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JAMES BOYD'S LEGACY

For those 'in the know' it was accepted that Mr Boyd had willed his railway books and considerable accumulation of paperwork, relating mainly to Welsh narrow gauge railways, to the John Rylands library in Manchester. Based on his long-standing association with that city – in both business and pleasure – the circumstances were understandable. However, apprehension was felt about the library's ability/capacity to catalogue the paperwork and, most importantly, to make it readily available for researchers.

"A variety of gems" - John Keylock reports on Boyd's WHR & FR papers.

Some twenty years had elapsed between the making of the will and Mr Boyd's death in February 2009. The library's scope and capacity had reduced and on viewing the collection they were only agreeable to accepting the books and magazines. Accompanying Mr Boyd's will was a note for the benefit of his solicitor to the effect that one Patrick Keef (of Alan Keef Ltd, Light Railway Engineers) would be a helpful contact having been much involved with the Downs Light Railway. So with the collaboration of, and in conjunction with, Mr Boyd's solicitor and grand-daughter plan 'B' was born.

Inter alia it was agreed that the WHR and FR material should be deposited with Gwynedd Archives in Caernarfon; geographically appropriate and a familiar environment to current researchers. Before being available for public view it would be catalogued by Patricia Lazell-Ward who is currently cataloguing the FR archives in the care of Gwynedd Archives.

It was further agreed that Adrian Gray (FR archivist) and myself could be privy

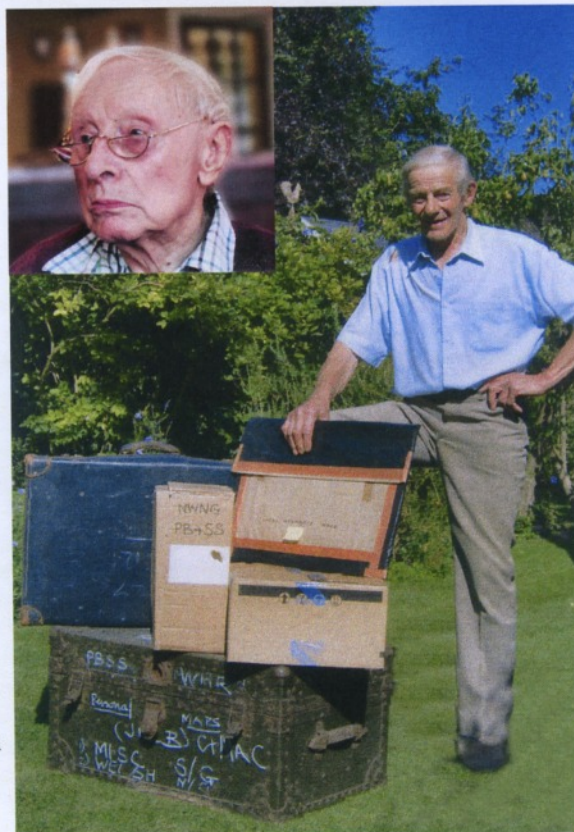
to 'a preliminary look' before the material was taken to Caernarfon by the end of August. And so it was that on Saturday 15th August we met Patrick Keef at 'Rineen', Mr Boyd's bungalow in Colwall, near Malvern. Patrick had mentioned 'a couple of boxes' but we were confronted with three trunks, a suitcase, a large folder and many boxes, the latter containing the source material for Mr Boyd's many books. The trunks I had last seen in the roof space – and marked NWNG and PB&SSR – several years ago. An initial look in some of the containers revealed – as was perhaps anticipated – a variety of 'gems'. Fortunately, Adrian and I have large motor cars which were duly loaded and the material signed for.

Back at home an immediate start was made on 'that preliminary look'. It is something of which I had dreamed, but here was the reality. Thank you James for having started collecting nearly eighty years ago and thank you Patrick for brokering the reality.

It was a year since I had been to 'Rineen' to see James on his birthday. Emotionally the return – and departure for the last time – was not easy, but life - and death - go on.

As a footnote it is appropriate to remind readers that Alan Keef's annual Open Day will be on Saturday September 26th at Lea Line, near Ross-on-Wye - post code HR9 7LQ

Always an interesting and good social event it will feature this year the bare



John Keylock with the boxes of Welsh Highland material described in the article. Inset Jimmy Boyd in September 2008 - both photographs by Susan Morris

bones of the War Department Baldwin which the Company are restoring on behalf of the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway at Gelert's Farm.

Mr Boyd's collection of photographs has been lodged with Oakwood Press where they will keep company with those of Roger Kidner and L.T. Catchpole.

**Next Issue -
Cambrian Crossing
supplement**

Birth of Project - Walk Two

It was the 30th of April, the day before a general election that was to change the face of British politics, but nothing could have been further from the minds of the five who assembled at Tan-y-Ffordd, Betws Garmon to complete the second phase of the survey of the former N.W.N.G. section of The Welsh Highland Railway.

It was a superb April day, sunny and warm, with the Spring-scented air perfumed like a crisp Moselle wine. The spirits were high, and there was an air of expectancy as the group made their way to the trackbed. The team had been joined for this second excursion by new member Alan Donaldson who had a somewhat unfortunate start. Whilst attempting to leap across one of Cedric's drainage ditches a gaiter-clad leg didn't quite make it, and then there was a rather bloody encounter with some inconveniently located barbed wire, and all before a foot had been set on the trackbed itself!

However, having overcome this little baptism the trackbed was regained behind the straight row of cottages, known as Gwyrfai Terrace, to the north of Betws Garmon. The bed was raised a couple of metres above the damper surrounding area which featured a good show of marsh marigolds and flag iris. The way ahead was straight, and clear of vegetation, the bell tower of Betws Garmon church dominated the distant horizon and a couple of local ponies gazed at us with mild interest.

After a small culvert, suddenly there appeared to be a track leading off to the South-west, a rail-built corner post part hidden in the willows 10 yards off the

trackbed seemed to have some significance - was this the tramway to the Hafod-y-Wern slate quarries? No, it was a false alarm but a few yards further on the sleeper marks of the quarry branch became obvious curving sharply to the right and then within fifty yards passing through two rail-built gateposts, rusty sentinels that must have stood for over a hundred years. The trackbed of the branch then passed through a marshy area of aspen and willow to a couple of slate gateposts in the boundary

David Allan continues the story of that 1997 pre-reconstruction survey, written at the time and reproduced unedited.

wall of the adjacent road showing where the branch had crossed the road, presumably by an ungated level crossing. The route of the tramway could be clearly seen, disappearing into the distance and paralleling the access road to Hafod y Wern farm

JK : The branch to Hafod-y-Wern going off just north of Betws Garmon station should not lose its definition, particularly where it left the main line. (The same applies to the Treflan/Carreg quarry branch, adjacent to Cedric's house at Tan y Ffordd)

John Keylock examines the quarry branch to Hafod y Wern at Betws Garmon. Photo Alan Donaldson



Survey party - L to R David Allan, Cedric Lodge, Michael Davies, John Keylock - Photo Alan Donaldson

Back to the main line and the remains of Betws Garmon station building. These were carefully examined; a hole in the floor of the building just inside where the door would have been, was thought to have been a cellar, later known to have been simply the space under a sprung floor. The southern side wall was intact to the eaves and much of the rear wall also. The base of the signal cabin to the north of the station was discovered and the grass-covered slate edging to the platform was also located. Sleeper marks delineated the path of the loop behind the station building. The station approach from the road was via an overgrown and barely passable path, adjacent to which was a length of leaning rusty rail, which had once carried the sign guiding optimistic travellers to the station.

Immediately after leaving the station the Gwyrfai river was crossed by the first of three bow-string girder bridges which traversed the river between Betws Garmon and Plas-y-Nant. As the transverse girders had been removed the party elected to cross this bridge by walking on top of the 'bow', a precarious exercise, not recommended for the over fifties!

The trackbed remained elevated above the marshy ground, and a substantial stone-built, five-arched, flood relief feature highlighted just how wet this area could be. A hundred yards on, the Waunfawr - Beddgelert road crossed the line by means of an unusual 'jack arch' constructed girder bridge, supported on stone-built abutments with a curious triangular plate inserted between the girder and the top of the supporting walls. The girder was inscribed "De Winton Carnarvon" 1873". The parapets guarding the road were of corrugated iron. What I wonder guarded the road on the original 1870s bridge? (M.D. -

“corrugated iron! - Surely this *is* the original bridge?”)

JK : ‘De Winton & Co 1873’ cast into the metal road overbridge beam south of Betws Garmon station is a delightful little feature; one envisages the beam painted black with the lettering picked out in white. (M.D. “Hear Hear!”)

We did not attempt to walk under this bridge because of the very thick boscage and the sensitivities of the owner of the caravan park through which the next section of the trackbed ran. Instead we walked up the path by Betws Garmon Church where Michael commented that the dates on one of the gravestones indicated that the deceased had been buried during the heyday of the line at the turn of the century. It would be interesting to explore the churchyard to examine the gravestones to see if there was any railway connection (likewise the parish records). (JK suggests that the FR’s Bessie Jones is buried here).

A signpost on the main road indicated a footpath into the caravan park which we elected to follow in spite of the alleged unfriendliness of the owner. A less than happy lady in a small Hitachi van shepherded us on to the route of the footpath through the site, but not before we had examined the road overbridge which had become a feature in the middle of the site. The trackbed had been part filled in under the bridge and the whole thing looked very odd indeed!

JK : I think that we must accept that the road overbridge within the caravan park will have to be demolished (M.D. - “Why?”) but surely it will provide some material for rebuilding elsewhere? (M.D. - “I would have thought a feature could be made of this bridge. However the cost of deepening the trackbed is probably too high to justify”)

Precarious position for a picture at Betws Garmon station! Photo Alan Donaldson



Examining the map on the approach to Salem halt. Note the rail-built diagonal stiles centre right. Photo David Allan

We walked over a small ‘pitch-and-put’ golf course and then down the side of an extension to the playing area and back onto the trackbed - at least some of us did. Alan and John continued to walk on the course and were immediately confronted by the shepherdess in the van who took umbrage at this damaging trespass, and after a brief conversation they quickly joined the rest of the party within the sanctuary of the fenced trackbed!

At the end of this length, which was contiguous with the caravan park land, we were greeted with a firmly-fenced, barbed-wire topped, strip across the trackbed. Wire cutters would have been useful, however we successfully negotiated this barrier by several ingeniously individual efforts and came to rest on a rail-built stile behind the new water works buildings.

Following this pause for breath, the walk resumed and we quickly located the track of a tramway to the left of the line (facing Rhyd ddu). This tramway served the Gareg-fawr & Ystrad Ironstone and Copper Mines - which Boyd

describes as “rabbit holes” - in a fold in the hillside high above. The lines of a siding, parallel to the track, could just be discerned. (C.L. This may be an alternative route to the Treflen and Carreg quarries). The line now ran straight to the next feature, the second of the three bow string river bridges.

JK : 3-arch flood relief culverts on south side of Cai Hywel bowstring.

The bridge was crossed and a further straight section ended in a spectacular ‘S’ curve with the river in full view to the left and across it the hamlet of Salem. The sleeper marks were clearly visible on the formation and also prominent here were some forlorn rail-built gateposts now serving no particular purpose as the accompanying fencing had long since gone, also a similarly useless, but quite imposing rail-built diagonal stile. An interesting feature of this latter object was that the left hand stile (facing Rhyd ddu) was set below the level of the formation and there was the remains of a footpath sloping down from the trackbed to the stile. It was clear that the footpath then ran through a gap in a wall fifty yards away and on to the wooden footbridge which crossed the river and which led to Salem.

Walking on for two hundred yards or so to the house on the right (Bryn Afon) where we had a conversation with the occupier. He was in ill health and not too enthusiastic about the rebuilding of the railway.

Immediately prior to this property was the site of Salem halt - see old photograph of multi coloured coaches picking up either a passenger, or more likely the guard, Daffyd Lloyd Hughes, posing as, or being mistaken for, a passenger.



Michael Davies navigates the bow bridge at Betws Garmon. Photo David Allan

A hundred yards further is Salem quarry, a source of ballast for the railway and into which at the southern end ran a short trailing siding, the remains of which were barely visible.

A sheepfold shown in a Caernarvonshire records office photo, published in Boyd's book (South Caernarvonshire), is still in existence and the party was able to pin point the site of the photographer. The picture shows a mixed train heading south. Associated with the sheepfold is a beautifully preserved sheep creep under the line, guarded on the east side by a pair of rail-built gateposts.

JK : More ladder stiles, sheep and cattle creeps. The sheep creep in association with the sheep fold by the old quarry just south of Salem halt is a particularly nice feature.

The formation now curves to the left on a high embankment supported by a magnificent stone built wall, then dives under a road bridge which carries a rough track to Pen-y-Gaer. The curve now reverses sharply, and with the river beneath and with a concealed World War 2 pill box on sentinel duty overhead, sweeps round on another very sharp reverse curve to cross the last of the bow string bridges and on to the site of Plas-y-Nant halt.

It was just before this bridge that the party stopped for lunch, beneath yet another pill-

Pause for lunch at Plas Y Nant. Photo Alan Donaldson



lunch has a particular significance in the annals of the WH Heritage group because it was during the course of this repast, like all the best decisions, that it was decided to form the Group!

After lunch the river was crossed and a notice advertising that the railway was to be reconstructed was examined. We also looked at the site of Plas-y-Nant halt of which little remained expect the possibility of some slate platform edging and also another flood relief feature just to the south of the bridge.

Then came a straight length of several hundred yards, at the far end of which the trackbed appeared to widen, this could have been the site of another siding. (M.D. - "a siding, unconnected, is shown on 25" map - surveyed circa 1920. Boyd asserts that this was possibly to serve the small Plas y Nant quarry, whose waste tip comes to a point approx 100 yards across the adjoining field".) The line then curved to the left, through quite a deep cutting and on across a flat plain to the skewed road-bridge just before the site of the 1877/78 temporary terminus at 'Old Quellyn'. This was a fascinating location in quite a deep cutting but certainly wide enough for two tracks and a siding with a walled and terraced embankment to the left and a steep bank to the right. Under the bank was located a pile of rusty rail of various weights, however there was nothing to link it to the original Welsh Highland.

One of the stones of the abutment of this bridge had been engraved with the stone mason's initials - a poignant reminder of the aura of

box, guarded by the remains of a mount for a Blacker Bombard mortar gun. There was another such mount in an emplacement above the trackbed - clearly this would have been a difficult position for the Panzers to overcome!

optimism surrounding the construction of the original NWNG line.

Just beyond the exit from the station another pair of gateposts straddled the track but there were neither gates nor fence to lend any authority to their presence. The trackbed now ran on a low mound straight across a sheep-infested field and it was here that the first of many culverts was in evidence draining the water from the mountains above.

Then through a gate, across a lane and into another field. The railway embankment was slightly higher here, however our pleasant dreams of hissing steam trains and creaking coaches were rudely interrupted by an all together more modern form of transport, one of those four wheeled mountain motorbikes complete with somnolent sheep dog and a rider whose accent owed more to the English midlands than rural Wales. (Michael says that he is surprised at my conclusion here, he suggests that the



The official 'Notice of Reconstruction at Plas y Nant. Photo Alan Donaldson

rider sounded more like a young North Walian - maybe Professor Higgins could arbitrate!) Perhaps with a slight air of menace he enquired what we thought we were doing walking across his field, that there was no right of way and that the railway couldn't have given us permission because it didn't own the land etc.

It was far too nice a day to enter into a heated argument and in spite of our odd appearance he soon realised that we were not sheep rustlers but just a rather eccentric group of walkers and after an exchange of comments on the weather and on the sort of lambing he'd had we were soon on our way again.

Across another lane, over a stile and onto the official footpath which the trackbed now seemed to have become. Within a hundred yards was 'Snowdon Ranger' station building. This had been well preserved because of its use as a holiday home. An oddity here was the absence of the yellow Ruabon brick which on other



Marking up the map at Pen y Gaer bridge - photo Alan Donaldson

N.W.N.G. buildings defined the corners of the buildings and the door and window surrounds. Either side of the windows on the railway side of the buildings were iron "hinges" driven into the wall. There was no explanation for their presence. Michael wondered if the name 'Snowdon Ranger', the original name of the station, could be reinstated under the roof. We also located the site of the water tower and the siding which served the station.

The way was now steepening noticeably with the original stone walls bordering the track topped with short iron fence posts, many of the bases of which were formed with NWNG fishplates. An underpass led a footpath under the trackbed and down towards Bron y Fedw farm and there were numerous culverts to record.

JK : Note Bron y Fedw farm water wheel (for mill?). The OS map shows a reservoir, sluice and leat.

The terrain was now becoming altogether more rugged. A marshy section followed amid some shrubby trees and then suddenly we were confronted with the magnificent sight of Glan-yr-Afon bridge.

The party had a short rest here whilst David scrambled down the steep banks of the Glanrafon gorge to the river below in order to take some pictures of the bridge which a few weeks later would have been more

difficult as the trees became covered in leaf.

An interesting feature of the bridge was a pedestrian underpass at the Southern end which led, via a well kept path, to Glan yr Afon, the large farm a short way down the valley.

One of the large dressed stones which was a part of the supporting wall at the Rhyd ddu end of the bridge

had fallen away and clearly this, and indeed the whole structure, would need some attention. It will be interesting to ascertain the plans for the bridge as it is clearly a most imposing feature.

Shortly after the bridge came the remains of Glan-yr-Afon quarry. An incline from the quarry led to the weigh house built in N.W.N.G. style - granite, with yellow Rubabon brick at the corners. The weigh house seemed to be located equidistant from either end of the siding area, which must have fanned out from the bottom of the incline. This was a very wide area which must have seen a lot of activity when it was working.

The trackbed here is supported by a stone built retaining wall which we understand is showing signs of bellying out. We are advised that there are plans are to divert the new railway away from its original course and move it onto the ground which may have been occupied by the quarry siding area.

JK : Glan-yr-afon sidings - a lot to be preserved even though the track may have to be moved 'in board' from the embankment. And then the bridge - words fail me! Obviously a lot of trees will have to be cut down to provide a 'loading gauge'. It would seem essential that a 'tree specialist' be engaged to advise - as the Talylyn have done - and further necessary felling for safety and the provision of passenger vistas. (M.D. Fully agree).

The splendid views and the warm weather were beginning to take their toll, however the party kept manfully to its task and dutifully recorded the next point of interest which was a siding area parallel with, and a couple of feet above, the main track. Was

there a loop here? (M.D. No loop - a facing siding, engine was always to be at Dinas end when shunting). And was the slate off loaded from the quarry trucks and onto the N.W.N.G. vehicles? The workings which the siding served was the Rhosclogwyn Slate Quarry.

Close observation was kept now in order to pin point the site of several of John's old photographs, including views looking down the valley towards Quellyn lake and in particular the posed picture of the demolition train. When this position was identified another picture was taken featuring the survey party. This was a sort of deja vue idea, an image separated by 56 years, of closure and renaissance, linked by the timeless continuity of the trackbed.

However journey's end was now beckoning. A beautiful sweeping curve through the bog, and rock encrusted territory followed by a reverse curve led to the terminus of the North Wales Narrow Gauge line at the remote village* of Rhyd ddu.

* in original version Rhyd ddu was described as a 'hamlet'. M.D. suggested that 'hamlet' be changed to 'village', he comments "it had a post office!"

It is wonderful to contemplate that William Ewart Gladstone may well have set out by rail from a busy, bustling Euston in 1892 and ended up, still by rail, at this tiny place set amongst the wild and wonderful scenery of this desolate part of Snowdonia.

To end the day, Cedric had arranged for tea and biscuits at Dave Kent's isolated farm house just off the Rhyd ddu path to Snowdon and it was perhaps fitting that our thirst was first quenched by a glass of pure cold water, direct from the slopes of Snowdon herself.

NEW WELSH HIGHLAND DVD

Member David Huntbatch of Belhurst Productions has produced a fantastic new Twin Pack DVD

With a running time of two and a half hours this must be a bargain at £21. Disc one features activity at Gelert's Farm and from Caernarfon to Rhyd Ddu, while disc two covers the line from Rhyd Ddu to Hafod y Llyn

Available from John Keylock, Weathervane Cottage, Childswickham, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7HL

Price £21 includes post and packing



Journey's end at Dave & Gina Kent's delightful period farmhouse at Fridd Isaf. Photo Alan Donaldson

PB&SSR - Portmadoc Branch

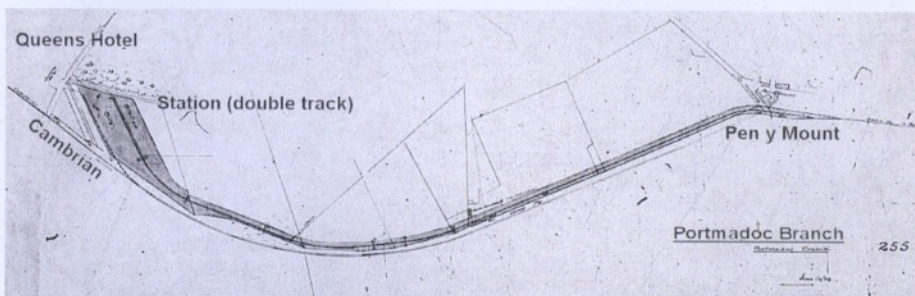
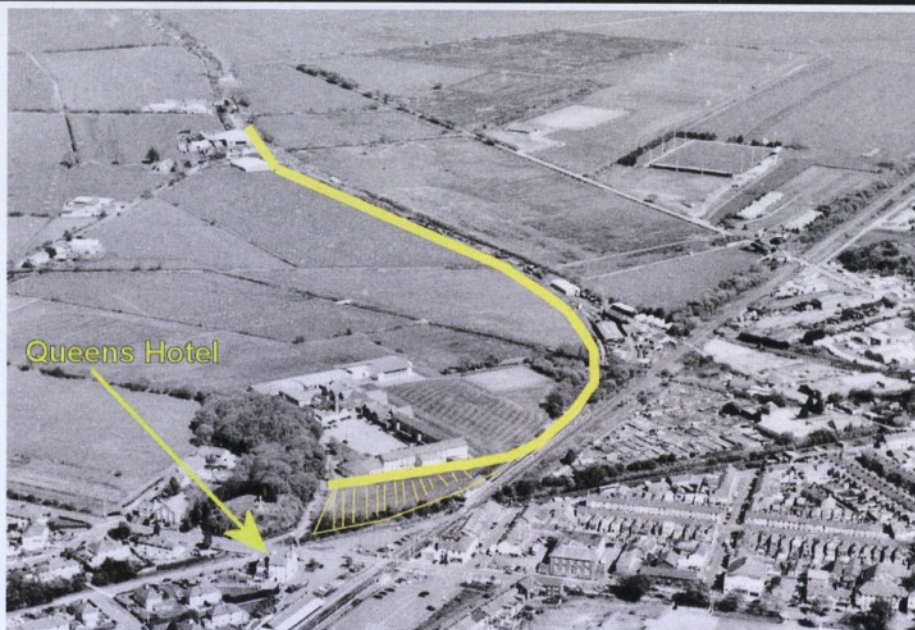
The plan 295-84 simply states "Portmadoc Branch" in the bottom right hand corner, and a date that appears to read June 20th 1904. There is nothing to identify it as the work of a particular consultancy but it was possibly by Harper Brothers, consultants to Sir Douglas Fox and Partners.

There were several attempts by the P.B.S.S.R. company to promote railways between Portmadoc and Beddgelert, and to other destinations from those points. The first was in 1901 and would have run from Black Rock Sands via Morfa Bychan, Borth y Gest, Portmadoc and the Croesor Tramway to Beddgelert. Here it would have connected with the South Snowdon Quarries in the Gwynant Valley.

By 1903 a revised scheme was put forward to link up with the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway's extension to Beddgelert. A further revision was approved in 1904, by which time the vision of an electric railway to Black Rock Sands had been dropped. I believe the latter scheme may be the reason why the name "Portmadoc Branch" was given to the spur leading towards the G.W.R. station.

The "Portmadoc Branch" shown on the plan was never built, but if constructed would have been integral to the P.B.S.S.R. It would have left the Croesor Tramway at Pen-y-Mount, and terminated close to the Cambrian Railways' main line station at Port. The 1904 plan indicates a railway following an alignment to the north side of the "Camb Ry", that is the standard gauge Beddgelert Siding occupied today by the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway.

A deposited plan for the earlier and equally abortive Portmadoc Beddgelert & Rhyd Ddu Railway, published in Johnson [1], shows a terminus located on the Tremadog Road side of Y Cyt. This location was repeated by the P.B.S.S.R. in its own deposited plans, which allowed for a "Railway No. 1, 5 furlongs 1 chain from Pen y Mount, parallel to the standard gauge Cambrian siding, to a location on the former Gorseddau Railway, opposite the Queen's Hotel at Portmadoc". The line would have ended on the alignment of the Gorseddau, where a footpath crosses the W.H.H.R. car park in modern times. The 1904 plan deviates from this and shows the Portmadoc Branch ending in the field



on the far side of Y Cyt, on the site of the Ysgol Eifionydd school building of today. This is on the *opposite* side of the outcrop of rock known as Ynys Galch or Ynys-calch. The reason for the change isn't known, but it would have meant a longer walk between stations.

Richard Watson interprets another of the Freeman Fox drawings

The track layout shown comprises a simple run-round loop with no siding accommodation for goods traffic, and platform arrangements are not shown. The plan omits the Cambrian main line and the Croesor Tramway south of Pen-y-Mount, probably for clarity.

The "section" drawing 295-85 is not particularly illuminating though still worthy of comment. The lie of the land is such that gradients would be close to non-existent at most places, the exception being at about one-fifth the distance from the Portmadoc terminus. Here a land drain occasioned a dip with a short gradient of 1 in

200; with a further adverse stretch of 1 in 261.5 near Pen-y-Mount.

At Pen-y-Mount the accommodation road was to be lowered by 2'6" and a farm building half way down the line earmarked "to be demolished".

Had the line been built, it is interesting to consider how the Croesor traffic might have been handled following electrification, as it seems unlikely that horse drawn traffic could have continued "under the wires" from Croesor Junction. It is possible that a Ganz electric loco could have "tripped" quarry traffic, but electrification of the Croesor would have been needed between Pen-y-Mount and Beddgelert Siding. It is more likely that an FR "England" loco would have ventured to Croesor Junction to pick up wagons destined for Beddgelert Siding, Portmadoc Harbour, and perhaps as far as Minffordd.

References

[1] Johnson, Peter. An Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway. OPC, 2002.

Special to Croesor Junction

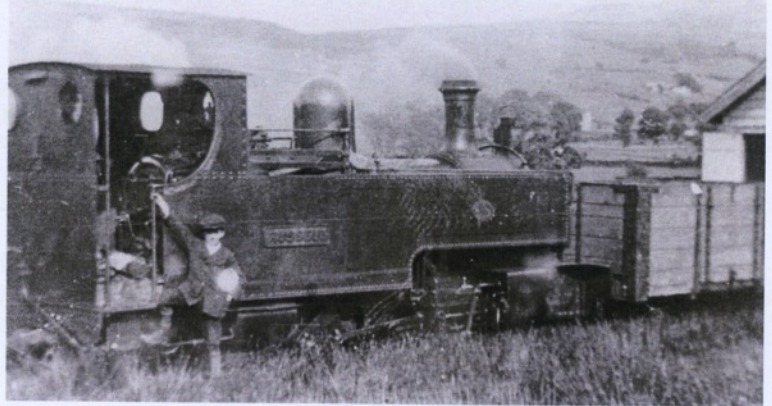
For March 1928 we are fortunate to have driver's logs / waybills for journeys from Dinas to Bryngwyn, Beddgelert and Croesor Junction. Although trips to Bryngwyn – departing from Dinas at 9.43am and returning by 12.40pm – would seem to have been a daily occurrence those to Beddgelert and Croesor Junction happened only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Analysis of the movement of goods suggests that this was an even more than adequate service!

The trip to Beddgelert and Croesor Junction – left Dinas at 12.45pm thus allowing fifteen minutes to coal and water the locomotive if necessary after its return from Bryngwyn and assemble the train. The logs concerned indicate that one departure was delayed by ten minutes. This train always incorporated Pickering brake composite no 9, described by the guard as 'compo van No 9' with working vacuum brake but 'no lights'. The guard was Dafydd Lloyd Hughes and the driver 'Willie Hugh' Williams. Of the two recorded Croesor Junction trips '590' hauled the first on Thursday 1st March and Russell the other on Tuesday 27th. Indeed, Russell took over all 'freight' duties from 6th suggesting that the Baldwin '590' was in need of care and attention.

On 1st March, in addition to the Pickering, the train was made up of two loaded 'covered goods wagons' and two empties for goods or coal. One of the covered goods wagons/vans was detached at Waunfawr with goods for Dudley Park

Quarry – the operation recorded as having taken four minutes. Even though nothing was detached it is recorded that a minute or two was spent at every station – but not halt. Timetabled arrival at Beddgelert was 2.05 but the train was twenty minutes late before spending thirteen minutes detaching on of the loaded 'covered goods' and attaching two empty goods/coal wagons. Nevertheless arrival at Croesor Junction was 3.05pm as per the working timetable. Here the two empty goods/coal wagons were detached – left to be collected by the 'bottom shunter'?

Having attached three loaded slate wagons and two loaded goods/coal opens' the train departed north at 3.20 on schedule. It would seem that water was taken at Beddgelert before arriving late at Waunfawr to attach three empty coal wagons – which had to be extracted from the coal siding – and one empty timber wagon/'bogie trolley'. Furthermore one loaded slate wagon had to be shunted into the coal siding and further shunting in-



Russell shuts a coal wagon at Waunfawr pre 1923

John Keylock describes trips on the line from 1928 Driver's Logs

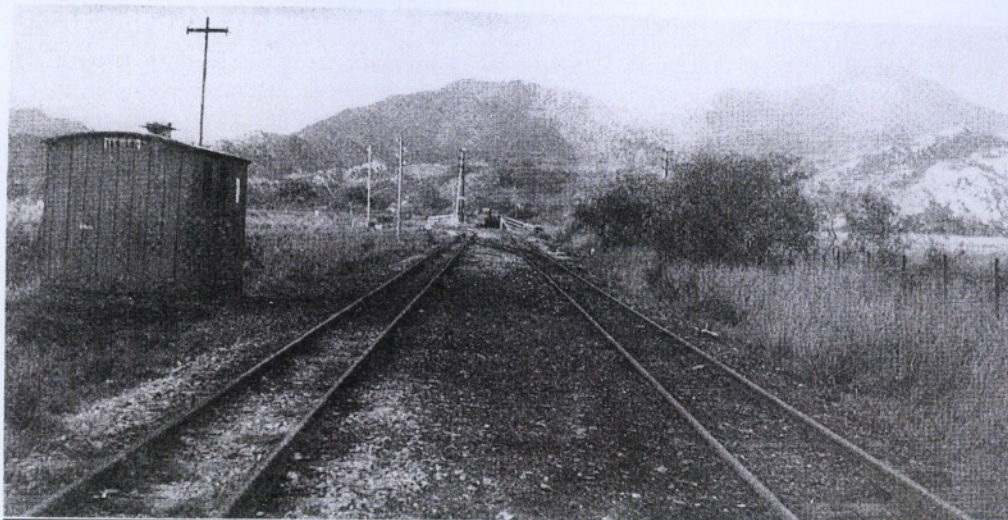
involved 'two loads of cement from Dudley' (Park). Perhaps inevitably return at Dinas was late; 5.42pm as opposed to 4.33pm.

The second recorded through trip to Croesor Junction is described as 'special'. The train left Dinas with two loaded slate wagons and two loaded 'goods/coal opens'; one containing oil drums. Attached at Waunfawr was an empty bogie trolley and an empty 'goods'. The train was half an hour late at Beddgelert where 'shunting warehouse' was undertaken. The empty bogie trolley was detached; likewise the oil in a slate wagon suggesting that it had in fact been thus transported from Dinas.

Arrival at Croesor Junction was twelve minutes late and the two loaded slate wagons were detached and three loaded timber wagons/bogie trolleys attached. Running late on the return four minutes were spent at Beddgelert before stopping at Waunfawr to shunt and attach an empty goods/coal open. Arrival back at Dinas was forty five minutes late.

From all the recorded journeys from Dinas to Beddgelert and Croesor Junction only on one occasion was the passenger accommodation used; three people from Beddgelert to Salem! Only on one day was it 'wet'; otherwise the weather was 'fair' or 'fine'.

Croesor Junction with its FR coach body acting as a shelter cum goods shed



Understanding the Welsh Names for WH Stations & Halts



Site of Hafod Ruffudd Halt

In Welsh ears many of the place names along the WHR evoke a picture in the imagination of the area, or remind one of its history. To the English they may just look difficult to pronounce, let alone understand. So join me on a trip along the line and enjoy the names with me.

Dinas means fort or refuge; did some ancient Britons build here I wonder as we leave? Before we get to Tryfan Junction we mustn't forget the unofficial stop for the locals at Wernlas Wen - White Marshland. Nearby is Wernlas Ddu, the black one! The Junction takes its name from Moel Tryfan, the mountain above it. Moel means bald and there is certainly a dearth of trees up there. Tryfan is a difficult one but it probably means prominent or obvious place. To the locals Tryfan Junction was always called Tyddyn Gwydd, after the small farm close by. Gwydd means goose and evidence from early maps supports this meaning. However some locals in the past referred to it as Tyddyn y Gwydd which means the weaver's farm. The present owners are sure it means Goose Farm so let's stick with that! In our imagination we could take the branch to Rhostryfan, the Heath of Tryfan, and go on to Bryngwyn.

Bridge over the Afon Gwyrffai at Plas y Nant



There are many places of this name in Wales, just as there are many of its meaning in England; Whitehill. So back along the main line to Waunfawr. This is Greatmoor, a good description of the area above the village. Then we come to Betws Garmon, Would you believe me if I told you that Betws is English? It's a corruption of bedehouse, from the old English bede which means prayer. Garmon was Ger-

manus of Auxerre who came to Britain around 430AD. Did he ever have a prayer house here? Maybe not, but whoever did named it after him.

By now the train is passing Plas y Nant halt where I look for Brook Place. Sure enough there is a farm on the left, but that's Plas Isaf. In England Isaf would be Nether so we need to look further up for the Plas right by the

Nant that tumbles down the gully where the quarry was. The

tramway to it passed by Ty'n y Weirglodd farm, Meadow House.

After passing the lake, we reach Bron-y-Fedw, Birch Brow and the old quarry siding at Glanrafon, Riverbank, and then up to Rhyd Ddu. Do you find this one difficult? Say, "Reed Thee" and you will not be far off! Black Ford is its meaning and it's here the road crosses Afon Gwyrffai, but now on a bridge.

In our minds the train moves on, and soon we pass Pitt's Head, the rock said to resemble William Pitt the Younger. Then we come to Beddelert, named Gelert's Grave from the story of Prince Llewelyn's dog. The story is most probably a legend, but Llewelyn the Great did rule these parts

for 40 years around 1200 AD.

Moving on we cross Brynyfelin bridge. This is Mill Hill. Does anyone know where the mill was? So on through the tunnels to reach Nantmor, which probably means Greatbrook; though it could mean Seabrook. Then there are two places called Hafod, Hafod y

Llyn and Hafod Garegog. Hafod means Summer Dwelling (Remember to pronounce it havod; a single f gives this sound. That's why we need ff for that other railway!). These were farms that were used seasonally, some down by the coast and others high on the mountains. Animals would be moved from a base farm (the Hendre) for the summer season. Here we have Hafod by Lake and Stony Hafod. Hafod Ruffudd which we passed earlier presumably belonged to someone called Gruffudd.

Now we enter Traeth Mawr, Great Beach, which was a large tidal estuary before the Porthmadog Cob was built. The high tides filled it all the way up to Croesor Junction and beyond. The small mounds on the plain were once islands; Ynysfor, near its



Nantmor cutting

halt, is Big Isle and Ynys Fach, Little Isle, lies nearby. Ynysferlas, the old name for Hafod Garegog halt, is Short Isle. It lies further upstream and would also have been an island at high tide.

As we glide along Traeth Mawr, on the hill to the left we glimpse that village on the FR with the wonderful name of Penrhyndudraeth. This describes its position so well, Headland-of-two-beaches, with Traeth Mawr on our side and Little Beach, the Traeth Bach estuary on the other. Porthmadog may take its name from the 19th century entrepreneur William Maddocks who developed Tremadog and built the Cob. However some say that the Port's name is much older and is taken from an island in Traeth Mawr called Ynys Madog after a famous resident, the 12th century Prince Madog ap Owain Gwynedd. Some locals will tell you that he sailed the Atlantic and discovered America about 1170, but it's a story with about as much foundation as the one about his relative's dog Gelert. Even so Welsh Highland Heritage goes back a long way!

Extracts from Ward Lock & Co's "Red Guides"

The former publishing house Ward, Lock & Co. once produced a series of pocket tourist guides covering different areas of Britain. Detailed maps complemented the text and gave additional information to the tourist. The books were popularly known as the "Red Guides" from the colour of the cloth covers.

Two such guides - "North Wales, Northern Section, 1921-22 and 1937-38", give interesting insights into the role of the N.W.N.G.R. and W.H.R. in the tourist industry of the day. The information wasn't exactly up to date, though: passenger services on the N.W.N.G ceased on 31.10.1916 - five years before the 1921/22 edition was published, and the W.H.R. shut the shop on 26.09.1936, the year before the 1937/38 version came out. In fairness, the 1921 edition does say that round trip tickets "may be resumed" - perhaps this was an oblique reference not only to a proposed revival of passenger services, but also to the opening of the WHR

Richard Watson Takes a look at early Tourist Guides

Notice that the spelling of Carnarvon had become Caernarvon by 1937, Rhyd-ddû had lost the circumflex over the "u", and Quellyn had become Cwellyn. Place name spellings are as printed.

From 1921/22 series

CARNARVON TO BEDDGELERT AND LLANBERIS

A motor bus runs on weekdays between Carnarvon and Beddgelert. Half a mile from the town it passes Llanbeblig Parish Church. At Waenfawr, some four miles from Carnarvon, the road crosses the River Gwyrfaï and the North Wales Narrow-Gauge Line

Llyn Quellyn

....A mile beyond the lake is the wayside village of Rhyd-ddû, consisting almost entirely of quarrymens' cottages and an inn. It is the site of Snowdon station, on the Narrow-Gauge Railway, and is within 3½ miles of the summit of Snowdon, the path to which may almost wholly be seen.

THE ASCENT OF SNOWDON

...Round trip tickets used to be issued, available on both the Snowdon Mountain Railway and the North Wales Narrow

Gauge line on the other side. As these may be resumed it is worth pointing out that the railways do not connect, the terminus of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway being not at the summit, but at the foot of Snowdon.

....2. The Snowdon Ranger (Quellyn Lake Station) Route

....The ascent begins near the Quellyn Lake Station on the North Wales Narrow-Gauge Railway, which joins the London and North-Western line at Dinas Junction, 3 miles south of Carnarvon.

....3 From Beddgelert or Snowdon Station

The distance to the summit from Beddgelert is 6½ miles, from Snowdon Station it is 3½ miles.....Snowdon Station is on the narrow-gauge line mentioned above.

From 1937/38 series

APPROACHES TO THE DISTRICT

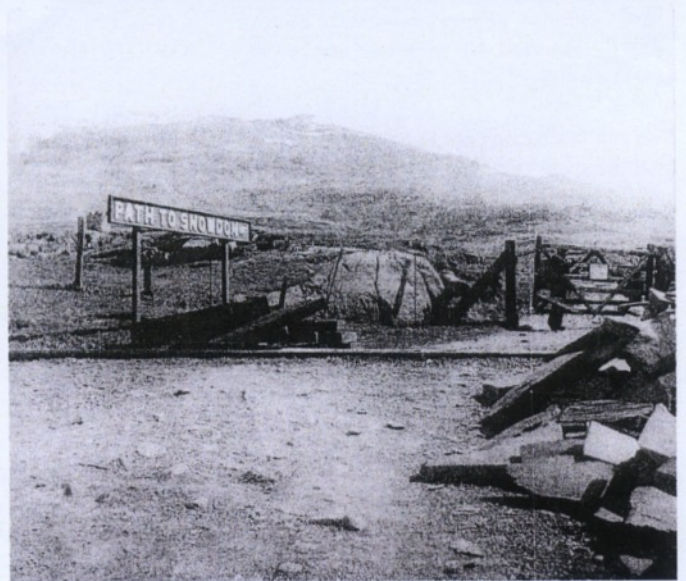
Buses connect the (L.M.S.) railway with such places as Capel Curig and Beddgelert, and the various rising resorts along the Anglesey coast, while Beddgelert is also served by the Welsh Highland Railway*, connecting the G.W.R. with the L.M.S. at Dinas, 3 miles south of Caernarvon.

BEDDGELERT

Access:- By motor-bus from Caernarvon or from Portmadoc, also viâ Pen-y-Gwryd, from Capel Curig and Llanberis, By Welsh Highland Railway (when open) from Portmadoc or from Dinas Junction, 3 miles south of Caernarvon on L.M.S. Distances:- Rhyd Ddu (South Snowdon Station), 4 miles, Bettws-y-Coed, 17½; Portmadoc 8; Caernarvon 13.

THE ASCENT OF SNOWDON

Access:-..... (1) The western walking routes up Snowdon are served by the bus between Caernarvon and Beddgelert and by the Welsh Highland Railway*(2) Next in point of ease is the Snowdon Ranger Path from Llyn Cwellyn. It is inclined to be wet, but has the advantage of good views, while buses and Highland Railway* (sic) pass its foot.....



Rhyd ddu - 'Path to Snowdon' - courtesy of Peter Johnson

.....(3) The South Snowdon Route (which incorporates the Beddgelert path) is less easy than the others, but throughout commands grand views. There is a little ridge-walking towards the top, but nothing to disturb ordinary folk. This is served by bus and Highland Railway* (sic)

*A footnote reads - "As the railway is frequently closed, enquiry should be made as to current arrangements".

Footnote: Both editions carry a John Bartholomew map entitled 'Snowdon - Showing Paths To Summit'. The 1921 map shows the line terminating at "Snowdon" but the 1937 map had been updated to show the railway passing through Beddgelert, and beyond. "Snowdon" had become "South Snowdon" but the railway is described on both maps as the rather American - sounding "N. Wales Narrow Gauge Railroad". The Snowdon Mountain Railway is described as a "Steam Tramroad". The 1937 map includes "Pitts Head Sta." and "Hafod Ruffydd Sta." (sic). Another curiosity in another map to be found in these editions is the existence of a station at Bryngwyn - apparently still open for passenger business as late as 1937!

These extracts have been obtained from Ward Lock & Co's "Illustrated Guide Books" for North Wales (Northern Section) for the years 1921/22 and 1937/38; the authors are unknown. All attempts to locate a copyright holder in this title were unsuccessful.

For further extracts from old guide books refer to Welsh Highland Heritage journals No.6, No. 18 & No. 27

More on Single Line working over the NWNGR.

Following my article in the last journal, several members have contacted me with further information on the subject.

For the initial openings to Old Quellyn and Bryngwyn, I suggested that the staffs used may have been provided by Saxby & Farmer. However, as all the signalling equipment was supplied by McKenzie & Holland (including that for the extension to Snowdon Ranger), it seems likely that they also supplied the relevant staffs, but they could equally well have been made by the NWNGR carpenter. They would probably have been a different colour and shape for each individual section, and would have had a key attached by a length of chain used to unlock the padlocks on any intermediate points.

The situation with the Saxby & Farmer (S&F) "lollipop" labelled Snowdon Ranger/Rhyd Ddu is more complex. It is clearly an Annett's Key but cannot, as I had suggested, date from the opening through to Rhyd Ddu from Snowdon Ranger as all signalling on that section was provided by the Gloucester Wagon Company (GWCo) and, anyway, S&F only obtained manufacturing rights for Annett's Keys during the course of 1881, too late for the opening date. Reference to the photograph on page 21 of Peter Johnson's recently published 2nd edition Illustrated History, which cannot date before 1891, shows the GWCo point lever in a slightly different position at Rhyd Ddu (compare with the c1909 picture, showing Gowrie and train, on page 26 of the same book) and with a different lock mechanism; this lock was possibly worked by wire from the open ground frame which was located beyond the north end of the station building (and was subsumed within it when the build-

ing was extended c1897). It seems that it was not the original intention of the NWNGR to lock this lever, which worked a point beyond the end of the normal running line, but they were compelled to do so by Marindin, the BoT inspecting officer.

Photographic evidence shows that the track layout was changed twice at Rhyd Ddu (or Snowdon as it became known) during the 1890s, doubtless to facilitate working the ever-longer trains made

Follow up to Derek Lystor's article in the previous edition of WHH

possible by the delivery of extra carriages. The first change was probably made by the summer of 1892 and included the installation of a run-round loop opposite the "platform", it was probably at this stage that the "lollipop" Annett's Key was first introduced. Given the labelling of the Key, it would have locked the points at both ends of the Rhyd Ddu loop, at Glanrafon Sidings and at Snowdon Ranger. It was quite unusual for a single Annett's Key, which was not also a train staff, to lock points at a number of locations like this, and it may be an indication that traffic for Glanrafon was normally worked by a specific shunt from Rhyd Ddu rather than by a train en route; the fact that any excursion train loco "laying over" at Rhyd Ddu had to work to Snowdon Ranger and back to take water may also have influenced the adoption of this arrangement.

The second change to the layout probably took place c1895/6 when the loop at Waenfawr was also installed – certainly it was prior to the extension of the station building – and further lengthened

the loop, provided a carriage siding and changed the access to the goods facilities; it is unclear whether the north end slate siding was provided as this stage or as part of the first change. The Annett's Key was certainly in use after the second change and indeed remained so until 1922 or early 1923. It seems likely that the Key was kept at Rhyd Ddu, except when actually needed to work points at Glanrafon or Snowdon Ranger. However, it may have normally been kept with the Waenfawr-Rhyd Ddu Wise's staff, and, if so, would have been allowed to travel ahead with a train with a permit to allow that the train to shunt clear at Rhyd Ddu prior to the arrival of the following train with the staff itself.

A diagram of the proposed loop installation at Waenfawr, dated September 1894 and prepared by S&F, shows that it was intended to use a single Annett's Key to lock both ends of the new loop there, the points actually being worked by hand levers, even though the existing siding point was worked and locked by the signal box.

One final paragraph regarding the construction details of both the Annetts Key and the Wise's Staff. The "retractable" nature of the Annetts Key is answered by the fact that the key itself (at the bottom part of the shaft) is shielded from wear and tear by a sleeve, which when lifted, reveals the key for use in the point lock. The Wise's staff was possibly fitted with a collar round one end of the main body to which the chain, with point keys attached, would have been affixed. Possible signs of wear created by such a collar are visible in an enlarged photo of the staff.

I am grateful to those who got in touch enabling me to set the record straight – with special thanks to David Woodcock.

A NWNNG Oddment

This is an extract from Light Railway Investigation Committee Return of 1920 - researched by Michael Bishop

Train Running – NWNGR 1913 to 1919

Under the standard report heading of "Description of Operation" - i.e. "system of working", which also requires the writer to note "particulars of any special requirements or restrictions etc"

The following are the hand-written notes that refer to the NWNNG between 1913 and 1919 -

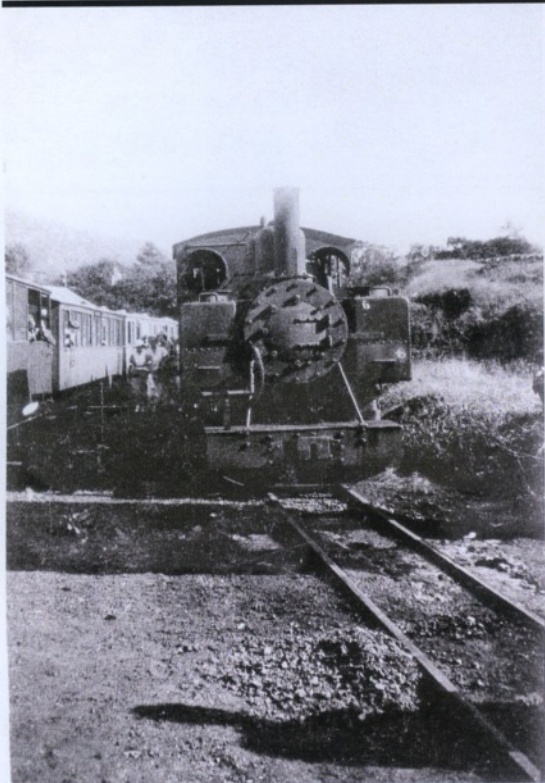
"Worked by one engine in steam carrying a staff. At present time and for some years now there has only been one engine in steam at one time, no passenger are run so that Freight Trains run as required and there being no other train on road no signalling is required at present."

Nothing is recorded under the Heading of 'Coaching Figures', but under 'Freight' it states that in 1913 "19300" tons were carried, but by 1919 this had dropped to "7987" tons.

Finally the report states that shunting is done *"By Train Engine at 5 miles per hour"*

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Photographic Detective Work



that they retain their "roof furniture". All WHR carriages, with the possible exception of at least one of the Pickering's, lost these features when their roofs were resealed prior to the 1936 season.

The scheduled crossings

In this period few, if any, through trains ran on the Railway and this photo can immediately be interpreted as a timetabled "crossing" manoeuvre, wherein both trains reversed and through passengers had to change from one to the other. As Beddgelert only had the single loop, this exchange would have been difficult indeed if both trains arrived and then tried to run the locos around the trains. Typically, the timetables

show that one train was scheduled to arrive well before the other allowing the run-round to be completed before the arrival of the second train. Only after the first train had departed could the second

ings at Beddgelert, where the Dinas train arrived first, show the Portmadoc train arriving at 16:35, the 16:00 departure from Harbour, the subsequent departure of the Dinas train at 16:50 and the returning Portmadoc train at 16:55. It would be dangerous indeed to presume precision timekeeping on the Railway over this period; nevertheless the shadows visible in the photo do seem to confirm that it was the early evening when it was taken. Analysis of shadow angles will, in fact, allow determination of the actual time of day. On occasion, notably when a complete shadow is visible in a photograph, it would additionally be possible to determine the date of the photograph – at least the day and the month, but not the year.

From time to time the Heritage Group comes into possession of "new", that is hitherto unknown, Welsh Highland photographs. These can come from many sources, both personal and professional and there may or may not be "provenance", such as photographer, location, date, etc., in support of such images. Where there is no such provenance, detective work is called for. The following notes describe just such an analysis applied to an image recently acquired via e-Bay.

A first step is to understand just what the photograph is actually showing us. The location, fortunately, is obvious so we can immediately note that the photograph shows 590 at the head of a train (confirmed by the shadows cast onto the visible carriages) standing on the western loop at Beddgelert. In Welsh Highland days, Beddgelert was set up for left-hand running, so we can further confirm that this was a train recently arrived at Beddgelert from Portmadoc. We also note that 590 is oriented chimney first towards Dinas, so we can additionally conclude that the photograph post-dates the establishment of the F.R. Lease, i.e. it was taken in 1934, 1935 or 1936, there being no passenger services after this latter season. In addition, the operating seasons were short – early July to mid-September – offering some additional date precision.

Peter Liddell Explains his Technique

complete its run-round and then depart. We therefore know from the photograph that the Dinas train must have arrived at Beddgelert before the Portmadoc train.

In 1934 and 1935, three trains "crossed" at Beddgelert each day, but with two of these it was the Portmadoc train that arrived at Beddgelert first. An examination of the photographs taken by H.F. Wheeler, if assembled into the correct sequence, show such an occasion with Russell running around the train from Dinas after 590 had already left to return to Portmadoc.

In 1936, however, two of the three timetabled crossings happened at South Snowdon and in the one crossing at Beddgelert the Portmadoc train would have arrived first. Therefore it seems highly unlikely that this photo was taken in 1936. As confirmation of this, an examination of the visible carriages will show

These timings would have applied equally in 1934 and 1935, so timetable analysis alone cannot, unfortunately, determine the actual year.

When a photograph has yielded all available detail, a second level of analysis is possible by comparing a "new" photograph with similar, already catalogued, photographs, should such exist. In the case of this "new" photo, there is a very well known comparator available to us – a photo showing Russell, with driver 'Willie Hugh' posing (above right), alongside the Baldwin at Beddgelert (WHR 17). This photograph is generally accepted as being from 1935 and some of the detail, for example the pile of clinker next to the left hand rail on the main line alongside the water tower, is so similar as to suggest very strongly that the two pictures are more or less contemporary.

If these observations prove valid, we can with some confidence date the e-Bay photograph to 1935.

A Welsh Highland Ticket Survives

ing – and an email arrives from Michael Bishop. “Although not rare, I attach a scan of a ticket counterfoil I have from 1925, in case you have a vacant space in the journal” - went the opening line.

Well perhaps it's not rare, but the story of its survival is certainly worth recording.

Michael's email continues:-

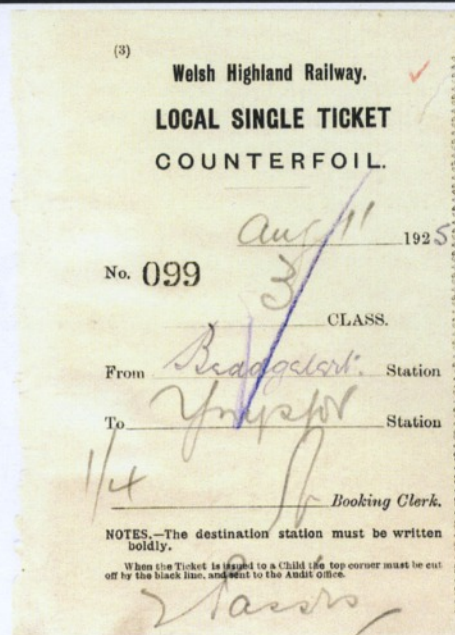
“This was part of the result of a job when, as an FR volunteer in the early 60s, a task was to start clearing out Portmadoc Goods Shed (now part of Spooner's Cafe). It was then 6 inches deep in loose muck, dirt, and I suspect, bird droppings, but amongst all the filth there were numerous examples of old paperwork - pages from ledgers, window stickers for carriage windows etc. One of the more interesting items was a used counterfoil book with a typical 1930s striped colour cover. When, many years later, the late Michael Seymour came to my house to collect the samples I had rescued to be included in the FR Archives, I hesitated over the Counterfoil book, so Michael ripped out the first page and gave it to me, taking the book.”

A subsequent enquiry elicits even more information from Michael. His second email runs

“It's more than thirteen years ago when I last saw it, and my memory is hazy. It was

over forty years ago I collected a sample of each type of document I found in this quite large building. I would think it was mostly FR paperwork, examples of way-bills and extracts from delivery ledgers. I do remember oval stickers with a maroon centre with a name on, (possibly the name of a travel company), designed to be stuck inside coach windows to reserve carriages. There was also a lamp from a coach roof. I cannot remember if there was any more WHR paperwork”.

And as to the ticket itself, well Welsh Highland ticket guru Derek Lystor comments – “Interesting ticket. The Heritage Group have the next book in the series running from August 1925 to Feb 1926. Michael's ticket is the LAST in the book, not the first, which would have been 000. Funnily enough, Beddgelert issued card tickets to Ynysfor as well during that week, so why H.D. Jones used a paper ticket on this occasion is a puzzle. Up to November 1924, the register recorded the destination of each paper ticket, but this practice stopped in August 1925. Only five of these Local Single books were ever used on the WHR, the last ticket being issued in October 1927. The ticket was issued for two passengers, which actually broke the conditions printed on the ticket itself, “Available for One Person for One Journey Only”. However, this pales into insignificance when one discovers that Jones issued a single ticket on 24th July



1924 for a record fifty passengers travelling to Plas y Nant! Perhaps an early example of a Welsh Highland block booking - easier for him to do this than issue fifty single card tickets I suppose!!”

A simple story that combines all the exciting elements of archival survival and adds to our ever increasing knowledge of Welsh Highland history.

Letter - More on those signs.....

Richard Watson has opened the debate about the Dinas Junction nameboards in WHH nos. 43 and 44. The “early WHR photograph” mentioned by him at the foot of the middle column of his first article (an extract appears as his top photo) – when only the original (top half) of the sign was still in position – can be dated 1925: both the Ashbury Corridors have been cut down, no. 23 has its window safety bars fitted but it is clear that no. 25 has not had these fitted yet. Incidentally, the photo has been published at least eight times, consistently dated 1925. So the sign illustrated might not have been a misleading “left-over” from the NWNGR era, but provided for June 1923, while the enlarged sign must be later than 1925.

No “evidence” is offered in support of the speculation that Blaenau Festiniog sported two “f”s as shown in the replications of the enlarged board (Mr Watson's text itself uses only one “f”); two would have been contrary to the two railways' accepted practice at the period when the board was fabricated, for in advertising and timetables a single “f” is invariably used. Although Ffes-

tinog does - curiously - appear in the sketch map used on WHR handbills for 1934-6 this is very much an exception and makes one wonder about the source of the block used.

Caernarvon (or even Carnarvon) or Bryngwyn for the blank space must surely be rejected: while extension was very much in the air in the heady days of summer 1923 (see WHH no. 4) this cannot have survived the winter and the grim annual general meeting that followed. Were there some evidence that the sign had been enlarged for the Portmadoc extension (which might have seemed plausible but is gainsaid by the 1925 photograph) there might, possibly, have been some credence for the notion, but not when the enlargement took place several years later.

There is an alternative scenario for that blank space:

middle photo: taken immediately after FR lease started with “Nantmor” having been unscrewed in readiness for station's renaming;

bottom photo: taken later in FR lease period with “Aberglaslyn” painted in.

In support of this hypothesis it can be said that the middle photo (WHH 43, p. 6) was

definitely taken during the lease period - note the colour scheme applied to the Pickering in the background. However, it was not taken in 1936 as we can see that the Pickering retains its 'roof furniture' which had been removed then. In publications this middle photo is dated, if at all, as c.1934. The lower photo must post-date it – usually dated 1936.

Although an Aberglaslyn Halt had been intended before the 1923 opening it did not, in fact, materialise so Nantmor took the rôle of providing access to the Pass. Recognising that “Aberglaslyn” would have more customer “draw”, the FR dropped the Nantmor name for the lease period substituting Aberglaslyn in all their publicity and timetables (whether or not they altered the signboard at the halt) – hence its inclusion on the Dinas signboard.

As to what occupied the blank space previously – it is freely admitted that we're in the realms of conjecture, but sheer geographical logic must put “Nantmor” in pole position – there's nothing else credible between Beddgelert and Portmadoc!

Richard Maund and Peter Liddell