

## WELSH HIGHLAND

£2.00

Issue No. 53

## HERITAGE

Web : [www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk](http://www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk)

September 2011

ISSN 1462-1371

## GOING UP!

**'G**oing Up' indeed – and you may well comment – 'at last'!

On Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> August Stuart McNair's photograph (right) shows the front elevation of Tryfan Junction station building looking more respectable than it has done for years.

'Cash Flow Controller' Keylock (left) is obviously discussing progress with 'Lou' Esposito – clipboard in hand to make measurements of lintels as the building is now at that height for them to be imminently required. All the bricklaying has been done by Lou and recently recruited member Ian Lord, who cycles to site from his home in Waunfawr.

The photo also shows first use of the scaffolding kindly donated by Dave Kent before he 'emigrated' to North Britain.

Stone work is in the hands of local volunteer, John Williams whose next task is to replace the facing stones in the far – Dinas facing – elevation where the door gave access to the 'gents'. In this elevation the window was filled in with sawn slate, we suspect in late NWNGR days. It is a matter of some contention as to whether this infilling should be undone and a window re-instated!. Bearing in mind that external restora-



tion was originally planned to be as found, what do members think?

Emails to [david.allan132@ntlworld.com](mailto:david.allan132@ntlworld.com)

A re-instated window would allow more internal light but involve more work and there is no known photograph of this elevation showing the window.

Based on current progress and eternal optimism the price for installing the complete roof (with Welsh slates) has been updated in the hope that this major step forward could start before the year end. We have the funds, but could use more hands so if you can help please contact Lou - [g.yorath@btinternet.com](mailto:g.yorath@btinternet.com)

## Photographs

*Above right - the building derelict before work began*

*Centre - door & window frames in position*

*Bottom right - window blocked with sawn slate & door to the 'gents'*

*Bottom left - close up of one the sawn slates in the window daubed red shows 70 year old graffiti that reminds us that just 3 years after the line closed, and before the track was lifted, a Howel Williams lived at Cae Hen!*



# The Carnarfon Proposals

## A view from the Sir Douglas Fox Plans

The remarkable survival of an archive of engineers' plans and drawings inspired this article. An item in *WHH* No. 39 (March 2008) recorded the discovery of a cache of drawings held on microfilm by Hyder Consulting, who are successors to Freeman, Fox and Partners and, earlier, Sir Douglas Fox and Partners.

Established histories of the Welsh Highland Railway (W.H.R.) and its predecessors naturally concentrate on events leading to the eventual construction of the W.H.R., between Dinas Junction and Portmadoc. The narrow gauge line - as built - terminated three miles away from the port of Carnarvon, and this foreshortening was to hamper the carriage of slates and passengers to the quayside beneath the Castle.

There were three proposals at different dates, the intentions of which were to extend the narrow gauge from Dinas to Carnarvon. These were by (a) the North

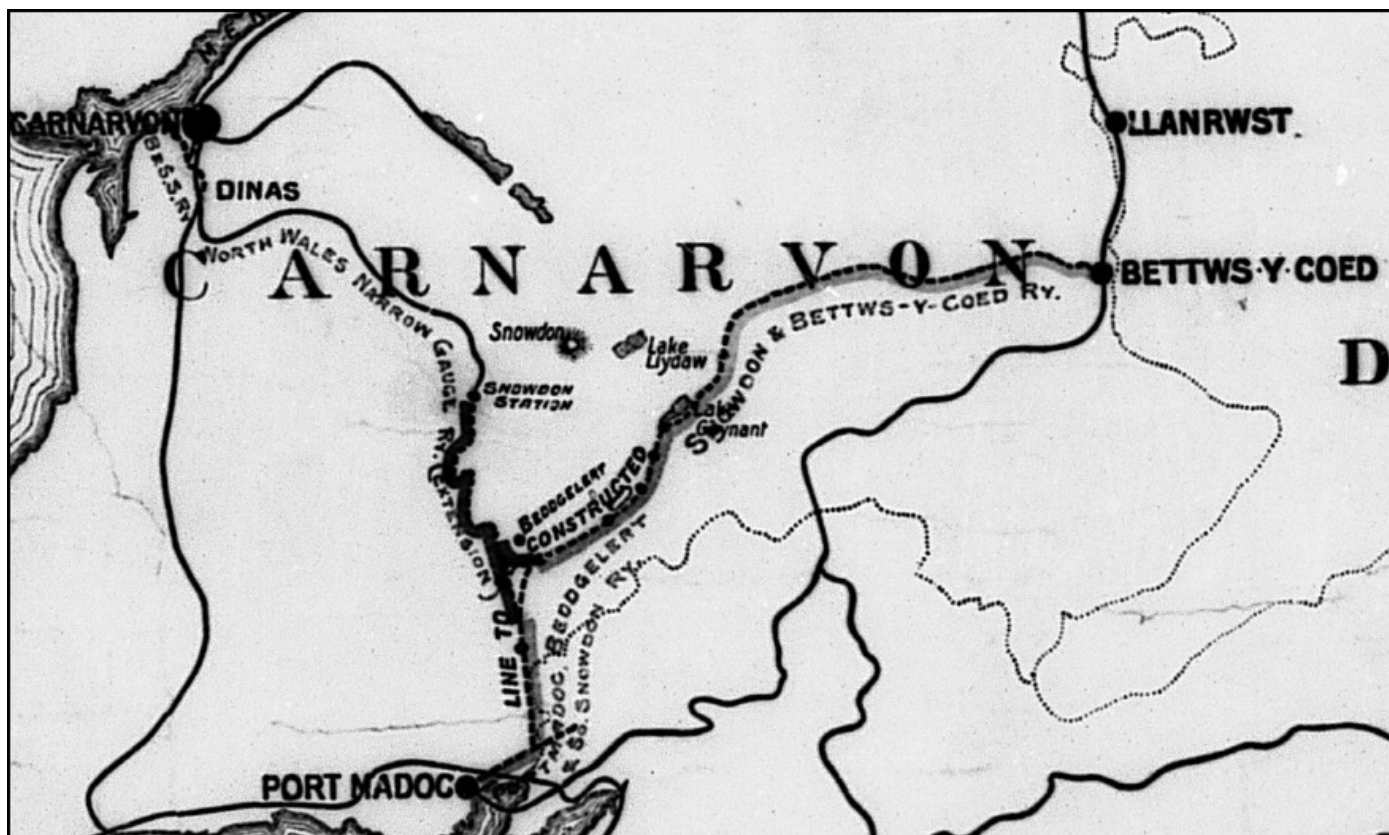
Wales Narrow Gauge Railways (N.W.N.G.R.) in 1885, (b) the Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway (P.B.S.S.R.) in 1904, and (c) by the promoters of the W.H.R. in 1923. None of these schemes came to fruition, and it took the railway until 1997 to reach Carnarvon! Some of the 1904 and 1923 plans are in the archive and have been dissected to put 'meat on the bones' of the proposals. Some fascinating insights have emerged as a result.

### *Richard Watson explores the Caernarfon Ambitions of the PB&SSR*

In this first part we will examine the P.B.S.S.R. proposals of 1904, and with one exception the plans in the archive are those prepared for submission to Parliament. Wherever possible, the plans themselves, or enlargements, have been

reproduced here. The past tense has been used wherever possible to avoid the tedious use of "would have been", and to avoid confusion place name spellings used are as printed on the originals. A word of caution however: none of the plans are given version numbers so they may not have been issued at the same time.

Had it been built, the Carnarvon extension would have given the North Wales Narrow Gauge, and its successors, the advantage of a route to a logical terminus alongside the River Seiont. The line would have been circuitous and steeply graded, but ultimately its construction was foiled by stiff opposition from the London & North Western Railway coupled with lack of funding. The story does not end here, however, as there was one further attempt by the promoters of the Welsh Highland Railway in 1923. An account of this proposal will appear as part 2 of the article in the December issue of *WHH*.

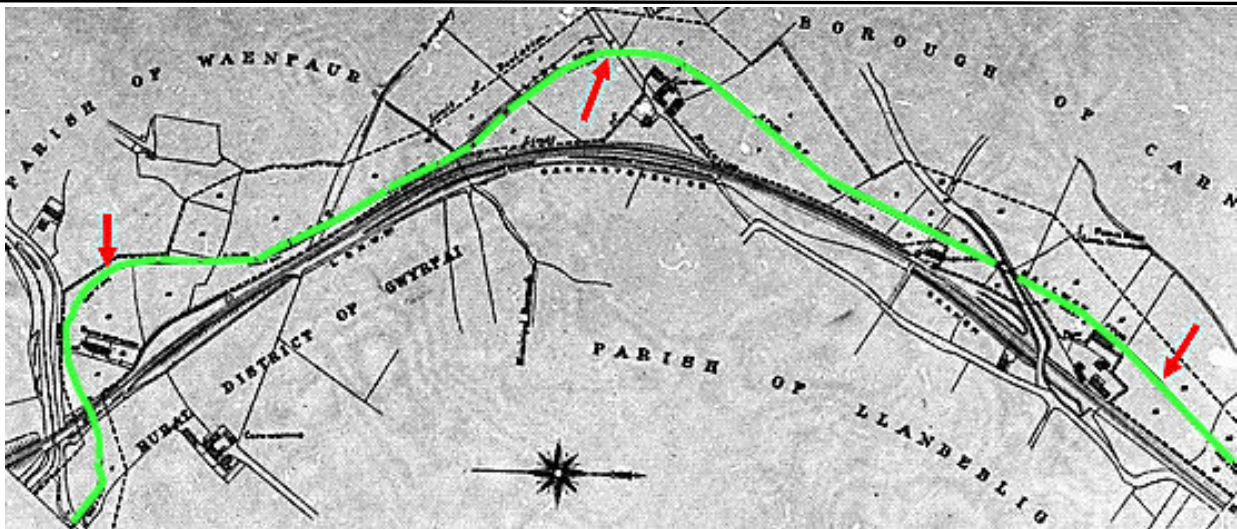


Plan 1 Extract from Drawing No. 31894 (294-79) of 1904 showing proposed railways in the district, including the Snowdon & Bettws-y-Coed Railway and the Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway. The proposed Carnarvon extension of the P.B.S.S.R. is shown as a hatched line. The original document contains the heading "In Parliament - Session 1904", and is rubber stamped as an office copy by Sir Douglas Fox and Partners. A paper label was attached showing Harper Brothers as the engineers, and Sir Douglas Fox & Partners were consultants.

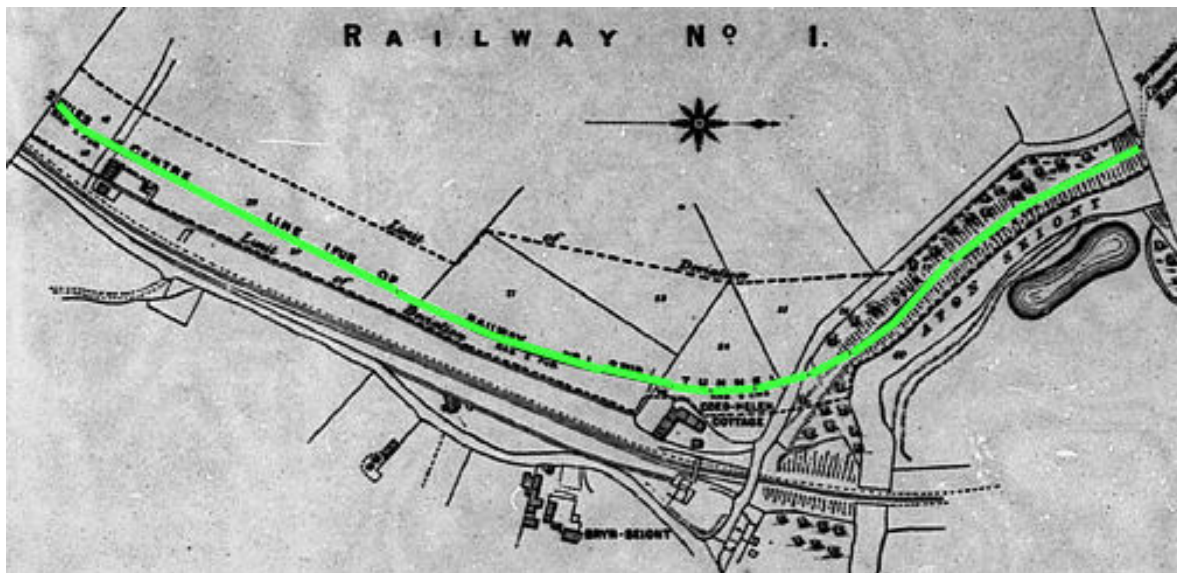


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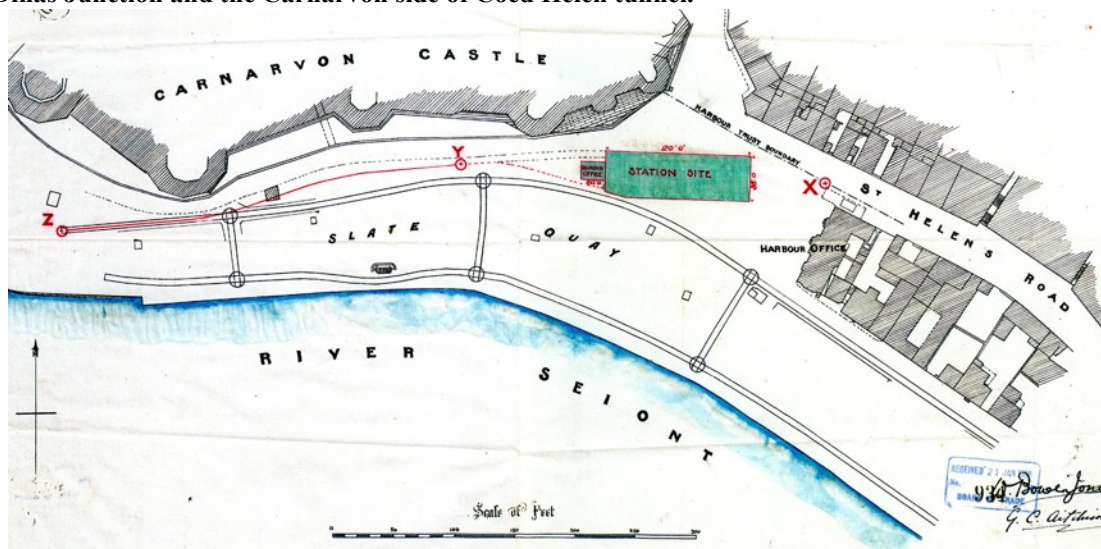




Plan 4. An extract from Sheet No. 2 again covering "Railway No.1" between the Gwyrfaai Bridge and Pant, the site of the first terminus of the standard gauge Carnarvonshire Railway. The P.B.S.S.R. curved east under the L.N.W.R. "Carnarvonshire Branch", thence to the north again on a curve of 45 chains radius and describing a letter "S". It curved back towards the L.N.W.R. On an embankment, falling at 1 in 40 and taking up a position parallel to the standard gauge. It curved away again, in a cutting and then embankment to the west, now on shallower grade and again on the old Nantlle alignment. Looping around Cae Coch house, and to its west, the line crossed an occupation road on the level before passing Pant on a falling gradient of 1 in 46.



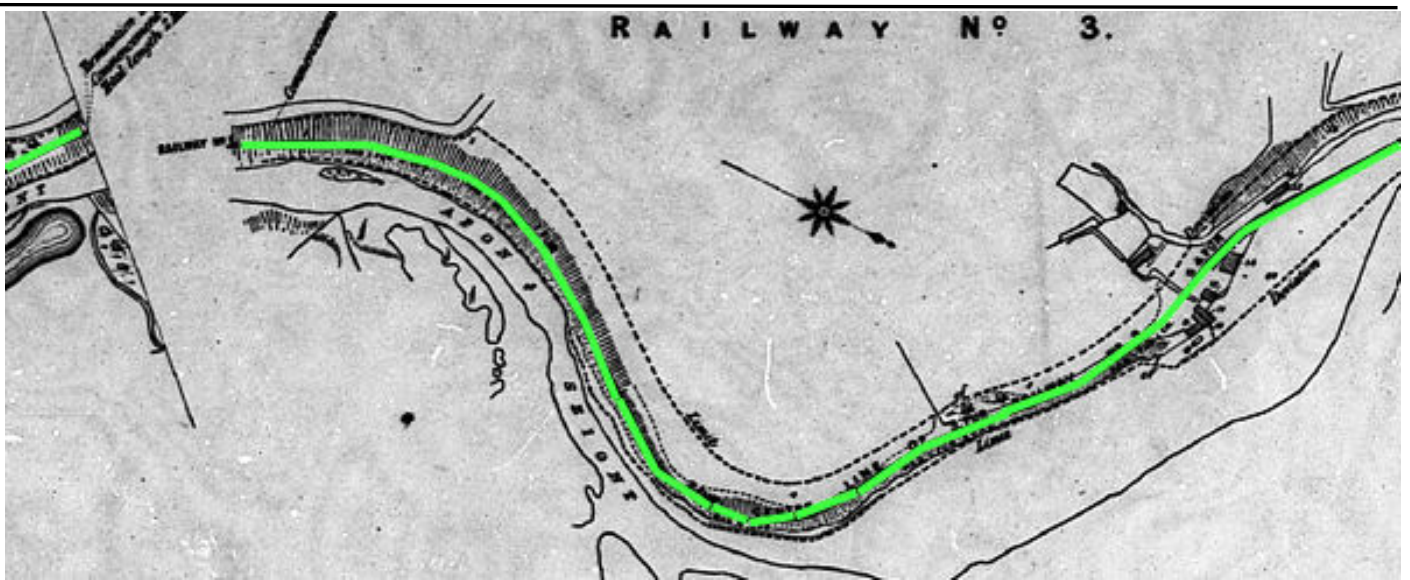
Plan 5. Sheet No. 3, between Pant and the end of "Railway No.1", and the showing the beginning of "Railway No.3" along the western bank of the Afon Seiont. Leaving Pant, the narrow gauge passed to the west of the standard gauge and ran through a tunnel west of Coed Helen Cottage. The tunnel was 117 yards long, on a curve of 6 chains radius and falling at 1 in 55 towards Carnarvon. "Railway No. 1" was 2 miles 3 furlongs and 9 chains (4 km) long, between the datum point at Dinas Junction and the Carnarvon side of Coed Helen tunnel.



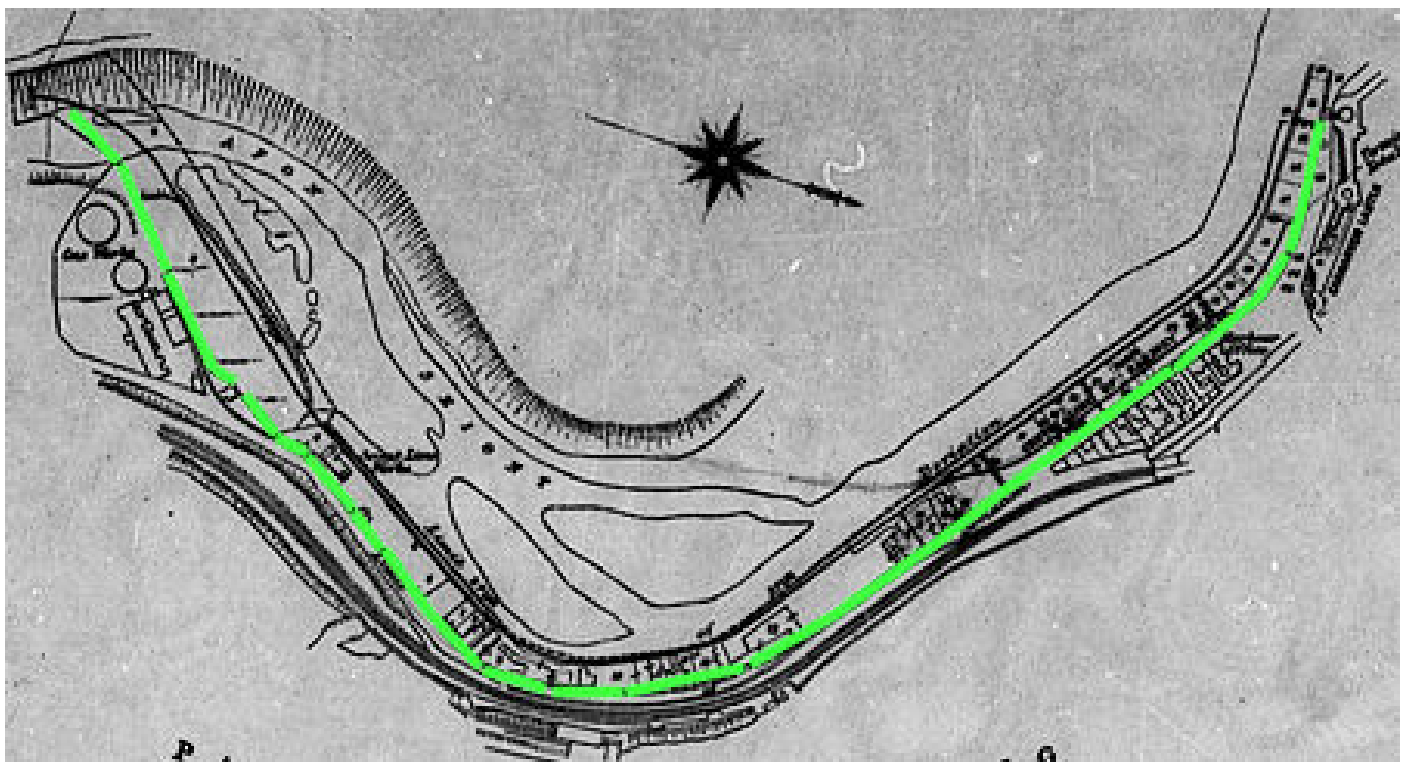
Potential site for the Carnarvon terminus of the PB&SSR

This plan is dated 1908 and is signed by Aitchison. Although not part of the Fox drawings it gives an idea of a possible site for the proposed Carnarvon station





Plan 7. "Railway No.3" followed the river bank on a falling gradient of about 1 in 106 to a terminus on the mudflats opposite the present day swing bridge, but no details of the track layout at the station are indicated. This arrangement is interesting as the line, if built, would have failed to connect with the slate quays on the opposite bank so would have been of little use for goods traffic. One might speculate about the reasons; perhaps the P.B.S.S.R. line planned it as an electrified line, primarily for passenger use only, or that overhead lines were seen as unsafe on the quays on the opposite bank. "Railway No.3" was 4 furlongs, 9 chains (990 metres) in length, whereas in fact it was planned to bridge the Seiont!



Plan 8. An interesting counterpoint to Plan 7 shown above, from drawing no. 295-76. Clearly, second thoughts must have prevailed as an alternative route was hatched for a "Railway No.2" on the opposite (eastern) bank of the Seiont. This plan is clearly not contemporary with the others in the archive as the headings and legend are hand written by the draughtsman and the sheet is not titled "In Parliament – Session 1904". It is, nevertheless headed "Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway" but we can deduce it was not part of the original submission. The railway crossed the Seiont by means of a bridge shortly after leaving Coed Helen tunnel, and traversed tidal slob land behind the gas works before joining the quays behind the Seiont Lime Works. Maintaining a position close to the water's edge, the railway curved around before moving inland a little, close to De Winton's works in St. Helen's Road. Here the narrow gauge encountered its standard gauge counterpart on the slate quays, crossing three of the connecting lines at 90 degrees before terminating under the Castle ramparts 4 furlongs and 3 ½ chains (875 metres) from the end-on junction with railway No.1. Again no station details are shown.

# Welsh Highland Excesses

(19A.) **FESTINIOG RAILWAY.**

No. **C 01** **EXCESS FARE RECEIPT.**

Issued at *Penrhyn Aug 5th* 19*25*

Excessed from *Here* To *Beddgelert*

Cause of Excess.	No. of Pass'gers in words		Excess Fare.	
	Single.	Return.	£	s. d.
<i>3</i> Class without tickets		<i>One</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>
„ travelled on .....				
„ ticket out of date .....				
Third to First .....				
Class child over age .....				

Collector. *H. D. Jones*

This Ticket is issued subject to the Conditions in the Time Tables of the Company. **Not Transferable.**

(19A.) **FESTINIOG RAILWAY.**

No. **C 02** **EXCESS FARE RECEIPT.**

Issued at *Penrhyn Aug 5th* 19*25*

Excessed from *Here* To *Beddgelert*

Cause of Excess.	No. of Pass'gers in words		Excess Fare.	
	Single.	Return.	£	s. d.
<i>3</i> Class without tickets		<i>Two</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0</i>
„ travelled on .....				
„ ticket out of date .....				
Third to First .....				
Class child over age .....				

Collector. *H. D. Jones*

This Ticket is issued subject to the Conditions in the Time Tables of the Company. **Not Transferable.**

(19A.) **FESTINIOG RAILWAY.**

No. **C 96** **EXCESS FARE RECEIPT.**

Issued at *Penrhyn Apr 28th* 19*26*

Excessed from *Here* To *Ynysfor*

Cause of Excess.	No. of Pass'gers in words		Excess Fare.	
	Single.	Return.	£	s. d.
<i>3</i> Class without tickets		<i>One</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>
„ travelled on .....				
„ ticket out of date .....				
Third to First .....				
Class child over age .....				

Collector. *H. D. Jones*

This Ticket is issued subject to the Conditions in the Time Tables of the Company. **Not Transferable.**

Those members of the Heritage Group who are also members of F.R Heritage will no doubt have read Jim Hewitt's most interesting account of the recently discovered Penrhyn Excess Fare Receipt book in the latest FR Heritage magazine. The book, covering the period from July 31st 1925 to May 29th 1926, contained 100 duplicated tickets, the originals being torn out and issued to the passengers whilst the duplicated stubs remaining as a record. Three of the tickets were issued for journeys onto the Welsh Highland and Jim has kindly allowed me to reproduce them for this article.

Tickets 'C01' and 'C02' were for Day Excursions to Beddgelert dated August 5th 1925 on the 12.09 departure from Penrhyn, issued in both cases to passengers without tickets, as Penrhyn had no pre-printed stocks covering this journey. At that time the WHR had three daily return journeys to Dinas and an additional week-day run to Beddgelert departing Portmadoc at 12.45. The 12.09 ex Penrhyn, arriving in Portmadoc around 12.30, would have connected nicely with this service, so it may be assumed that our passengers took advantage of this train. They would have arrived at Beddgelert at 1.30pm, just in time for lunch, and would have had a choice of returning by the 2.20pm (ideal if it was raining!) or the 6.05pm giving them plenty of time to visit the local attractions. Due to the general

decrease in FR fares from March 1st 1924, the fare on these tickets of 2/- is slightly less than that charged two years earlier, when an Excursion in the opposite direction from Beddgelert cost 2/3d. (Ref the Beddgelert Ticket Register). Two adults and one child made this particular journey on August 16th 1923 and were the only people to undertake such a trip in the whole of the WHR's existence!! Ticket 'C96' was for a single journey to Ynysfor on April 28th 1926 by the 1.47pm

## *Excess Fares on the Welsh Highland - Inspector Derek Lystor Investigates.....*

train, arriving Ynysfor 2.34pm. Although blank cards were available at Penrhyn and would normally have been used, Jim points out that the station was only singly manned, so the likelihood was that the booking office was shut whilst the staff member dealt with the train and the ticket was issued on board by the conductor/guard.

Although none seem to have survived, the WHR issued similar Excess tickets, no doubt printed by the same firm as those used on the FR – most likely Waterlow & Sons. The Beddgelert Ticket Register gives details of such issues, but frustratingly, H.D.Jones failed to record

the serial numbers until 1925. The first mention appears on Friday 10th August 1923, when 1/6 was charged for upgrading from 3rd Class to 1st Class on a Dinas to Blaenau Festiniog journey. Similar upgradings appear throughout the summer of 1923, the largest Excess fare being 15/5 for five returns from Portmadoc to Quellyn Lake in early September. Charges re-appear in June 1924, but no journey details are given, just simple monetary entries under the heading "Excess". Again there is a steady flow throughout the summer.

As mentioned earlier, the first recorded ticket number appears in the Register during 1925, with an opening number of 855 issued w/e June 10th. A total of 189 Excess tickets were issued that month and 102 the following, all no doubt issued to tourists. Jones erroneously listed the closing number as 800 instead of 899, and didn't notice the mistake until 1926, when a new Excess book, commencing 000, came into use in August that year! Only another 46 tickets were issued from Beddgelert until the booking office there closed in September 1928.

During 1925, Jones' somewhat less than accurate record keeping caused an almost daily flow of correspondence from C.H.Rennie, the newly appointed WHR/FR Auditor based in Sale, Cheshire. He constantly asked for clarification over missing returns and incorrect entries and

# 'Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald' 1905

Newspaper cuttings always provide an interesting and revealing insight into the views and opinions of the day. It is easy, with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, to be critical of the decisions and the optimism displayed by the promoters of a scheme that was to become the pre-cursor of today's wonderful Welsh Highland Railway. These excerpts from the 'Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald' for 1905 reflect the prevailing optimism of the day as plans were formulated not only for the electrification of the route but also the extension to Caernarfon, (see article on page 2).

**13 January 1905 p5**

## **ELECTRIFICATION OF SNOWDONIA - WORKS PROGRESSING**

Before the advent of the summer there will be laid a network of electric wires and cables through some of the loveliest districts in North Wales. For some months past quite an army of navvies and a large number of engineers, electrical and otherwise, have been at work with the result that the power station at Llyn Llydaw has been nearly completed. The machinery has been delivered and thousands of tons of cables have been delivered. There was a set back in the early part of the winter when a

considerable part of the plant was washed away by the floods at Beddgelert.

The railway to Portmadoc had been pretty nearly laid, and when the tunnels in the Pass of Aberglaslyn have been finished, the line will be practically ready, so that there will be direct communication from Carnarvon via Dinas and Beddgelert to Portmadoc. The NWNCR from Dinas to Rhyd-ddu is being electrified, the overhead wires are now being laid, and the whole of the new rolling stock has been ordered and the power lines have been laid, not only along the route of the railways, but through the Nantlle valleys.

Many of the quarries in this popular part of Snowdon will be worked by electricity and some of the principal owners have made application for power.

The Company have laid overhead posts in the valley - lines laid to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

So far no progress has been made with the railways from Dinas to Caernarvon, and the confirmation of the Beddgelert railway is being waited for before that portion of the route is taken in hand.

**19 May 1905**

## **THE SNOWDON ELECTRIC SCHEME GOOD PROGRESS MADE THE EXTENSION TO CAERNARVON**

A few days ago a visit of inspection to the North Wales Power Station was paid by Mr Rawlins, Chairman of the Power Co.; Sir Douglas Fox, the chief engineer; Mr Walter Harper engineer of the contractors; Mr Peebles (Bruce Peebles & Co). They found that the work was making satisfactory progress. We are informed on good authority that the Dinas to Caernarvon extension is included among the operations to be taken in hand at an early date. The financial arrangements have been definitely completed. As soon as certain debates have been settled work will be started.

**April 1905**

## **THE BETWS COED RAILWAY**

The work of constructing the new railway from Rhyd-ddu to Beddgelert connecting the Narrow Gauge Railway with that village is proceeding at a rapid pace. Although some dispute arose which stopped work for some weeks, the matter has now been cleared and work has again been resumed. On Monday next it is said that 500 navvies will be added to the already large number at work and it is thought very possible that they can run a train down from Rhyd-ddu as far as Beddgelert during the summer.

**9 June 1905**

## **CAERNARVON TOWN COUNCIL PORTMADOC & BEDDGELERT RAILWAY**

Dr John Williams presented a report of a meeting of the Highway Committee held that evening at which a letter was read from the promoters of the Portmadoc Light Railway asking for permission of the Council to take the proposed railway along St Helens Road and past the foundry. It was resolved that every facility be given subject to satisfactory arrangements as to the rights being arrived at.

## WH Excesses

continued from previous page

was at pains to point out that instructions were not being followed correctly. The life of a station master was no easy chore! One particular letter from this period is amongst those which survived in the Quellyn Lake hoard. Dated September 24th, it refers in the main to the fact that large numbers of collected tickets were going missing and gave the steps

necessary to prevent future occurrences. With regard to excess issues, Rennie had the following to say:-

*"Excess must be collected in all cases of irregular travelling and an Excess Receipt issued. The original ticket (if any) with which the passenger has travelled must be collected at the time the excess fare is paid and sent in attached to a covering note giving particulars of excess receipt issued (except in cases where excess fares are collected for riding in a superior class of carriage) when the*

*passenger must be allowed to retain the ordinary ticket, to be given up at the usual collecting station and sent in attached to the Excess Fare receipt. Collected Excess Receipts must be sent in daily along with the collected tickets....."*

My thanks to Jim for the use of the pictures.



# Signalling at Waunfawr - Update

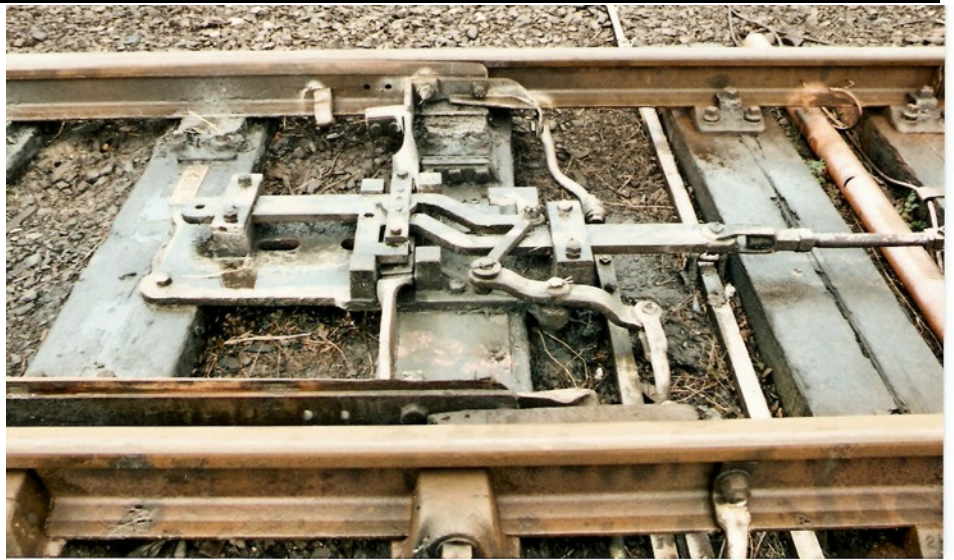
**R**eg Instone suggests that "economical FPLs" may have been used in the 1897 re-signalling of Waunfawr. An economical facing point lock (FPL) is a device whereby a point and its associated FPL are both worked from a single lever in the signalbox. When the lever is moved, the first part of the stroke withdraws the FPL bolt, the middle part moves the point blades and the last part re-engages the bolt. They were widely used on several minor lines, and by the Irish companies, as well as by the Midland Railway for all its facing points. There were several different designs produced at different times in the nineteenth century. In particular, Saxby & Farmer supplied Black's economic FPLs to patent 16324 of 1889. It is therefore possible that Waunfawr had economic FPLs installed by S&F in 1897.

Referring to the diagram in *WHH No. 50* points A and their FPL might have been worked by lever 3; points D and their FPL by lever 6. That would still have made the total of 7 levers in use and 1 spare.

While it is possible that economical FPLs were used, I think it highly unlikely for the following reasons: Russell's memo to the HMRI tells us that the NWNCR only needed one new FPL. So where did the second FPL come from? For the reasons explained in my original article, it would appear to have been the existing siding-point FPL re-used. This was a standard-type of FPL worked by a separate lever, not an economical FPL.

Yorke noted that both points were locked by FPLs "in the usual manner", which again suggests to me that they weren't economical locks.

The concession that HMRI allowed about not having to provide starting signals at the exits from the loop only makes sense if the points were trailable, which they wouldn't have been if worked using economical locks. The Waunfawr signalling appears to be a slightly more sophisticated version of what is still in use on the Isle of Man Railways, where the loops also don't have starting signals, and the loop points are trailable. In the case of the Isle of Man, the points are "locked" for facing moves by the detector in the wire-run to the home signal. Retaining the already-installed ground-levers to work the points, and re-using the siding-point FPL, would have been the simplest and cheapest method of providing FPLs on what had already been installed. And "cheapest" really is the operative word when it comes to the NWNCR, which spent most of its life in receivership, with all significant expenditure having to be approved by the Court of Chancery. The



whole saga of the Waunfawr resignalling is one of the NWNCR scrimping to save every penny, with Russell even making a special

*A somewhat worn 'economical FPL' taken at Appleby on the Midland Railway a few years ago.  
Pic - Peter Matthews*

*Peter Matthews' erudite article in WHH 50 on signalling at Waunfawr has led to some further speculation by Reg Instone of the Signalling Record Society.. Peter sums up the discussions.....*

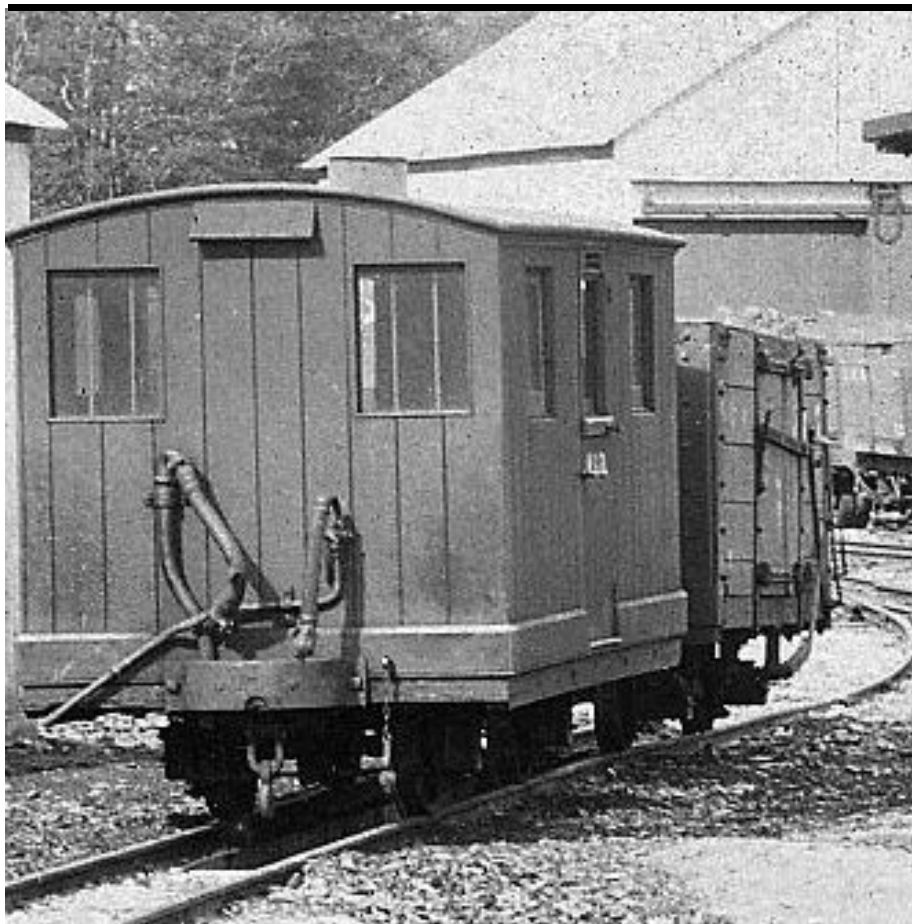
visit to the HMRI to agree an acceptable minimum-cost solution that only involved one new FPL. The idea of them then going out and buying two new economical locks really does not fit in with this background. Interestingly, the signalling of the Lynton and Barnstaple just a year-or-two later had some obvious similarities to Waunfawr, being likewise signalled "on the cheap". As originally signalled, the L&B loops also did not have starting signals, only homes and distants. The L&B was also inspected by Col. Yorke. However, the L&B signalling was subsequently modified to a more conventional arrangement. Why was this felt necessary? One of the major drawbacks with the arrangements at Waunfawr and on the Isle of Man is that there is nothing to stop a train departing with the loop points still locked for an arriving train. The Isle of Man Railways have apparently suffered a number of such incidents over the years. I suspect that the L&B also suffered such an incident, which is likely why they decided to convert their signalling to the more conventional arrangement for passing loops with home and starting signals and

worked points. Unfortunately the lever-frames didn't have enough levers to do this properly. We know that they re-used the distant-signal levers to work the starting signals, and we know that they used economical locks to work the points. It makes more sense for the economical locks to have been fitted as part of this conversion, rather than being part of the original installation, as most economical locks were provided as retro-fits to save having to provide extra levers in existing signalboxes.

When inspecting Bettws Garmon in 1901/1902, Major Druitt's report noted that both crossovers there "are worked from separate ground-frames containing one lever.....". The points of both connections require to be fixed with facing point locks, ...". Obviously the NWNCR and S&F had forgotten the lessons of Waunfawr! Normally, a railway company would reply with a bland statement to the effect that the requirements had now been complied with, but in this case Aitchison replied with a bit more detail "I beg to inform that the requirements mentioned in Maj Druitt's report have now been complied with. The key has been affixed to the staff by a chain as he suggested, and the points have been fitted with Saxby and Farmer's patent facing point locks." The reference to a special type of facing point lock makes me suspect that these might have been economical locks, worked from the already-installed single-lever ground-frames. In this case, use of economical locks would have saved money, as it would have saved them having to replace the single-lever frames with two-lever frames.



# The Rather Elusive Van 4



photographic evidence of it in use on the WHR so I decided to dig deeper.

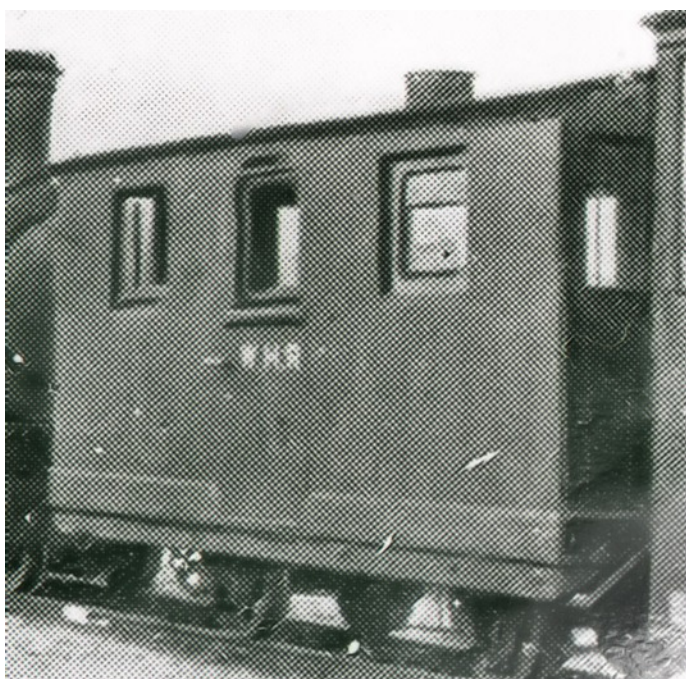
A series of articles on rolling stock by Fred Bateman with amendments by Adrian Gray appeared in the FR Heritage Group Journals and that in edition No 82 (Summer 2005) mentioned Van 4 although not by name and states that it was converted in September 1922 possibly for use during construction work when 'Palmerston' was on loan to McAlpines. Details of the minimal conversion are given but quite how it was used appeared to be a mystery with only a couple of photographs at Beddgelert being mentioned. So far I have found a total of five photographs and these are detailed below. What the additional Beddgelert photo shows will have to remain a mystery for the time being as I have only located the one mentioned in the opening paragraph.

Van 4 was converted from a Mk 3 quarrymen's coach with surgery being restricted to adding end windows, with a vent between and dual brakes whilst retaining its original single side doors and single roof 'bonnet'. It appears to have

I have to confess to having a bit of a thing about brake vans and needing a brake van for my developing 16mm scale WHR rake decided to look for a suitable candidate. What turned out to be Van 4 was chosen as I could run it with

two bogie coaches to form a short but complete train. It appears on the siding between the water tower and lamp room at Beddgelert in the well known 1923 publicity photo of 'Little Giant' with a FR rake. The best copy of this picture I have

## *Jerry Oakey Researches a Little-Known Van for his 16mm Railway*

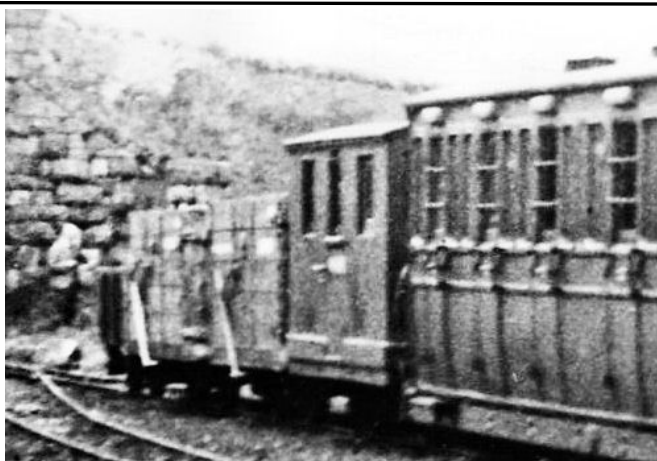


found is on page 17 of Alun Turner's "The Welsh Highland Railway" revised edition 1996. (See above)

I had previously assumed that this was what is now Van 6 on the FR and the FR Festipedia also suggests this. However after further delving in my collection it became evident that the van at Beddgelert was not Van 6 and so far I have found no

reinforcing woodwork along the bottom of the sides and ends, perhaps a repair for ageing timberwork or reinforcing for its new duties? Although I have yet to locate a photograph of the Dinas end it is probably fair to assume that both ends were identical. According to Boyd (*NGin SC Vol 2 1989*) it was only used for a few years being returned to the FR and scrapped before 1939 and I have found no photographic evidence of use after 1926. Couplings appear to be a dumb semi-circular buffer with the standard shackle and hook below - why its original sprung couplings were replaced is surprising. Livery is unclear - FR Lake, Red Oxide or perhaps Kentish Green.





Welsh Highland 1964 Co publication *'More About The Welsh Highland Railway'* published in 1972.

Other appearances are at Snowdon Ranger in 1925 behind a two coach rake including the Gladstone Coach with Prince taking water. This is on page 11 of *WHH No 38* and although Van

4 is not mentioned in the covering text this omission was picked up in *WHH No 40*. It is also on Page 84 of the 2nd edition of Peter Johnson's *'Illustrated History of the WHR'*. A slightly hidden appearance is on page 82 of the same book with a 1924 view of *'Moel Tryfan'* arriving at Ryd Ddu crossing a Dinas train with Van 4 at the rear of the *'Russell'* hauled train with what appears to be a freshly repainted or re-canvassed roof.

Whilst the FR Festipedia appears to have confused its vans a bit it does suggest that the need for an additional brake van was an emergency measure after the recently dual-braked ex-NWNGR Pickering brake No 4 kept derailing and had been taken out of service. As referred to earlier, I am not sure that the extant single balcony van was used and consider that Van 4 was swiftly converted for this purpose. This conclusion is reinforced by the rake in the Snowdon Ranger picture which comprises *'Gladstone'* and 23 and are also shown in

33 of the WHHG collection dual-braked at Portmadoc New in 1923 with Van 4 perhaps out of shot on the right as I feel sure that a photographer would have included a brake compo if it had been marshalled in the rake but probably ignored the humble ex-quarrymen's coach at the end.

Whilst this is a rather brief article it does gather together all the evidence I can find on this rather illusive little van with a working life in its brake van form of about 4 years. Not many assumptions have been made but any additional information or corrections would be gladly received (via the editor of course). I probably have enough data now to build a fairly accurate model but inevitably something contradictory is bound to emerge just as the paint dries and I am still confused by the change of couplings!

It appears to have been widely used, both on the winter service, details of which are given in Derek Lyster's article in *WHH No 26* and shown with *'Russell'* at Portmadoc 'New' - although incorrectly identified as a workman's vehicle - see photo bottom of page 9. However, looking at the couplings in the Beddgelert photograph this may have lead to an uncomfortable ride for passengers in the following stock if the van was marshalled immediately behind the loco.

Van 4 also appears at Waenfawr on the 12.45 mixed from Dinas to Portmadoc hauled by a cutdown *'Moel Tryfan'* between the FR bowsider and the unfitted freight stock. This photograph, taken on 3rd April 1926 KACR Nunn (see photo above), is No 8 in the Group sales collection and also features in a number of books. The same train is also shown in a photo taken at Dinas in 1926 also by KACR Nunn this can be found in Vol 2 of Boyd's *'NGRsSC'* and page 65 of the

#### Olive Jones

Olive Mary Jones passed away in April aged 85, after several years of debilitating illness borne with fortitude. Olive, along with husband Brian, represented one of several husband and wife 'teams' who are members of the Group. Their support for the railway was manifest by their attendance at AGMs and West Midland Branch Society meetings. To quote Brian 'we did everything together'. The railway was represented at Olive's funeral and our sympathy goes to Brian and his daughters.



*This photograph taken at Dinas circa 1895 has been enhanced to provide a much better print than has hitherto obtainable*



# Deudraeth RDC and the WHR

With the reorganisation of Local Authorities in 1974 Deudraeth Rural District Council commissioned the late Cllr.R.O Williams of Rhyd to write a summary of all the transactions of the Council since its formation. This includes more and interesting details of its dealings with the W.H.R. than reported in the Cambrian News. (See *WHR No 50 page 5*)

Early in 1921 the Council agreed in principle to assist the WHR financially, if it was requested to do so.

In 1922, with eight members present when a loan was discussed, four members were in favour, four against but with the casting vote of the Chairman (Mr. John Roberts, Tregwylan, Talsarnau) it was agreed to give the W.H.R. a loan of £3000. Llanbedr Parish Council had registered their opposition to a loan beforehand.

In May one Councillor gave notice of a proposal that the Council should rescind the decision that the Council should give the W.H.R. the loan. In June, Llandanwg Parish Council also registered their disapproval of the loan.

On further discussions with ten members present, five members voted in favour of the loan, five against, and once again, the Chairman with his casting vote, voted in favour of the loan on condition that if local workmen applied for work they would be employed. In October, ten members met with Councillor M.E. Nee (the investing authorities representative) and Mr Cradoc Davies (solicitor) also in attendance. After a long discussion, there was a proposal that the loan should be granted:

but a counter proposal was put forward that a barrister should be consulted to see if the original intention of granting the loan was legally valid. Six Councillors voted for the original proposal, and 4 for the counter proposal. The loan was finally granted.

A report dated 25<sup>th</sup> April to representatives of the investing authorities quoted *"It is anticipated that in a few years' time the railway will be as popular as any mountain railway in Europe"*!

## Brian Paul Elaborates

The Council was very concerned about the financial position of the W.H.R. during the following years, and in particular, the fact that interest was not being paid on the loan after 1923 and there seemed little prospect of the loan being repaid.

Eventually, when the Railway closed the Council asked repeatedly that the rails

In 1971, almost 50 years later, the author of the report asks whether in such financial matters, any Chairman should have an additional vote to decide on a course of action bearing in mind the great loss of income in lost interest to the Council over the years.

This goes to prove that press reports do not always convey the true – or whole – facts of a matter. 'Twas ever thus.

With the railway company being in Receivership since 1927 it is reasonable to ask where the money came from to make repayments, after 1923, to Deudraeth R.D.C. – and indeed the other investing Local Authorities.

There were two sources – the sale of track material to Cohens and the sale of assets peripheral to the basic trackbed by Aubery Thomas, the Liquidator from 1944. Peter Johnson's *'Illustrated History of the W.H.R.'*, on page 95, confirms that income from Cohens was invested in 2 ½% National War Bonds. Redeemed in 1946 a court order approved the disposal of the invested money to pay, inter alia, some long outstanding debts. By October 1952 the financial situation justified an 'interim distribution'. At a meeting of the Investing Authorities it was agreed to pay 2/- in the Pound to debenture holders and make 'part payments' to the local authorities. Similar payments were made in 1962 and 1971 as quoted.

<b>1922 &amp; 1923</b>	<b>Interest paid</b>	<b>£116-19s-11d</b>
<b>1952</b>	<b>Part repayment</b>	<b>£300 -0-0</b>
<b>1962</b>	<b>Part Repayment</b>	<b>£187-10s-0d</b>
<b>1971</b>	<b>Part Repayment</b>	<b>£150-0s-0d</b>

should be left in position between Port and Erw Fawr in the hope that the Crësor Quarry should re-open, but Captain Clough Williams- Ellis, when consulted, stated that at the present time (in 1936) there were no such intentions but in any case, the slate could be transported more cheaply by road than by rail.

I am indebted to Aled Ellis of Minffordd for passing on this report (written in Welsh) to me.

## More 'Reflections'

What fascinating snippets of local news were discovered when pages of the 'Cambrian News' from 1905 were found behind Dave High's mirror in Barrow-in-Furness. (See article in *WHH No. 52*). He questions how the pages got from North Wales to the coast of Morecambe Bay?

The answer lies in the fact that in the latter part of the 19th Century there was considerable trade by coasting vessels, from Amlwch in particular, to Millom and the Duddon Estuary. It can be safely assumed that this was mainly in relation to the Parys Mountain copper mines and their associated industries, plus the iron ore and slate workings in that part of Cumberland. Barrow-in-Furness grew from a place of a few hundred souls to an important Lancashire County Borough in

the space of twenty years, and many men from Anglesey and Caernarfonshire went there in search of work when times were bad in the slate quarries. The sea passage from Amlwch to Millom is comparatively short and indeed shipyards were established in both ports under the same ownership. Again, there were Welsh chapels in Millom and Barrow to cater for the new arrivals.

**Michael Davies**

## Staffing for the Festiniog Railway's lease services, 1934: Station Mistress, Beddgelert



In her talk – given originally in the mid-1970's and printed in *WHH* no.44, p.9 – about her time as Beddgelert station mistress, the late Miriam Jones (née Roberts) said:

Well now I had to start work a week before Whitsun 1934. I reported at the station at Beddgelert about 9 o'clock and there waiting for me were the same two ladies and four gentlemen [one of whom was Festiniog chairman, Evan Robert Davies] who had interviewed me. One of these men I understood later to be the editor of the London Morning and Evening Star. ... Well there were quite a few press photographers there – I spent nearly all that day posing for photographs. My photograph appeared in all the daily newspapers, many of them out of press now and it appeared even in the Sunday's News of the World and I still have these photographs.

Elsewhere, she explained that the interview followed an advert in *Yr Herald Cymraeg Carnddog* in March 1934 for planned re-opening of the Welsh Highland at Whitsun 1934.

However, Miriam's recollection of the timescale of events 40 years earlier may (forgivably!) be a little distorted, for Davies had only formally declared the Festiniog's intention of leasing the railway at a meeting with county officials on 10 May, following his trip over the line

by inspection train the previous day. Doubtless there had been "straws in the wind" for a few weeks, but there is no evidence of which I am aware of a target of Whitsun for the start of services, even though the Festiniog's own "shoulder season" tourist service had been restored at Easter. An advert in the press for staff – still less making an actual appointment – would surely not have preceded that formal meeting. Given that Whit Monday 1934 was 21 May, what would Miriam have done for the eight intervening weeks before services over the WHR started?

Although Davies had by then retired from London, he obviously retained the contacts he had made in the ten or so year he worked there, as well as those established through the Federation of British Health & Holiday Resorts (which he had founded a couple of decades earlier), so his involvement with the London press is not at all surprising – recall the press visit he had organised in June 1923 for thirty journalists to the Festiniog, Welsh Highland and Snowdon Mountain Railways, described in Peter Johnson's *An Illustrated History of the Snowdon*

### *Richard Maund examines the circumstances surrounding the employment of the Beddgelert Station Mistress*

*Mountain Railway* (pp.61/63).

The London daily newspapers to which Miriam specifically refers appear to be the morning *News Chronicle* and evening *The Star*, which were closely associated (and probably shared the same editor, as she says). In the hope that something may have been published which would pin down the date of the "photo call" at Beddgelert, both papers have been examined from mid-May and through June; alas, no picture of Miriam appeared in either paper.



*This is the press photograph that appeared in the 'News of the World' on the 22nd July 1934*

Her reference to the *News of the World*, however, is certainly correct: at the foot of page 11 of the issue of 22 July 1934 appears the charming photograph of her waving from a WHR carriage, which carried simply the following caption:

A WOMAN STATION MASTER  
She is in charge of Beddgelert station, on the miniature Welsh Highland Railway which runs between Portmadoc and Dinas, North Wales.

There was no accompanying article. One notes that the newspaper did not refer to her as Station Mistress

It may be that the "dailies" (including some of the other ten London dailies then being published) also carried something when services started – but we have no ready-made clue as to the date of the Beddgelert "photo opportunity" and the start of Miriam's career as Station Mistress. It seems more likely that the advert was placed *after* Whitsun, with the interview and appointment in June – perhaps a Welsh reader can test this theory by finding the advert in the *Herald*?