

# WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

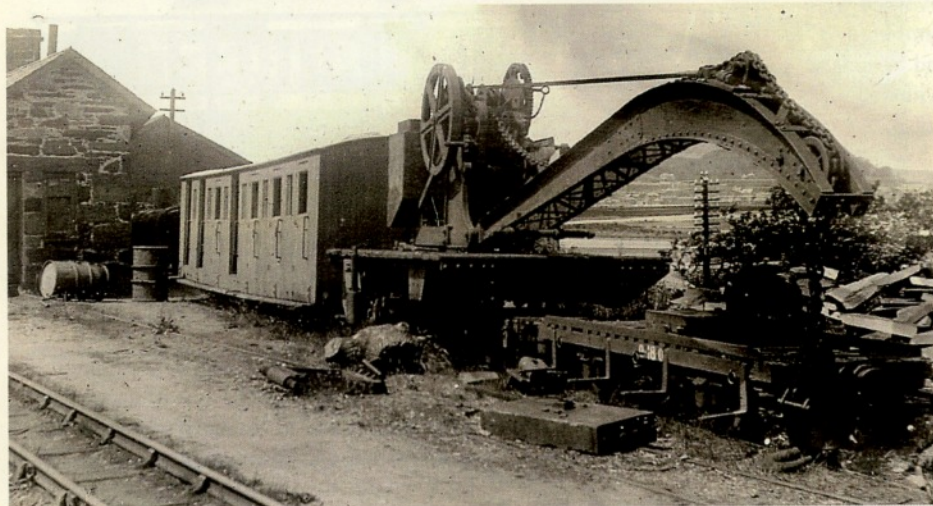
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## NWNG 'Mystery' Coach



**J**ust what is this mystery NWNG coach (behind the crane) that was photographed by Shephard at Boston Lodge sometime in the 1920s.

Could it have been that elusive coach from Ashbury, about which rumours have abounded for sometime. Michael Bishop explores the evidence in a major article on page 2.

This is the first time, to the best of our knowledge, that this picture has been published and it is reproduced here by kind permission of the West Sussex Record Office, who hold the Shephard collection.

### Tryfan Junction Update

**T**he Tryfan Junction Reconstruction team has had its first meeting. Led by Stuart McNair the team has sketched out its approach to the task. Three stages to the project have been identified, each will be tackled separately and completed as funds allow. These include the platform - similar to that at Plas y Nant; the building itself, which will be rebuilt using existing and locally sourced stone to be outwardly identical to that seen from the line in the 1920's; and finally a slate wagon display on a short length of unconnected track on the approximate line of the Bryngwyn branch.

The scheme is estimated to cost in the region of £50,000. The May AGM approved £5,000 for the scheme from Group funds, which added to donations and previously agreed funding, provides £15,000 to enable a start to be made. Fund raising will start in earnest with the next issue of this journal.

Edward Padget-Tomlinson's evocative painting of the 1923 scene at Tryfan Junction (reproduced here), will be used as the logo for the scheme. A limited run of A/4 copies of the painting are now available from Phil Hawkins, priced at mounted £8.00 + £2.50 p&p; mounted and framed £16.50 + £6.50 p&p. All proceeds (less expenses) will go to the Tryfan Junction



fund. The Group is most grateful to Mrs Padget-Tomlinson for agreeing to this fund raising plan and to Phil Hawkins for facilitating the scheme. Orders to Phil please at Fron Goch, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6DN

### Tickets Please!

**N**ot surprisingly, Portmadoc was the most popular destination for travellers from Beddgelert and, according to the station's ticket register, over 3800 3<sup>rd</sup> Class single tickets were issued from 1923 to 1928.

The original 2500 Waterlow prints were exhausted by mid May 1927 and the new Williamson print, as illustrated, was introduced week commencing May 16<sup>th</sup>.

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY  
NOTICE—This Ticket is issued subject to the conditions and regulations in the Company's Time Tables, Books, Bills and Notices.

**BEDDGELEERT**  
TO  
**Portmadoc**

THIRD CLASS FARE 1/-

3283



# NORTH WALES NARROW GAUGE CARRIAGES

The fascinating subject of the coaches used on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway has been the object of much speculation. New evidence, which may not have been seen by other researchers, throws further light on the coach numbering system. That evidence is contained within the accounts and statistics that were provided to company shareholders every six months and suggests that a revisit may explain some of the ambiguities.

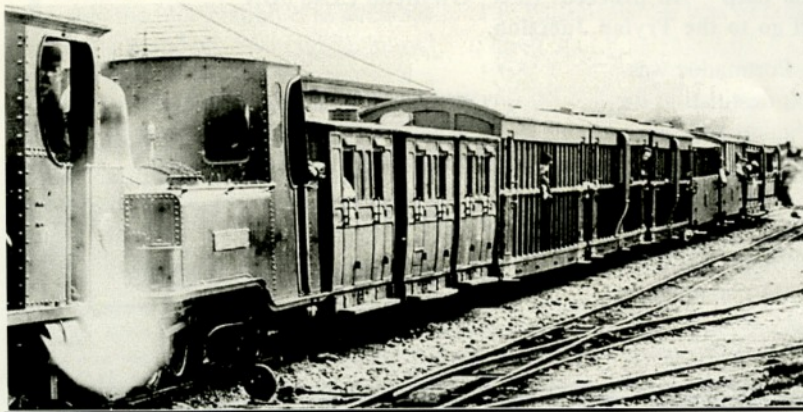
## 1877

August 1877 saw the opening of the NWNGR to a temporary terminus at (old) Quellyn. The company's first Board of Trade (BOT) return for that year listed five carriages. Edouard Vignes visited in September and reported there were two types, 4-wheelers and bogie vehicles. 'Engineering' for 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1877 stated that "In ordinary working one of the (Vulcan Single Fairlie) engines will take up the line . . . a load of 30 tons, consisting of one bogie passenger carriage, and two four-wheeled passenger carriages weighing together 10 tons 5cwt. when full, the remainder of the load consisting of goods and coals and empty slate trucks".

These bogie braked vehicles are shown in an engraving (picture 1), and also in a maker's picture (picture 2) which the late Michael Seymour (FR archivist) suggested was an Ashbury. The drawings in the Metro-Cammell collection at Birmingham Central Library, are (Michael thought) Brown Marshalls, who subcontracted the job. The drawings have two names written at the bottom, including that of C E Spooner.

A reference in 1907 (when the two bogie coaches were replaced) suggests that there were two of them, and the "1" in the garter of the crest (picture 2) lends credence to

Picture 3 - All the company's coaches at Dinas in circa 1892



the idea that they were numbered '1' and '2'. We know from the accident report of February 1883 (see WHH No. 19) that two of the 4-wheelers involved were numbered '3' and '5'. The evidence suggests, (1890's photo of all coaches), that as there were three of these 4-wheelers (picture 3) then the other must have been numbered '4'.

Unfortunately there seems to be no evidence as to who built these 4-wheelers,

*Michael Bishop takes an in-depth look at the history of these vehicles and provides more evidence for that elusive 'mystery' coach*

but in view of the Festiniog's purchases, Ashbury must be a strong possibility.

## 1878

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1877 the Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald reported that "as the traffic has increased new carriages are to be introduced, similar in appearance to the old, but wheels and axles arranged on Cleminson's system". James Cleminson was engineer of the line from 1877 to 1883 and he had patented his pivoted underframe with a central radial axle in 1876. These 6-wheeler carriages had longitudinal seats rather than the cross

seats of the earlier vehicles and with them Second Class was introduced for the first time. These coaches feature in two

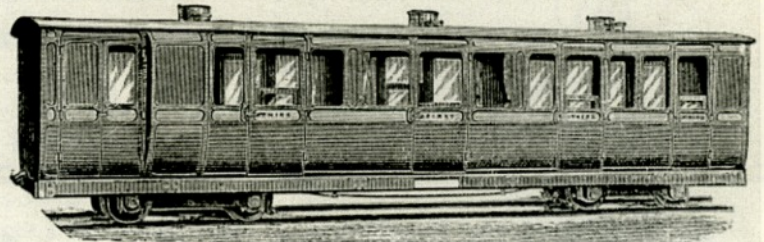
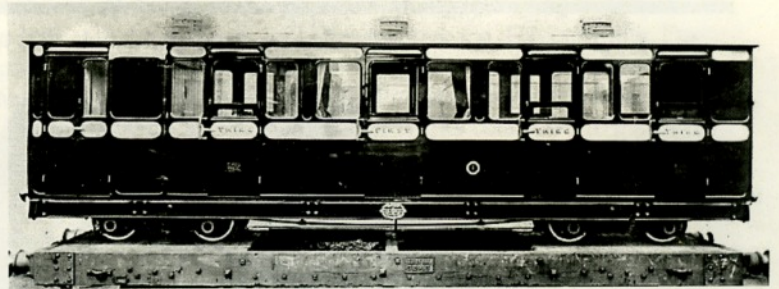


FIG. 231. Bogie Passenger Coach for Narrow Gauge Permanent Way. From 24 in. gauge upwards. Similar to those used on the Festiniog Railway.



Picture 1 - (top) engraving used in an advert. : Picture 2 - (bottom) Ashbury No 1 - Courtesy FR Photo collection

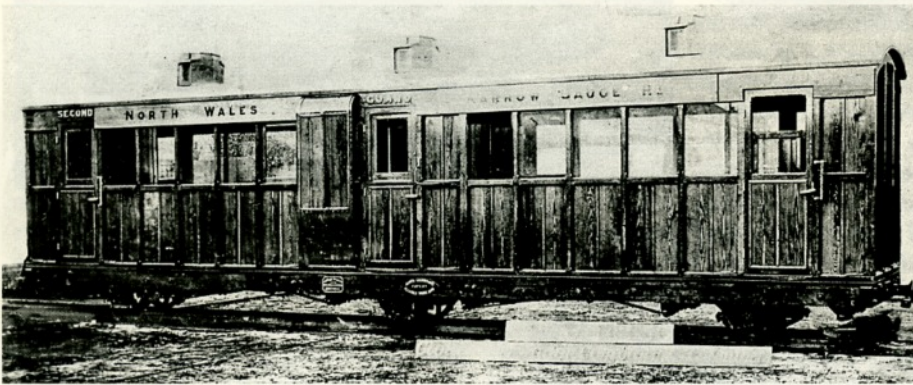
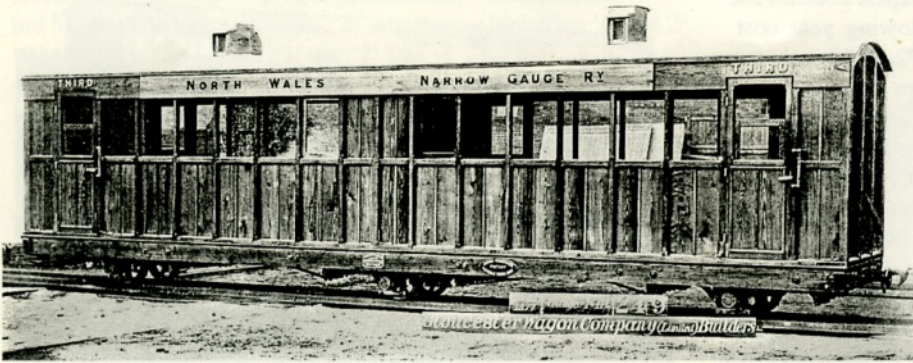
Gloucester Wagon Co. Maker's pictures (dated December 1877), one of an all third (picture 4), and the other of a second/third brake composite (picture 5). They look fairly basic - one unkind person has pointed out that the firm also made garden sheds!

The next coach numbers ought to start at '6', and we know from the 1883 accident report that a "six-wheeled composite carriage with break (sic)-compartment" was indeed number '6'. We also know from the same 1890's photograph mentioned earlier (picture 3) showing three of this type, that two were braked coaches and the other a third. An Agreement of December 1878 shows coach numbers '6', '7' and '8' amongst rolling stock that J.C. Russell, then a NWNGR Director, sold to a Company that he had formed for this purpose, - the 'Moel Tryfan Rolling Stock Co. Ltd'. The rolling stock, including all three engines, was in use on the NWNGR (which justified the company including it in its stock totals), and was hired to it until 1880. It seems clear from this that these coaches were the Cleminsons, and that these were the numbers they were given. Two, including No. '6', were 'composite brakes', and the other was a 'third'. £6,000 in Debentures were issued by the Railway in 1880 to purchase the hired vehicles and to pay outstanding hire charges. (see more details in WHH No. 25)

## 1881

At six monthly intervals the Railway's shareholders were presented with a set of accounts. The earliest of these traced so





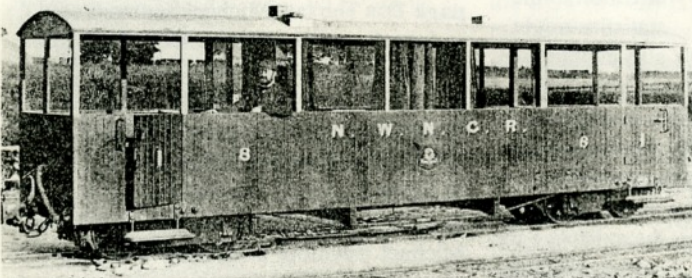
Picture 4 (top) - Cleminson All Third; picture 5 (bottom) - Cleminson second/third brake Composite'

far is for the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1881 and these break down the totals in Board of Trade returns, *four 'Composites' and four 'Thirds'*, which ties in with the above scenario.

### 1891

Things then settled down for some ten years. In the early summer of 1891 James Szlumper was appointed engineer to the company which seems to have sparked off a new enthusiasm for coaches, apparently to cope with tourist traffic. At 31<sup>st</sup> December 1891 the accounts showed that the number of vehicles in each of the two coach categories ('Composite' and 'Thirds') had been increased by one - i.e. five 'Composites' (up from four) and five 'Thirds' (again up from four). This coincides with Metropolitan C & W drawings (in Birmingham Library) of a 'Workmans Car' and a 'Tourist Carriage' both dated 1<sup>st</sup> June 1891. The 'Workman's' would surely have been included in the 'Third' category, (maybe for quarrymen?). The new 'Composite' could have been a conversion of an existing third-class coach, but this was unlikely as Second Class was about to

Picture 6 : Gladstone car at Dinas (from MacKay)



be abolished. So it is more likely to have been the Tourist Carriage, (later to become known as the Gladstone Car), could possibly have been delivered with Second Class inside, and Third Class outside, at each end.

### 1892

Six months later, at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1892, the shareholder's accounts reflect a reclassification of these ten vehicles. The figures now show one 'Tourist Car First Class', two 'Composites' and seven 'Thirds', which suggests that one of the 'Composites' had been upgraded to a 'Tourist Car First Class', and two others had become 'Thirds'. How can this be explained?

The clue to the change in the Tourist Car may be in the drawings, which show "*lath and space seats to be removable*" at the ends, and "*perforated seat and back*" in the central closed section. Hardly a description of a 'First Class saloon'! One explanation that fits the facts is a conversion in anticipation of the impending visit by Prime Minister Gladstone in September 1892, and, maybe, the income opportunity of being able to sell first class tickets afterwards to travel in a coach travelled in by the PM. The 'Liverpool Daily Post' reported in its

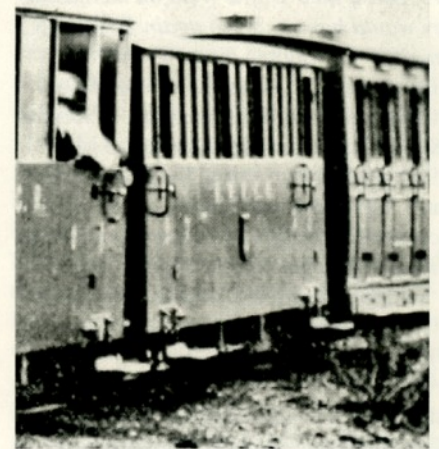
description of that trip that "*Mr Tanner, the courteous manager of the company, had done his best in the way of decorations, and provided a new saloon carriage for Mr Gladstone's journey to Rhyd-ddu.*"

According to the 'Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald' "*the new saloon in which the right hon. gentleman was to make his maiden trip on the two-foot gauge was profusely adorned with flowers &c.*"

The two 'Composites' becoming 'Thirds' is probably explained by the abandonment of Second Class, which affected the two Cleminson braked coaches. At the same time Westinghouse Brakes had been fitted so far to four carriages (including the two new ones) in compliance with the order from the Board of Trade to fit continuous brakes by the end of 1893.

### Ambiguity of coach numbering

There is a well-known picture of the Gladstone car (picture 6) with what is said to be Samuel Tanner seated in it, lettered with number '8'. A picture, recently come to light, confirms that the Workman's Car was given the number '7' (picture 7). What is impossible to explain is why the two new coaches were numbered '7' and '8' (not necessarily when new, but apparently by 1893) when there were



Picture 7 - Workman's Car - with the No '7' just visible (FR Archives)

already eight vehicles on the company's books when the new ones were delivered. The Gladstone car (picture 6) just referred to first appeared in MacKay's 1896 book on Light Railways, when the coach was 5 years old.

All ten of the Company's coaches which were in operation in 1892 are shown in the alleged circa 1892 photograph (picture 3). Additionally, in connection with the Board of Trade 1890 directive to fit continuous brakes, Russell wrote to the BOT in June 1892 stating that "*there are three 6-wheel carriages of particular construction which*



cannot be fitted with continuous brake. Two of these have Brakes and a Brake Compartment, one has not”.

But this still does not explain why the already allocated numbers of ‘7’ and ‘8’ were given to the two new vehicles. The original coaches numbered ‘7’ and ‘8’ must have been one of the Cleminson Composites and the Cleminson Third, so the idea that the two Cleminson Composites were ‘remaindered’ or ‘duplicated’ on the abolition of Second Class does not fit the facts as we know them. J.I.C. Boyd advanced the theory that the Cleminsons and the Ashbury Brakes (which lasted until 1907) were re-numbered, but if this was evidence-based then the sources have not been published. The 4-wheelers, which were at the end of their lives, were only piped until withdrawn in 1897 under pressure from the Board of Trade (see later), but that would have left three vacant numbers.

Maybe there isn’t a rational explanation and there were simply two ‘7s’ and two ‘8s’!

### 1893 – 1894

In October of 1893 Russell told shareholders that “in consequence of the increase in their passenger traffic they had to increase their stock by getting two large cars, and if their traffic went on increasing they would have to do so again.” These were the “Corridors” Nos. ‘9’ and ‘10’, built by Ashbury, and which followed on with the established numbering. (Pictures 8 & 9) Seven months later, at the May 1894 half-yearly meeting, he announced that: “Four new carriages, each accommodating fifty-six passengers, will be ready for the June tourist traffic.” So, ‘11’ to ‘14’, the “Summer Coaches” were duly delivered, again from Ashbury, (Picture 10).

Ashbury were specialists at producing cheap and basic coaches. According to James Szlumper they cost £170 each. Peter Johnson’s recent “Illustrated History of the FR” says that Ashbury’s tender for each of the FR’s coaches Nos. ‘21’ and ‘22’ supplied in 1896 was £188. By comparison the Lynton & Barnstaple’s

cheapest coaches the following year cost £372.12.0d each, (plus extra for roller bearings) for a vastly superior and long-lasting standard that is now being followed by the modern WHR!

### 1896

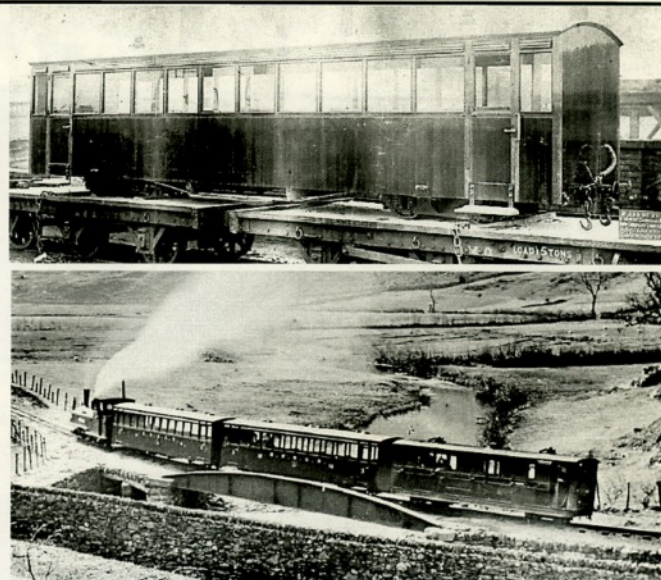
In April 1896, Russell told the BOT that “the passenger stock consists of 16 coaches of which 13 are large on 6 to 8 wheels from 25 to 30 feet in length.” - the other three being the 4-wheelers. The accounts had faithfully recorded the six additions in 1893 and 1894, but on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1895 ‘Composites’ increased from two to three at the expense of the ‘Thirds’ - down from thirteen to twelve. But the situation was restored the following 31<sup>st</sup> December. Maybe this was an aberration.

### Demise of the 4-wheelers

Despite the difficulties, the 6-wheelers were fitted with continuous brakes in 1894, but the BOT was told that the problem with the 4-wheelers was money, but they had been fitted with “blow-through pipes”. By April 1896 the BOT were getting insistent, and Russell agreed they would be fitted or “taken off the road” by the end of 1897. But there had been enough prevarication and Russell had to improve his offer to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1897 to discontinue running them, which was begrudgingly accepted.

They did not appear in the 6-monthly continuous-brake return in June 1897. It is at this point that the accounts and returns become suspect, as the 4-wheelers were not deleted from the totals until 1909, when someone presumably realised! The accounts ignore an entry in the BOT returns from 1902 to 1912 for an “other coaching vehicle”. Maybe this was a 4-wheel brake van.

### A Mystery Coach?



Picture 8 (top) Ashbury ‘corridor’ awaiting delivery (FR archives) : Picture 9 (bottom) First two coaches are Ashburys ‘9’ & ‘10’ at Plas y Nant (Symons)

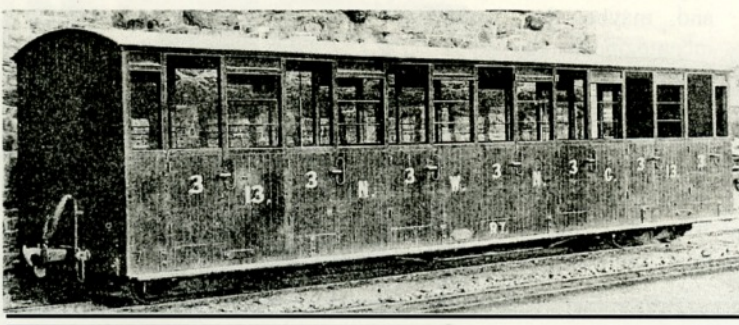
the NWNCR is in a letter of 20<sup>th</sup> September 1897 from Company Secretary, Samuel Tanner, to the BOT. He was following up Russell’s correspondence about the 4-wheelers mentioned in the previous paragraph: “I beg to state that these were taken out of traffic sometime ago and a new large Coach fitted with the Westinghouse Brake had been put into use in place thereof.” The obvious number to be given to this coach would be ‘3’, thus starting to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of the 4-wheelers ‘3’, ‘4’ and ‘5’ in 1897, which would also explain why the Pickerings of 1907 were given numbers ‘4’ and ‘5’. Unfortunately, the statistics in the accounts/BOT returns don’t change in the first half of 1897, but the accounts for the second half of that year show that there was capital expenditure of £162 against the heading ‘rolling stock and continuous brakes’. This could not have been for fitting the required continuous brakes as this was completed in 1894. Also, the sum is remarkably similar to the cost of coaches ‘11’ to ‘14’ noted above and FR’s coaches ‘21’ and ‘22’, all from Ashbury. Such a coach could conceivably have run on the Bryngwyn branch without being photographed.

During the twenties and thirties a vehicle looking a bit like an Ashbury bogie version of a Quarrymen’s coach was left on a siding at Boston Lodge Halt. (Picture on page 1). The late Michael Seymour said “it doesn’t appear to be an FR vehicle, and perhaps it is ex NWNCR”.

This lack of attention to the statistics might also explain why an apparent further coach may have gone unrecorded. The evidence for the existence for such a coach on

Possible corroboration comes from Robert Williams’ 1922 list of NWNCR coaches, in which he noted “closed coaches Nos. ‘3’ and ‘7’.” Could this No ‘3’ possibly be Michael Seymour’s mystery coach at

Picture 10 - Ashbury’s ‘Summer’ coach No 13 (from MacKay)





Boston Lodge? This has to be speculation, but Michael had a point. No. '7' was the 'Workman's, but neither '3' nor '7' saw service with the WHR, doubtless due to the 'rather dilapidated condition' that Williams found them in.

### 1907

1907 was the year of the Pickerings and is unambiguously recorded. The Directors' report of September 1907 says: "During the Half-year two new Composite and Brake Carriages were obtained to replace two of similar construction which had been running since the opening of the line in 1877. The cost, £780, was paid out of moneys in Court representing the renewals reserve." The 1877 carriages were clearly Nos. '1' and '2', but the new ones were numbered '4' and '5' (see separate enclosure for full size reproduction of the order), taking their numbers from the withdrawn 4-wheelers. (It is possible that a chassis from '1' or '2' may have survived to be used on the 1941 demolition train and before that final use, as a 'large timber truck').

### 1909

The accuracy of the statistics now becomes even more questionable with what appears to be a re-think at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1909. No change had been made when the Pickerings arrived in 1907, but now the 'Composites' in the statistics have been increased from two to four. How could this be, unless the original '1' and '2' were still included? The fact that the Pickerings were given new numbers rather than those of the coaches they were replacing lends a little weight to the idea that these old coaches were not immediately scrapped, but simply taken out of regular use. Failing that maybe two 'Thirds' had some seats converted to First Class, (of which we have no evidence), because at the same time the 'Thirds' went down in number from thirteen to eight. Presumably the disappearance of the other three was the deletion of the 4-wheelers. The one 'Tourist Car First Class' – the Gladstone Car, continues in the statistics making a total of thirteen.

### Summary of position in 1909

Composites Nos. '1' and '2' - replaced 1907  
Third class 4-wheelers Nos '3', '4' and '5' - withdrawn c 1897  
Third class 6-wheelers Nos. '6' '7' and '8'  
Third class Workman's No. '7'  
First class Gladstone No. '8'  
Third class Corridors Nos. '9' and '10' of 1893  
Third class Summer Coaches Nos '11', '12', '13' and '14' of 1894  
Third class Mystery 'New Large Coach' acquired 1897

Composites  
Pickering '4' and '5'  
of 1907

This totals sixteen, or fourteen without '1' and '2', in which case, maybe a Cleminson had been withdrawn if the 'thirteen' in the statistics is to be believed.

### 1913

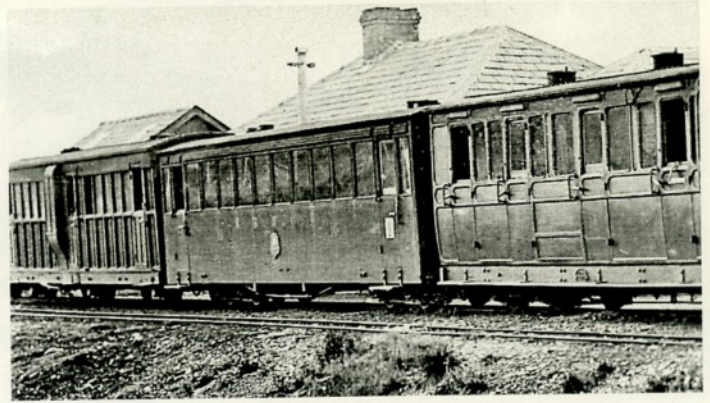
1913 was the year when a change in the law (*the Railway Companies (Accounts and Returns) Act, 1911*) forced new railway accounting and statistics, which hitherto had been governed by Acts of 1868 and 1888. Carriages now had to be sorted between those of a Uniform Class and Composites. The NWNCR now showed eight and five for these with similar comparatives for 1912, suggesting that another 'Composite' had been shown as a 'Third' in the past. It would appear that Corridor No '10' was converted to a 'Composite' around this time, and a well-known Locomotive Publishing Co. Photograph (Picture 11) shows it in this condition. This alteration might be catching up with that change. The eight Uniform Class were returned as seating 424 'Thirds', and the five 'Composites' 67 seats third class and 40 seats first class. This sounds wrong, if the Gladstone was still an all First. So the statistics appear untrustworthy.

### 1917

Peter Liddell reminds us (in his booklet on the Buffet Car) of a quote from Mr Boyd in Narrow Gauge Rails to Portmadoc in which he stated that in 1917 "the following passenger coaches were in storage: two guard's composite vans, one observation, seven glazed and six semi-glazed coaches" - sixteen coaches in total. The semi-glazed would include '8', '11' and '12'. Maybe three others were laid aside and in such poor condition the glass had disappeared, which could also explain sixteen coaches rather than the thirteen in the statistics.

### 1922-1923

The first WHR total returned to the BOT in 1923 is the same as the NWNCR return of 1913 - i.e. thirteen coaches, although the reliability may be questionable. The breakdown is now six Uniform Class, three 'Composites', and four 'Other Vehicles'. Also recorded was a luggage brake van, maybe the "other vehicle attached to passenger trains" in the



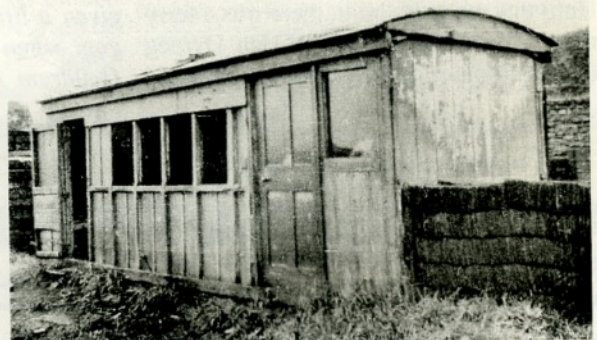
Picture 11 - Ashbury 'corridor' (centre coach) converted to a 'composite'

BOT return of 1902 – 1912 previously mentioned.

William's schedule of 1922 lists actual coaches and totals eleven. His list shows two Pickering Composites, the Gladstone Car, two Corridors, four Summer Coaches and two third class closed coaches Nos. '3' and '7'. Since 1917 five coaches (Composites '1' and '2' and Cleminson's '6', '7' and '8') appear to have been either written off, or ignored, as being unusable and it seems likely that Nos. '3' and '7' quickly disappeared the same way, leaving the nine coaches with which we are familiar viz - Nos. '4', '5' and '8' to '14'.

### Conclusion

Part of the fascination about such subjects is that we know only part of the story, and there is the thrill of the chase - maybe some forgotten document in Gwynedd Archives or obscure newspaper report of a half-yearly meeting (held variously in London, Manchester, Chester and Liverpool) or even some 'new' photographs that will turn up more clues. At least the break-down of rolling stock figures and the Capital Expenditure shown in the accounts, plus the Continuous Brake returns, which have been used as new evidence for this assessment, provide a fresh perspective on an old problem. But one thing is for sure - it is not the end of the story!



Picture 12 - Final resting place for a Cleminson at Dinas in 1934 (Roger Kidner)



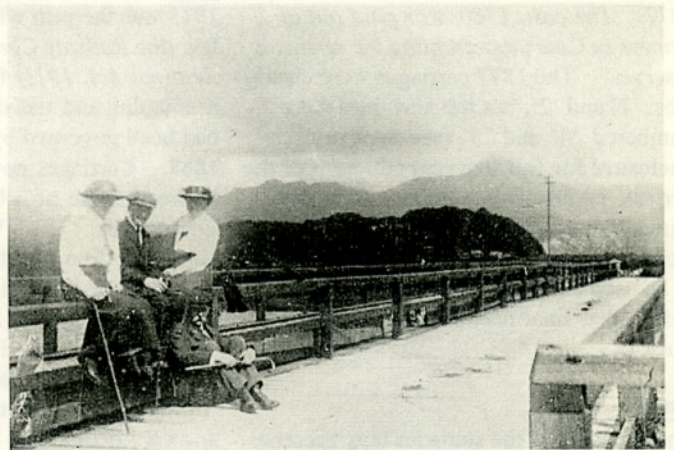


With the installation of the new bridge at Pont Croesor earlier this year, this article takes a look at the two previous structures to have carried a line of rails across the waters of the Afon Glaslyn at this point.

With Portmadoc becoming a thriving port, the need for better transport for his slates caused Hugh Beaver Roberts, owner of the Croesor quarries, to take full advantage of the facilities available there by constructing the Croesor Tramway, completed and opened to traffic in 1864. Up until then, *“slates had been conveyed by horses and wagons down steep slopes from the quarries to Penrhyn along the Morfa road”*, [ref 1], which in those days was little more than a muddy track. The builders of the tramway constructed a wooden bridge at Pont Croesor (locally known as Pont Traeth) to carry the line over the Glaslyn. It remained a purely rail bridge until *“Around 1872 a branch road was built from Garreg Llanfrothen, to go to Glaslyn Bridge, and leading to the Beddgelert to Portmadoc road; this is 2½ miles long”* [ref 2]. The road followed the routes of earlier footpaths, and as there is no evidence of there ever being a ford crossing the river, one may speculate that unofficial use was made of the tramway bridge by those on foot! Pont Traeth must have been widened at this date with the addition of a wooden roadway carried on extensions of the original piers.

Until this road was built, there was a ferry across the Glaslyn near the Hen Dyrepog (Old Turnpike) or Turnpike Uchaf on old

maps, the first cottage on the right after passing the present day Aberdunant Caravan Park on the road to Beddgelert. It was operated by being pulled across on a wire and crossed opposite the confluence of the Glaslyn and Nanmor rivers. Once on the eastern bank, it linked up with a network of footpaths serving Ynysferlas to the south and ultimately the site of the later Hafod y Llyn Halt to the north. A further footpath joined the northern path opposite Hafod y Llyn Isaf, crossing the WHR route where a halt was planned, but never opened. An old census shows a fer-



Pont Traeth (Pont Croesor) – Croesor Tramway period

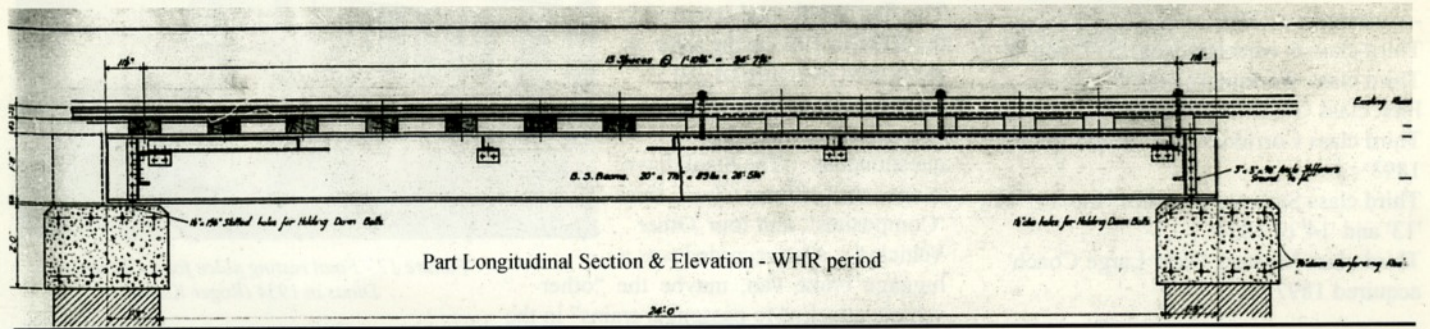
## Derek Lystor explores the evolution of Pont Croesor

ryman living at a house (Turnpike y Traeth on old maps, but present day farm buildings) at the intersection of this road just past the old Glaslyn Hotel. [ref 4].

The road bridge was the scene of a very sad tragedy in its later years as described by John Hughes:- *“Wil was the small boy given a lift by Ifan Owen, Hafod Garegog, when he and Ann Huws, Gareg-Hylldrem Bach, were going to Port in*

*1920. It had rained heavily and the road from Ty Newydd Morfa to Pont Traeth was covered with water. The bridge was a wooden bridge in those days and by the time they arrived, the flood water was ‘bubbling’ through the planks. This frightened the horse and it tried to turn back after it started across the bridge. The result was that the handrail collapsed and the horse & cart, and both Ifan Owen and Ann Huws went over and drowned, but the small boy, Wil Morfa Du, succeeded in jumping from the cart”*. [ref 3].

The WH Heritage Group has been fortunate enough to have had access to the considerable archive of Freeman Fox & Partners, Engineers to the original WHR, and amongst the documents contained therein are plans of both the original Croesor tramway structure and its later WHR replacement. Little has been recorded





about the Tramway bridge other than a brief description given in Major J.C.Spring's report in 1921. However, the Freeman Fox plan shows its construction in some detail.

Built in 1864 as previously mentioned, it was principally a wooden construction of eight 24ft long spans, mounted on seven slate rubble built piers, each 2ft 6ins wide. Each span consisted of a pair of 12in x 12in timbers, at 24in centres, supported on a layer of bedstones on each pier and both abutments. The plans give no clue to how the spans were fixed in place, but successive timbers were linked together by horizontal steel plates. Each beam was "tensioned" by means of a pair of 1in diameter steel bars fixed at each end and joined by a central cast iron strut on the underside. In addition to the main timbers spanning the piers, were a pair of 12in x 6in spans which supported the ends of the timber decking on which 9in x 4in longitudinal sleepers in 4½ft lengths carried the tramway rails. The sleepers had a timber infill topped off with a layer of stone chippings to just below rail height, which gave a firm, safe base for the passage of the horses pulling the slate trains. Finally, on each side of the bridge, there was a post and rail fence approximately 3ft high. At some later date, the piers were extended to 30ft long to accommodate the adjacent road. This was of similar construction to the tramway bridge, with a timber roadway 12ft wide supported on 12in x 12in timber spans, with its own post and rail fence on the downstream side (see photo top of p6).

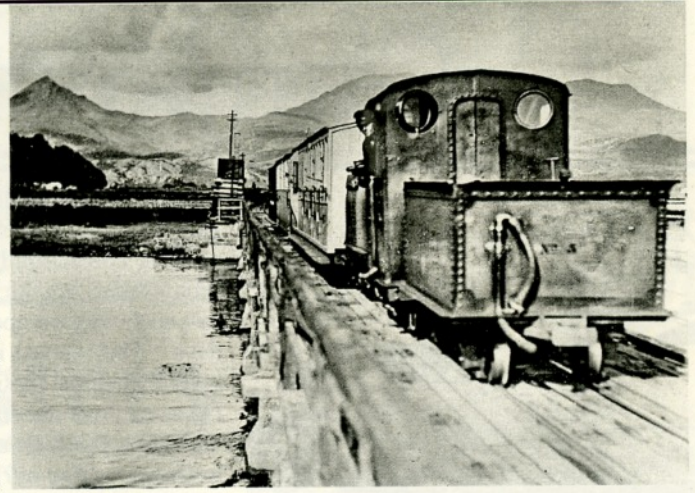
Dated January 1922, the plan makes some references to the state of repair of the bridge. It is noted that the condition of the main spans was "doubtful", some of the 12in x 6in deck supports were split and that some of the supporting bedstones were "displaced and wedged up". The piers are described as being in good preservation, although their condition given in

*Pont Croesor:- Detail of stone piers showing concrete plinths & holding down bolts*



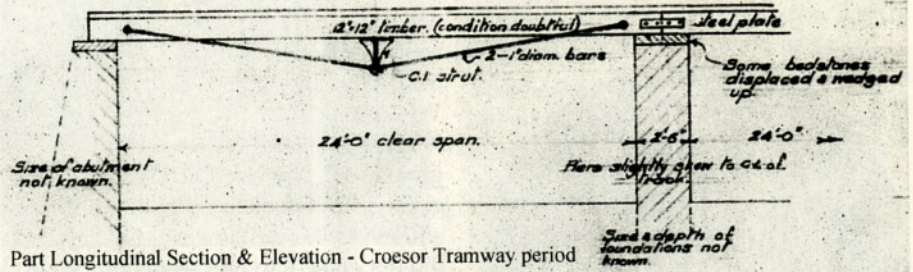
Spring's report is contradictory:-

"The piers are decidedly faulty, having been damaged by floodwater and require re-pointing". He goes on to say that the wooden girders "should be strong enough to take a shunting engine at 5mph". It was also noted that the county council were contemplating reconstructing the bridge at this time and this looks very likely to have happened. Thus the opportunity was taken to replace the rail deck for the new WHR at the same time, it being the only work done on the bridge until the 1940's.



*Welsh Pony & train crossing Pont Croesor in 1934.  
R.W.Kidner*

During 1939, when the question of relieving the FR from its lease obligations and subsequent dismantling of the WHR were



*Part Longitudinal Section & Elevation - Croesor Tramway period*

The new piers were constructed of stone blocks each with the central part of the top having a reinforced concrete plinth cast into it, into which eight 18in long holding down bolts of 1in diameter were set.

The renovated deck was again of eight spans (nominal length 24ft), but were this time constructed of a pair of 89lb/yd steel beams each 20in x 7½in at 37in centres, braced with 3in x 3in x ¾in angle irons arranged in a zigzag pattern. The beams were linked together at their ends by 9in x 3in transverse beams. Each beam end rested on a ¾in thick steel bearing plate and was fixed to the piers by the holding down bolts. The deck was fully clad in timber with 9in x 4½in x 4ft 6in long sleepers with 6in x 6in timber guard rails fixed on top of their ends. The latter were held in place by ¾in hook bolts every third sleeper. Unlike its Croesor Tramway predecessor, no handrails were provided, but the adjacent road was protected by a concrete post and steel rail fence (see photo left).

being discussed by the county council, it was suggested by Portmadoc UDC that the section of track from Croesor Junction to Portmadoc be left in situ as they thought it "practically hopeless" to expect the quarries in the Croesor valley to re-open without a rail link as they possessed no road access. Deudraeth RDC even went as far as suggesting that Parc & Croesor Slate Quarry Co might themselves take over the stretch. In the event the quarries never re-opened and the bridge beams were removed along with the last remaining portion of the WHR between August 1948 and the following August by W.O.Williams of Harlech.

The following information contained in this article, researched and in some cases translated from Welsh, has been very kindly made available by Brian Paul, to whom I offer my sincere thanks.

*Ref 1:- From the Diary of Ioan Brothen (John Jones 1868-1940)*

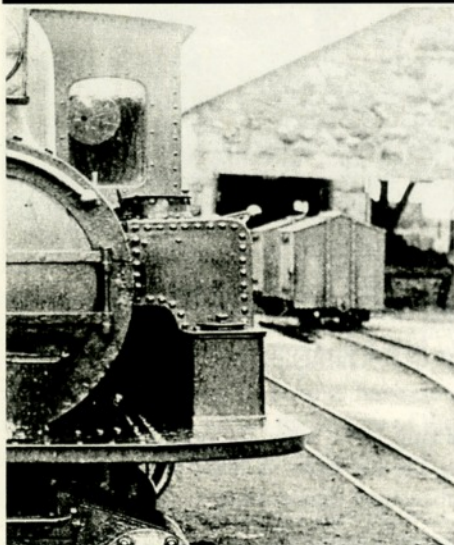
*Ref 2:- Taken from Diwydiannau Coll (Lost Trades & Crafts) of the Area (1941) by Robert Owen, ("Bob Owen - Croesor", 1885-1962). Bob Owen was born in Llanfrothen and worked from the age of sixteen as Clerk at the Parc & Croesor Quarry until closure in 1931, and was an ardent historian.*

*Ref 3:- From the Adventures of John Hughes, Y Wern.*

*Ref 4:- Brian Paul.*



# Gunpowder 'Plot'



looking very much like the Hornby '0' gauge tinplate model of a Saxa salt wagon – is conjecturally described as a 'gunpowder' wagon. In fact there were two such wagons operational in NWNG days. They appear in two known photographs; the pair outside the goods shed at Dinas and one marshalled next to 'Moel Tryfan' at Rhyd Ddu ready for departure to Dinas. (Top left). On the outward journey the wagon – like any wagons should always have been – would have been at the rear of the train; if it had a delivery of gunpowder to make en route then rightly so! Both these photographs are from the

NWNG era and

there is no evidence of these wagons having been taken into WHR stock. It is known that gunpowder was used at Dudley Park quarry and indeed the explosives store still exists there. However Dudley Park did not come into operation until WHR days. Apart from the quarries on Moel Tryfan mountain the two major and potential users of gunpowder in the Gwyfrai valley in the NWNG era would have been Glanrafon – until at least 1916 – and the Betws Garmon iron ore mines, particularly during WW1.

So where is all this leading?! 22 years ago on or near the Welsh Highland trackbed, and possibly near Waunfawr, the illustrated steel disc was discovered. (Left) 20¼" in diameter and 3/32" thick with a ¼" thick strengthening ring around the holed circumference. It is the brass

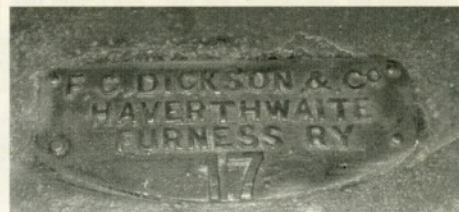


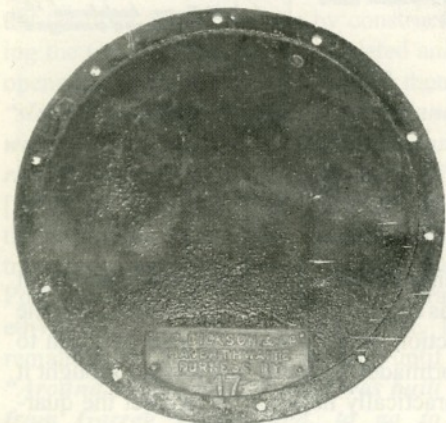
plate that suggests gunpowder; 'F.C. Dickson & Co. Haverthwaite, Furness Ry 17'. (Top right). At Bouth near Haverthwaite was the Black Beck gunpowder works connected to the Lakeside branch of the Furness Railway by a 1½ mile long branch; the wagons were horse-

drawn thus avoiding sparks from locomotives!

One may imagine a container – of which the lid is illustrated – of gunpowder making the standard

gauge journey from Black Beck to Dinas for transhipment. For the sake of keeping it dry this would most likely to have happened in the goods shed using the 30cwt capacity hand-operated crane. What we conjecture to be gunpowder wagons had at least one side of the apex roof hinged; this would have facilitated 'top loading'.

But the foregoing leaves many questions unanswered. Is this an incident from NWNG or WH days? What happened to the rest of the container and why wasn't the lid, at least, 'returned to sender'? Thanks are due to Rob Shaw of the Embasay Steam Railway for advising us of the discovery of this steel disc by one of his members.



Referring to the drawings of WHR rolling stock – most of which was of NWNG origin – produced by the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association there is one obvious omission. This 4-wheeler with its characteristic roof – and

## GETTING IT RIGHT

Those of us who put this quarterly journal together strive to ensure that the information is as accurate as possible based on 'best current knowledge'. After all we declare on every page that we are 'Recording Yesterday for Tomorrow' and who knows that but fifty years hence our modest journal may be a source of accurate reference. In several cases we have been able to correct previously accepted 'facts' and certainly

have been able to elaborate on many.

However, errors do creep in; take journal No 38 for

example. In 'A Scheme is Born' it was stated that carriage No. 28 survived the 1942 disposals. It was of course No. 26 which the FR salvaged from Groeslon in 1955.

The photograph of 'Prince' at the Snowdon Ranger water tower in the same issue shows two bogie carriages. Behind the second carriage is a 4-wheeler, which has been identified as an FR brake van converted from a quarryman's coach.

So dear reader, should you spot an error or an obvious omission please advise the editor so that 'Tomorrow' will thank us for their 'Yesterday'

And here your editor apologises for the omission of the last few words in two article in the last issue. The article on J.E. Simpson concluded with "The train could well be the 2.37pm bound for 'Port'" and that on South Snowdon Station finished

"H.D. Jones would have had ample time to have dealt with the goods and coal traffic at both stations."

Editor : David Allan, 132 Eastham Village Road, Eastham, Wirral, CH62 0AE. Tel 0151 327 3576 Email david.allan132@ntlworld.com

Secretary : John Keylock, Weathervane Cottage, Childswickham, Broadway, Worcestershire, WR12 7HL Tel : 01386 852 428

Membership Secretary : Chris Hazlehurst, 23 Leagate Rd, Gipsy Bridge, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE22 7BU. Tel : 01205 280923 Email Westernpatriarc@aol.com



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R. Y. PICKERING & CO., Limited. WISHAW.

No. of Card Order.	Issued to Mr.	Date.	DESCRIPTION OF ORDER.
71056	Stephen Millar Stark Aikman Mochari Johnston Currie Murray Reid	1904 Jan 14	<p>Build 2 steel underframe Composite Bogie Carriages to Specn No. 682/B5, with alterations as per their letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 1906 and to our Engg Nos. <sup>General</sup> 4229, <sup>General</sup> 4234, <sup>General</sup> 4226, 4234, 4240, 4241, 4244, 4245, 4246, 4249, 4241, 4243, 4249, 4280, 4284, 4285, 4286, 4288, 4296, 4299, 4299-38</p> <p>1. 1st Class, 2. 2nd class or Guards compartment, 30'0" long x 6'0" wide over body. Gauge 1'11 1/2", Central Couplers, Chilled Cast Iron Wheels 20" dia on tread mounted on M.S. Axles, Oil lighting, Side Chains Vacuum Westinghouse Brake, 2 Small side lights at back of Guards compartment, Oil Axle Boxes</p> <p>Colour of Paint as per their letter of 23/3/04.            Painted Nos. 4 &amp; 5.            Lettering N W N G etc see photo</p>
<p>NO TRAIL PARTS F. 2488</p> <p>4366</p> <p>REVE THIS OFF. 1942</p>	<p>Delivery April or May 1904. earlier if possible</p> <p>Delivered G.O. at Dinas</p> <p>To Order of            North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway            Secretary &amp; Managers Office            Glanbeis R.S.D.            Carnarvonshire</p>		

**Confirmation from R.V. Pickering & Co of the original order for NWNG coaches '4' & '5'**

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