

# WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

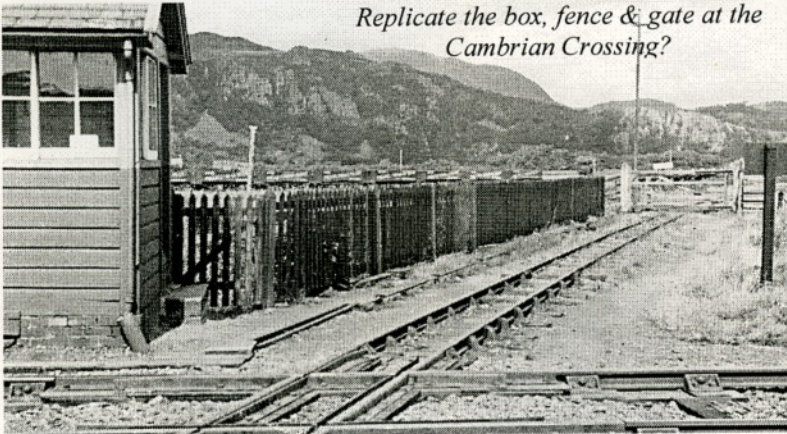
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## GREAT EXPECTATIONS!



*Replicate the box, fence & gate at the Cambrian Crossing?*



*Reconstruct Tryfan Junction*

It is very apparent that this year 'heritage' has moved up a gear within the overall Welsh Highland enterprise, perhaps even more so with the imminent completion of the project in 2009. A preserved railway that displays and promotes its heritage must surely reap a commercial advantage - although the actual cash value or profit may not always be readily identifiable; perhaps the current interest means that 'heritage' has moved up the agenda?

The FR Heritage Company, under the congenial chairmanship of Gareth Williams, is the heritage conscience of the FR board. It is responsible for advising the FR board on the extensive portfolio of FR & WHR heritage, on how best it should be preserved and used in the interest of both railways. It is a sympathetic forum for echoing the concerns, and reflecting the importance of heritage not only to the Festiniog and the Welsh Highland Railways but also to its current customers and to future generations.

At the most recent meeting of the Heritage Company (26th May) two important schemes affecting the WHR were put to board members, both received unanimous support and have been forwarded to the FR board with a recommendation for approval.

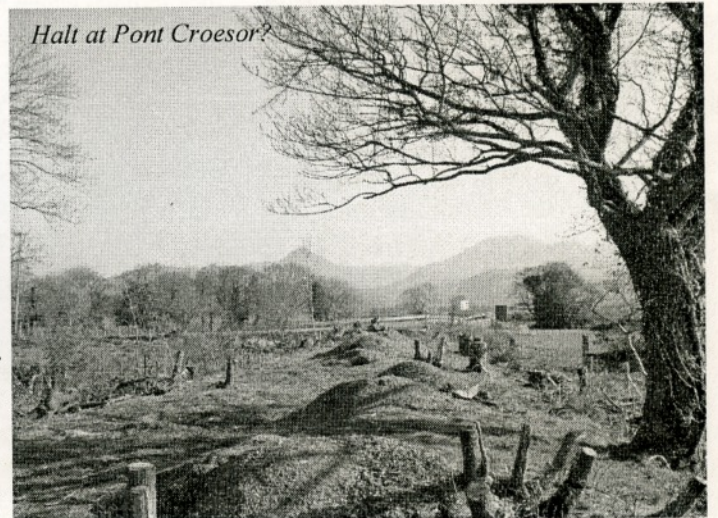
The two schemes are:-

a) The provision of a replica Cambrian Crossing control box with its associated wooden gate across the narrow gauge, north and south of the crossing, together with the reinstatement of the paling fence that lay between the box and the northern gate. This will provide passengers with an authentic WH cameo at the start (or end) of their journey.

b) The refurbishment of Tryfan Junction station building together with the construction of a platform and short length of unconnected track on which quarry wagons can be displayed. Although this latter project has already been approved it goes back to the main board for formal approval under the new arrangement.

A third scheme with WH heritage implications was also approved - that of the establishment of a halt at Pont Croesor, with the possibility of the construction of a WH style station building similar to the one at Pen y Mount. This last scheme was under the banner of the Welsh Highland Railways Association. The Association has

*Halt at Pont Croesor?*



been most helpful in enabling all the WH supporter's groups to speak with one voice on matters of mutual interest. It is clear the 'heritage' will play an important role in the Association's activities. One example already of this coordinated effort is the previously mentioned Cambrian crossing cameo, which will receive funding from all three organisations, including the West Midland's group of the WHR Society who will be funding the two wooden gates for the crossing.

So the Welsh Highland Heritage Group has indeed got 'Great Expectations' that at last it can make a real contribution to re-establish that essential character which made the Welsh Highland unique

# 'Lloyd George Thought Not.....'

**A**s a group we are lucky to have Michael Bishop as a member. Although his main interest is the history of a now re-emerging narrow gauge railway in North Devon, his second 'love' is the WHR, or more specifically, its predecessors. So whenever he finds himself at a source of new information his WHR interest is seldom forgotten. What follows is based on an article that appeared in the North Wales Chronicle for Friday January 5th 1906 unearthed by Michael whilst trawling through newspaper microfilm. Yes – this is even more Portmadoc, Beddgelert, & South Snowdon Railway!

As noted in WHH 34 (p10) construction work had temporarily ceased by December 1905; but why? One may speculate regarding money about to run out and/or 'problems' with landowners but in this instance it seems that it was the National Trust who might well have caused work to cease. Founded in 1895 it was three years until the Trust were alerted to the possibility – in 1898 – of a railway being built through the Aberglaslyn Pass. The scheme at that time was the stillborn Portmadoc, Beddgelert & Snowdon Light Railway.

Their concern was that a railway would despoil the scenic beauty of the Aberglaslyn Pass and having it in one long tunnel would hide it for as long a length as possible. The PB&SSR 1901 'Estimate of the Expense of the Undertaking' allowed for a tunnel of 280 yards (shorter than the existing long tunnel) but the National Trust succeeded in persuading Parliament that a tunnel, 'approx 700 yds' long (1903 tender & indeed 1904 contract!) would serve to placate their misgivings. Assuming that this tunnel would have commenced at the current southern portal (Nantmor end) of the long tunnel it would have extended beyond the current northernmost short tunnel! In a document dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 1905 Harper Bros., as consulting engineers, summarised the NWP&T Coy's scheme for the construction of a new line between Portmadoc (sic), Beddgelert and Snowdon (Rhyd Ddu) and the electrification of the NWNW. Reading from north to south the tunnels would be about 109ft, 47ft and 1100ft respectively, so by December 1905 the die was cast. As tunnelling pro-



gressed in late 1903/early 1904 it became obvious to Harper Bros., that some of the rock through which a tunnel would have to pass was completely unstable and they were not prepared to let it discharge onto the bed of the Afon Glaslyn! Therefore by May 1904 an alternative plan had been

## *More PB&SSR John Keylock expands on Michael Bishop's Research*

drawn providing the tunnels as one knows them today. This plan was approved by both Harper Bros and Mr Greaves, Lord Lieutenant of Carnarvonshire but not by the National Trust, who, when the inevitable became apparent, 'rose in arms' causing work to cease pending a site visit by the President of the Board of Trade (Mr Lloyd-George) and his colleague, Mr Kearley Liberal MP for Devonport. In December 1905 Mr Kearley had been appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. In November 1904 the Light Railway Commissioners sanctioned that the PB&SSR be operated as a light railway under the terms of the 1896 Light Railways Act and furthermore agreed to the modification of tunnel plans in the Aberglaslyn Pass. In October 1905 the Board of Trade heard the National Trust's objection to the aforementioned confirmation as it related to tunnels in the pass. Mr Percival Birkett, on behalf of the National Trust contended that having had one long tunnel approved by Parliament neither the

Light Railway Commissioners nor the Board of Trade had power to modify the plan. The promoters should have returned to Parliament. Mr Harper claimed the impossibility of a single tunnel and Mr Huxtable (of Paines, Blyth & Huxtable the promoters (PB&SSR) solicitor) contended that the Light Railway Commissioners did have the powers of override which they had invoked on this occasion. This situation provided the context for the Goat meeting with Lloyd George et al described in the next paragraph. (As a footnote it is interesting to observe that Harper Bros were at 13, St Helen's Place E.C., with Paines, Blyth. & Huxtable 'next door' at No 14!) The visit was made on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> December 1905, the venue being Beddgelert's Goat Hotel. Also present were Canon Rawnsley, one of the National Trust founders – and Mr Nigel Bond its then Secretary; Mr Francis Fox (engineer) of Douglas Fox and Partners, Mr G.C. Aitchison (PB&SSR manager), Mr L.D. Taylor (resident engineer & Superintendent of Works), and Mr Wells representing Bruce Peebles. Mr Lloyd George explained that as the matter had advanced to a certain stage before he and his colleagues took office the Board of Trade would be glad if the parties concerned could come to some agreement as the Board of Trade preferred to sanction such an agreement rather than enforce its own view. "Canon Rawnsley asked if it were possible to compel adherence to the original (1901) tunnel plan; Lloyd George thought



rock which had fallen down and taken their own angle of rest (this is still obvious today) and the slightest disturbance might set the whole mass in motion and possibly fill up the whole bed of the river Glaslyn, and with their extensive experience of this kind of work they were not prepared to face the danger. Hence their deviation from the original line. As to the requirements of the National Trust the company were quite prepared to adopt all their suggestions as far as possible.

Mr Aitchison concurred.

**Mr George:** "I am glad to hear that" - Mr Fox added that when the work was finished he felt sure the National Trust would be as satisfied as he was that there was no eyesore at all, and he was a landscape gardener as well as an engineer.

**The view that nearly wasn't! The three photos of the Aberglaslyn that illustrate this article may not have been possible without the intervention of Lloyd George. Photos: This page Michael Bishop (1960s); page 2 - David Allan (1994); page 4 - Frith (1924)**

(laughter).

Mr Bond stated three requirements which Canon Rawnsley had laid down on behalf of the National Trust, with which he fully concurred, with the object of minimising the effect of the deviation on the natural beauty of the scenery.

Mr Aitchison said that every bit of the work done had been done absolutely in accordance with the plans submitted to and approved by the Lord-Lieutenant. The company had made various suggestions which would have met Canon Rawnsley's objections, but to these the Lord-Lieutenant had demurred, and he asked Canon Rawnsley to allow that to be noted.

Canon Rawnsley replied that it should most certainly be made known that the work had had the imprimatur of the Lord-Lieutenant, but the very strength of the trouble lay nearer home in the embankment. The National Trust was not aware of that till it was too late or the people of Beddgelert would have been appealed to not to sanction it, but it was not the suggestion of the engineers and it would

have been better for the village if it had not been made. {Interpreting this paragraph is difficult insofar as it refers to an embankment 'nearer home' (Beddgelert Village?). Is this perhaps the embankment that would have been built from the Goat road bridge past Gelert's Grave to the crossing of the Glaslyn had the whole scheme succeeded? Photographs of the Goat road bridge (at the entrance to Beddgelert village) circa 1905 show the start of the bridge to be considerably longer than it is today, so patently some of the original spoil tipped to form it has found a re-use. Perhaps not in PB&SSR days; but Jim Hewett suggests that it could have been used to form the approach embankments for the 1922/23 road over-bridge at Bryn y Felin.}

**Mr Aitchison:** "And very much to the company's advantage".

Mr George said that he had discussed the point with the Lord-Lieutenant and that gentleman agreed with the view of the National Trust. Further the Lord-Lieutenant was satisfied that with regard to the tunnelling work there was an engineering difficulty that was practically insuperable, and that the deviation was unavoidable. His (Mr George's) only difficulty was now that the Parliamentary pledges originally given that the line should follow a specified route, but since the parties concerned seemed to have agreed he thought the position was simplified.

Mr Kearley expressed his satisfaction at the amicable solution of the difficulty, because they felt that in view of the Parliamentary pledges it was a serious matter for them to give judgment.

The whole party then proceeded to view the locus in quo, and afterwards it was understood that the Board of Trade would sanction the deviation. The result of this will be a practically immediate resumption of work on the line which had been suspended, which means the re-employment of hundreds of men."

The Carnarfon & Denbigh Herald for December 1905 (WHH No 34, p10) not only expressed the hope that work on the PB&SSR would resume soon, but added that the 'decision (intervention?) of the President of the Board of Trade (Lloyd George) in reference to the proposed deviation at Aberglaslyn will probably lead to the early restarting of work', which it did by mid February 1906.

Work was still in progress in the Aberglaslyn Pass in May 1906 but we learn from a post card sent at that time - "It is a very beautiful place but this last week has

not (by this time contractors were already working to the 1904 plan!). What follows is a continuation of the North Wales Chronicle press report which seems to have been syndicated to other local papers.

"Canon Rawnsley then explained that he and Mr Bond and Mr Fox had been over the points of the line under consideration and he and Mr Bond could now see a reason for the deviation, and consequently the position was greatly simplified and though, as representing the National Trust, they could not in the interests of the people endorse the change per se yet under the circumstance as represented by the gentlemen named and in view of the willingness of the company to do everything possible within reason to make the unsightly effects of the deviation slightly {the building of (decorative?) retaining walls between the tunnels} they were disposed not to press their original objections. He would however appreciate an assurance from the President of the Board of Trade that he endorsed their reasonable objections.

**Mr George:** "You are quite satisfied that it is impossible for the company to proceed on the original lines, Mr Fox?"

Mr Fox said he was.

He had been connected with the Simplon Tunnel, and probably had more experience of tunnelling work than most people in England, and he said without hesitation that the work they were now avoiding was the most dangerous that he had ever come into contact with. The original intention was to carry the line through a single tunnel, but when the work was commenced it was found that the ground consisted mainly of masses of

been terribly wet with the Glaslyn in flood”.

Looking back 100 years it is difficult to comprehend that a railway construction site employing several hundred workers would have had to even temporarily close down because of an objection from the ten year old National Trust. By this time Peebles were two and half years into their contract and Cwm Dyli hydro power station would come on stream the following summer (1906). That scheme had consumed more money than anticipated leaving insufficient funds to complete the PB&SSR. (A letter from Rawlins to Aitchison dated 17<sup>th</sup> June 1906 confirms this).

I would venture to suggest that the cessation of work, here under discussion, was no more than an opportune breathing



space, for the writing was plainly already on the wall.

## Another View.....

Work has stopped in relation to the railway line because of the difficulty of going through the famous pass of Aberglaslyn between Portmadoc and Beddgelert. On Friday (29th December 1905) Mr Lloyd George (President of the Board of Trade) met with Mr Kearley (Secretary of the said Board) at Beddgelert.

In order not to despoil one of the most beautiful views of the Kingdom, the Company had promised to make the railway through a tunnel. They found that it was more difficult and costly than they had imagined, and therefore they sought the right to put the railway through an alternative route. The National Trust, a body of influential people, who are attempting to protect the beauty of the countryside

from the depredations of Philistines, tended to object.

Mr Fox, the famous engineer, gave evidence of behalf of the company.

Mr Lloyd George: "Are you perfectly

**On the same subject we reprint a translation by member John Ellis Williams of the coverage given by Yr Herald Cymraeg for 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1906. Written in almost biblical Welsh it provides a different 'flavour' of the subject – the reference to railway promoters as 'Philistines' being particularly interesting!**

sure that it is impossible for the Company to go forward on the lines that they started on, Mr Fox?"

Mr Fox said he was.

He had a hand in the Simplon tunnel, under the Alps, and perhaps he has more experience in the work than many. He said without fear of contradiction that the work that they were now engaged in is

the most dangerous that he has ever come across. The intention was from the start, to take the line through a single tunnel; but when the work was started it was found that fallen rocks were on the site. It would be easy for the smallest contact to dislodge the whole lot and perhaps fill the bed of the Afon Glaslyn. Since they had extensive experience of work of that nature they were not prepared to face the danger. This is the reason for turning away from the line that was intended from the start

Mr Lloyd-George said he discussed this question with the Lord Lieutenant. The latter agreed with the view of the Trust. In respect of the work of digging a tunnel the Lord Lieutenant saw the difficulty that was almost insurmountable and therefore the change of route was almost unavoidable. His only difficulty (Lloyd-George) was the parliamentary pledge that was made at the beginning, namely that the line followed the path specified. But since the parties agreed, he believed that carrying on was more simple.

It is believed that the result of this would be to resume work, and that hundreds of men that has been laid off would be able to be re-employed.

### ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES.

FOR Sale, ready for immediate delivery,  
Six New Electric Locos, built for a 2ft. narrow gauge railway, suitable for three-phase, 50 periods, 550 to 600 volts, with overhead trolley.

Any reasonable offer will be accepted.

Full particulars on application to THE NORTH WALES POWER AND TRACTION CO., LTD., LLANBERIS, R.S.O., NORTH WALES. 408u.p.

This North Wales Power Co. advertisement appeared in "Machinery Market" for 28th August 1908, and continued week by week until 16th October 1908.

It was last seen in an Australian magazine in 1910.

Research - Michael Bishop

# The Fire Bar

Firebar unearthed at Dinas



Photo : Patrick Keef

tunity arose to show it to Patrick Keef of Alan Keef Ltd. "Delighted to have a look", he said, having seen a fair variety of fire-bars in his time. His best guess was that it had come

mately 830mm, which equates well with the 32" for what we have. However there is one anomaly; although relative shapes are virtually identical the drawing shows the fire bar to have four longitudinal slots, whereas 'ours' has but two. One must now conjecture a little. Fire-bars are an expendable item during the life of a locomotive and even though the locomotives may well have been supplied fitted with firebars as per the drawing, what we have would seem to be a subsequent replacement. Might a fire bar with only two slots last longer than one with four? As is so often the case a question answered poses new ones, but it does seem certain that to join the other 'Moel Tryfan' remains at Gelert's Farm we now have a fire bar!

When work started in Dinas South Yard a steel box marked 'artefax' was provided as a depository for any dug up bits of metal that might sniff of the original W.H.R. One item that found its way into the said container was – even to the untutored eye – patently a fire bar, of approximately 32" in length. Being found at Dinas it was far more likely to have been from a narrow rather than a standard gauge loco.

from a Single Fairlie – which is perhaps what we wanted to hear!

Recently, having consulted Eduard Vignes 1878 treatise relative to his writings about an almost complete NWNGR I decided to take a fresh look at the excellent scale drawings at the back of the book. Behold!

## Spotted by John Keylock

A scale drawing of Vulcan's Single Fairlie that was both 'Moel Tryfan' and 'Snowdon Ranger' and there sitting in the forward sloping fire box a fire bar. Now Vignes of course was French, so dimensions were metric. The fire bar on the drawing measures approxi-

Over time it was shown to various people who one might have suspected would have come up with a definitive answer. But no – more time passed and the oppor-

Firebar per Vignes drawing



## Turning WH Locomotives

Locomotives on short railways such as the WHR were often turned, usually to equalise tyre wear but sometimes to address other problems such as keeping the firebox crown covered when ascending steep gradients.

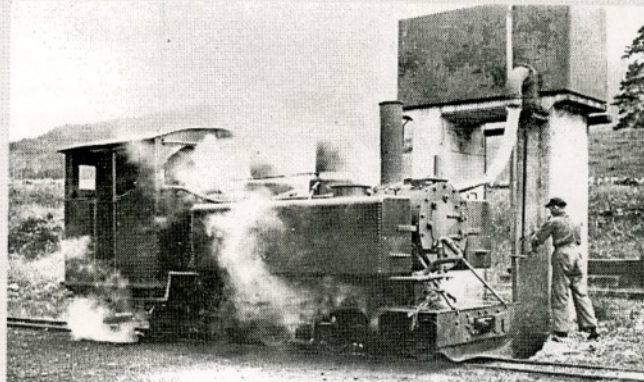
### Richard Watson Poses a Question

The NWNGR and its successor the WHR was no exception, and nearly all of the locomotives were turned at one time or another. How this was achieved when the NWNG was in operation is open to question; and in WHR days the Portmadoc High Street triangle was taken out of use in about 1924. The Baldwin and 'Russell' couldn't have made it to the triangle at Glan-y-Pwll due to their respective heights and widths.

I believe it was just possible to turn engines by running round the layout at Boston Lodge, and there was, of course, the Boston Lodge Halt turntable, but whether

these methods were used for WHR engines isn't known.

Curiously, no photographs have come to light showing 'Russell' with its smokebox facing Dinas, as opposed to facing Portmadoc. For some obscure reason the engine appears never to have been turned at any time in its career, either with the NWNGR or the WHR. The long slog up the 1 in 40 from Nantmor to Pont Cae'r Gors must always have been tackled cab first. Can any reader offer an explanation for this?



The upper photograph was taken at the water tower in Beddgelert in 1936; the lower photo was taken by Geoffrey Hughes in 1934. The Baldwin is facing in different directions, so it was clearly 'turned' between these two dates.

# Yet more on what needed to be done in 1922

I had only just sent off the article which appeared in WHH 35 when I made another discovery. Another visit to Kew allowed further inspection of file MT6/3007. I had looked at this before but not in detail due to lack of time. When I say that this file is about 8" thick and comprises mainly of carbon copy "flimsies" you will appreciate why I had not examined it closely! From information in Peter Johnson's "Portrait of the WHR" it is clear that he has seen it but could not report its contents in detail due to lack of space.

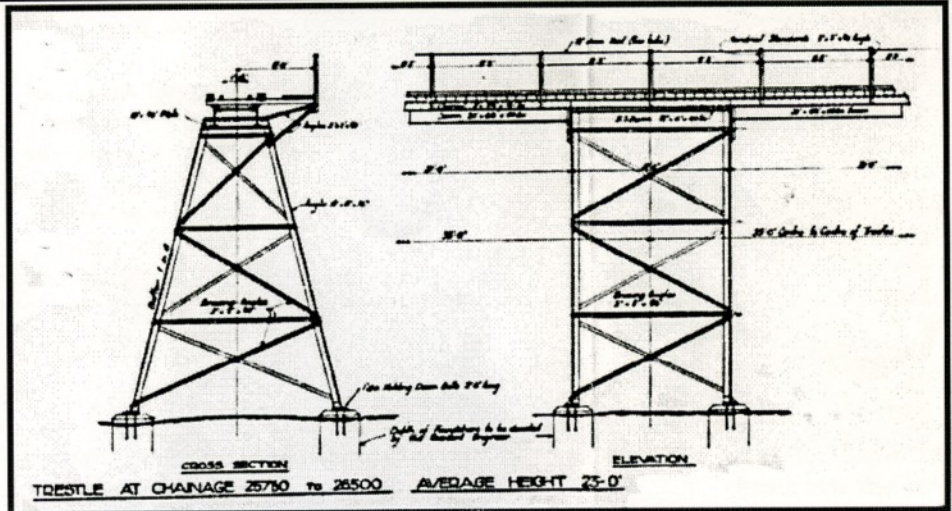
The document which is probably of most interest to us is the one which details the work to be done and this ties up well with plans for which I have already given details. It also gives details of the old NWNGR & Croesor Tramway sections but I will leave those for another issue.

Unfortunately this document is not dated but I would hazard a guess that it was produced towards the end of 1922. The reason for saying this is that it is clearly not the final version but close to it. I say that because I am fairly sure it is what Peter Johnson refers to as "Fox No. 4 route" because the section between the Goat tunnel and Bryn-y-Felin bridge does not tally

## Jim Hewett Again

with the final plan. Not only that but the document proposes a series of trestles (presumably along the east side of the road) as being cheaper than an embankment. The line was, of course, actually built on the west side of the road.

A large part of the document lists all the bridges, culverts, level crossings etc but as this list is virtually identical to the list in WHH 35 I will not repeat it. The most interesting notes in the document are those telling of the amount of earth etc needing to be moved as detailed below. This should be read in conjunction with the table & plan in WHH .35. The distances refer to the distance in feet from Rhyd ddu. The TWA chainages are my addition to aid identification of the location. Anything not in italics is my comment. Don't try to get an exact relationship between the two measurements as the surveys appear to differ by 100m or so in places.



1923 drawing, courtesy of Douglas Fox via Charles McKenzie, showing the proposed trestles. For more information on the routes south of Beddgelert see John Keylock's article in WHH 35

- 1) 0 to 5150 ft. (TWA 14787 - 16349) *Banks exceed cuts in this section by about 800cu. yds. Excess will be found by enlarging existing cuttings. 340cu yd @5/6 is £93.10.1*
- 2) 5150ft to 10,800ft. (TWA 16349 - 18068) *Banks exceed cuts by 1500cu yds. Excess will be obtained by enlarging existing cuttings. Principally earth with boulders. 3,700cu yds @4/- is £740.0.0*
- 3) 10,800ft. to 16,200ft. (TWA 18068 - 19759 - Coed Mawr loop) *Banks exceed cuts by 2300cu yds. Excess can be obtained from existing bank on original route of railway at distance 13,000 feet (TWA 18749). Principally earth with boulders. Cutting at 14,2000 to 14,800 may reach rock. 8340cu yds @ 4/- is £1668.0.0.*
- 4) *Extra price for any rock cutting 500cu yds @7/- is £176.0.0.*

### Authors comment

This statement is one of the most interesting. For those who have studied the so called "WW1" O/S maps it is clear that the route shown on these maps was not the WHR route as built. Most of the route shown was just boundaries of the land purchased by the PBSSR but some cuttings and embankments had been made and part of the constructed embankment was not on the WHR trackbed. It was thought (by me at least!) that the survey was wrong because why would the WHR want to move an already constructed embankment when money was tight. I admit I was wrong as the proof that the embankment was moved is in the above statement.

- 1) 16,200 to 20,150ft. (TWA 19759 - 21087) *Cuts exceed banks by 2700cu yds. A large proportion of cutting at 18,4000 to*

- 19,000ft is expected to be rock. Surplus to be used for item 11. 4500cu yds at 4/6 = £1012-10-0*
- 2) *Extra price of rock cutting (provisional quantity) 3000cu yds @ 6/- = £900-0-0*
- 3) 20,150 to 25,350ft. (TWA 21087 - 22546) *Cuts exceed banks by 13,400 cu yds 3000cu yds cutting are required to level site at Beddgelert Station. A large proportion of cuttings at 20,300 to 22,000 (TWA 21130 - 21493) & 24,950 to 25,250 (TWA 22392 - 22483) are probably rock. Surplus to be used for item 11 22,800cu yds @ 4/- = £4,560-0-*
- 4) *Extra price for rock cutting (provisional quantity) 10,000 @ 6/- = £3,000-0-0*
- 5) *Alternative price for tunnel in rock, same section as existing tunnels, length not exceeding 100yds 1000cu yds @ 30/- = £1,500*
- 6) *Trimming existing tunnel. 25,350 to 25,500, 110cu yds of filling required along bottom of tunnel. 110cu yds @ 40/- = £220-0-0*
- 7) 25,500 to 31,050. (TWA 22591 - 24370) *33,400 cu yds less 16,000 from items 5-7. Only 900 cu yds is available from cuttings in section. Balance of 16,400 cu yds must be got from borrow pits. Contractors must state where they propose to obtain this. 17,300 cu yds @ 5/- = £4,325-0-0*
- 8) *Alternative price for steel trestle instead of highest portion of bank - see type drawing A33405. Price per bay of 33ft = £170*
- 9) *Trimming existing tunnels at 30,400 (TWA 24165) & 30,500 (TWA 24197) & 30,600 to 30,700. (TWA 24246 - 24260) 80 cu yds @ 40/- = £150-0-0*

- 10) Extra for rock cutting at 30,700 to 30,950. (TWA 24260 - 24352) 140cu yds @ 7/- = £49-0-0
- 11) 31,050 to 31,450. (TWA 24356 - 24644) Excavation & trimming of Aber-glaslyn tunnel - Rock. 2100 cu yds @ 30/- = £3150-0-0
- 12) 31,450 to 36,800 (TWA 24644 - 26,060) 7000 cu yds less 2100 from item 15. Only 2800 cu yds is available from cuttings in section. The balance must be obtained from pits and next section 2000 is available from 19. 4,900 cu yds @ 5/- = £1225
- 13) Extra for rock cuttings 2500 cu yds @ 6/- = £750
- 14) 36,800 to 45,800. (TWA 26060 - 28900, Croesor Junction) Cuttings exceed banks by 700 cu yds. Note. Items 4-6-8-14-17 are rated extra to normal rates covering earth & boulders. Both rates will be paid for all rock excavations. All rates include trimming & forming against culverts & abutments. 1900 cu yds @ 5/6 = £522 10/-
- 15) At 34,300. Excavate & lower public road to pass under railway. Road to be re-graded & grades not exceeding 1 in 20
- 16) Extra for rock cutting

- 17) Extra on above for re-metalling & steam rolling road
- 18) Side ditches not exceeding 1ft 6ins depth & 2ft top width in earth & boulders (provisional quantities)

The document goes on with another 24 points costing everything you would need to complete a railway.

Examples are:-

Steel for lattice girder bridges erected complete 60 tons at £30 = £1,800 (presumably Bryn-y-Felin, Afon Nanmor & Afon Dylif).

Steel for the joist bridges 10 tons at £22 = £220 (presumably the Nantmor road bridge and possibly some large ditches).

Rail, 600 tons at £8-10/- = £5,100.

Laying the track, 9 miles at £176 per mile = £1,584.

£1500 was allowed for stations.

£2,500 for fencing.

£1000 for additional land.

Total cost -£52,422-5-0.

In July 1919 McAlpine's Clydebank office sent Jack at the Aluminium Corporation, Dalgarrig an estimated cost for the comple-

tion of the railway. The figure was £68,559 in which there was no apparent provision for either stations or additional land, but mile posts and gradient boards were included. However by the time the contract was to be placed it was felt that McAlpines would do the best job and they were asked to submit an official tender as the cost of labour had fallen. They did that and got the job at £60,819, which was not the lowest tender.

When the first tenders were put out to contractors they were asked to give costings for the 1 in 28 route as well as the 1 in 40. The file gives little clue as to when the 1 in 28 was abandoned. It must have been towards the end of 1922.

One final point. In the last issue I remarked that there was two horizontal scales on the plans, one was in miles and furlongs but the other appeared to have about 55 units to the mile. John Keylock tells me that there are two sorts of chains used in measurement. One is 22yds (66 ft) i.e. 80 per mile but the other (rather uncommon) is 100ft giving 52.5 per mile. I believe that must be the answer.

## Unscheduled Halts

Historical anecdote relates that WH trains made unofficial stops to set down passengers - at Cwm Cloch and Wernlas Ddu for example. However, until a recent chance meeting with an 86 year old gentleman who had grown up in Rhostryfan there had been no record of trains making unscheduled stops to pick up passengers.

Bryngwyn branch passenger trains not having been reinstated after World War I meant that by the early 1930s the nearest and most easily accessible railhead for Rhostryfan was Wernlas Ddu. For a Saturday excursion village children would

walk down the road to Wernlas Ddu and wait for the Beddgelert bound train. At this time Goronwy Roberts might well

have been on the locomotive footplate - with Dafydd Lloyd Hughes the guard - and it is known that he was sympathetic towards these unofficial stops and would have been relaxed about responding to

### *John Keylock stops the train!*

the children hailing the train to stop. With pocket money in short supply in the 1930s one wonders whether the youthful excursionists actually paid to travel from Wernlas Ddu and back?

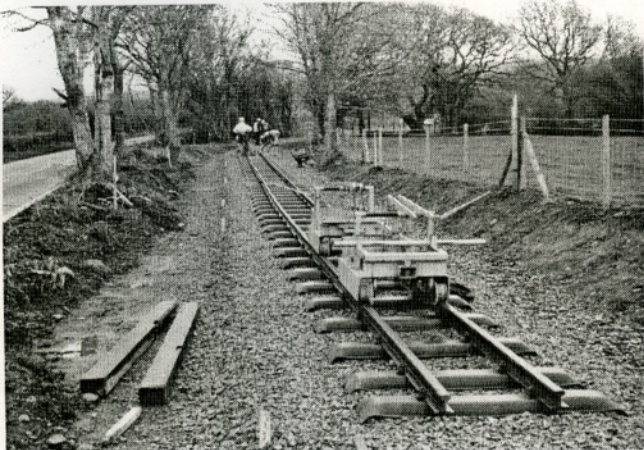
Furthermore, it is interesting to recall that at this period Rhostryfan boasted some sixteen shops with at least two butchers and two boot and shoe shops/cobblers amongst the total. The latter would have provided a service for quarrymen and it is known that boots were delivered to the village by train from a number of suppliers.

Not only were passengers catered for by these unofficial stops, but

goods also took advantage of the flexibility of WH working. There exists a written record of goods dispatched by Mr Jones of Nantmor. Mr Jones was not only a grocer but he also used Nantmor goods shed, (two side-by-side, redundant FR coaches memorably photographed by Roger Kidner) to store coal and sacks of animal feeding stuff.

On March 8<sup>th</sup> 1924 he consigned three bags - weighing three hundredweights in total to Mr G Jones at Cwm Cloch. It is known that manure (fertiliser) was delivered to the at Wernlas Ddu, so it would not seem unreasonable to assume that the Cwm Cloch delivery was made similarly. On January 24<sup>th</sup> 1928, two bags - of meal, weighing one hundredweight each - were consigned to Mr Pierce at Tyn-y-Coed, but Beddgelert is quoted as the delivery station. It is difficult to imagine that this would have happened in practice; far easier and friendlier to have delivered them to the lineside at Ty'n-y-Coed.

Reverting to Cwm Cloch it must be remembered that the building of the W.H.R. rather cut up the estate then in the ownership of Messrs Sharples and Welch. Tenant farmer Mr Jones would have endured the subsequent inconveniences so delivering hundredweight sacks to the lineside for him might be regarded as some measure of compensation. It is ironic that those 'inconveniences' suffered eighty years ago when the line was being built are now being repeated as the line is re-built.



Track gang at work on 26th April 2000 at the probable site of the Wernlas ddu unofficial halt (LC7) - road and rail converge north of roadbridge.

# A Tenuous Tale

The relationship between the WHR and Shackleton's expedition to the Antarctic might indeed seem tenuous, but to prove otherwise please read on.....

Sir John Henderson Stewart Bart, proprietor of a wholesale wine and spirit business in Dundee, is mentioned as a 'major player' in the affairs of the WHR – and indeed the FR – in the early 1920's, but perhaps his name came to prominence in the late 1980's when Trackbed Consolidation (TCL) were engaged in tracking down major holders of comparatively worthless WHR shares – both ordinary and debenture

By 1922 he had become a director of the NWNG Rly of which Henry Joseph Jack was Receiver. (It does seem an uncanny coincidence that Jack started his business life as a wine and spirit merchant in South Wales). Since January 1921 Sir John had provided £1500 to enable the Receiver to keep the Moel Tryfan Undertaking going and subsequently gained ownership of three quarters of NWNG Rly Debentures. In the same month the issued capital of the North Wales Power & Traction Co. in the wholly owned PB&SSR was assigned to him so that he effectively 'owned' the constituents to form the WHR without the necessity of paying out any more real money! In July

1921 he was appointed a Director of the FR, with Jack as chairman, and the ubiquitous Evan R. Davies – who was also a latter day NWNG Director. In consequence Sir John became a major shareholder in both the FR and the new WHR, but by February 1924 all his FR shares had been transferred to either Jack or Davies. On 6<sup>th</sup> February he shot himself through the head at his Fingast Castle in Perthshire. He was but 44 and left debts of £570,000. He had been created a

*Compiled by John Keylock  
based on the researches of  
Michael Bishop and Peter  
Johnson*

baronet in 1920 and the £50,000 he had paid to 'political party funds' was 'clawed back' to help in small measure, pay his debts. There seems little doubt that the baronetcy was 'purchased' from Lloyd George for 'public services'. He had been both a Freeman of the City of London and a J.P.

The Times newspaper of October 4<sup>th</sup> 1924 reported the death of Mr J.Q. Rowett a City Merchant. Aged 48 he had been found hanged in the billiard

room of his Hyde Park Terrace town house by his butler. In the years up to his suicide his solicitor had noticed 'changes coming over him' due to financial worry'. One primary cause was the failure of the late Sir John Henderson Stewart to whom he was heavily involved financially to the extent of close on £100,000 for goods supplied. Mr Rowett was associated with Shackleton's expedition, which he financed to the tune of £70,000

Of Sir John's WHR ordinary shares some were transferred to Jack and others to his heir, Bruce Fraser Stewart who had emigrated to New Zealand where TCL's search for shares started. It is also worthy of note that Stewart was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, an organisation that would doubtless have been involved with Shackleton's expedition. Was he made a Fellow because he too contributed?

By virtue of all the above share transfers over a comparatively short period one is almost tempted to suspect that Sir John's suicide was pre-planned. Irrespective of this speculation it is apparent that the WHR had two suicides on its conscience – and a tenuous association with Shackleton's expedition!

## GRELMINS!

Richard Maund has kindly highlighted a couple of errors that crept into WHH33 The letter featured in the article on the front page of WHH 33 was **FROM** Robert Evans **TO** Col. Stephens, not the other way round. On p4 centre column, Michael Bishop refers to the Paddle Steamer "Waverley". Richard points out that "Waverley" was not owned by P & A Campbell but was built in 1946 for the L.N.E.R., to replace tonnage lost in 1940; on nationalisation, she passed to Caledonian Steam Packet (the BTC/BR Clyde shipping subsidiary) by whom she was eventually sold (for £1) to the current owners.

And in WHH 35 your editor managed to omit the references in the text of Richard Watson's article in couplings. These are:-

1. Lee, Charles E, The Welsh Highland Railway ("The Blue Book") page 21
2. Boyd, J.I.C. Drawing by J.M. Lloyd. The Welsh Highland Railway Vol. 2 page 55
3. Photo of Russell and Gowrie at Dinas, 1908. Turner, A. The Welsh Highland Railway – A History page 1
4. Maker's photo Lee, Charles E, The Welsh Highland Railway ("The Blue Book") p. 20
5. Maker's general arrangement drawing, fold-out, in Lee, Charles E, The Welsh Highland Railway ("The Blue Book")

## Letter

### Cwm Cloch Lane Bridge

I too have pondered the unusual design of the Cwm Cloch Bridge.

I now believe it was built by the PB&SSR as an arch bridge, similar to the surviving Cwm Bychan Bridge.

when the WHR was being built, the railway was lowered. The arch crown was in the way, and the arch was removed. The concrete piece on the north abutment replaced the removed arch. The wing walls were cut down to the new level, which would account for the unnecessary level bit on the top of the wing walls.

Gerald Fox (by email)