

WELSH HIGHLAND

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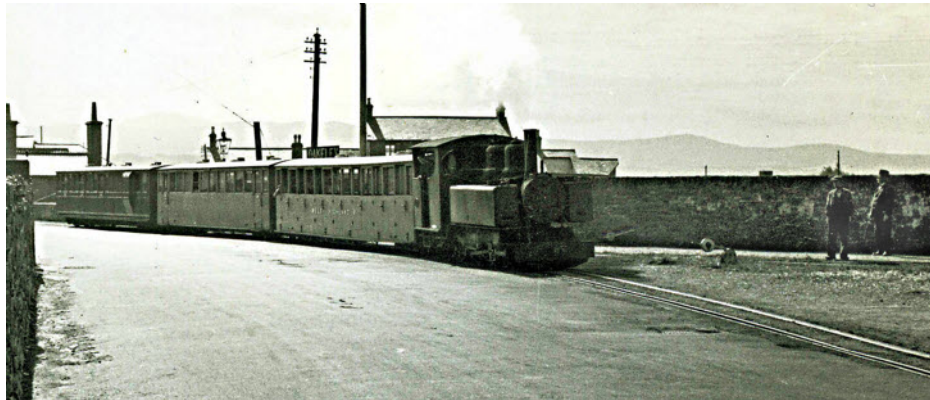
HERITAGE

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REFLECTIONS

In the context of today's WHR progress has been rapid during 2010. Re-opening to Nantmor and Pont Croesor for public services has particularly gratified those older residents who may remember the original railway in their childhood.

October 30th - although not for public benefit - saw the first train from Caernarfon to Porthmadog. At least the 1885 'dream' of connecting Caernarfon Bay with Cardigan Bay had been fulfilled. "25 miles through a riot of splendour" to misquote a 1930 timetable, when the journey was but 22 miles.

Several Heritage Group members were on the train, enjoying an event the hope of which had been nurtured for up to 50 years. It was an occasion for reminiscence and reflection. Picnic locations during the 1990s were identified, as were sites of trackbed walks in an unspoilt countryside, and those places where one had helped with the track-laying.

The train's entry onto High Street was an emotional experience; the crowds of well wishers were phenomenal. The few 1930s photographs at this location show only the odd disinterested onlooker as the train threaded its way across High St. (See Wheeler's 1935 photo above). Compare with John Stretton's photograph (right) of the train on 30th October 2010

With today's WHR considering the acquisition of further motive power it is sobering to reflect that in 1910 the North Wales Power & Traction Co., were still trying to dispose of 'six new electric locos' left over from the abortive Portmadoc Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway, a predecessor of the WHR.

Back in 1910 the letters "W.H.R." were still unknown and it would be thirteen years before they became a reality.

We shouldn't dwell too much on the past, but certainly heed its lessons. Today's WHR is far better equipped to adjust to changing patterns of business; our predecessors just didn't have the resources.

**No. Fifty**

Those responsible – if that is the right word (!) – for compiling this quarterly 'Gentlemen's Companion' strive to feature on the front page a current happening with historical significance. For example the reconstruction of the station building at Tryfan Junction has started with the laying of some yellow bricks. However, this issue of your journal must surely record that it is 'Number Fifty' and an historical milestone has been achieved. No 1 in 1997 was but four pages but very quickly eight pages became the norm. We have since graduated to colour, together with inserts and the odd supplement. In celebration of 'Number Fifty' this issue has sixteen pages plus a supplement, not to mention a Christmas price list and a reminder that next year's subscription is nearly due! – but don't expect this every quarter!

Our journal's success has largely been built on the dedication and excellence of our contributors, some of whom seem to spend more time in record offices than at home! There is no knowing what new material may emerge from the depths of Gwynedd Archives when the cataloguing of WHR (and FR) archives has been completed thanks to the sterling efforts of Pat Layzell Ward. Maybe sufficient information will surface to contribute to the next fifty issues of this publication?

Proposed Works at Portmadoc

Background

The Welsh Highland was in course of authorisation and construction in 1922-23, together with a connecting line from the Festiniog Railway at Portmadoc Harbour. There was a proposal at that time to construct an entirely new workshop and running shed complex on land east of the Portmadoc New 1923 station, which would have resulted in the complete or partial closure of Boston Lodge, as the new complex would be centrally placed to service both railways as well as being more modern.

*Richard Watson explores the
1922 plans to relocate
Boston Lodge on the WHR*

The Drawings

There are two alternative layouts numbered 1 and 2, with yet a third (2A) featuring minor amendments to the second. The first two appeared in the first edition of Peter Johnson's excellent "Illustrated History of the WHR". They were redrawn for clarity but without comment. The existence of Layout 2A suggests that the second layout was

preferred by Fox's clients, but even this one was discarded. Further explanation is offered below.

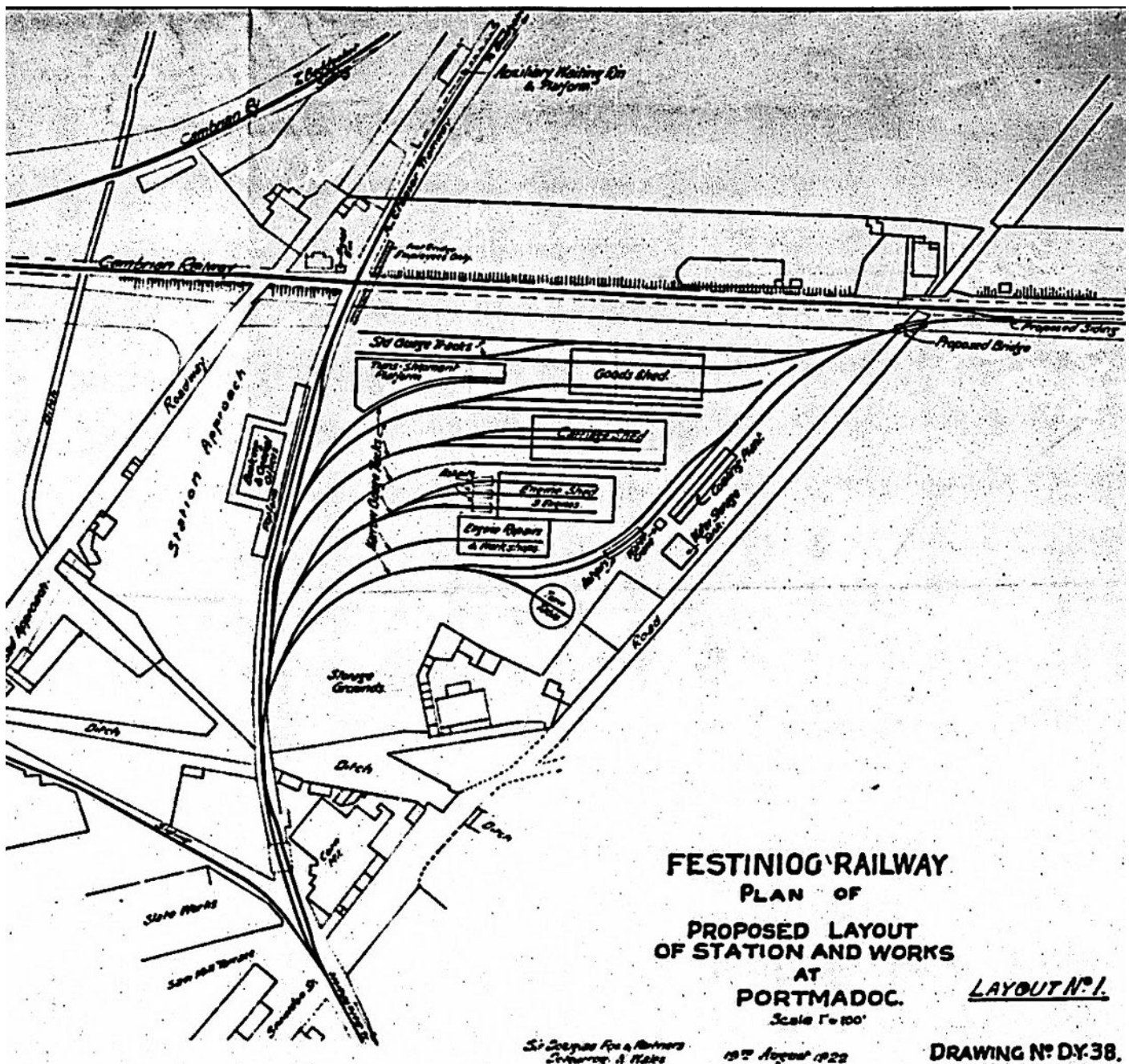
The main features of the options presented by Sir Douglas Fox & Partners were as follows:-

Layout No. 1, Plan no. DY 38

Dated 19th August 1922

The following facilities are shown:

1. Engine Repair and Workshops
2. A separate 3-road Engine Shed, stabling "9 engines". Each road has an external ash pit.
3. Carriage Shed



4. Goods Shed
5. Trans-shipment platform to/from standard gauge
6. Coaling Plant
7. Turntable

Four separate "king" points arise individually from the 1923 station loop. For convenience I have called the roads 1 to 4, numbered from the southern end. Nos. 1, 2 and 4 gives rise to sidings 1A & B, 2A and B, and 4A and B, with road 3 arising separately from the loop:

1A serving the Engine Repairs & Workshops

1B leading to an ashpit, water crane, coaling facility and turntable. This road also featured a run round loop. The coaling plant would have a high level standard gauge siding.

2A to a siding between the carriage and engine sheds

2B to a 3-road loco shed housing 9 locomotives

Road 3 would lead to a 3-road carriage shed – this would have been too small to hold the entire stock of the two railways Road 4A to a transshipment platform with the standard gauge

4B led to a single road goods shed with additional standard gauge siding, with two further roads alongside but outside the building.

Standard Gauge

The standard gauge connection is interesting. The connection from the Cambrian main line faces Portmadoc main line station and leads to a head shunt, so a reversal into the works complex would be necessary. A trailing connection leads into the works complex, crossing the adjacent road by means of a new bridge.

The standard gauge loco driver would encounter the following turnouts, from left to right.

Siding 1 to the coaling plant

Siding 2 leading to siding 3; a loop with one leg passing through the goods transshipment shed and ending at the outdoor transshipment platform

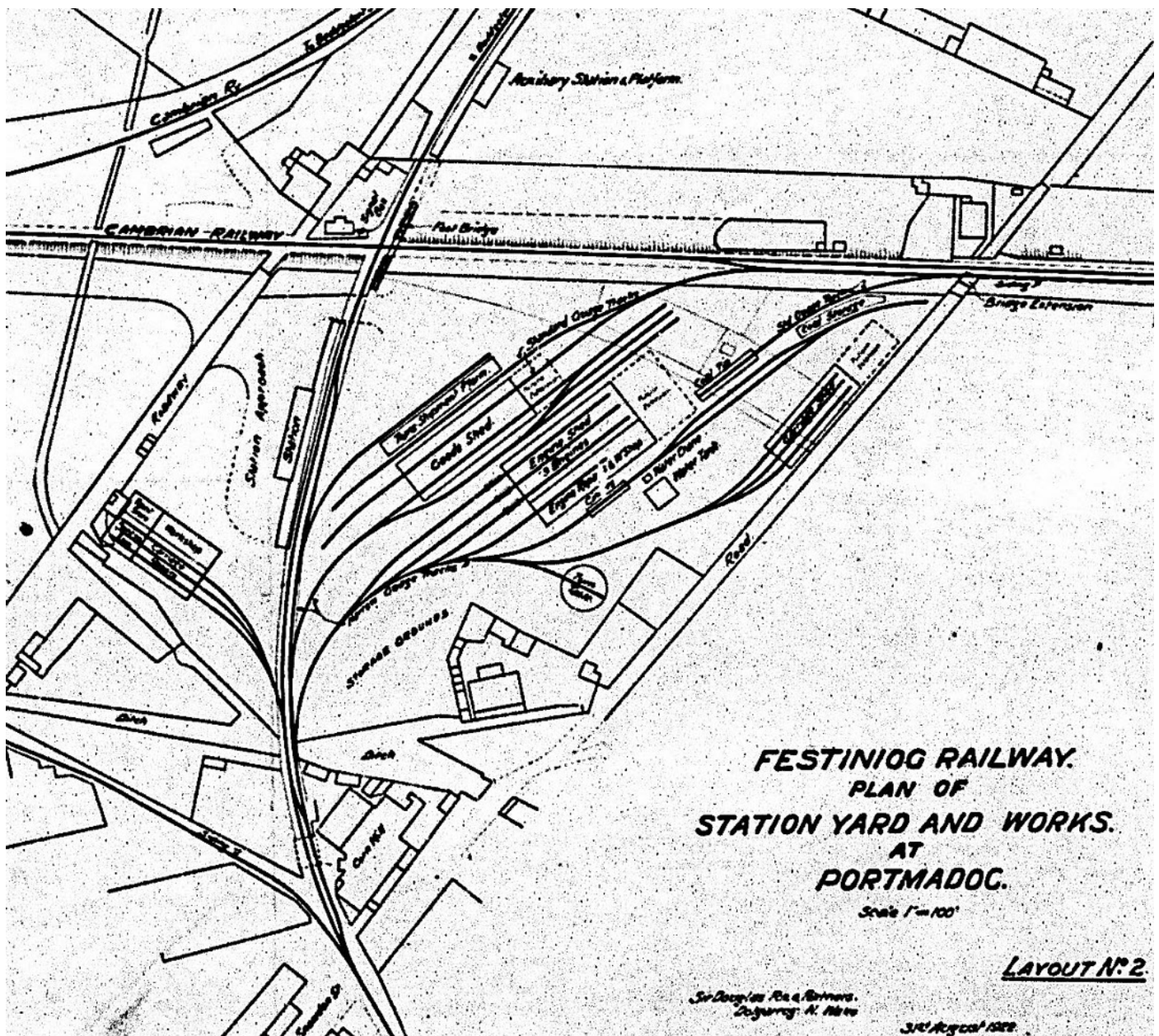
Storage Grounds

An area marked "storage grounds" is indicated to the north of the Cambrian main line and to the south of the workshop complex.

1923 Station

The "station approach" is shown as a large tract of land bounded by the public road and a drainage ditch to the west of the station. No turning area is provided for road vehicles.

Curiously, a second station is shown to the north of the Cambrian Crossing, on the western side of the WHR and described as "Auxiliary waiting room and platform". The footbridge over the Cambrian was marked "Employees Only". Was this to have been a "ticket



platform", or perhaps an early indication that passenger train movements over the Cambrian might be limited?

Layout No. 2, Plan No. DY45

There was evident dissatisfaction with Layout No. 1, as a second version was issued on 31st August 1922.

Facilities

The second layout provides similar facilities to the first, with the addition of a 3-road carriage repair shop plus attached workshop and paint store. These are on the western side of the WHR station and occupy part of the station approach.

This time there are only 3 "king" points arising from the station loop;

Road no.1 feeding:

1A: 3-road engine shed again with room for "9 engines". A fourth road is provided for loco repairs within the same building and a dotted line indicates room for future expansion.

1B: A long road with loop, coaling point, a pit and a water crane

1C: Leading to a 3 road carriage shed, again with room for future expansion Road No. 2 leading to a goods transshipment shed with external loop, the whole ending in 3 dead end sidings.

Dotted lines indicate space for future extension of the goods shed.

Road No. 3 leading to the north face of a transshipment platform with the standard gauge opposite.

Standard Gauge

This version of the plan shows the standard gauge penetrating deeply into the site. The points for the siding or loop on the Cambrian main line are closer to Portmadoc (Cambrian) station than in Layout 1, and the works siding exits over a bridge extension rather than a completely new bridge to bring it into the FR/WHR site.

Two sidings branch off the main connection, the first being to a coal stage.

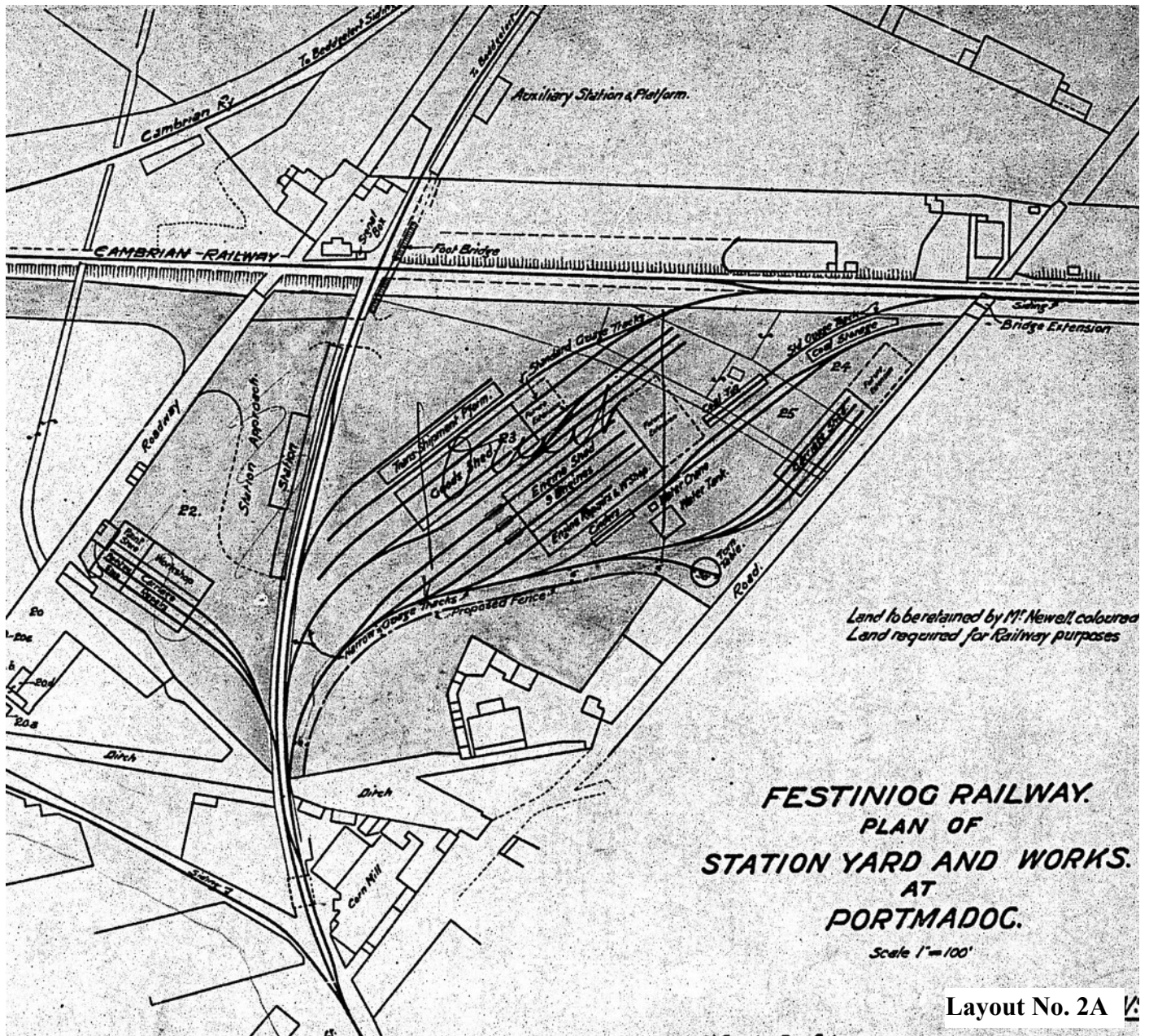
Whether or not this is on a higher level to the narrow gauge is not indicated. The second leads to two further roads, one to a through line in the goods shed and the other to the south face of the transshipment platform.

1923 Station

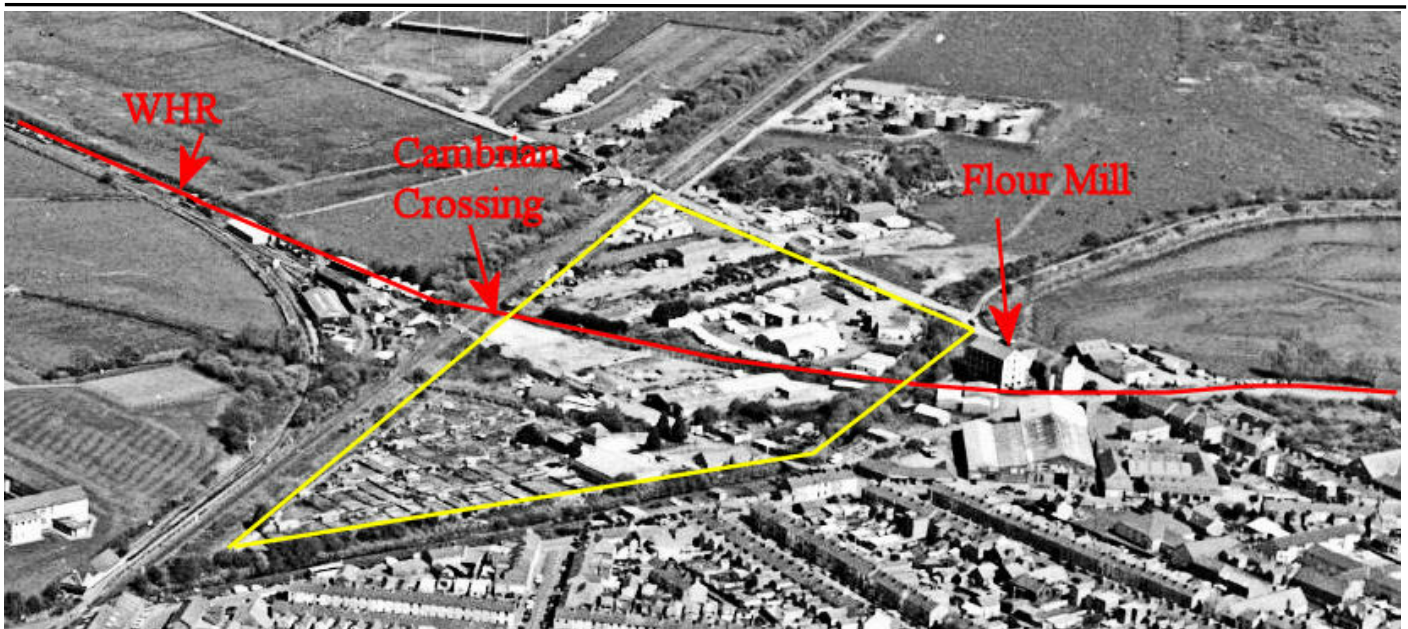
The land available for the station approach on the west of the WHR is limited by the presence of the carriage works.

The description of the station arrangements on the north Side of the Cambrian Crossing has changed to "Auxiliary Station & Platform", the facility having swapped sides to the east of the line. The footbridge is made available to all, rather than just railway employees.

The station passing loop is now much longer, being continuous with the one at the flourmill.



Layout No. 2A



Aerial view of the site for the proposed 'new' Boston Lodge - compare with plans

Layout No. 2A, Plan No. DY45a

A third version, No.2A, was redrawn from No.2 on 24th October 1922. The principle difference between these two versions is that the storage grounds have been omitted to the south, perhaps to save costs as the amount of land needed would be reduced. A fence appears around the most southerly track in the complex.

However even this version failed to please it would seem, as the word 'omit' has been scribbled on the plan in freehand. This injunction covers most of the area. The only item that seems to be unscathed is the carriage shed!

Even this economy failed to take effect, it seems, for building works never started and the land was eventually sold.

A Personal View

My personal view of Layout No.1 is that it would have been cramped, with limited room for expansion and no carriage repair facilities. From the operating point of view trains entering and leaving the works complex from the passing loop would have required a shunt token.

I believe Layout No.2 was intended to address these problems, but the carriage works would have occupied land previously intended for the station

approach. However, the station loop would have extended into that at the flourmill, suggesting a head shunt facility for locos working within the complex.

The standard gauge facilities would have been simpler and cheaper to build, particularly as a separate bridge into the works area would not have been required.

I suspect money was tight, which was why version 2A was produced. The drawing indicated that less land would need to be purchased, at lower cost. Financial considerations no doubt put the final nail in the coffin, and in the event the complex was never built.

Report from the 'Cambrian News & Welsh Farmers Gazette' from the issue of Friday 13 January 1922 page 7

Deudraeth Rural Council: in part:

Welsh Highland Railway. Mr Cradoc Davies, Pwllheli, appeared on behalf of the promoters of the Welsh Highland Railway and asked the Council for an advance of £3,000 by way of loan for the construction of a light railway from Portmadoc to Dinas via Beddgelert and Rhyd-Ddu. Mr Davies said that £139,000 had already been spent on the railway but goods traffic only traversed it during the war. Over £60,000 had been spent on the Croesor portions. The company of the railway was in financial difficulties and another company took the railway over in 1914. The new company had spent £36,000 on Dinas and Croesor portions. There was a total of 1,800 men unemployed in North West Wales and the scheme would go far to reduce that number. The scheme would be instrumental in reducing the burden imposed on local

authorities in providing distress relief. It was anticipated that the sum to be expended on wages was £44,000 and the scheme from Portmadoc to Rhyd-Ddu would be completed by the summer. As the whole work was to be completed by March 1923 it would mean that a large number of men -

between 80 and 1,000 - would have to be employed. With the Government grant and advances of local authorities the total was £63,500. The promoters would have to find £45,000 of the total cost. The securities were good, the loans of the local authorities being the first charge on the undertaking and covered by debentures. The possibilities were great as the railway would be the means of developing the quarries of the district which were closed for the lack of transport facilities. Moreover the world famous district would be opened up to tourists. The promoters would be prepared to pay interest on the advance .

[The proposal that the Council should advance £3,00 by loan was unanimously adopted].

With thanks to Richard Maund for unearthing this nugget.

NWNGR Signalling : Waenfawr

The 2nd edition of Peter Johnson's "An Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway"

contains a plan of the 1894 signalling alterations at Waenfawr, obtained from the National Archives. This prompted me to also have a look in the National Archives, to see what other WHR-related signalling material there might be. This article is based on those researches, and subsequent discussion on the WHR

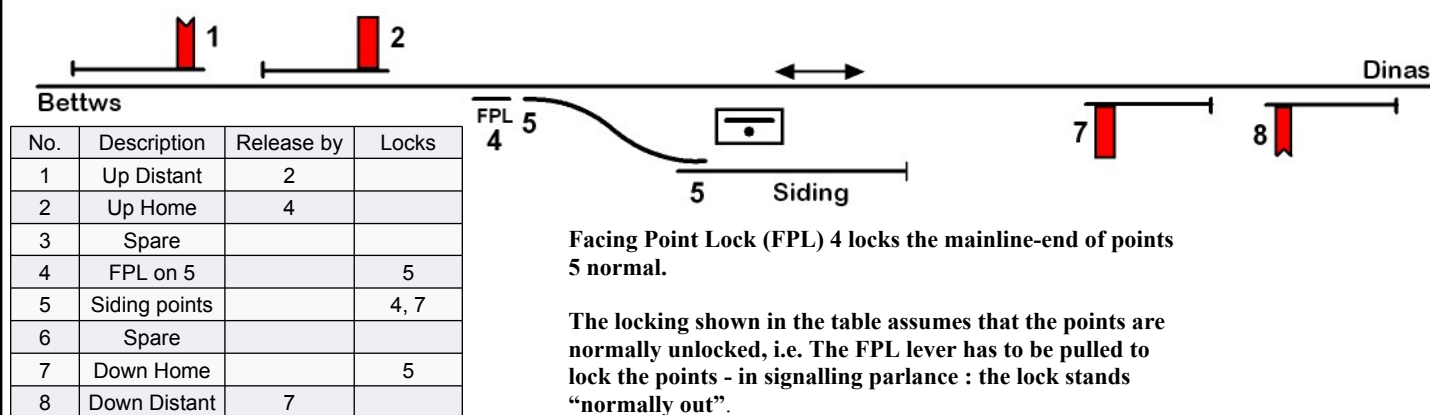
of the siding. The siding point also had a facing point lock, FPL and detector bar, to prevent the points being moved under a

by Saxby & Farmer, dated 10 September 1894.

Peter Matthews expertly dissects the evolution of the Waenfawr signalling system

Under this simple arrangement, Waenfawr could be used to allow a passenger train to pass a looped goods train, but could not be used for passing two passenger trains. This probably explains why the loop-line is shown as a "siding", to emphasise that it is for goods trains only. It almost certainly explains why the loop was provided with trap

Waenfawr : 1877



Forum, and concentrates on the changes at Waenfawr.

The 1894 plan is useful, because it allows us to "back-track" to the original 1877 signalling as installed by McKenzie & Holland, see diagram above. Remember that when the NWNGR opened, it was worked under "one engine in steam". The intermediate signalboxes were not "block posts" – the signals were provided purely to protect the sidings at these stations. Nowadays a simple two-lever ground-frame released by the token would suffice to work an in-section siding, but the original NWNGR signalling predated the availability of Annett's keys on train-staffs. So Waenfawr was provided with home and distant signals in both directions, worked from an eight lever signalbox, purely to protect the siding. Because the signalboxes were not block posts, it is quite likely that the opposing up and down direction signals could all be "off" together – provided, of course, that the siding point was set and locked normal.

The signalling at Waenfawr was quite advanced for its day, for example the siding had a trap point to protect passenger trains from vehicles rolling out

train. And the distant signals are shown with another recent innovation, "fish-tails", so that drivers could distinguish them from the home signals (the distant would have been painted red, the same as the home signals – it wasn't until nearly 50 years later that yellow for distant signals became accepted practice).

Once the NWNGR opened and almost immediately went into receivership, parsimony was to be the order of the day. Thus in 1894, when it was decided that a passing loop was needed at Waenfawr, Russell (the NWNGR Chairman) decided that the loop-line would be for goods trains only. No doubt Russell would have been aware (or if not, Saxby & Farmer, the signalling contractor, would have made him aware) of what would have been required for a fully-signalled, passenger passing-loop. A loop where a goods train could be locked-in while a passenger train passed through on the main-line would have been much simpler, and therefore more affordable. The diagram overleaf (1894/95) is based on the signalling plan (reproduced in Peter J's book) produced

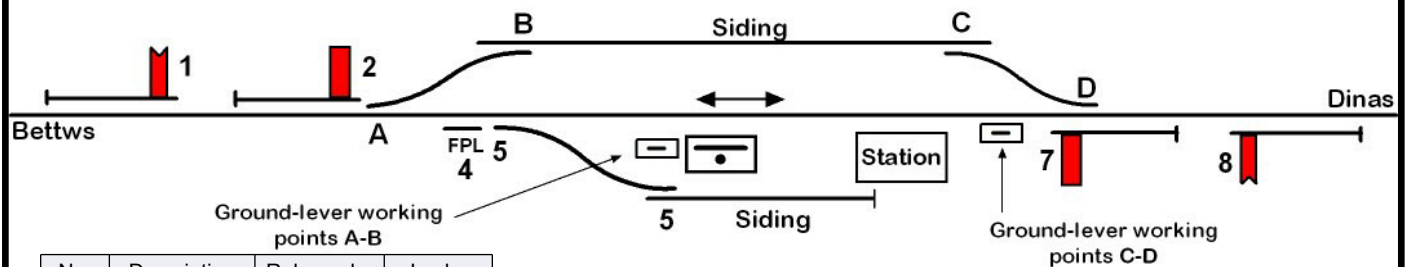
points at each end, as a passenger running-line would require protecting against unbraked vehicles running out of



Stump of the Snowdon Ranger 'Home' signal found in situ during reconstruction

Waenfawr : 1894/5

Signalling not approved by BoT



No.	Description	Release by	Locks
1	Up Distant	2	
2	Up Home	4	3
3	Locking lever		2, 5, 7
4	FPL on 5		5
5	Siding points		3, 4, 7
6	Spare		
7	Down Home		3, 5
8	Down Distant	7	

New locking shown in red

The ground-levers which work points A-B & C-D are unlocked by an Annett's key. The Annett's key is obtained by reversing lever 3, which locks the signals at danger. As there is only one key, only one set of points, A-B or C-D, can be worked at one time.

a non-passenger line. Perhaps Russell also had in mind that the loop could actually be used as a siding if need be - the existing siding could not have been very convenient for Dinas-bound trains wanting to pick up wagons.

Interestingly, the plan was not submitted to the Board of Trade until nearly a year later, being received by them on 21 August 1895. I suspect that the impoverished NWNCR may have balked at the estimate, and there would then have followed some negotiation with S&F as to how the costs could be reduced. A comment was added to the original plan that the new ground-levers are "to be fixed by Rly Co". By doing the manual work of installing the ground-levers "in house", rather than have S&F come and do it, the NWNCR could save itself some money. These negotiations, plus the time needed to carry out the work, explains the delay between the production of the drawing and its eventual submission to the BoT.

Note that the loop points weren't worked from the existing signalbox lever-frame, which would have required extensive locking alterations, but from independent ground-levers adjacent to the points. The original S&F plan was also amended to show the ground-lever for the Bettws-end points next to the signalbox (it may even have been inside the signalbox!) rather than next to the points. So why wasn't the lever for the Dinas-end points likewise put near the signalbox? Was it simply down to the extra complication (and hence cost) involved in taking the point rodding around the station and

platform? Is it significant that the depiction of the "Station" appears to be another amendment to the original drawing?

Note that, although the original siding is fitted with a facing point lock, neither of the new loop points are shown to have FPLs. It certainly didn't escape Col. Yorke's attention when he inspected the finished works. His report of 28 Nov 1895 reads "I have inspected the alterations at Waenfawr on the NWNCR. These comprise the construction of a "loop siding", the points of which are worked by two ground levers which are locked and unlocked by an Annett's key from the signalbox. The facing points on the mainline at each end of the loop must however be provided with facing point locks in the usual manner, and if this is done the loop siding might be approved for goods traffic only." He then goes on to say that he does not see how use of the loop for passenger trains can be avoided, in which case it will be necessary to signal the station as a proper passing place, and the catch points recovered.

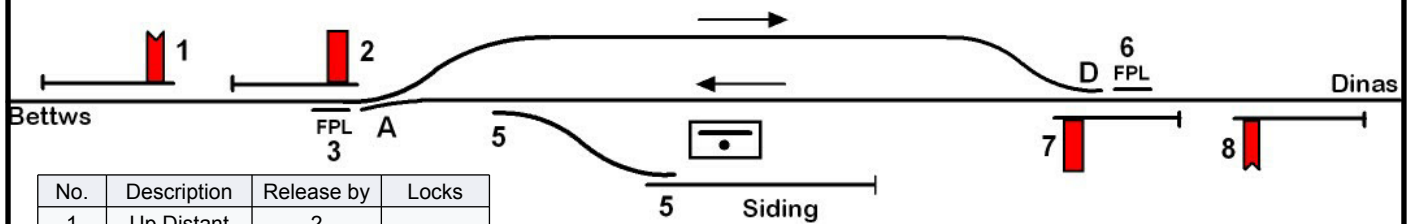
This report must have come as an unpleasant shock to Russell and the impoverished NWNCR. Having paid out to have all that work done, and then have it so decisively rejected, must have been a considerable blow. Quite how the provision of FPLs could have been overlooked is a bit of a mystery. Saxby & Farmer, a reputable signalling contractor, must surely have known of the requirements, even if the NWNCR management didn't. (As an aside, when

the connections to the quarry line were made at Bettws Garmon in 1901/1902, Major Druitt's inspection report noted that "The points of both connections require to be fixed with facing point locks". Once again the need for FPLs had been overlooked!)

Russell subsequently had an informal "interview" (date unknown) with Yorke and Marindin (the BoT's senior inspector), to get their advice on the best way forward. On 10 Dec 1895 he then replied to Yorke's report: "With regard to the arrangements for working the station and loop as a passenger train crossing place, the concessions of not requiring starting signals, and of the provision of only one set of facing point locks enable us to come to the conclusion to fit out this loop as a passenger train crossing that being its primary object during the summer months." These concessions give us significant clues as to the final signalling, and I will return to them later.

As time dragged by, the BoT were getting increasingly concerned about passenger trains continuing to run over those facing points not fitted with FPLs, so on 11 March 1896 sent a reminder to the NWNCR that the works still needed completing. On the 12th of May Russell eventually replied "Some delay took place in obtaining tenders and in reducing the work as much as possible. The order was finally given to Messrs Saxby and Farmer on the 1st April." - obviously the impoverished NWNCR were, as before, negotiating hard to get the work done as cheaply as possible. On the 20th of May the BoT issued a further reminder. The

Waenfawr : 1897



No.	Description	Release by	Locks
1	Up Distant	2	
2	Up Home	3, 4*	
3	Up FPL		6
4	Spare		5
5	Siding points		4, 7
6	Down FPL		3
7	Down Home	6	5
8	Down Distant	7	

New locking shown in red
* existing 1877 release removed - see text

Points A and D worked by weighted ground levers
FPLs assumed to stand normally "out"
FPL 3 bolts points A normal only
FPL 6 bolts points D normal only

BoT file contains several notes about the "unsatisfactory delay", so quite what the inspectors thought when they received a plea from the NWNCR on 21st July for a re-inspection of the works "as early as possible as the loop is required for use", one can only imagine!

The NWNCR certainly didn't get their early inspection. Yorke's report on his re-inspection is dated 21 December 1896, a full 5 months later. It noted:

"The signalbox now contains 7 levers in use and 1 spare. Facing point locks have been provided at each end of the loop, and the home signals are only capable of being lowered when the points are in the proper position for the left-hand road. I noted the following requirements:

- 1) the up home signal no.2 should not be released by no.4 points lever
- 2) the locking bar at the upper end of the loop should be lengthened.

In working the station it is of course essential that all trains should pass through on the proper (or left-hand) line,

It took until 11 June 1897 for the NWNCR to finally report that these further alterations had been carried out, presumably just in time for the loop to be brought into use for the summer season.

The box must have been extensively relocked and reworked for left-hand running, with the loop points fitted with FPLs and locking bars, and the new trap points taken out again. So that 1894 sketch, reprinted in Peter J's book, would seem to bear little relation to what was finally brought into use three years later in 1897. Based on the number of levers in use, the two loop points must have remained worked from ground-levers, but

now with FPLs worked from the signalbox. See diagram above. Note that according to Yorke "Facing point locks have been provided at each end of the loop", whereas according to Russell they had agreed a concession for "the provision of only one set of facing point locks". With all trains passing through on the left-hand road, the siding point would no longer be a facing point, so would no longer need an FPL. So I am fairly certain that the FPL on the siding point was moved to the upper-end loop points – this meant that the railway only had to provide one new FPL. This would also fit with Yorke's note that "the locking bar at the upper end of the loop should be lengthened". The locking bar originally fitted on the siding point would have been designed for the rolling stock in use when the line originally opened, and would not be long enough for the new, longer-wheelbase coaches introduced subsequently. Whereas presumably the newly-purchased locking bar would have been designed to suit the latest coaches, which would explain why only one of the locking bars needed lengthening.

Yorke also noted that "the up home signal no.2 should not be released by no.4 points lever". With left-hand running, this signal now reads into the new loop-line, and so no longer needed interlocking with the siding points. It would appear that this locking was unintentionally left in place when the frame was relocked. Now, adding extra locking to another manufacturer's 20-year-old obsolete interlocking, for which you had neither the patterns nor the patent-rights, would not be simple. I suggest that S&F added their own locking tray for the extra locking, and left the original McK&H locking well alone.

If I am right, then the release that Yorke is talking about is part of the original McK&H 1877 locking. It would mean that originally you needed first to pull lever no. 4, the point FPL lever, which would then release lever no.2 allowing you to clear the up home signal. Because the home signal required the points locked by the FPL, it would follow, therefore, that the FPL locked the points when you pulled the FPL lever reverse, not when the FPL lever was normal.

The traditional way was for FPLs to be "normally in", in other words the points are locked (FPL in) when the FPL lever is normal. With this arrangement you have to pull the FPL lever (to disengage the FPL) in order to change the points. This is still the usual arrangement for ground-frames. However, Yorke's comment would seem to indicate that the original McKenzie & Holland signalling used the more-modern "normally out" arrangement. With this arrangement, the FPL is out when its lever is normal, and the FPL lever has to be pulled (to lock the points) in order to clear signals reading over those points in the facing direction.

In the original 1877 signalling, as I mentioned previously, it is quite likely that you could have both up and down direction signals "off" together. This would not be allowed under the 1897 signalling, when you would have been required to wait until the first train had come to a stand in the station before you admitted the second train. I have shown this as locking between the two FPLs. This would mean that you couldn't operate 6 FPL, in order to clear the down home, until you had unlocked 3 FPL after the up train had passed clear of the associated detector bar. However, it may

Heritage Group Projects - Update

Beddgelert Replica Water Tank

This will be transferred from Brunswick Iron Works in Caernarfon to Dinas ready for internal and external painting using the appropriate and recommended paints; zinc rich for the inside. In an ideal world this will be installed prior to the start of the 2011 season. The tank will sit on two lengths of rail, but prior to installation the top platform requires some 'fettling'.

Beddgelert Lamp Hut

Although a West Midland (WHR) Society project, this item – along with the inspection pit and water tank – will form a part of the Heritage cameo or as previously suggested, a fitting memorial to 'Concrete Bob' McAlpine. Manufacture and installation of the lamp hut is now scheduled for construction by the same company who produced the replica waiting shelter for Pont Croesor.

The Crossing Box

To allow more space at the supplier's premises this has been moved as a 'flat pack' to Dinas. At least it is now closer to its final location.

Tryfan Junct. Station Building.

As threatened, reconstruction started on the first Saturday in October; a fortuitous day because at their board meeting on the same day the WHR Society agreed to provide £4000 towards restoration costs.



In late September, our building expert John Williams, and FR Building Manager, Brian Coldwell went on a course to learn about the use and application of lime mortars and plaster. This will be of significant benefit in the proper reconstruction of the building and will also have a significant longer term effect as both are members of the small team charged with assessing remedial work on the buildings of both railways.

An initial delivery of lime mortar was put to the test on the 9th October when construction of a yellow brick surround was completed round one of the door frames. John Williams is gradually passing his knowledge and skills to Lewis Esposito, but both

are on an experimental learning curve in the use of this traditional 'sticky stuff'. The use of lime mortar is very much weather-dependant, so that with the coming of winter working opportunities may be few and far between. It will therefore be a case of grabbing any opportunity as it may arise. The photo above was taken on the 15th November 2010

At last the Group has invested in its own generator; this will enable the mechanisation of many on-site tasks.

Finally our thanks to Terry Rogers for donating a new 110v drill

Wanefawr signalling have been achieved by locking directly between the two home signals, or it may have been purely by instruction.

One final puzzle remained. If the loop points were worked from ground-levers, how could the signals be interlocked with the points? Each home-signal lever could be interlocked with the FPL lever for the facing point immediately ahead, as both levers were in the same frame. If the FPL could only be applied when the point was in its normal lie, then this would ensure that you could only pull the lever to clear the home signal if the facing point ahead was locked normal by its FPL. But what about the far-end point, at the exit from the loop? Would you really be able to clear the home and distant signals for a train to run through the station, with the exit-end points potentially set against the

train? And then it hit me: yes, of course you could! - if the points were trailable. This is surely the reason that the BoT conceded that starting signals would not be required. If the points had been worked from latching levers in the conventional manner, then starting signals would have been needed to ensure that a departing train didn't leave unless the loop points ahead of it were correctly set. However, if the points were trailable, then it wouldn't matter if the points were incorrectly set. Similar arrangements still exist on the Isle of Man Railway, where the passing loops have trailable points and so don't have starting signals.

In 1906, the NWN GR obtained its Light Railway Order, which meant that signalling was no longer necessary. Although the signals may have fallen out of use, it is highly unlikely that the impecunious NWN GR would have paid

out good money for new point levers, when the existing was perfectly serviceable. If the signalboxes were retained for working the points, this would explain why the signalboxes remained in reasonable condition. It was only when the WHR came along, with funds to refettle the NWN GR section, that the points were all converted to weighted hand-lever operation, and the signals removed.

I hope that this article has shone some light on a previously relatively unexplored part of WHR history. I apologise if some of it has got a bit technical. I also appreciate that quite a lot has been deduced from rather little hard evidence (not that that has ever worried archaeologists!), the locking charts in particular, and that others may have equally valid interpretations.

The First NWNGR Coach?



The activities of High Unsworth McKie as the initial contractor for the building of the NWNGR are well documented by J.I.C. Boyd. Having cost the railway more money than it could afford the board decided to instruct McKie to 'surrender all works, materials and plant by 7th February 1876', by which time they were negotiating with another contractor to take over – and finish – the works. A Mr J Boys was appointed to fulfil this task and by May 1877 the lines were open for business as far as the Drumhead at the head of the Bryngwyn incline and to (Old) Cwellyn as a temporary terminus.

Whether or not McKie employed a steam locomotive is not recorded but Mr Boys (J. Boys & Co.,) certainly did – 'Palmerston' being hired from the FR not long after he took charge. Its employment could explain why work was rather more expeditious under his control. The bulk of McKie's equipment was sold by auction at Dinas in September 1876 and amongst the items on offer were 'timber carriages'. In view of what is to follow it is reasonable to speculate that at least one of these was purchased by Boys.

By May 1881 the NWNGR was open in its entirety and it was now time for Boys to dispose of his equipment. By this time his operating base was at Rhyd Ddu. Here we turn to an article in the journal of the Penrhyn Railway Society entitled 'The Penrhyn Coaches – Part 4 – The Estate Coach' written by Eric Foulkes. Eric tells us that in October of 1881 Boys was visited at Rhyd Ddu by Arthur Wyatt, the

manager of the Penrhyn Quarry together with the quarry engineer and the workshop foreman. They struck a deal with Boys to

An Article by Eric Foulkes (Penrhyn Rly Society) inspires John Keylock to research the NWNGR's first coach

purchase a 'coach' which he had used as a mobile office and mess coach during railway construction. The purchase price was £20 and transport costs of £2-13s-1d were also agreed. The coach arrived at Penrhyn's Felin Fawr workshop the same month, perhaps having travelled 'top loaded' on an LNWR wagon from Dinas to Port Penrhyn? At the workshop it received a coat of varnish (13/3d) and in January 1882 Wyatt and his colleagues were paid £1-19s-6d expenses for travelling to Rhyd Ddu!

However this coach was not purchased for service within the quarry but rather to provide transport for Lord Penrhyn's 'hunting, fishing and shooting' friends wishing to so indulge on his Penrhyn estate. The only known photograph showing this coach/carriage/saloon is published above – said to have been taken in the mid 1930s.

A description of this vehicle appears in Boyd's 'Narrow Gauge Railways in South

Caernarfonshire' Vol II on p136. He observes – quite rightly – 'that it appears to have been built on wagon running gear components'. The size of the coach has been estimated at about 11 ft long by 5 ft wide and 7 ft 6 inches in height. A close look at the photograph shows a 4" to 6" diameter hole in each end at window mid height. There would appear to be two options for this distinctive feature - to allow passengers to look ahead or behind, or to accommodate late 19th century fishing rods which would have been 16' long or more. Whether these holes were a functional feature during Boy's ownership is, of course, not known but they could well have been useful for him. For its estate saloon function the fishing rod suggestion is most plausible – and far more romantic!

Eric Foulkes, in his article, suggests that the coach was destroyed by fire in the Felin Fawr workshops in October 1952. By virtue of Blanche's livery the photograph was taken between August 1934 and June 1936 which precludes the possibility of the coach having been destroyed by fire in 1933 (Boyd 1935!). It is said that the Estate coach continued to serve its purpose until the outbreak of WWII and the fact that no later photographs have yet come to light suggest that it kept a low profile well away from the few photographers of the time.

Our grateful thanks to the Penrhyn Railway Society for permission to use the photograph and to Eric Foulkes to quote from his article.

Those Sleepers & Associated Matters.....

At the December 1906 Board meeting of the North Wales Power & Traction Co. (NWP&T) it was resolved to instruct Mr Gethin Jones to produce an inventory of 'surplus materials' lying along the sites of PB&SSR construction. As an aside it is interesting to note that Mr Jones was perhaps best known for keeping records of local rainfall relative to anticipated water supply for the Cwm Dyli power station in Nant Gwynant. Perhaps he was given the job by virtue of his known meticulous recording!

NWP&T Board meeting minutes also reveal that the 'Croesor' rails used by the PB&SSR contractor were 'on loan'. Alas from whom they were 'on loan' is not recorded but stock kept by Moses Kellow (of Croesor Quarry) – who may well have acquired some from the Gorseddau Tramway – seems a possibility. Any rail stock not returned

at the end of the contract was to be debited to the contractor. Many lengths of rail were obviously not returned perhaps because of the comparatively hasty termination of the construction contract.

Research by Michael Bishop

At the December 1908 Board meeting the General Manager, Mr G.C. Aitchison – who was usually at such meetings – reported an offer he had received for sleepers. These could have been those that were subsequently invoiced to the FR. Any income from the sale of sleepers was to be put to the credit of the account specifically set up to pay the Caernarfon Harbour Trust (£2,500) for

land needed for the proposed Caernarfon extension and its terminus.

By June 1910 there were still surplus materials available for sale – including some sleepers (Invoice to FR dated September 1911?). Scrap metal merchants Marple and Gillot of Sheffield and contractors R White & Sons of Widnes were contacted to assess their interest in surplus rail and bridge materials. It is not known if either of these two companies were the purchasers but the following December Board meeting recorded the sale by the 'Portmadoc Railway Co' (PB&SSR) of rails to the value of £185-14s-7d and bridgework £100-0-0.

As work ceased on the PB&SSR in the summer of 1906 it obviously took at least five years to realise the value of any assets.

Tickets Please

Unfortunately, the WHR did not enjoy a monopoly over public transport between Portmadoc and Dinas, and the meagre train service provided in its latter days certainly did nothing to help its cause. By the time the line was open, the road going internal combustion engine was well established and it is not surprising to find motor transport conveying passengers over parts of the area served by the WHR. The two tickets illustrated are examples of such road services, and although they are audit withdrawals and therefore undated, it is safe to assume that these journeys took place in competition with the WHR as is explained below.

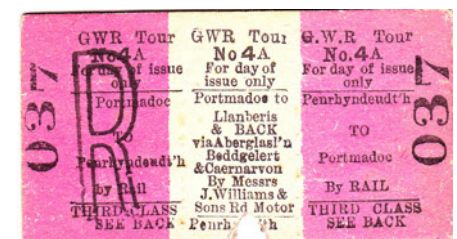
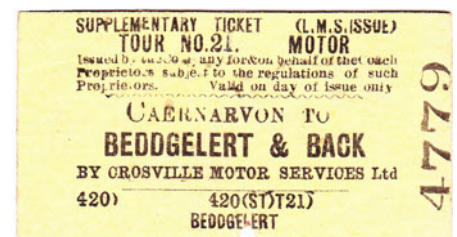
Ticket #4779 is for LMS Tour No.21, which is fully described in their booklet "Where to Go & What to See with your Weekly Runabout Ticket" issued in the summer of 1936. From Caernarvon, the tour encircled Snowdon, visiting Llanberis and the nearby

lakes, Gwynant Vale, Aberglaslyn, the Vale of Colwyn and Quellyn Lake, with a short stay at Beddgelert, all for a supplementary charge of 2/6. The earliest possible date for this tour would have been 1930, the year in which Crosville Motor Services Ltd was formed. In November 1929 its predecessor, Crosville Motor Company, had gone into voluntary liquidation

and had been acquired by the L.M. & S.Rly and renamed LMS (Crosville). A few months later, the railway companies had reached a reciprocal agreement with the Tilling & British Automobile Traction Group to each acquire 50% of each other's holdings. As a result, LMS (Crosville) became Crosville Motor Services Ltd on 15th May 1930.

#037 is a three stage ticket for GWR Tour 4A, from Penrhyndeudraeth to Llanberis and back. This is a road and rail ticket, by GWR from Penrhyn to Portmadoc and then by road transport on to Llanberis via Aberglaslyn, Beddgelert and Carnarvon by Messrs

Derek Lystor explores more WHR tickets



J. Williams and Sons, Road Motors. Tracing this firm has proved somewhat difficult and it is still not absolutely clear where its operating base was. It seems likely that they were based in Portmadoc and were operating in the early twenties, such a firm advertising their services in the 1923 issue of the "Snowdon & Welsh Highland Holiday Book".

My sincere thanks are due to both Brian Paul for his researches both locally and at Gwynedd Archive Services, and to Jim Hewitt, who waded through lists of Williams's in early census records, not a simple task when dealing with such a common Welsh surname!

JOHN WILLIAMS & SON

Cartage Contractors and Furniture Removers in Motor Vans
Charabancs and Cars for Hire Telephone 49 Portmadoc

RED GARAGE, PORTMADOC

NWNG Employees - Thomas Ore

We first meet Thomas Ore in November 1909 when he is listed by G.C. Aitchison as one of 32 NWNGR employees. Described as a mason, he was earning £52 a year. Being about 38 at the time and living at 5 Maencoch, Llanwnda he had more than likely been working for the railway since the turn of the century or even earlier.

More on the Men who made the NWNGR work from John Keylock

Even though the WHR had been constituted by May 1922 the pay sheet for the fortnight ending 24th May 1922, compiled by D.O. Jones, was headed NWNGR. (Perhaps old habits were dying hard!). During that fortnight only Mr Jones and T.R. Thomas, foreman, worked for twelve days; the remaining 18 employees only worked on nine days – perhaps an indication of the state of trade. Perhaps Thomas Ore was one of those earning 10/6 a day. Having paid 2/4d National Insurance (the company contributed 2/6d) he 'took home' £4-12-2 for nine days work, about 2 ½ times as much as in the first decade of the century. He was one of six 'loaders' and would have been employed with trans-shipment; slates out and coal and other goods inwards.

Later in the year (1922) he became platelayer on the Bryngwyn branch and with the WHR fully operational in 1923 he took over the Dinas to Waunfawr section with a modest wage increase. His wife, Ruth, bore four sons and a daughter and by January 1924 the eldest son, Henry, was also working for the WHR as an 'underman'. Alas by December the son was to have been made redundant.

The photograph shows Thomas Ore (on the left) and a workmate on a ganger's trolley in the early 1930s and most likely on the Bryngwyn Branch. The trolley represents the remaining sub-structure of a Fairbanks-Morse 'speeder'; note the rope used – inter-alia – for attaching the trolley to the rear of a train.

We are grateful to Thomas Ore's grand-daughter Mrs Ruth Strello of Llandwrog, for providing us with the photograph and



to John Ellis Williams for the initial 'find'.

According to information just received gangers/platelayers were paid £2-2s-9d per week in 1930 (depression?)

BEDDGELERT'S LITTLE TRAIN

BRIAN PAUL has kindly translated from the Welsh several poems that were written by local people about the coming of the railway to Beddgelert.

The following lines were penned in 1922 by Elin Ann Evans of Cwmcloch.

Elin was the sister of Edith Evans of Eryri Harp Choir Fame - see WHH No. 10

Seriously, I wonder if the railway will come to our area?

If it comes, it will be easy to go for a ride;

*They've been saying it's coming for such a long time,
But we doubt in all honesty whether we'll ever see the Train.*

But then, if it comes, in truth things will be better.

*People from every county will flood into Snowdonia;
Farmers and shopkeepers, be they young or old,
Will easily get all their needs carried on the Train.*

We eagerly await the 'Sunday school trip',

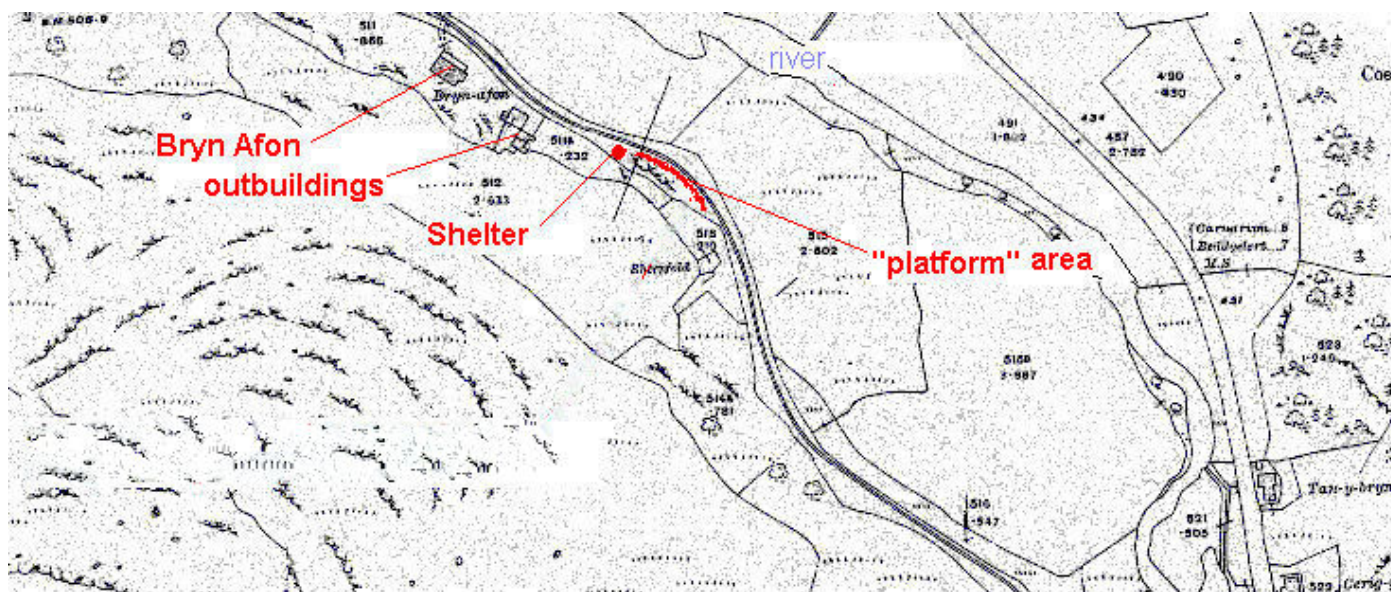
We'll all travel happily along the 'Narrow line';

*We can go to England, Cardiff and Llanrwst,
And come back by nightfall in the loud puffing Train.*

When people see the railway, it'll be farewell to the motor.

*The time will have come to pension it off;
We'll all join together, the young and the old,
To give it a leaving gift when we see the Train!*

Salem Halt



Salem Halt is somewhat of an enigma, with confusion in published sources as to when it existed and where it was located.

Despite usually being quoted as opening in 1922, the location was in formal but unadvertised public use in North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways' days – a NWNCR Workman's Ticket from "Salem to Glanrafon Sidings or Bettws Garmon", price 2d., is illustrated as fig. 24 in *Tickets of the NWNCR* by Trefor David (copies available from WHH Group sales, price £4) and reproduced below.

The facility could have started at any date from the opening of the Rhyd Ddu extension on 14 May 1881, under the terms of a 21-year agreement with the Glanrafon Quarry for the conveyance of workmen as set out on page 21 of *An Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway* (Peter Johnson, 2009). The NWNCR timetables had trains falling broadly within the quarry's criteria – usually 05:30 (subsequently 06:00) from Dinas Junction and between 17:30 and 18:00 from Snowdon. The return train ran

rather later during the three summer months (when there was another a train about 16:30) and also later – at one period – on monthly "pay Saturdays". The quarry was employing over 400 people by the

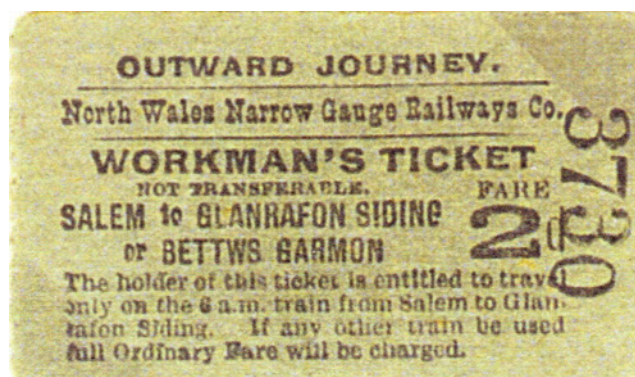
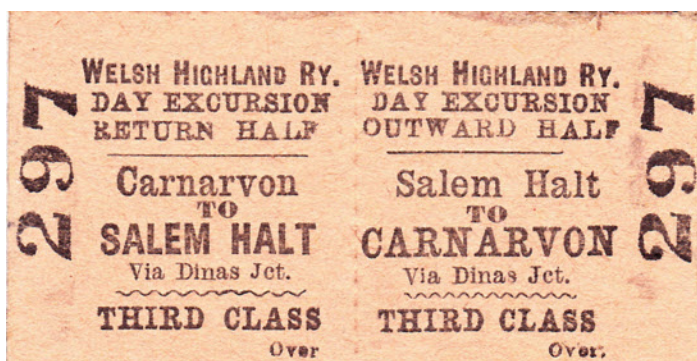
Richard Maund deduces the exact site of the enigmatic Salem Halt

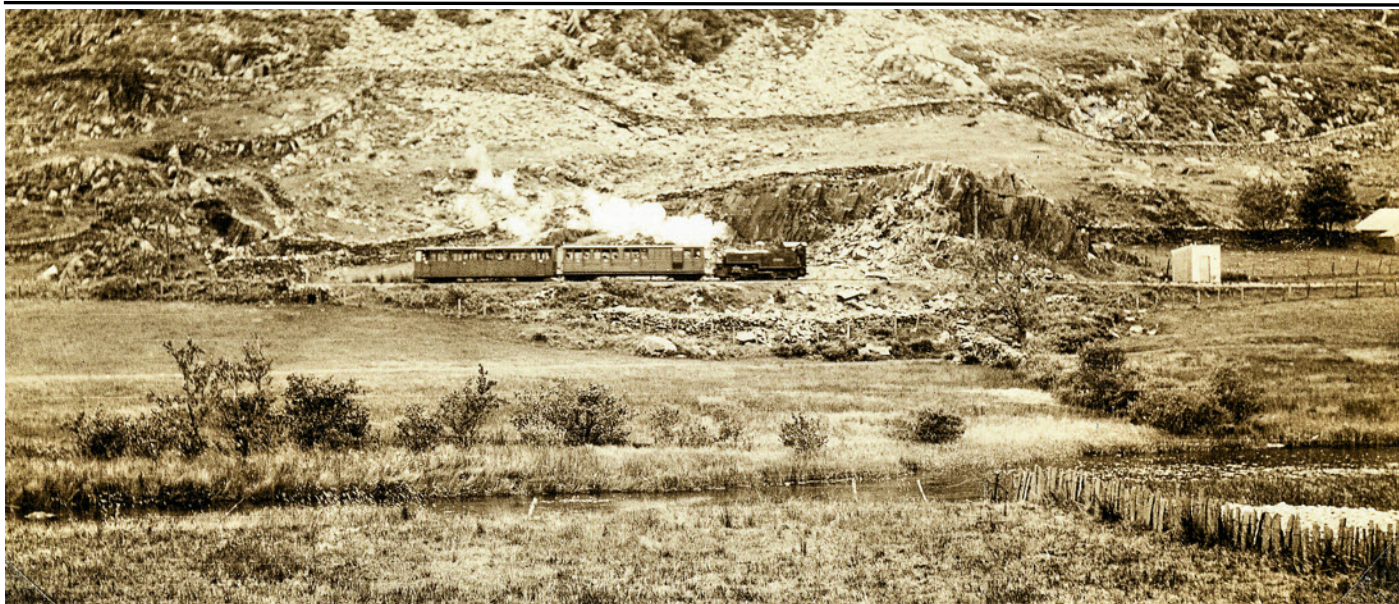
mid 1890's – doubtless accounting for virtually all the NWNCR's season ticket purchases. Later the workforce was running down: 208 men in 1900, 138 the following year. From October 1901 the timetable changed permanently (as it had, briefly, the previous winter), with the morning train at 06:20 (and subsequently even later) and the afternoon train at 16:20, timings which precluded daily travel to Glanrafon and must have marked the end of the use of the halt at Salem for such traffic. Was it coincidence that the 1879 agreement expired about this time? Certainly, the quarry workforce was down to only 9 men in 1902 and NWNCR season ticket sales virtually disappeared.

Glanrafon was revived later in the decade but train times were *not* altered to suit a resumption of daily "commuting". When NWNCR passenger services ceased at the end of October 1916, the quarry had again been closed – or, at least, virtually so (WHH 8/2).

WHH 5/2 put the halt's original position "just to the south of the stile which carried the footpath leading to Bryn-afon" (a residence) whereas the hut in the upper photograph is the halt's shelter as at 1936 – about 100 yards south, beyond Bryn-Afon and its outbuildings (just out of shot, right). The late Bill Rear believed the halt moved "a few yards" south – presumably from where the village footpath reached the line to where the shelter is seen. The second photograph – of guard Dafydd Lloyd Hughes with a down train – is not the same location as the

Tickets from two different eras: the North Wales Narrow Gauge ticket probably dates from the 1880's (possibly the 1890's), while the Welsh Highland ticket was from the reopening (or at least the early 1920's – "Carnarvon" became "Caernarvon" in 1926). (n.b. tickets are not actual size)





hut, but a train's length south (note the telegraph pole, mentioned again in picture caption right).

"Secondary source" references to the halt exist:

- The principal map (page 51) in *More about the Welsh Highland Railway* (WHLR (1964) Ltd., 1966) has the halt by the ford at grid ref 539 570, well north of the village. Although the text does not help pin down the site, there is an illustration on page 66 which is quite clearly *not* at the "ford" site!"
- *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire*, Vol I (James Boyd, 2nd edn., 1988) quotes the opening date as 21 July 1922 on page 197 (presumably a typo., having 31 July 1922 – the date the line did reopen – on page 260), making no reference to the halt's prior existence. The text locates the halt – a wooden hut – "opposite a wooden footbridge over the river" opposite Salem village, at 5m 40ch from Dinas. The plan at page 194, however - like the previous publication - locates the halt by the ford, even though a simple scaling from Plas y Nant Halt (at 5m 75ch) shows this location to be wrong; the plan at page 7 of the same author's Vol. II (2nd edn., 1989) repeats the solecism. The only references in the text are to the contractor's specifications for reopening the line, with mention of a new ballast quarry "four chains south of Salem Halt" and – despite there being no mention of the halt in the specifications and estimates accompanying the contract (Gwynedd Archives (Caernarfon) XC2/33/47) – the author asserts (page 13) that it was "installed officially"

These two photographs provide almost a panoramic view of the halt from the village, across the Afon Gwyrfai. Left: Russell with a two-coach Down (northbound) train is just about to stop at the halt, short of the waiting shelter (right). The middle of the rear carriage is passing the telegraph pole mentioned in the text. Right: The same loco. with a three-coach Up train is passing Bryn-Afon and approaching the halt. The waiting shelter (with the stopping place for the train just beyond) is off the left edge of the photo, beyond the Bryn-Afon outbuildings. The footbridge is bottom left. [from Peter Johnson and Bob Freeman collections, respectively]

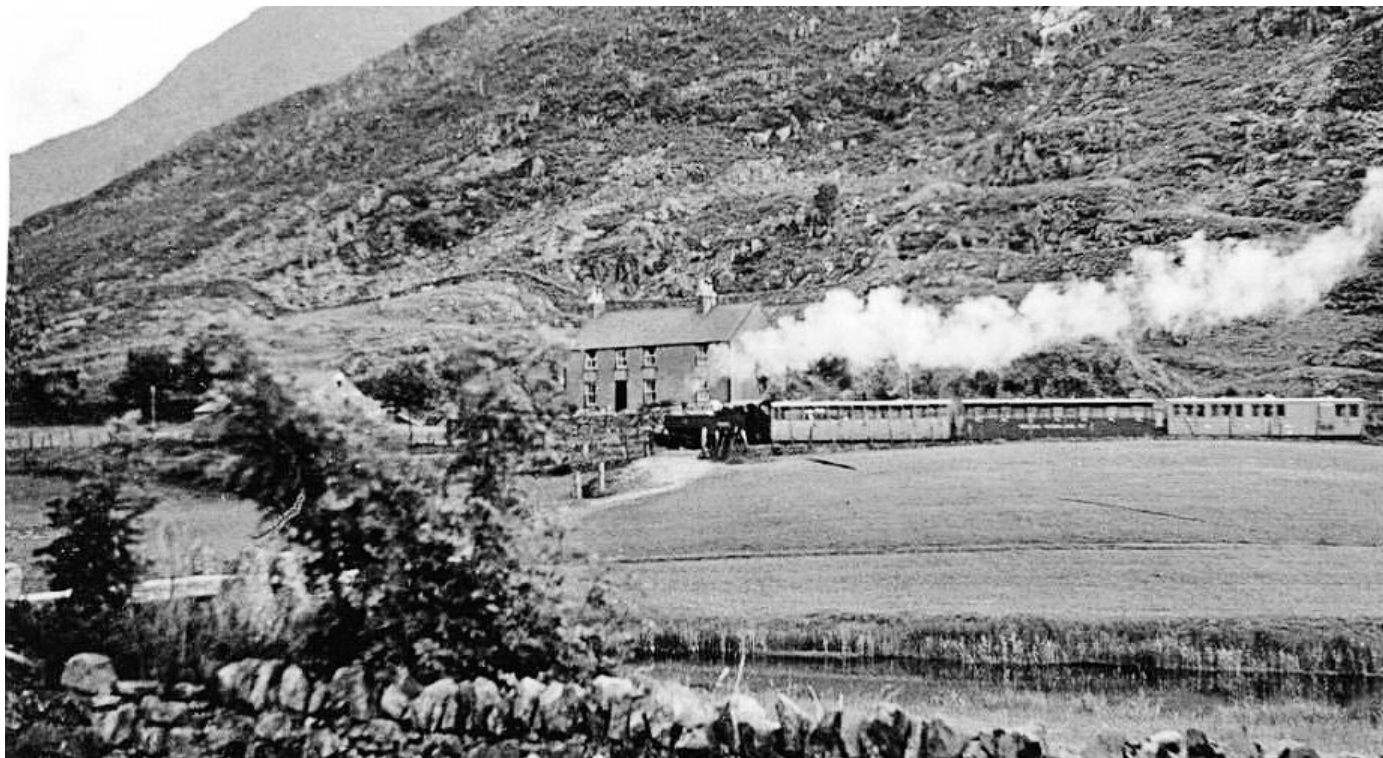
and " 'platform' added". A WHR return ticket from South Snowdon to Salem is illustrated between pp. 102 and 103.

- *Branch Lines around Portmadoc 1923-46* (Vic Mitchell *et al*, 1993) merely states that the halt opened on 21 July 1922 – repeating Boyd's typo!
- In the Group's publication, *The Welsh Highland Railway – An Historical Guide, Part One* (2005) John Keylock states (page 19): "Opposite the village of Salem a halt was provided, accessed by a wooden footbridge over the river. Shortly after the remains of Salem Quarry...are passed...". This, too, puts the halt by Bryn-Afon. The illustration is of a down train passing the ballast quarry, "approaching" the halt. Although not explicitly stated, the small hut on the right hand edge of this photograph would be the halt shelter. The middle of the rear carriage is passing the telegraph pole mentioned above.
- The front end-paper of *An Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway* has the halt by the ford at grid ref 539 570 although this is quite clearly *not* the footpath /occupation crossing location illustrated in the photographs at pages 38 and 84, which would be by Bryn-Afon.

Ordnance Survey maps of Great War vintage (scale 25" : 1 mile) for the area

can be consulted on-line at web.bethere.co.uk/steven.harris/ww1/std/map10.htm (Salem northwards) and web.bethere.co.uk/steven.harris/ww1/std/map11.htm (south of Salem), while other old OS maps - some large scale - for 1889, 1891, 1901, 1915 and 1919/20 can be consulted on-line at www.old-maps.co.uk/ (for Salem, search for the "ford" site using co-ordinates 253900 357000 and for the site near Bryn-Afon using co-ordinates 254550 356600). Comparison of these old Ordnance Survey maps appears to date Bryn-Afon to the first decade of the 20th Century. None (so far as I could see) actually contains any hint of the existence of a railway halt or shelter for Salem (suggesting that the shelter, at least, did not exist before the 1922 re-opening); they are, however, helpful in understanding the locality.

In readiness for restoration of passenger services with the line's reincarnation as the Welsh Highland Railway (Light Railway), the Minister of Transport's inspecting officer, Col. J W Pringle, made his inspection on 22 July 1922 and submitted his report (National Archives MT58/449) three days later; he does *not* list Salem among the passenger halts. The re-opening timetable – effective from 31 July 1922 – and the succeeding months' *Bradshaw's Railway Guides* make no mention of Salem Halt until the October 1922 issue. The company's timetable from December at last acknowledges the existence of the request stop, available for general public use.



In the Gwynedd archives at Caernarfon (XC2/33/57) appears some exchanged correspondence in autumn 1931 between the County Clerk (with his WHR “hat” on), J A Iggulden (Lt.-Col. Stephens’ lieutenant at Tonbridge) and the County Surveyor. The latter was seeking to move the shelter, temporarily, for use of his men on a road widening scheme in the area and to rent it for 2s 6d a week. Iggulden asked that the shelter be returned to Dinas, not Salem after use. All was agreed in December 1931 but in the end, the offer was not taken up so the shelter presumably stayed where it was – and where our photographers later found it!

The 1934 lease of the line by the Festiniog Railway simply said (in Schedule Two) that Salem consisted of “one wooden hut as waiting room”, rather than corrugated iron (or “zinc” as the lease called such constructions).

So, in the absence of other definitive documentary evidence what conclusions may we draw from all this?

Location of halt: The distance from the village makes the “ford” site – curiously so favoured by railway cartographers B W Evans, J M Lloyd and Gordon Rushton (perhaps all misled by a 1927 4 miles to the inch OS map?) – a most unlikely spot for a picking-up place to serve the village, whereas the short step over the footbridge directly opposite sounds much more likely – although a not entirely satisfactory location, being on a narrow embankment. When the halt became “officially public”, in autumn 1922, it was slightly further

south of Bryn-Afon itself, where the railway’s right of way was wider (mid point grid ref 545 566) – indeed, the very area illustrated just right of centre of the illustration on the top of page 14.

There is no public access to the site now. There appears to be no definitive evidence to prove whether the halt “moved” (as Bill Rear averred) or was always here (as others suspect).

Dates of halt: A formally recognised but unadvertised stopping place certainly existed in NWNRR days for quarrymen – possibly from as early as 14 May 1881. However, the timetable changes made in October 1901 must have marked the end of regular quarrymen’s use of the halt. There is no evidence as to whether or not it was used formally by other than quarrymen during the NWNRR era, but we may expect that informal use took place! The photograph (dated as “ca.1905”) on page 38 of *An Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway* very much suggests the shelter did not exist in NWNRR days.

With the line’s reopening on 31 July 1922, the lack of any contemporaneous mention of Salem must make one very sceptical indeed that the halt reopened that day. Doubtless locals made their views known and one could suspect that calls did resume before the appearance in *Bradshaw’s Guide* from October 1922 and which, for the first time, acknowledged the halt’s availability for general public use. It is most likely that the shelter itself dated from this time of great confidence (alas, so soon to be shattered) in the

railway’s prospects: it is highly unlikely that finance would have been available for providing it after the railway had gone into receivership in March 1927 and yet we know it did exist by 1931.

Of the 16 advertised intermediate stopping places in the summer 1933 timetable, only seven remained for the three seasons operated under the Festiniog Railway’s lease: of these, Salem was one. So while we may not know when it opened, we do know that its last advertised available day of service was Saturday 26 September 1936.

As an aside: this was the only halt on the WHR (LR) that formally carried the suffix “Halt” in its title, albeit dropped fairly soon into the Welsh Highland era. Other stopping places were, in effect, halts and were referred to as such in some publicity material – but never formally carried the suffix in their names.

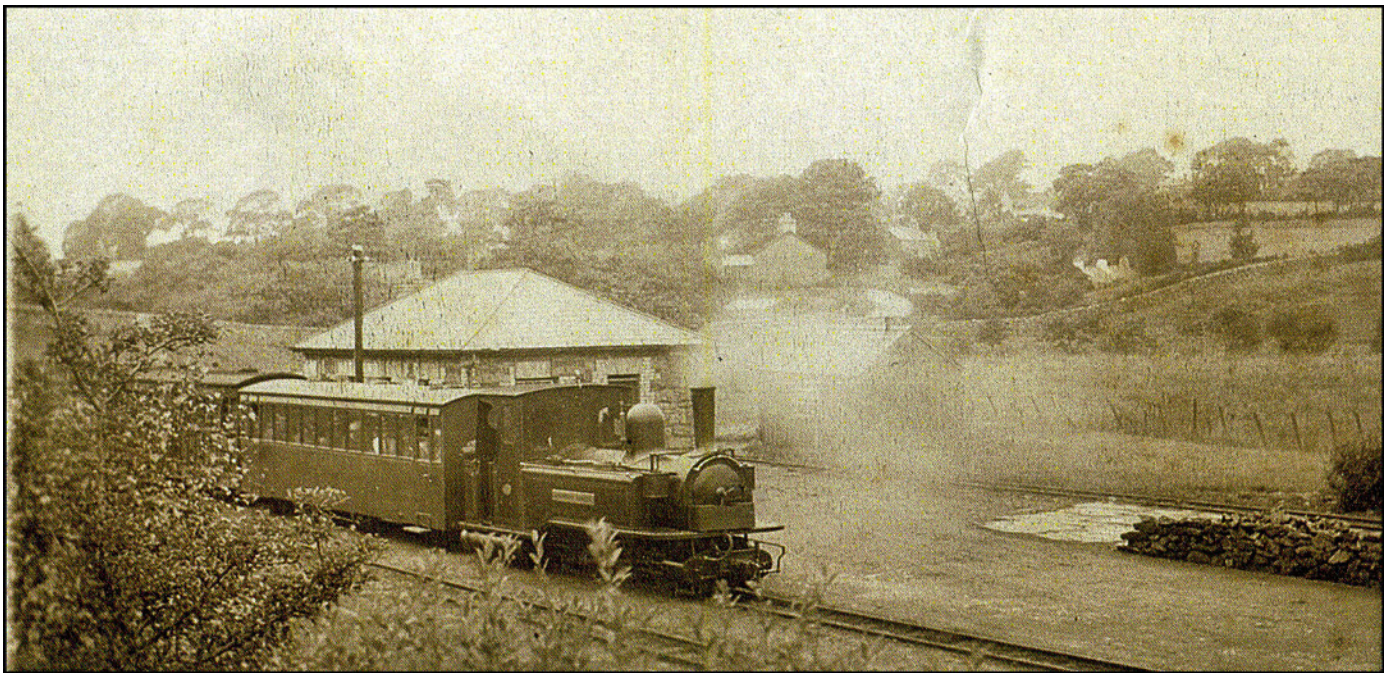
Pronunciation is with a short “a”: sal-um, rather than say-lem.

For their invaluable insights during this research I am particularly grateful to David Allan, John Keylock, Peter Liddell and Derek Lystor.

"Chronicles of Croesor Crossing"

Richard Maund has compiled a sheet of corrigenda to this book, the results of further research, principally in the county archives at Caernarfon. For your free copy send an S.A.E. To Richard Maund, 1 Fourseasons Close, Crewe, CW2 6TN. Alternatively, an electronic copy can be requested from chronicles@themaunds.idps.co.uk

A 'New' Old Photograph



From time to time the Heritage Group is privileged to receive 'new' old pictures of the WHR/NWNG. They arrive as a result of the higher profile that we have tried to establish or from 'professional' researchers such as Peter Johnson

Earlier this year we received the above photograph from Mrs Glenys Walters. The picture was in an album presented to her grandfather, a quarryman living in Waunfawr, in 1908. The dedication is to "Mr Thomas Trevor Davies, with the compliments of J. Hamilton Gibson, 1 Sept. 1908"

Glenys writes :-

"According to my late mother, her father worked in "Gors quarry", probably Gors

y Bryniau* I think that is on Allt Coed Mawr**, but he started work as a 14 year old, so he probably began in one of the more local quarries rather than going so far at that age, but I am not sure of that. His home was Cae Steel, Waunfawr, and all his brothers were quarrymen as well. He wasn't a rockman but he worked in the slate splitting sheds. He made a lovely slate inkstand (see photo below) that was given as a prize in a chapel competition in Waunfawr, and the people who had it have recently given it back to the village museum - Antur Waunfawr. I believe that there was a rockfall in Gors quarry in 1908 and the men were laid off for several months, which is why he had to go away to Manchester, where his wife had relatives. I am afraid I know nothing else about his work in the quarry. He

was a wonderful singer and had an offer to go to Italy to study, but his mother wouldn't let him go - he was her favourite. But that is nothing to do with quarrying or railways!"

Thank you Glenys both for the photograph and for the memories of your grandfather.

The picture shows 'Moel Tryfan' and train at Waunfawr station. Of particular interest is the very neatly stacked coal yard - this is the only photograph that we have seen which features this aspect of the NWNGR operation at Waunfawr. However during reconstruction, when the Waunfawr site was being cleared, the slate floor of the coal yard was uncovered.

*Cors y Bryniau, otherwise known as Chwarel y Gors, is/are the colloquial names for Alexandra Quarry. The name comes from the one-time active turbary that was on the marsh ('cors') that was on the hillsides ('bryniau', singular: 'bryn') on the Gwyrfaï side of Moel Tryfan (the 'mountain' not the quarry, which is Moeltryfan). The English name was only invested on the site in 1862-3 by the new English proprietors, who borrowed on the 'Alexandra fever' of the age (similar to 'Diana fever' of the 1980s) when Princess Alexandra of Denmark was marrying Edward, Prince of Wales.

**Allt Coed Mawr is the very steep hill ('[g]allt') on the country lane that drops down from a mile or so north of Rhosgadfan village to Waunfawr, near the WHR station. There are large trees ('coed=trees mawr=large/big') on this hillside.

Thanks to Professor Gwynfor Pierce Jones for the translation and explanation

