

# WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

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## How we Spend (Some of) Your Money!

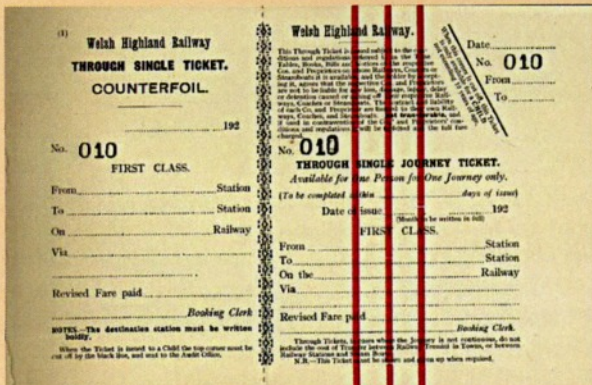
It seems only fair and democratic that occasionally we offer some explanation as to where your funds are spent, over and above major items as agreed at the AGM. Besides which it gives us the opportunity to show off the printer's ability to produce single pages in colour!

One of our tasks is to ensure that as much material as possible relating to the W.H.R (and its predecessors) is acquired on behalf of the railway and kept in the the Group's custody until a museum or other suitable display location becomes available. Indeed we have a comprehensive schedule that lists all known Welsh Highland artefacts, where they are located and in whose care, or ownership, they are entrusted.

Between 3rd August 2005 & 28th January 2007 we have managed to purchase, on behalf of the Group, several rare or even unique tickets or other paper perishables; some of these are reproduced on this page.



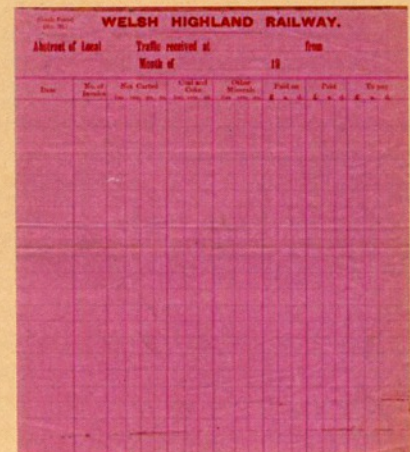
Train Staff Tickets (x 2) £70.00



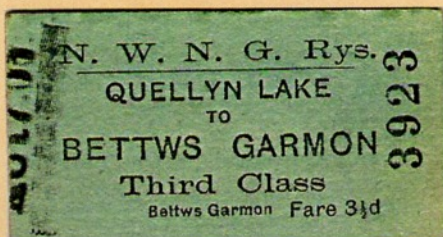
Part book of 1st Class paper tickets. £8.50



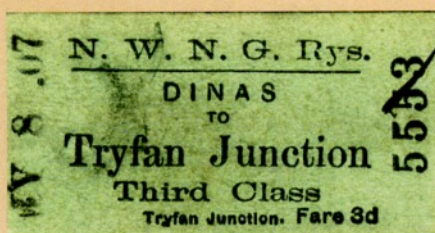
Snowdon & WHR Guide Book £13.00



WHR Goods Form £4.45



NWNGR 3rd Class Ticket. £30.09



WHR/FR Wagon Repair Label £2.00

From

THOMAS WHITE & Co.,  
QUARRY AGENTS & MERCHANTS  
CARNARVON

6 April 1887

To Mr Wm. Fraser  
Froghall

*Practical Inspectors and Valuers of Slate Quarries and Slate Properties.  
-----Plans and Estimates Furnished-----*

Dear Sir

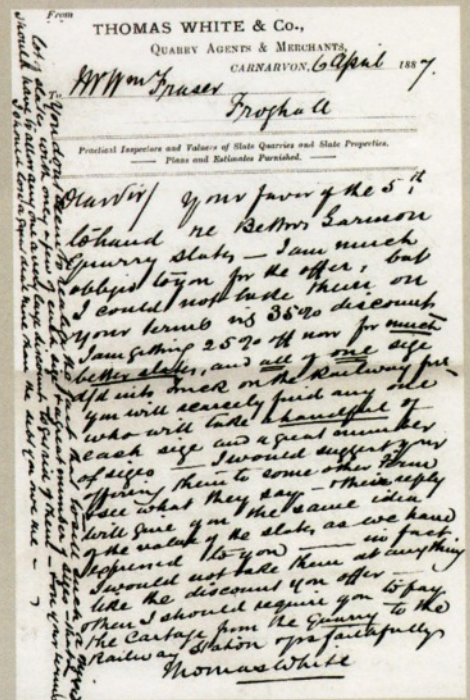
Your favour of the 5th to hand re Bettws Garmon Quarry Slates - I am much obliged to you for the offer, but I could not take these on your terms, viz 35% discount. I am getting 25% off now for much better slates, and all of one size delivered into truck on the Railway. You will scarcely find any one who will take a handful of each size and a great number of sizes - I would suggest your offering them to some other firm and see what they say - their reply will give you the same idea of the value of the slate as we have expressed to you - in fact I would not take these at anything like the discount you offer - and then I should require you to pay the cartage from the quarry to the Railway Station.

Yrs faithfully

Thomas White

You don't seem to realise the fact that to sell such a mixed lot of slates with only a few of each size and a great number of sizes - that I would have to allow anyone a very large discount to get rid of them - on your terms I should lose a great deal more than the debt you owe me *(This is the 'PS' written on the long side of the original letter - above right)*

*From time to time a document emerges which provides a delightful insight into the day to day affairs of the railway and its customers. This 120 year old letter, which has been unearthed by the ever diligent Peter Johnson, falls into that category.*



Original Letter

## Welsh Highland Memories

In mid 1958 a series of articles appeared in the house journal of the Transport Ticket Society concerning the tickets of both the Festiniog and the Welsh Highland railways. There was some discussion on the subject after the series concluded, and the following extract is taken from the October edition of the journal. My thanks are due to the Society Editor for his permission to quote the relevant paragraph.

### General Practice.

Mr.J.H.Roberts recalls the days when both railways were in operation. He travelled twice on the round tour Llandudno Junction - Blaenau Festiniog - Portmadoc - Dinas - Llandudno Jc. Tickets of the bell-punch series were being issued by the guard to passengers boarding at the halts. The guard was very fussy about the carriage doors, lest an open door be smashed by the train going in the opposite direction on a passing loop. On one trip from Portmadoc (New) the FR engine "Welsh Pony" was in charge to Beddgelert, where one filled in a long wait by taking tea in the village. Then "Russell" in green livery took the train on to Dinas.

Another time "Russell" was on from Dinas to South Snowdon, the red Baldwin tank thence to Beddgelert, with "Welsh Pony" completing the trip to Portmadoc. Mr.Roberts remembers the guard opening the ticket office at Dinas, issuing tickets thence, and locking up again, although most tickets were issued at

### Research by Derek Lystor

the LMSR booking office. There were no staff at WHR stations on the occasions of his journeys.

Mr. Roberts's reminiscences provide some fascinating details of what were in effect the Welsh Highland portions of the "Five Valleys Tours". No date is given for his journeys, but from his description of the liveries of both Russell & 590 we can narrow it down to the last three seasons of operation. Russell was repainted light green in 1934 when the FR leased the WHR, and the Baldwin received a coat of "FR red" during a refit at Boston Lodge in the same year, both being dealt with before the start of that year's summer season. The reference to the long

wait at Beddgelert, relieved by taking tea in the village, suggests that Mr.Roberts took the 1.40 or 1.45 departure from Portmadoc, which in all three years gave a generous 2½ hours wait at Beddgelert before departing at 4.05, arriving Dinas at 6.05.

It can be seen that Mr.Roberts did the round trip in both directions, the anti-clockwise tour involving no less than two changes of locomotive during the journey. Russell is noted as working the northern end of the line on both occasions, so our time period may be further refined to 1935 or 1936. Boyd notes that an FR England loco shared the Portmadoc - Beddgelert run with Moel Tryfan from the start of the 1935 season, with Russell taking over the latter's duties at the northern end, an arrangement which was repeated in 1936.

It is also interesting to note the lack of staff and the use of both LMS and WHR ticket offices at Dinas. This is confirmed by specimens of used WHR edmondsons which show the different type layouts of the individual date stamping machines. The bell-punch paper tickets described as being issued to passengers boarding at the halts were the Edmondson series of singles and returns brought into use at the commencement of the FR lease period.

# Nineteen Twenty-Two

**N**ineteen Twenty-Two was a busy time for the contractors striving to open the new Welsh Highland on schedule.

First, there was the decision to make on which of the three alternative routes south of Beddgelert to use, and secondly, there was the inevitable snagging list – those 'To Do' items, on the Rhyd Ddu to Croesor Junction section, which had to be sorted before the line finally opened. Jim Hewett & John Keylock illuminate the thinking and the decisions that were made over 80 years ago. The 'To Do' list itself is on the centre spread; this has been compiled by Jim Hewett with the current location numbers added by John Keylock. This should be read in conjunction with the route map enclosed with this issue.

**I**n the last WHH (No. 34) I gave a brief review of what needed to be done in the Beddgelert area to complete the WHR in 1922. I had hoped to produce a report on what was needed for the whole route between Rhyd ddu & Croesor Junction for that edition but time was against me and WHH arrived the day after I had obtained the necessary information. To remind you my information comes from file MT54/616 at the National Archives, Kew.

Unfortunately, the information is ambiguous and inconsistent leading me to think the plans were drawn by more than one person. Some parts are very clear; "tunnel to be excavated" is clear enough. "Farm Rd level crossing req'd" seems to indicate the level crossing needs to be built and "Culvert constructed" would seem to indicate that the culvert is

already there. So far so good but then we get simply "Farm Rd level crossing" and "Culvert 3'0" x 3'0" ". Is it there or not? I assume not. I have set out the table on pages 4 & 5 giving all the comments from the gradient profile together with the distance given from Rhyd ddu and the approximate chainage from the TWA maps for the present rebuilding. I have tied the TWA chainage (in metres) to specific, easy to identify, points and if anyone troubles to check one against the other they will find that they do vary a bit in places. This is probably due to slight errors in surveying and the fact that railway being built (and as built



*Original route to the right of the picture*

## *Jim Hewett Explains the 1922 'To Do' List*

in 1922/3) does not exactly follow the plans. Strangely, although the error is around 100m at one point it largely corrects itself by the time it gets to Croesor Junction. There are a couple of places, (near Ty'n y coed is one), where the plan shows a definite meandering but from my observations is perfectly straight. In some places the gradient profile shows a dashed line which I assume indicates the ground level at the time of the survey and

I believe this only indicates work done by the PBSSR as no such line is shown in the new WHR parts. I have used that also to indicate work already done. All comments in italics in the table are mine; those which are not are quoted from the plan.

Finally, something curious I cannot explain. The gradient profile has two horizontal scales, one in miles & furlongs and the other in units for which there are about 55 to the mile! I have no idea what they could be.

I should remind readers that the part between Croesor Junction & the Afon Dylif is shown on the pre WW1 O/S maps as having track although the amount of preparation needed to do that could have been minimal. We also know that track was laid from Bryn y felin towards the PBSSR crossing of the Afon Glaslyn although not right to the bridge as there is a cutting which still remains unfinished.

**M**ention has been made of the fact that the embankment extending SE (towards Porthmadog) from the Goat road bridge was by 1906 considerably longer than it remains today. Even in 1922 it covered an area of approximately 4850 square yards, which represents – by virtue of its height – a substantial volume of 'fill'.

At this time there were three routes being considered for the new line of rail from the Goat Bridge to Bryn-y-Felin. One would have been to utilise the incomplete PB&SSR alignment, i.e. complete the embankment to today's free standing abutments and beyond, cross the Afon Glaslyn using the bridge abutments already in situ, then pick up the complete PB&SSR trackbed taking the line to the top of the Aberglaslyn Pass.

## *John Keylock Explores the Proposed Routes south of Beddgelert*

Route No. 3, so styled by Sir Douglas Fox & Partners – would have left the PB&SSR alignment about half way between the Goat Bridge and their projected river crossing. Then heading south and passing just to the west of the sewage works it would have crossed the Afon Glaslyn by an acute bridge to join the completed PB&SSR trackbed just before its entry into the Pass, i.e. just north of where today's WHR and said trackbed diverge.

Route No. 4 brings us a little closer to what we have today, but nevertheless utilised the Goat Bridge leaving the existing embankment a few yards beyond the bridge; it would have more or less paralleled the Porthmadog road to cross the Afon Glaslyn at today's point. Both routes three and four would have had a ruling gradient of 1 in 40.

All the above considerations were abandoned in favour of what we know today, which necessitated diverting the main road and providing a bridge for it to cross the line of rail at Bryn-y-Felin. Could the road bridge embankments be made from some of the aforementioned 4850 square yards of 'fill' from the abortive Goat Bridge embankments?

## Recording Yesterday for Tomorrow

Fl	TWA				
Chainage (furlongs)					18857
0	14787	South Snowdon Station (Rhyd ddu)			<i>On the high embankment there was a sheep creep (now filled in). Boyd claims this had PBSSR origins. The abutments probably are PB&amp;SSR, but there was no embankment there until the WHR built it. UB142 (filled in sheep creep)</i>
1.09	15006	Open culvert 2' x 1'6" req'd <b>OB117</b>			
1.48	15085	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd	4.48	18907	2 culverts 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd
1.74	15137	Culvert 2' 6" x 2' 0" constructed <b>OB118</b>	4.73	18957	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC73</b>
2.41	15272	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd <b>LC66</b>		19000	<i>Hendy y weirglodd isaf</i>
2.58	15306	Culvert 3' 6" x 2' 6" constructed (to be cleared) <b>UB119</b>	6.03	19219	Stream diversion
3.05	15401	Culvert 2' 0" x 2' 0" constructed	6.71	19355	S.T. culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd
3.09	15409	Culvert 2' 0" x 2' 0" constructed (to be rebuilt)	7.32	19478	Open culvert, 2' 0" x 1'6" req'd
3.53	15497	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd <b>LC67</b>	7.73	19561	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC75</b>
3.71	15533	Culvert 1' 6" x 1' 6" constructed (to be cleared)	7.85	19585	S.T. culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd Lower bed of stream <b>UB148</b>
3.96	15584	Culvert 3' 6" x 3' 0" constructed <b>UB120</b>	0	19615	3 miles
4.15	15622	Culvert 3' 6" x 2' 6" constructed	0.39	19693	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC76</b>
4.41	15674	Sheep creep 3' 0" x 3' 6" constructed	0.74	19770	10' 0" opening req'd, Meillionen Bridge <b>UB150</b>
4.57	15706	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd <b>LC68</b>	1	19822	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC77</b>
4.62	15716	Girder culvert 5' 0" span, Decking req'd	1.06	19834	Start of stopping & spur 40' long
5.03	15799	Open culvert, 3 req'd 2' 0" x 1'6"	1.36	19894	End of stopping & spur 40' long
5.71	15936	Chute constructed		20000	<i>Beddgelert Campsite Halt</i>
5.82	15958	Public Road constructed <b>OB123</b> Overhead bridge( <i>Pitt's Head</i> )	1.94	20011	Open culvert, 2' 0" x 1'6" req'd <b>UB152</b>
6.02	15998	Overhead Bridge 18' 6" span, <b>OB124</b> Superstructure req'd ( <i>Still required!</i> )	2.09	20041	Culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd
0	16396	1 mile	2.66	20156	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd
0.39	16490	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd	3.38	20301	2 culverts 2" x 1' 6" req'd
0.53	16503	Culvert 2'0" x 2'6" constructed <b>UB125</b>	3.95	20416	2 culverts 2" x 1' 6" req'd
0.8	16557	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd <b>LC70</b> ( <i>Pont cae'r gors L/C</i> )	4.14	20454	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC78</b>
1	16597	<i>up to 2' to be excavated in cutting</i>	4.6	20546	<i>leaves NWNGR/PBSSR route</i>
1.79	16756	Open culvert, 2' 0" x 1'6" req'd	4.76	20585	10' 0" opening. Girder span req'd, <i>Ty'n y Coed/ Afon Glochig</i> <b>UB156</b>
2.14	16827	12" Dia. EW pipe req'd	6.04	20837	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC81</b>
2.27	16853	Culvert 3' 6" x 3' 0" constructed (to be cleared)	6.28	20885	S.T. Culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd
2.89	16978	12" Dia. EW pipe constructed <b>UB126</b> (to be cleared)	7.27	21084	Open culvert, 2' 0" x 1'6" req'd <b>UB157</b>
3.39	17078	Culvert 2' 6" x 1' 6" constructed (to be cleared)	7.31	21092	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd & Divert Farm Rd. <b>LC82</b>
3.93	17187	2' 0" diam. Pipe constructed <b>UB127</b>	7.57	21145	10' Span culvert req'd. <i>Afon Cwm cloch (1)</i> <b>UB158</b>
4.36	17273	12" Dia. Pipe constructed (to be cleared) <b>UB128</b>	0	21231	4 miles
4.77	17356	Culvert 3' 0" x 2' 0" constructed <b>UB129</b>	0.32	21296	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC83</b>
5.33	17469	Culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd <i>up to 3' fill req'd here over 60 yds</i> <b>UB130</b>	0.38	21300	<i>Rock cutting N</i>
5.72	17547	10' 0" opening req'd ( <i>Afon Cwm du bridge</i> ) <i>up to 4' fill req'd here over 50 yds</i> <b>UB131</b>	1.4	21500	<i>Rock cutting S</i>
6.37	17678	Culvert 2' 6" x 2' 0" constructed (to be cleared) <b>UB132</b>	1.78	21589	Culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd
6.49	17713	10' 0" opening req'd ( <i>Afon Hafod Ruffydd Isaf bridge</i> ) <i>up to 6' fill req'd here over 200 yds</i> <b>UB133</b>	2.26	21686	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd
6.89	17782	24" Dia. EW Pipe constructed (to be cleared)	3.02	21839	10' 0" Opening Girder span bridge ( <i>Afon Cwm cloch 2</i> ) <b>UB164</b>
7.11	17827	24" Dia. Pipe constructed (to be cleared)	3.1	21855	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd <b>LC86</b>
7.3	17865	Culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd. <b>UB135</b>	3.74	21950	Bridge/level crossing <b>LC87</b>
7.57	17919	16" Dia. EW Pipe constructed (to be cleared)	4.38	21984	<i>Up to 10' of northern end of Bank to be removed</i>
7.65	17935	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd <b>LC71</b> ( <i>Hafod Ruffydd L/C</i> )	4.53	22050	<b>PBSSR Junction</b>
7.73	17951	12" Dia. EW Pipe constructed (to be cleared)	4.61	22115	Private Rd. overbridge. Formation to be lowered 3'0" <i>Cwm Cloch road bridge</i> <b>UB165</b>
0	18006	2 miles	4.61	22165	S.T. Culvert 2'0" x 2' 0" const'd
0.58	18122	Open culvert, 2' 0" x 1'6" req'd <b>UB136</b>		22200	Arch bridge constructed I ring thick <i>Afon Cwm Cloch crossing (3)</i> <b>UB166</b>
0.74	18154	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd <b>LC72</b>	4.91	22208	<i>New Beddgelert station loop (N)</i>
0.81	18169	21" Dia. EW Pipe constructed (to be cleared) <b>UB137</b>	5.13	22263	Farm Rd. bridge 14'0" span Abutments built to 3'0" from top. Superstructure req'd <b>UB167</b>
	18200	<i>Hafod Ruffydd ganol up to 3' fill req'd here over yds</i>		22266	<i>North end of old Beddgelert station site, siding 180' long</i>
300					<i>Minor adjustments of height, +/- 1', within station area</i>
1.11	18229	Open culvert, 2' 0" x 1'6" req'd	5.9	22410	<i>Beddgelert station loop (S)</i>
1.56	18319	2 culverts 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd	6.1	22418	<i>South end of old Beddgelert station site</i>
1.72	18352	Open culvert, 2' 0" x 1'6" req'd	6.39	22466	Farm over bridge required ( <i>"Goat" footbridge</i> ) <b>OB168</b>
2.27	18462	2 culverts 2" x 1' 6" req'd	6.49		<i>Aqueduct to be repaired</i>
2.35	18478	Farm Rd. Level Crossing req'd	6.72	22553	<i>"Goat" tunnel (N)</i>
2.49	18507	2 culverts 2" x 1' 6" req'd <b>UB140</b>		22590	<i>"Goat" tunnel (S)</i>
3.2	18650	<i>"Beddgelert canal", From here it looks as though no further work had been done until 4m 3.7fl on WHR alignment although we do know that work was done by PBSSR south of Ty'n y coed.</i>	7		<i>Fill up to 2' required to compensate for steeper PBSSR</i>
			7.31	22639	<i>Divergence of PBSSR, new route until app. 5m 2.8fl</i>
			7.39	22702	18" pipe
				22718	Footpath level crossing
					3' 0" x 3' 0" Culvert

7.48	22736	18" pipe	6.91	25867	Culvert constructed <b>UB187</b>
	22775	<b>Cemetery crossing LC88</b>	7	25885	65ft Pitching on River bank
0	22841	5 miles	7.4	25965	Farm Rd. level crossing
0.07	22872	18" pipe	7.55	25996	Farm Rd. to be diverted
0.16	22890	3' 0" x 3' 0" Culvert	7.69	26024	Farm Rd. level crossing
0.36	22930	Farm Rd. level crossing	7.73	26032	Land drain
0.64	22986	18" pipe	7.76	26038	open culvert
0.87	23033	24" pipe	0	26086	7 miles
1.17	23093	12" pipe	0.42	26197	Culvert constructed
2.08	23276	Farm Rd. level crossing	0.48	26209	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC96</b>
2.12	23284	Culvert 2'0"	0.59	26231	Culvert constructed <b>UB188</b>
2.35	23330	Overbridge under Public Rd diverted ( <i>Bryn y felin</i> ) <b>OB173</b>	0.65	26243	Divert stream to culvert (above)
			0.88	26289	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC97</b>
2.46	23352	Footpath level crossing	1.27	26368	Culvert 2'0" x 1'6"
2.62	23385	Afon Glaslyn Bridge 75'0" span ( <i>Bryn y felin</i> ) <b>Rejoined 1904 route, appears finished to tunnel UB174</b>	1.35	26384	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC98</b>
			1.47	26408	Culvert 3'0" x 3'0"
			2.2	26555	open culvert 2'0" x 1'6"
3.24	23509	Culvert 3' 0" x 3' 0" req'd	2.52	26619	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC99</b>
4.73	23819	Culvert constructed	2.87	26689	Open Culvert 2'0" x 1'6"
4.98	23869	Culvert constructed	3.16	26748	Culvert 8ft opening
6.34	24153	Retaining wall constructed (north end)	3.53	26822	Open Culvert 2'0" x 1'6"
6.43	24171	Retaining wall constructed (south end)	4.06	26929	Farm Rd. level crossing req'd
6.49	24183	Tunnel excavated, roof to be trimmed, (north end)	4.43	27003	Open Culvert 2'0" x 1'6" <b>UB193</b>
			4.75	27068	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC103</b>
				27100	<b>Hafod-y-llyn Halt</b>
6.65	24215	Tunnel (2) south end	5.11	27140	Open Culvert 2'0" x 1'6"
6.72	24229	Retaining wall 6'0" high 20'0" long req'd (north end)	6.08	27345	Sheep creep
			6.37	27404	Afon Nanmor bridge 75' span <b>UB196</b>
6.8	24245	<b>Retaining wall (south end)</b>	6.49	27428	Footpath crossing
6.89	24264	Tunnel 40'0" long Excavated Roof, to be raised 2'0" (north end)	6.94	27518	Farm Rd. level crossing
			7	27530	Culvert 3'0" x 3'0"
6.96	24278	<b>Tunnel (south end)</b>	7.61	27653	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC105?</b>
7.02	24286	Retaining wall constructed (North end) of first short tunnel	7.7	27671	Culvert 3'0" x 3'0" req'd
			0	27731	8 miles
7.42	24366	Retaining wall constructed (south end) of first short tunnel	0.41	27814	Farm Rd. level crossing. Gate to be removed
7.44	24370	<b>north end Tunnel to be excavated</b>	0.45	27822	Culvert 3'0" x 3'0"
0		<b>6 miles</b>	1.24	27981	Farm Rd. level crossing
0.87	24652	<b>south end Tunnel excavated</b>	1.55	28048	Afon Dylif bridge 75' span <b>UB199</b>
1.16	24710	Farm Rd under crossing constructed ( <i>Cwm Bychan</i> ) <b>Embankment nearly complete - needs raising by up to 4' UB177</b>	1.69	28076	Footpath crossing req'd
			1.82	28103	2 Culverts 3'0" x 3'0"
			2.8	28300	2 Culverts 3'0" x 3'0"
1.29	24736	Culvert constructed	3.64	28469	2 Culverts 3'0" x 3'0"
1.49		<b>Cutting to be excavated -</b>	4.47	28636	Farm Rd. level crossing
1.64		<b>to a depth of up to 20' over 30 yards then</b>	5.66	28875	<b>Culvert 6'0" Opening UB205</b>
1.69		<b>fill up to 6' req'd over 10 yds then</b>	5.82	28907	8.7 miles Croesor Junction
		<b>Cutting partly excavated, 20' over 10yds left, rest excavated about 6' too deep until -</b>			
1.76					
2	24879	Nantnor (sic) Rd Level Crossing req'd, Road to be regraded <b>LC92</b>			
	24914	<b>Present position of Nantmor L/C, needs 5' fill</b>			
2.16	24911	Stopping Place & spur (5' to 7' of fill req'd until			
3.85)					
2.44	24968	Culvert constructed <b>UB180</b>			
2.52		<b>Cutting excavated 5' too deep</b>			
2.83		<b>end of cutting</b>			
3.46	25173	Culvert constructed <b>UB181</b>			
3.51	25183	Retaining wall 6'0" high 30'0" long			
3.85		<b>Cutting needs excavating up to 25' over 30yds, rest excavated</b>			
4.39	25360	MAIN ROAD to be diverted			
4.66	25414	Underbridge 25' span 14' headroom over diverted public Rd. Breadth of Rail bridge over - 12 feet <b>A4085 UB182</b>			
4.72		<b>Some fill req'd next to bridge</b>			
4.9	25463	Culvert constructed <b>UB183</b>			
5.42	25567	Culvert constructed <b>UB184</b>			
5.91	25666	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC93</b>			
5.97	25678	Culvert constructed			
6		<b>This appears to be the end of earthworks although 1 little req'd from here on. Some work done on culverts - see below</b>			
6.24	25732	Sheep creep Rail bearers req'd <b>UB185</b>			
6.35	25754	Culvert constructed			
6.65	25815	Farm Rd. level crossing <b>LC94</b>			

### From 'The Times' 25th January 1921

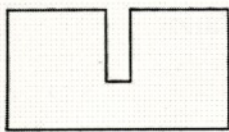
**CARNARVON** Owing to the stoppage of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway, which has its terminus at the foot of Snowdon, comparatively few visitors have so far this year made the ascent of Snowdon from that point. On the other hand, the mountain railway from Llanberis is well patronised daily, and, with increased facilities on the main railways, the traffic is likely to be much heavier during the month of August. Visitors who organize among themselves motor-coach tours around Snowdon should make an effort to take in the Drwncoed Pass. Arrangements are being made at Carnarvon for the camp of the 42nd East Lancs (T.F.) Division. Some 5,500 officers and men are expected here for the first two weeks in August. The division will be in the command of Major-General Shoubridge.

Cutting courtesy Michael Bishop

# W.H.R. Couplings

I suppose the subject of WHR couplings is a little arcane, and I confess that I took very little interest in the topic until recently. It started with my involvement in a WH Society East Anglian Group project to restore an ex-military wagon for use on the WHR(C). We needed to assemble FR-style chopper couplings from kits of parts supplied by Dinas, so a good understanding of their structure and principle of operation became necessary.

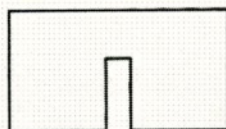
There are few references in the published histories of the NWNGR and WHR to the types of couplings in use prior to closure in 1937. Those that do appear refer to apparent difficulties in coupling ex NWNG carriages with those on the Festiniog, but apart from some diagrams very little detail is recorded. For that reason I decided to examine old photographs using the late Rodney Weaver's "Cornerman principle" (A Cornerman is an historian who specialises in looking at incidental details in odd corners of photographs). I was not too surprised to find marked differences between coupling types, which seemed to tally with stories that both FR and WHR staff had experienced problems!



Let's begin by looking at the Baldwin, which was delivered to the WHR in 1923. When the loco arrived, it was already fitted with

WD standard buffer couplings. These comprised a central rectangular steel buffing plate with a spring mechanism inside the headstock. The buffer had a central vertical slot cut into the plate from the top edge to about two-thirds the way down. The simple coupling mechanism comprised a steel link, which could be pulled through the slot to marry with that on an adjacent vehicle.

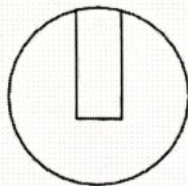
Evidently, a problem was spotted quite early on as the couplings were, in effect, turned through 180° soon afterwards. The slot was now at the bottom of the buffer, which makes



sense as couplings on WHR wagons comprised a short chain and hook arrangement *underneath*, and not above the buffer. I assume from this that a special link was used in some way to couple the engine to "goods fittings" on passenger stock, but further detail is lacking.

This style of coupling remained with 590 for the rest of her career, and raises two interesting questions. The engine was used mainly on WHR passenger workings, so why was it never fitted with chopper couplings? Was it

necessary to marshal 590 next to a "barrier coach" to allow it to haul chopper-fitted passenger stock?

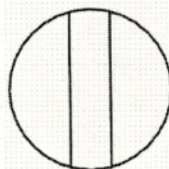


Early WHR photographs depict *Russell* in near original condition prior to its surgery at Boston Lodge (or was it Dinas?). The couplings fitted at this time were of the standard "Norwegian chopper" type with balance weight, the buffing

## Richard Watson Gets Hooked!

face at this time having only the top half slotted. (I will call this style the "horseshoe" or U type). Interestingly, some photographs show a loose steel casting hooked over the front of the coupling. This had a chain link towards its bottom edge, and the casting protruded to the front of, and below the buffing face. Evidently, this was the method used to couple goods rolling stock to the locomotive. It isn't too clear whether this casting was hooked over the chopper eccentric, or merely over the U-slot of the buffer face. (Ref. 1) As the hook stood proud of the buffing plate, loose-coupled stock "on the rebound" must have hit it repeatedly, particularly if spare coupling links often seen on *Russell* were not used!

Some drawings show *Russell* with the standard U chopper coupler, but with the hook extended downwards below the coupling assembly. The hook had a central hole used to locate it on the eccentric, so that with the hook pivoted "back" towards the locomotive, the bottom extension projected forward from beneath the buffer face. This bottom extension had a hole drilled towards its tip, allowing attachment to goods wagon hooks. (Refs. 2,3)

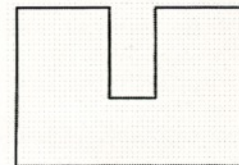


At some stage in its career, *Russell* was fitted with a "Cloven Hoof" or D style of coupler, having a vertical cleft the entire diameter of the buffer face. The two sides of the buffer described a (| |) shape. A larger and more curvaceous hook, possibly without balance weight, was fitted. This had a longer projection than on the previous version. It is thought this was to overcome differences in coupling height and dimensions, as a possible result of the "compatibility problems" mentioned above. The function of the full-depth cleft would have been to allow a

coupling hook to be brought up to the horizontal from beneath, to allow linkage to goods vehicles.

*Moel Tryfan* appears to have followed the same course of events as *Russell*, i.e. chopper couplings during its early days with the WHR, followed later by (| |) couplers with longer hooks. Curiously, *MT* was apparently fitted with safety chains to the sides of the couplings at the rear only.

To complete the story, *Snowdon Ranger* appears to have had the standard U coupling (as shown in the maker's photograph, (Ref. 4)), as did *Beddgelert* and *Gowrie*. *Snowdon Ranger*, according to the maker's drawing (Ref. 5), was fitted with a version of the centre pivoted chopper previously described, with downward extension for attachment of goods stock. However, this feature is not apparent in photographs taken of the engine.



Festiniog locomotives, for good measure, were used on the WHR during the 1920s and 30s; these were fitted with simple sprung central buffers with chain and hook fixed underneath.

Passenger stock was fitted, variously, with U or D buffer couplers or another, rectangular type I have termed "Foursquare". The Gladstone Car, for example, had a very chunky "Foursquare" coupling and a similar type may be observed on the rear of the coach in the well known but rare view of a passenger train at Bryngwyn.

Goods stock possessed variations on the general principle of sprung or unsprung central buffers, with chains and hooks mounted underneath. I have seen a reference, which says that certain goods vehicles were fitted with chopper couplings, but have not yet seen photographs to support this.

The notes collected above are in no way exhaustive or definitive, and I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who can add to or refute – any of the information.

I think what is clear, however, is that coupling design did evolve over the years, and this may well have led to "incompatibilities" when used on both railways.

# Aspects of The Beddgelert Bookstall

Member Peter Liddell is building a finescale model – in 4mm – of Beddgelert, so all the buildings have to be in the most accurate relative locations. What follows is a comparatively brief description of the bookstall based on Peter's original treatise which tells – inter alia – how its position on the 'platform' and the sizes of its components were calculated. If any member would like a copy of the original 3-page script please send 2 x £1 coins to John Keylock

Until recently it was possible to see the bases of the station building and goods shed at Beddgelert but with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century railway all that will remain to remind one of the original layout will be the water tower – fitted with replica tank – inspection pit/siding and concrete base of the lamp room. Another building however existed at Beddgelert but by virtue of its transient nature it has received scant attention. This short-lived structure was the Beddgelert Bookstall.

It arrived on the scene not long after the 1923 opening but on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> / 29<sup>th</sup>

October, 1927 it was badly damaged in a gale and departed the scene. There is no known photograph of the complete bookstall only ones showing its southern and western elevations. However even from these it is possible to establish the building's dimensions; 18ft long, 8ft – 8ins wide and 10ft – 6ins to the roof apex.

The accompanying photograph indicates its location on the station platform – between the station building and the coal siding.

The photographic evidence indicates a neat – and possibly new for the railway – wooden planked building with shuttered windows on the western side. The gable-ended roof was slated and finished with ridge tiles; 'rainwater goods' were fitted, with both elements suggesting a substantial building.



Presumably there was a door in one of the, as yet, (we live in hope?) unseen elevations, and in the nature of such buildings the eastern end would seem to be favoured. But one must wonder how vending took place; inside or through the open windows. The photo above appears to show serving hatch located in the end elevation, perhaps confirmed, apparently in use, by the photo below

## Peter Liddell on Construction

Several memos have survived amongst the papers discovered at Quellyn Lake regarding the bookstall at Beddgelert, allowing us a glimpse of its brief existence.

Although no specific date has been recorded for the erection of the wooden building, it is safe to assume that it was up and running some time in July 1923, as on the 13<sup>th</sup> of that month stationmaster H.D. Jones was requested to post up, at 'prominent positions at the station', notices concerning bookstall attendants.

It is not known who took on the job at first, whether a private individual or a company

employee, but by 28<sup>th</sup> October 1925 the bookstall had obviously become something of a liability which the WHR was seeking to offload. On this date, Robert Evans (at Harbour) was urging Jones to make enquiries for a suitable tenant, or to consider taking it on himself. It is not difficult to understand why the original attendant had decided to call it a day. The line was closed to passenger traffic for 5½ months from 15<sup>th</sup> December 1924, which coupled with the introduction of a reduced train service on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1925, must have had devastating consequences on the takings for that year.

## Derek Lystor on Operation

By 9<sup>th</sup> November, Evans was still awaiting Jones' reply and there is no further surviving correspondence in the archive until 1927. Who ran the bookstall in 1926 remains unknown – perhaps Jones ran it himself as Evans had suggested, for the task would not have been onerous for him. The sparse winter service was interrupted by the

General Strike in May, an event that affected the railway badly, with the booking office at Beddgelert

closing at the end of April and no trains running on the railway at all during June. Things got back to some degree of normality with the commencement of the summer service on 19<sup>th</sup> July and the booking office was reopened. The new winter service of one return train came into force on 20<sup>th</sup> September and, not surprisingly, passenger figures for the year were only just over half the number carried in 1925.

By 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1927 Jones must have formulated a plan to let the bookstall to an interested party, and on the 9<sup>th</sup> Evans agreed a letting fee of 2/- per week for the season,



adding that fresh arrangements would have to be made for 1928. Interestingly, the building was referred to as the "Bookstall & Refreshment Room". (Possibly the precursor of the Buffet Car?) Following another letter from Jones on 7<sup>th</sup> June, Evans agreed a week later to let the bookstall to Mr. Till, a local farmer, for the said 2/- per week.

Mr. Till's occupancy was to be limited to just one season for, on the night of 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> October 1927 the area was hit by a freak hurricane which damaged the buildings at Beddgelert. As a consequence, the bookstall was sold off and one suspects that the WHR were in no particular hurry to repair or replace it!

# Yet More on that Bridge (Cwm Cloch)

## Graham Howland writes

{The} letter referring to Cwm Cloch lane bridge {WHH No 34} has answered a few questions about this location over which I have often pondered, but it has also left more questions unanswered:-

- 1) What did the 1922/3 bridge look like? Is it reasonable to assume that it was similar in design to the old Nantmor road bridge?
- 2) When was it removed? Was it removed when the rails were lifted in 1942 or at a later date to improve vehicle access to Cwm Cloch? It is interesting to note that whilst the northerly abutment remains intact with its concrete cap, the southerly one is almost non-existent.
- 3) Why, when this bridge and the next small bridge before Beddgelert station were removed, was the Nantmor road bridge left in place? (I believe that it is this small bridge between the Afon Cwm Cloch and Beddgelert station, which Francis S Jones refers to in his letter, and not the abutments on the unused PB&SSR route as inferred by the editor's reply.)

## John Keylock comments

The width of the bridge was a bone of contention with the owners of both Cwm Cloch and Bron Hebog. This started, as far as our records show – with the coming of the WHR. The gap will have been bridged in PB&SSR days to give access

further up the line for construction purposes. One suspects that such bridging would have been of a non-permanent nature, but adequate to facilitate possible timber extraction in World War I

We are fortunate to have the diary of Aubrey Thomas, the WHR liquidator, from 1944 (until his untimely death some twenty years later). In January 1948 Twiston-Davies of Bron Hebog requested permission to widen the road by altering the bridge. The following September (1948) the girders constituting the bridge were valued at £10.00 (by the manager of the Portmadoc Foundry) and offered to Twiston-Davies for £15.00. He was also given permission to widen the bridge - which wasn't done! As an aside; in August 1949 the girders spanning the smaller bridge were sold to police constable Tom Williams of Beddgelert for £5.00, he having bought the Beddgelert station building s for £56.00 in October 1948! So, based on the foregoing it would seem that the Cwm Cloch road bridge was a smaller version of the one at Nantmor, but



*Old & new- Cwm Cloch bridge February 2007  
David Allan*

whether or not it had guard rails is unknown, (perhaps not – being much shorter). One can reasonably assume that the Nantmor road bridge was – until recently – left in situ, because being much bigger, its removal for scrap value would not have been justified if only based on the unnecessary disruption to road traffic. Furthermore it linked what had become an unofficial footpath since the railway's 1937 closure.

I too believe that Francis Jones was referring to the small (footpath under) bridge between the Afon Cwm Cloch and Beddgelert station as opposed to the unused abutments between the 'Goat Bridge' and the Glaslyn...

## Beddgelert Trap Point Mystery Solved Derek Lystor Explains

Thanks in part to eagle-eyed member Peter Liddell, the question regarding the apparent lack of a trap point on the goods shed/warehouse siding posed in issue no.30 of the Journal has been satisfactorily answered.

Peter has noticed, after careful study of the 1923 Frith view on page 94 of John Stretton's WHR vol II book, what appears to be the top of a point lever visible just to the right of the goods shed (above the boundary wall in the foreground), the position of which would correspond to a hand lever operating a trap. In the original article, reference was made to photo no.64 in the WHR collection as being taken by PM Gates in 1926, but a better reproduction of it appears on page 93 of the same book and

is credited to H.C. Casserley. Taken on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1926, it clearly shows such a trap in situ and so would have already been there at the time of Mount's inspection. Interlocking with the goods siding point on the loop would, in all probability, have been carried out around the time when the coal siding was modified. It is reasonably logical to conclude therefore that the siding was originally fitted with a single bladed trap, worked by a local hand lever, until being interlocked with the siding points on Mount's recommendation. Peter also suggests that as the only siding on the layout which led out directly onto a downward gradient, a trap would have been a vital safety requirement from the outset.

As to the coal siding, this was on the same ruling gradient as the station itself, i.e. falling towards Croesor Junction, so as the likelihood of wagons running out onto the main line would seem unlikely; a scotch would have sufficed at first until improvements were deemed necessary. The pit siding, although appearing to rise quite considerably in photographs, must have been on the level so that locomotives could safely use the ash pit without fear of runaway. As with the coal siding, here again a scotch would have given sufficient protection against this remote possibility.

With regard to the use of the pit/inspection siding without the use of the staff, no satisfactory explanation has been offered. It may be that H.D. Jones possessed a dedicated padlock and key for this particular set of points, and that traffic to and from the siding was under his sole supervision.