annum to help preserve the railway's heritage
Details from John Keylock
 (see below)

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