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A Gem Revealed

February saw the completion of that section of the slate trail between the site of Rhostryfan station and the main road through the village. This work was funded by another grant to Llanwnda Community Council from the Welsh Government. In the process of the work a gem has been revealed.

This gem is the original NWNCR overbridge which is unique in being the only accomodation overbridge not even designed for a horse and cart (in the mid-1870s when it was built). Perhaps it was not even designed to be a public footbridge as the 1913 OS map does not relate it to a footpath. The best suggestion therefore that it was provided so that the adjacent farm (Cae Rhug) could have access for livestock to fields that had been divided by the line.

This bridge's uniqueness lies also in the fact that, unlike all other NWNCR bridges the measurement from trackbed level to arch level is original, the other NWNCR bridges having been lowered to accommodate the Garratt's,

Besides this delightful 'exposure' the whole station site has been landscaped and incorporates picnic tables, and a car park. The only remnant of the original station is the slate platform edging – a length of which features in the site's rehabilitation.



The bridge can just be discerned in this 1930 picture of Rhostryfan station (left). The enlargement above makes it a little clearer

Coloured photographs courtesy of John Ellis Williams

Caernarfon Extension Proposal - 1921/2



Drawings still exist in the Sir Douglas Fox archive of a further proposal to extend the railway to Caernarfon, this time by the promoters of the Welsh Highland Railway in 1921. The archive comprises mainly preliminary surveys, that is plans, contour surveys and cross sections. Some are in poor condition, having darkened before they were microfilmed, but we can be thankful that they did survive. Computer technology enables some detail to be deciphered, but some of the documents are too poor to use. Few of them are dated, but some are signed *“J.K. Prendergast, January 1923”*,

Even by 1921 plans for extending to Caernarfon were still being considered; Richard Watson explains in Part II of his article

Prendergast was the site agent for Sir Douglas Fox and Partners and he took up residence in the Royal Goat Hotel during most of the construction period.

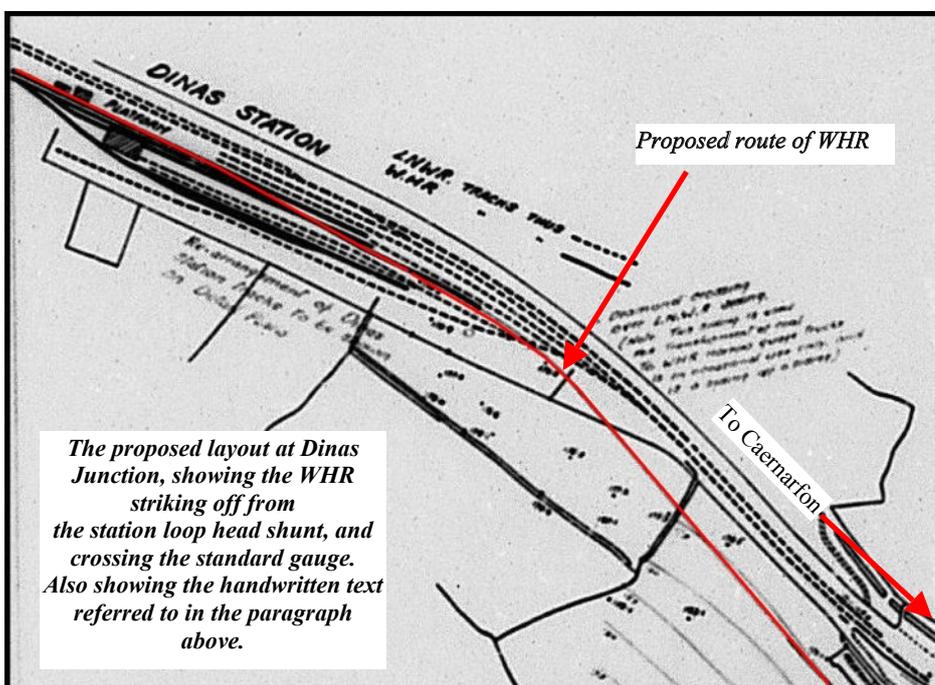
The route description has been assembled from the archived plans, and where possible reproduced here. There is an

Although pre-dating the period in question we couldn't resist including this photograph; it depicts standard gauge wagons loaded with slate on the quay lines, some of which would have been crossed by the WHR if the proposals had gone ahead.

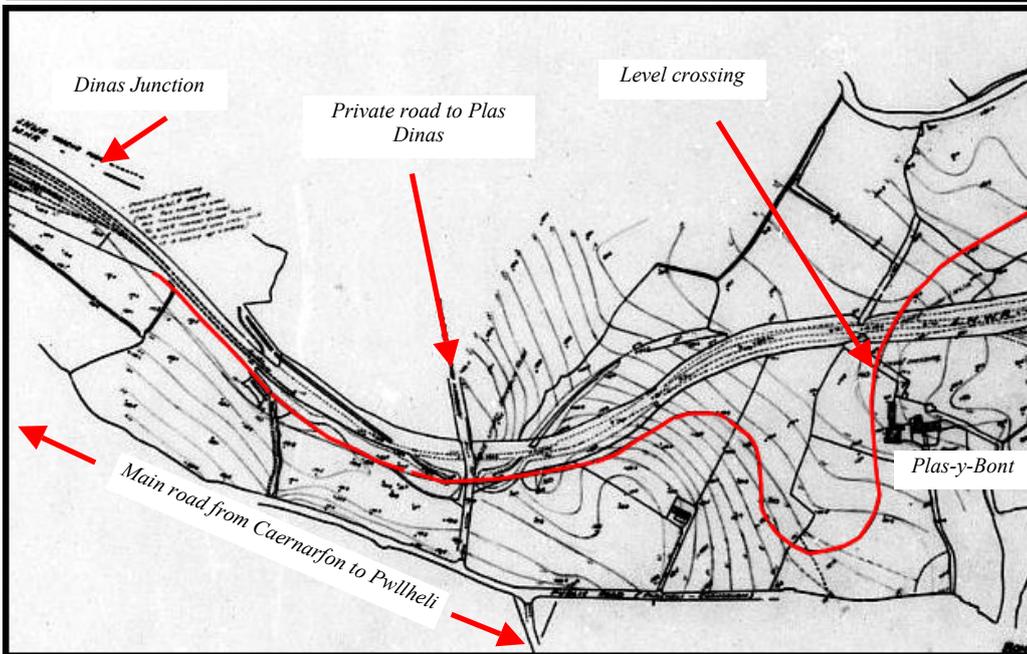
important ‘health warning’ however: I could not be certain that the plans were from the same date so do not know for sure that they represent the same version of the proposed route.

The Welsh Highland Railway Caernarfon Extension started at Dinas, the railway forming an end-on junction with the northern end of the ex-N.W.N.G.R. It was, in effect, a continuation of one of the W.H.R. sidings, and very quickly crossed a standard gauge siding on the level. Handwritten text on one of the plans (294-26) reads: **“Diamond crossing over L.N.W.R. siding. Note: This siding is used for transshipment of coal to W.H.R. narrow gauge trucks and is in occasional use only....”** (The remaining text is indecipherable). Another note reads **“Rearrangement of Dinas station tracks to be shown on detailed plan”**.

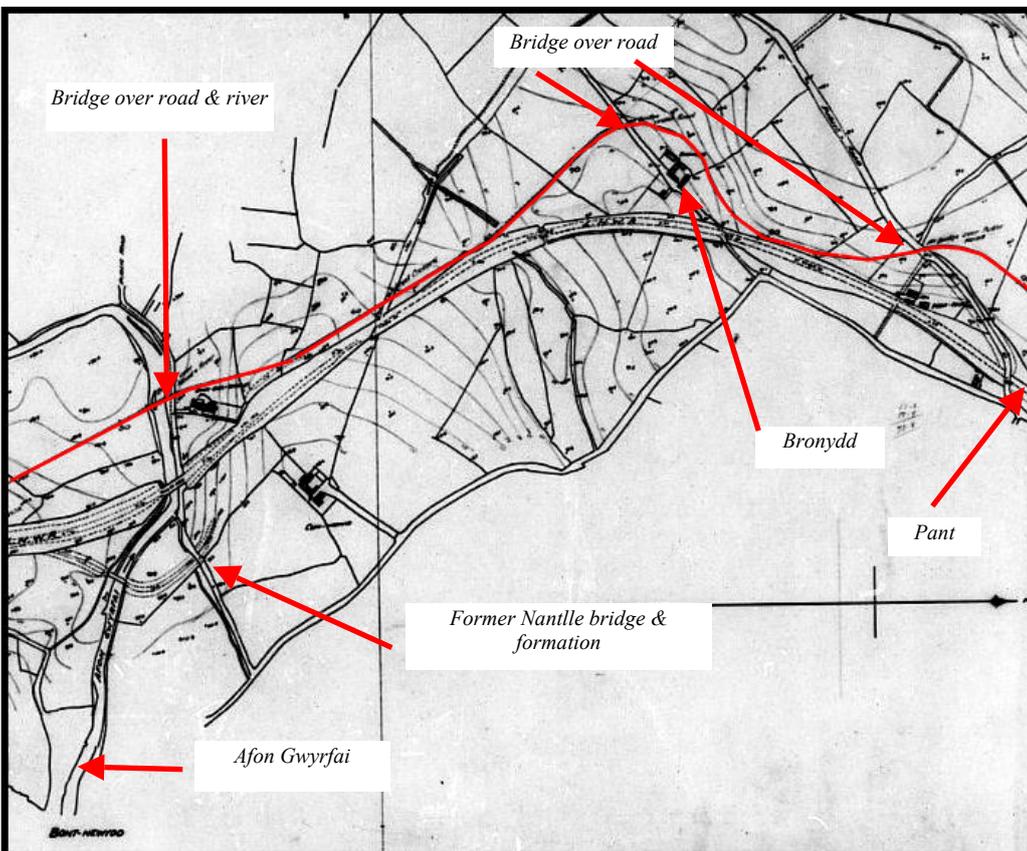
The W.H.R. extension proceeded along the eastern side of the former L.N.W. Railway, falling on gradients of 1 in 40 and 1 in 53 before passing under an **‘Occupation Road to Plas Dinas’** in tunnel, apparently on the alignment of the old Nantlle Railway. Here it states **‘Bridge under occupation road. Road level unaltered’**. Still on the eastern side, but on new formation and mainly in a cutting, the W.H.R. fell again at 1 in 40,



The proposed layout at Dinas Junction, showing the WHR striking off from the station loop head shunt, and crossing the standard gauge. Also showing the handwritten text referred to in the paragraph above.



Enlargement of a section of the preliminary survey, from Dinas Junction to just short of the Gwyrfai Bridge at Bontnewydd. The proposed route of the W.H.R. is highlighted for clarity, with the L.N.W.R. running through the centre.



Enlargement of part of the preliminary survey, between the Gwyrfai Bridge at Bont-newydd and Pant, with the W.H.R. highlighted in pink

considerably to the west of the present day W.H.R. bridge, at a point where an island occurs in the river. The bridge dimensions quoted were *'Occupation bridge span 15'0"*, *Afon Gwyrfai deck bridge span 85'0"*, *road bridge span 25'0"*.' A different version of the plan (294/59) proposed a trestle bridge but there was no mention of it crossing an occupation road. The railway crossed a track between Cefn Werthyd and Bronydd on the level before crossing the access to Bronydd itself by overbridge, falling on gradients of perhaps 1 in 97 (this figure is indistinct), and then 1 in 40. The W.H.R. looped around Bronydd to avoid the house itself, making use of the abandoned Nantlle Railway formation. It approached the standard gauge once again and crossed the minor road at Pant by means of an over bridge. The road levels under these two bridges were not altered.

Approaching Hendy, the W.H.R. crossed the side road on a bridge and ran in to meet the L.N.W.R., sharing the cutting on a shelf above the standard gauge. It is apparent from the section plan that, in the cutting, the W.H.R. would have fallen more steeply towards Caernarfon than did its main line counterpart, on gradients of 1 in 40/45. A note reads *"Heavy excavation (as indicated by ground level above L.N.W.R.) may be achieved by locating railway on the side slopes of L.N.W.R. cutting as shown on sketch....[indecipherable].... above"*.

The line passed beneath Coed Helen Cottage, and the minor coast road, in a tunnel, before emerging on to a short embankment on the west bank of

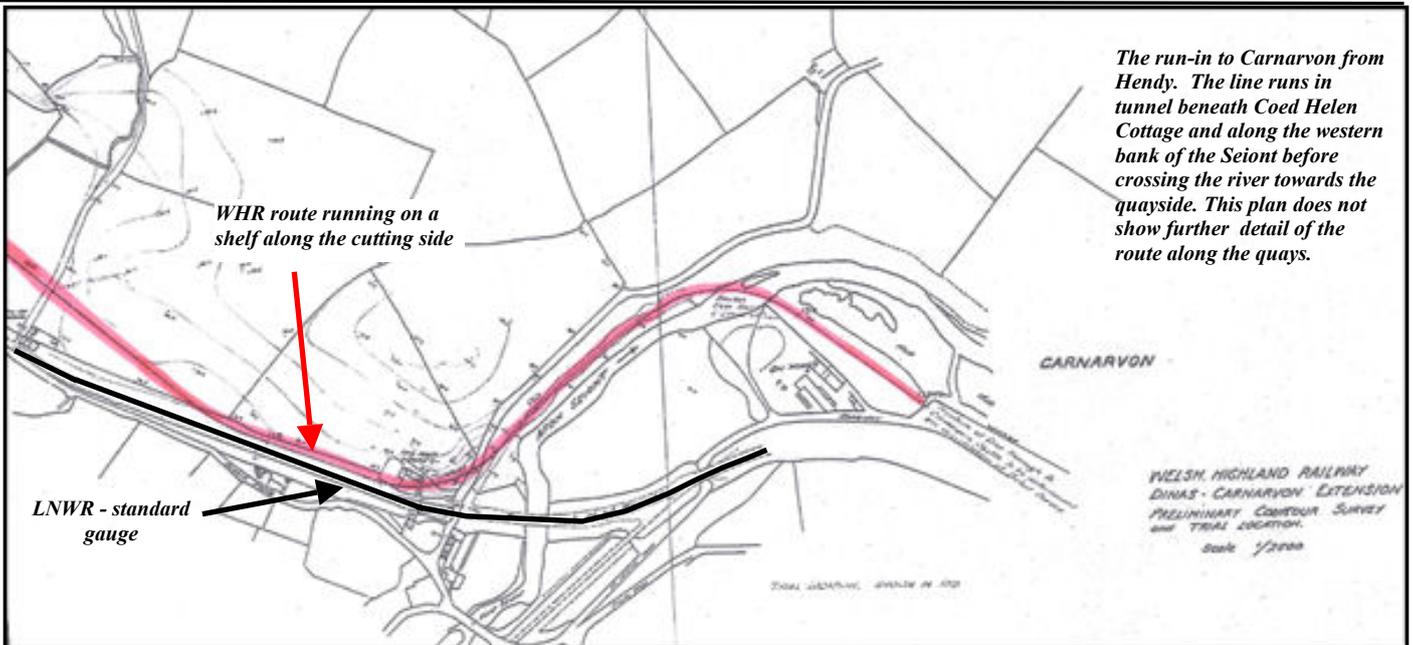
describing a double S-Curve in a loop towards the Caernarfon-Pwllheli road, before curving once again towards the main line railway. As a means of changing height within a short linear distance, this would have been similar to the "S" curves below Pitt's Head. In contrast, the main line was gently curved at this point. The railway crossed the occupation road to Plas y Bont Farm on

the level before passing under the *'L.N.W.R. Carnarvonshire Branch'* to gain the western side of the standard gauge.

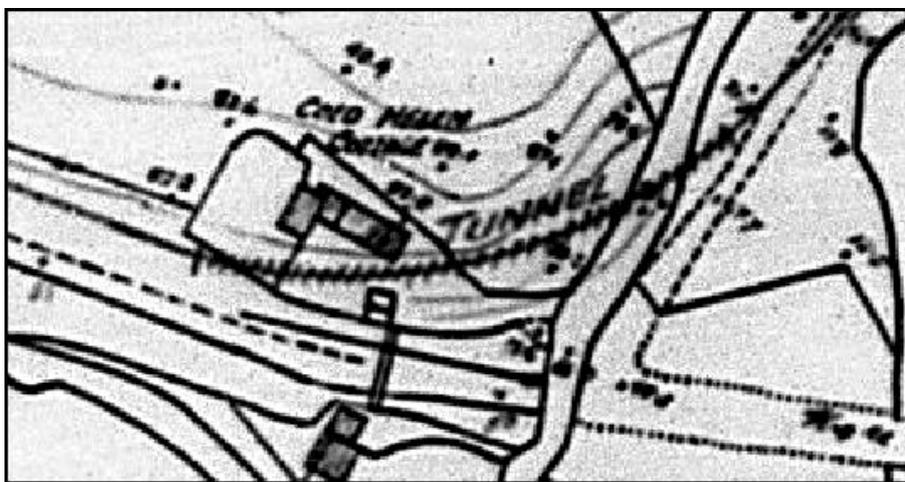
Near Bontnewydd the W.H.R. rose again at 1 in 40, crossing within the same structure an accommodation road, the Afon Gwyrfai and a public road by means of a compound over bridge. This was

the Seiont. Thence the railway ran on roughly the alignment of the old Nantlle Railway as a note reads: *"Disused tramway cutting. Bench cut on side of steep slope. Utilise this bench and thereby save heavy excavation"*. The Tunnel itself would have been 127 yards long.

Curving right, the railway crossed a trestle bridge over the Seiont, to regain



The run-in to Carnarvon from Henty. The line runs in tunnel beneath Coed Helen Cottage and along the western bank of the Seiont before crossing the river towards the quayside. This plan does not show further detail of the route along the quays.



Enlargement showing the W.H.R. running in a tunnel beneath Coed Helen Cottage, but apparently on a different alignment to the old Nantlle Railway. A little indistinct, but included for interest.

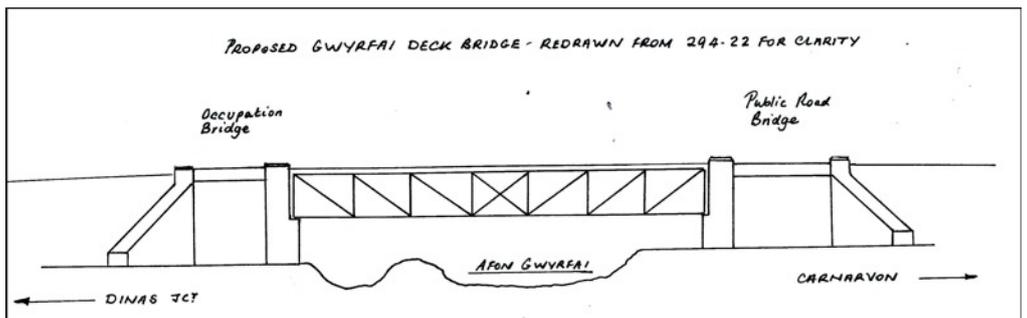
connecting links from the L.M.S. main line to the standard gauge street tramway, both on the level.

The L.N.W.R. line here was referred to as '*L.N.W. Rly to Llanberis & Dinas (Carnarvonshire Branch)*'. It became a branch of the London, Midland and Scottish railway on 1st January 1923, which suggest that these plans pre-date the formation of the L.M.S. Opposite the former L.N.W. tunnel entrance, the W.H.R. curved in towards the quayside and crossed the standard gauge street tramway once again, quickly followed by three of the 90 degree sidings connected by wagon turntables. The line terminated beneath the ramparts of Caernarfon

the eastern bank along the mud flats near the Gas Works, before finally reaching the quayside. Plan 294-21 states '6 spans 40'0" 5 20'0"' (evidently six spans at 40 ft in length and five at 20 ft). The railway continued to descend to quay level, possibly on a 1 in 40 gradient, before levelling off along the quays themselves.

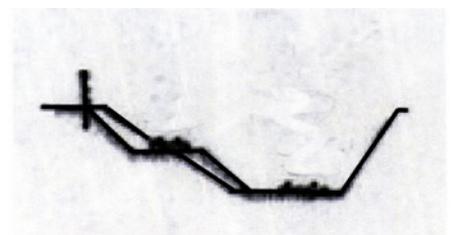
The Preliminary Survey ends at this point, saying as it does "*Location of line through to Caernarfon Castle to be determined on completion of the detailed survey*".

Two further plans exist, unsigned and undated, and in poor condition being almost too dark to discern. These show the railway between the Seiont Bridge and the foot of Caernarfon Castle. With a practiced eye the route of the W.H.R. along the quayside can be determined and tracings of these are shown below.

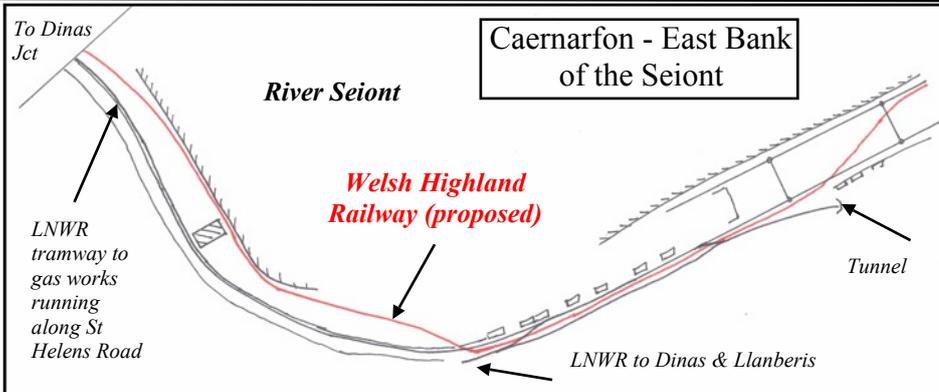


An inset drawing of the proposed bridge over the Gwyrfai, re-drawn from Cylinder No. 294, Frame 22. It comprises (left to right) an occupation Bridge with a span of 15'0", the 'Afon Gwyrfai Deck Bridge' with a span of 85'0" and a road bridge having a span of 25'0". This type of bridge is known as a "deck truss span".

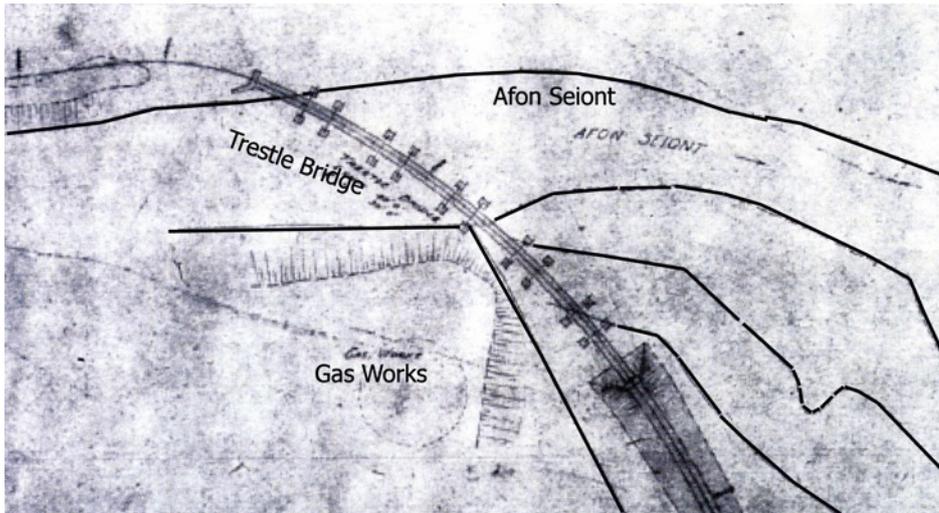
Having gained the eastern bank of the Seiont, the W.H.R moved to a position close to and parallel with the quayside, then curved around to the roadside. It crossed the standard gauge siding to the gasworks on the level via a diamond crossing, before taking up a position along the centre of St Helens Road as a street tramway. Travelling along St. Helens Road, the W.H.R crossed two



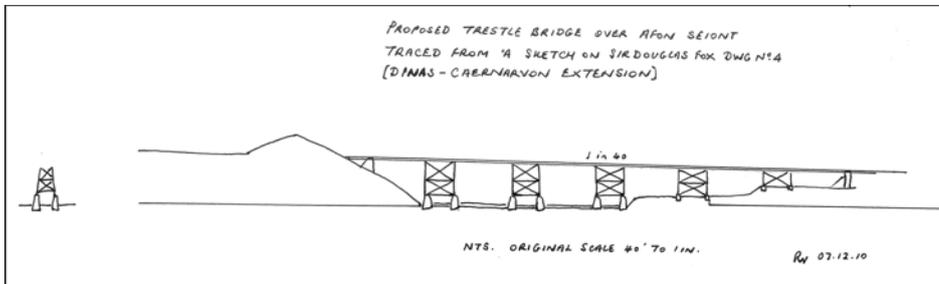
An enlargement showing a cross section of the cutting with the WHR



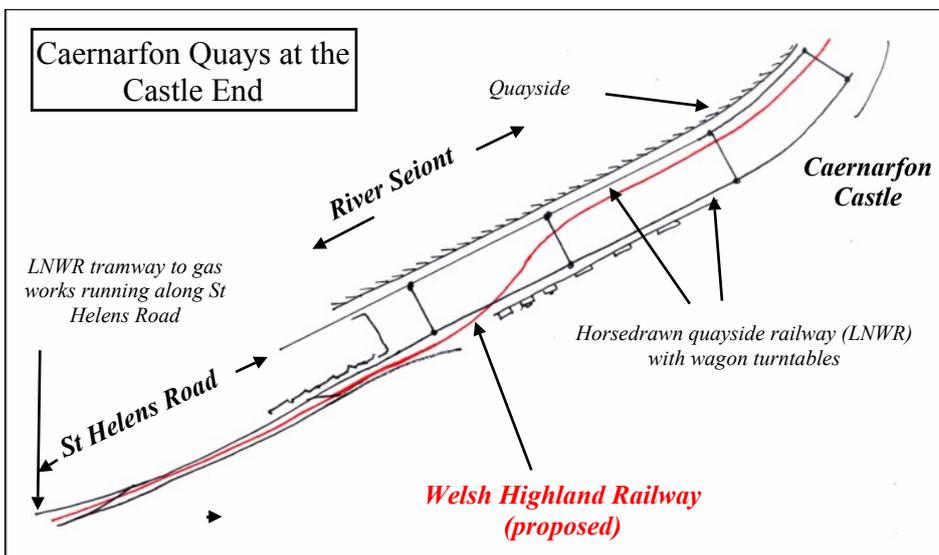
Sketch map of the section between the Gas Works and the standard gauge rail tunnel, redrawn for clarity from an almost unintelligible original. The railway crossed the standard gauge on the level no fewer than six times on this and the following map, not to mention running down the middle of St. Helen's Road!



Plan view of the proposed trestle bridge over the Seiont on the approaches to Caernarfon



Side elevation sketch of the proposed trestle bridge, enlarged from an inset on the drawing



The end of the proposed Carnarvon Extension, which would have terminated under the ramparts of the castle. Redrawn from a very dark original.

Castle, but no details of the station or track layout are shown. The narrow gauge extension proposals between Dinas and Caernarfon ended up as a great 'railway that never was'. The economics of the line as constructed were always somewhat marginal, so it is regrettable that the railway never reached the ultimate goal of Caernarfon since this could have made a difference to the volume of traffic carried. Both sets of plans show, however that the railway routes would have been steeply graded, incorporating new bridges built at some expense. Objections made to the extension by the powerful London & North Western Railway on grounds of unfair competition were further nails in the coffin of these interesting proposals.

All plans from the Freeman Fox archive courtesy Hyder Consulting

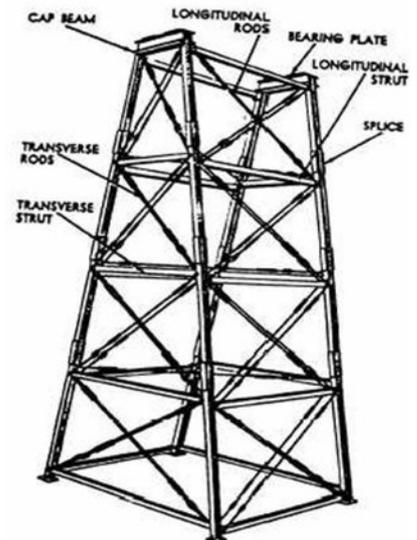


Figure 1-45.—A trestle tower.

Van No. 4 - A Note from Jerry Oakey

I must thank David Wilcock for adding to my knowledge of Van 4 and also clearing up my confusion by clarifying the use of FR Van 5 on the WHR. I have to admit to being misled by the Snowdon Ranger picture and hence my initial doubt over the Festipedia content but can use either Van with conviction as it is now clear to me that both vans were used on the WHR and that van 4 was probably red.

However I remain intrigued by the dumb couplings on Van 4 but I am sure that a suitable reason will come to light just as the photo by C.C. Green has.

“Full steam ahead for Highland Railway”

This might have been the jubilant headline in the North Wales press ninety years ago this May, the word “Welsh” often being taken as read in that context. However, the news was actually broken to readers of the *Carnarvon & Denbigh Herald & Merioneth News* in their issue of Friday 12 May 1922, buried in a report of Portmadoc Council’s meeting the previous Tuesday, in these more prosaic terms:

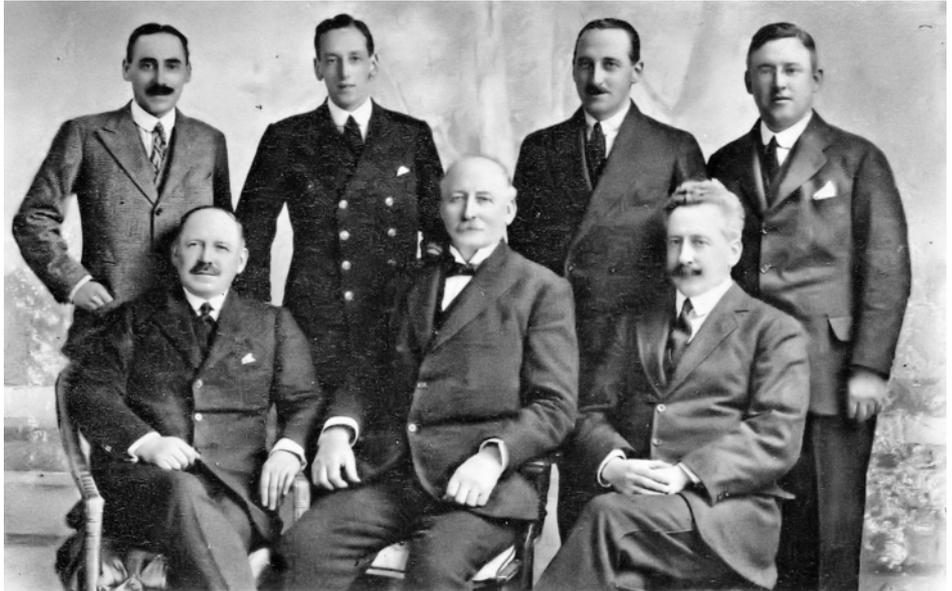
“The Welsh Highland Railway wrote stating that it had let the contract of the construction of the railway to Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons for £59,985 which would ensure the completion of the railway without extras. The Dinas - Rhyd-Ddu portion of the railway would be ready by Whitsun and the Portmadoc - Aberglaslyn portion would be ready for the carrying of passengers by the end of July and the whole line would be ready by March 31st, 1923.”

Richard Maund

The latter part of the report appears to be a mistaken reference by someone to the reopening of the North Wales Narrow Gauge section in July 1922.

The signing of the construction contract had taken place in late April - the document being dated 30 April 1922 - between the new light railway company and Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons, noted railway contractors. The contract provided for the renovation of the North Wales Narrow Gauge, the up-grading for passengers of the Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon (the statutory portion of the erstwhile Croesor Tramway), and the construction of the long-awaited link line between the two - all, of course, to standards provided under the Light Railways Acts and to be operated as the Welsh Highland Railway.

Robert McAlpine started the business at the age of 22, in 1869; by the time he was 27, he had built - and owned - practically the whole of Burnbank (now part of Hamilton) in Lanarkshire. The firm became noted for its railway and factory construction, particularly embracing the extensive and innovative use of reinforced concrete - indeed, Sir Robert’s soubriquet was Concrete Bob. In 1922 the firm was still a partnership - it did not



become a limited liability company until 1956 (although a number of its subsidiaries had done so earlier). Hence the contract is signed jointly and severally: jointly on behalf of the partnership by Malcolm McAlpine (he also initialled every page of the supporting documentation), and severally by each of the partners - namely, the founder and his four eldest sons. Their signatures were witnessed by McAlpine employees, J R Milne and J Esam.

At this anniversary it is fitting that we are able to publish a portrait of the McAlpine signatories of the contract through the kindness of Sir William Hepburn McAlpine, Bt, the 6th Baronet - perhaps better known as Bill McAlpine, railway enthusiast *extraordinaire* - whose grandfather was one of the signatories. The photograph is not dated but the inclusion of Douglas in uniform suggests it to have been taken between 1915 and 1918 when he served as a Surgeon Lieutenant with the Royal Navy. Note that the ladies of the McAlpine clan - Sir Robert had five daughters - do not feature...

The Welsh Highland contract’s signatories were:

Sir Robert McAlpine of Knott Park (Oxshott, Surrey), Bt : born 13 February 1847 at Newarthill, Lanarkshire - died 3 November 1934; knighted (Baronet) 1918 [seated, centre]

Robert McAlpine : 17 October 1868 - 16 November 1934; succeeded to his father’s title on the latter’s death, but survived his father by only 13 days [seated, left]

William Hepburn McAlpine : 31 October 1871 - 20 February 1951; succeeded his father as Chairman of the firm (Bill McAlpine’s grandfather) [seated, right]

Sir Thomas Malcolm McAlpine : 19 June 1877 - 12 April 1967; knighted (KBE) 1921 [standing, far left]

Alfred David McAlpine : 6 November 1881 - 25 May 1944; knighted 1932; split from family business in 1934 to found Alfred McAlpine Ltd (firm acquired by Carillion in 2008) [standing, far right]

Also in the illustration above are Sir Robert’s two younger sons: Archibald Douglas McAlpine (by his second wife) who became a noted neurologist [standing, left centre] and Granville McAlpine [standing, right centre]; they were not parties to the agreement.

For the railway, the contract bears the company’s seal, affixed in the presence of directors Sir John Henderson Stewart, Bt and Henry Joseph Jack - names which will be familiar to students of Welsh Highland history - and company secretary William Richard Huson, an employee of Evan Robert Davies’ London legal practice. Davies - the WHR’s third director - was not a formal witness to the sealing.

A transcribed copy of the agreement, with its supporting tabulations and drawings, is now available on-line at www.railchronology.free-online.co.uk/WHR-contract.htm

Creating the WHR in 1922/23

Before the Welsh Highland railway was completed in 1923, the former North Wales Narrow Gauge sections between Dinas and South Snowdon, and the Bryngwyn Branch, were reconditioned as part of the overall scheme. A drawing in the Hyder (Freeman Fox) archive of drawings gives us some insight into the scope of some of the works undertaken. This is Drawing A33395 (Cyl. 294/43), entitled *Welsh Highland Railway (Light Railway) Plan of Existing North Wales N.G. Railway from Dinas to South Snowdon and Bryngwyn Branch*. The original scale was 6 inches to 1 mile.

The drawing comprises a map of the route, broken into two sections for convenience. In the margin are some freehand notes:

Dinas - South Snowdon Section

Note of work done in reconditioning railway

Track

Imperfect sleepers replaced with new sleepers 9" x 4 1/2" x 4ft. 0ins (Author's note: elsewhere on the plan it stated that

Richard Watson unearths some more fascinating comments

the sleepers these replaced had been 4ft. 6ins long)

Ballast

cleaned and sleepers packed with new (granite) ballast.

New crossings as shown on plan.

Culverts & Bridges* (see footnote)

All culverts cleaned. Culverts repaired and new culverts made as shown in plans. Bridge steelwork painted and new timber deck constructed as shown in plans.

Fences and Stations

Fencing and gates repaired. New tanks provided as shown.

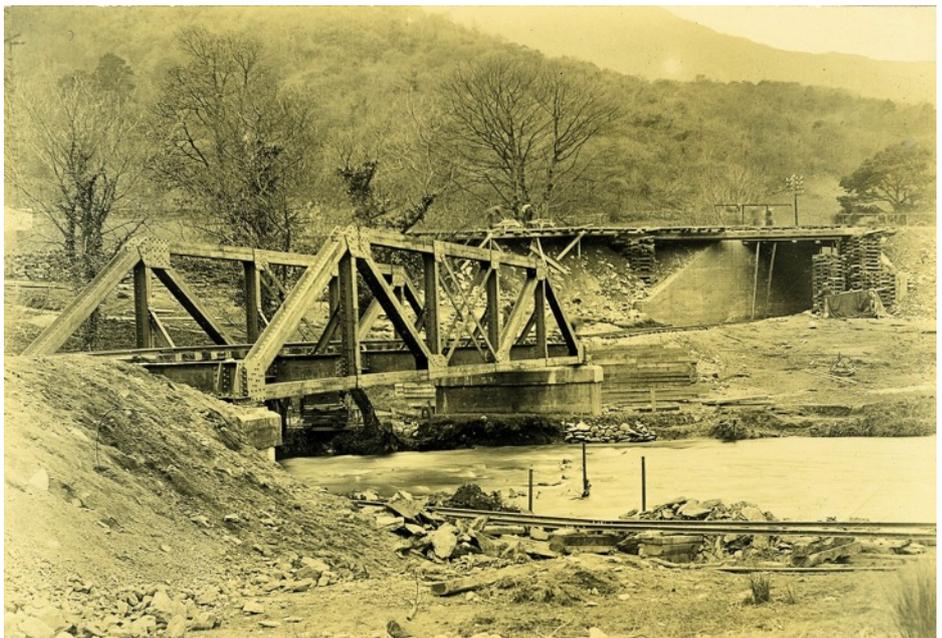
Steepest Gradient

(Author's note: there was no entry against this heading)

Sharpest Curve

Between 5m 3f and 6m 3.12 chains on grade of 1 in 84 (see section of this part of line)

On the section of line between the overbridge at Dinas Junction station, and the loco shed, the plan noted a "new 1 in



This is the second of two photographs recently acquired from the McAlpine family and showing 1923 construction work. The river bridge has been recently installed and bearing in mind the on-going debate about the origins of the three river bridges, even in this professional photograph it does not appear to be in the 'first flush of youth'! Work on the road over bridge is in hand; note the use of contractor's track for moving materials around the site and the abandoned Hudson skip chassis.

8 crossing" (possibly referring to replacement of a point nose close to the bridge), a "new diamond crossing" and a "new water tank". Another note talks about the water supply *to the tank*, but the other wording is too indistinct to read.

Against specific locations on the map itself, it is worth noting that a culvert had been repaired at approx milepost 7¼, close to the shores of Llyn Cwellyn. Additionally, new timber decking had been provided for the bridge at Glan yr Afon, and for the three hogsback river bridges between Bettws Garmon and Plas y nant. A "Temporary Ballast Quarry" had been provided near Salem; there is another word before "Temporary"; this might say "Contractor's", but unfortunately I was unable to fully decipher it.

***Footnote from John Keylock**

As the caption to the photograph states the source of the Bryn-y-Felin and the other river bridges has always been a matter for debate and conjecture. All three are identical even though the Afon Dylif crossing could well have utilised a shorter structure. However three bridges to the same specification - for who ever they may have been built - may well have been the most economical option. The

'first flush of youth' mentioned in the caption might suggest that the bridges were acquired second-hand as a job lot. After all the WHR work was surely being done down to a price; Lloyd George's 'job creation scheme'. John Screeves observes that construction of the bridges indicated their suitability for an (Indian) metre gauge railway; a frustrated order lying in wait for a purchaser? A further speculation is the possibility of their having been manufactured for use during WWI.

And then there is the company of Heenan & Froude Ltd. This name appears associated with a drawing of the trestle bridges that may have been used on one of the four possible routes (No 4) between the Goat Tunnel and Bryn-y-Felin. (See *WHH No. 35*; colour insert). Was this company a potential supplier of such structural steelwork and indeed an intermediary for the provision of three river bridges? Bring a general purpose engineering company one of Heenan Froude's involvements was with 'bridge and roof iron work'.

Perhaps we don't expect to ever have the answers but it is sometimes stimulating to speculate!

A DYING RAILWAY

The NWNG railway had been in difficulty for years, never having enough money to pay the interest to the 'C' Debenture Holders, and the 'B' holders only on odd occasions. As has been previously related (*WHH No 46*) the money built up in Court in 1901 and 1906 was mostly used to buy replacement rolling stock - in 1907 Pickering brakes Nos 4 and 5 to replace the old Nos. 1 and 2, and in 1908 to purchase *Gowrie* ready to replace the ailing *Snowdon Ranger*. £700 was put back into the fund on the order of the Master on 15th April 1909, making £1,800.

From 1910 it was down hill as far as the viability of the railway operation was concerned and the remaining money in Court was required to make ends meet. G.C. Aitchison's affidavit to the Court of

The days of the NWNGR up to WW1 Michael Bishop

March 1910 as Secretary and Traffic Manager had asked for £500 to enable the Railway to be carried on. Some of the drop in income was accounted for by the loss of guaranteed trains for quarrymen because of some quarries closing.

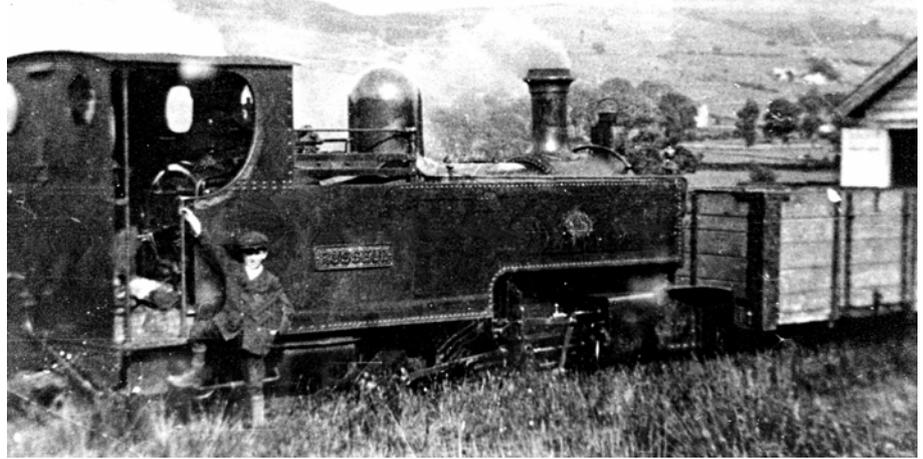
Aitchison said: *'There had been other losses owing to bad times in the Quarries and falling off of the Passenger traffic but the real trouble is the falling off in Slates turned out by the quarries as shewn by the following figures referring to Slates carried in the June half years of the following years:*

1898: 8,872 tons, 1900: 7,897 tons,
1909 5,640 tons.

And in January 1910 the Railway only carried 710 tons as compared with 764 tons in 1909, and in February of this year there has been in my opinion a very great loss although I have not yet been able to work out the exact figures.'

Between 1906 and 1913 the number of quarrymen employed in North West Wales dropped by 38%.

Between 1906 and 1910 passenger figures dropped by 8000 per annum, and by 1912 a further 17,000 per annum, due in part to a reduced timetable.



Under instruction from the Receiver and Manager Russell at Waunfawr siding.(1921). This picture suggests 'goods train as required'. Photo - C.R. Clinker

(i.e. JC Russell) he was doing all he possibly could to keep down expenses, but the Railway could not be worked for less than the £1,850 he estimated for the half year to 30 June - wages averaged £60 a fortnight. The general depression of trade throughout the country was, he said, reflected in the diminished receipts of the Company while no corresponding reduction in working expenses could be effected. Russell is at present, he continued, very seriously ill and quite unable, he had been informed, to swear any affidavit, which explains why he, Aitchison, was doing so. The Court had ordered the £500 requested be paid to the Company.

In an affidavit of May 1911 Russell declared a *'great falling off in receipts from passenger and goods traffic'*. They had fallen off so greatly, he said, that we have not within the last six months earned sufficient to pay our working expenses, and payment of 'A' Debenture Stock interest of £179 fell due in July *'and that must be met'*. There was only £94 in the bank and *'there is expenditure for fencing posts, engine tubes and sleepers amounting together to £185 which it is absolutely necessary to make.'* The £500 released in May 1910 to enable the railway to be carried on had been expended, and another £500 was required to enable him to carry on the working of the railway and pay the Debenture Stock interest. If this was not sanctioned from the fund he doubted if he

could carry on the working of the line for more than two or three months at the very outside. He continued that if the line closed it would have a disastrous effect on the negotiations with the L.N.W.R. Company to transfer this railway to them. *'These negotiations are of course subject to the sanction of this Honourable Court'*.

The next event was the death of Russell on 29th August 1912. Aitchison lodged another affidavit to the Court of Chancery in October offering to take over as Receiver and Manager. He said he had held the offices of Secretary and Traffic Manager from March 1898 to September 1910, and from that date, *'the office of Secretary at a salary of £250 pa (less Income Tax) and during the illness and incapacity of the late Mr Russell which extended over 6 or 7 years I have done most of the work for him only troubling him when absolutely necessary.'* He said he was willing to accept the offices of Receiver and Manager of the Moel Tryfan Undertaking of the NWNGR at a salary of £275 in addition to his existing role, ie. for another £25 pa. He was duly appointed on 15th January 1913.

In July 1913 receipts from all sources were continuing to be very low and he asked for another £300 *'to enable the Company to be properly carried on and the expenses consequent thereon paid.'* He attributed the causes of the lowness of receipts as follows:



From 1912 timber extracted from Beddgelert Forest provided some welcome traffic. Photo - C.R. Clinker.

1. The total output of Slates from the Quarries served by the Railway continuing to be small.
2. The anticipated Iron Ore traffic not having yet commenced.
3. The competition at low rates arising from Motor traffic which carry goods, parcels and passengers to and from places served by the Railway.

Although he had reduced the train service to a minimum and curtailed expenses in every possible way the profits lately had not been sufficient to cover the A Debenture interest. Again the Court agreed to the request and the £300 was paid into the Railway's account.

In theory this left only £500, and a need to spend this amount arose in February 1914 - when the Railway was down to one engine (apparently the 4 year-old *Gowrie*) - to repair locomotives *Russell* and *Moel Tryfan* (as related in WHH 46), and an order was made for paying £500 to the Company, so the cupboard was now bare, or was it? The Consols that the Moneys in Court had been invested in when the £500 was released were worth £842 plus £8 in cash. The £350 left over explains another affidavit 5 months later

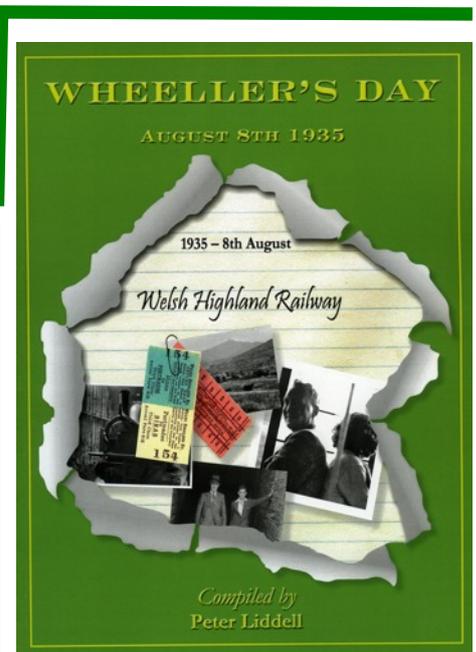
confirming the locomotive repairs were in progress and asking for the release of the present credit in

Court, rendered necessary by the continued low receipts from all sources. He then explained: *'Our principle source of income, namely the Slate carrying traffic has, owing to the closing of several of the Quarries fallen off to a very serious extent as appears by the following. There were at one time eight Quarries on the line, but four of them are now closed down and a further one (the largest) is about to close, and of the remaining three Quarries one did not send out any Slates last month and the others sent only a Wagon or two. Our Slate traffic for the half year to June was at one time practically 9000 Tons but for the last (June) half year it was only about 3380 Tons. The recent strike in the largest Quarry from which lately some 75% of our Slate traffic has emanated has been settled, but I am informed that this Quarry Company has now given notice of its intention to close down within a few days so will cease making Slates.'*

'Although we get enquiries in reference to Iron Ore Traffic rates nothing has so far come in from this source although men are kept working in the mine and I am informed that experiments with a plant for calcining the Ore at the Mine have recently taken place.'

He then said that the 'A' Debenture interest, usually paid for the June half-year on 10th July, had not been paid, and despite his earlier comment about the necessity of paying it, he now suggested that *'it will be better to apply the fund in Court and the £97 above referred to (a sum referred to as not being earmarked) for the purposes of working the said Railway in order to enable the Company to receive the sums usually obtained from Tourist traffic etc during the months of August and September and with a view to the sale of the Railway as a going concern, negotiations for which are still proceeding, rather than pay the A Debenture holders their June interest and thereby cause the Railway to cease working.'*

In the event, of course, WW1 broke out a few days later and (according to JIC Boyd) the LNWR were too pre-occupied with war matters to consider pursuing the acquisition of the PBSSR and presumably the same applied to negotiations to acquire the NWNGR which had become increasingly moribund. No more Debenture interest was ever paid, the debt accumulating in the balance sheet in addition to that unpaid on the other Debentures. There was little likelihood that the Government would consider it worth taking over the NWNGR to transport war materials or people involved in the war effort, as happened with the Festiniog Railway. Passenger traffic had already ceased on the Bryn-Gwyn line at the end of 1913, and the Railway struggled on until the end of October 1916 after which it operated on an 'as required' basis.



The modest investment in an attractive sales 'flyer' which accompanied the December journal certainly proved its worth. Christmas sales - which were still being processed at the end of January - provided a turnover of £1900. This represents three times as much as our previous best, but we did have two new items to offer and both have received much praise.. The first print run of 100 of Peter Liddell's 'Wheeller's Day' quickly sold out and the DVD 'The Welsh Highland Story' produced 40 orders. Needless to say both items are still available! The DVD is priced at £18.50 and Wheeler's Day is at £19.00. The special Christmas offer of £16 having been sold out. Prices include post and packing and a cheque to John Keylock will encourage a swift response! John is grateful to everyone who has bought copies and reminds members that his address for further orders is Weathervane Cottage, Childswickham, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7HL. Further stocks of Journal binders have been ordered and will be available soon.

WELSH HIGHLAND FARE TABLE – SUMMER 1934



For their lease of the Welsh Highland - with services starting on 9 July 1934 - the Festiniog had a whole new set of tickets printed. Clearly, Evan Robert Davies - the FR chairman, one of the "founding fathers" of the WHR and the driving force behind the lease - had high expectations for the services - or found the WHR bereft of suitable ticket stocks! The new stock included some Edmondson cards - for issue at Dinas which had a staffed booking office - and a full range of punch tickets for on-train issues from other stopping places. Information about these is to be found in the Group's publication *Tickets of the Welsh Highland Railway 1923 – 1936* by Derek Lystor and John Keylock (copies available from John Keylock, at the address on page 12, for £6 post paid). Only some specimens of the punch tickets are illustrated, but photo facsimiles of all the tickets are available for study at the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn Wharf station, and from these it is possible to construct a fare table for summer 1934. In some cases these fares are less than those printed on tickets for the previous period, when the WHR was being managed by its Receivers, so card tickets from the earlier era will be found with higher fares.

The advantages of the punch tickets printed by Edmondsons on thick paper, rather than the pasteboard used for card tickets - and held in portable racks of the sort that will be familiar to older readers on buses or trams - were simplicity of issue and ease of accounting. Each ticket series had a face value (and was therefore "locked stock" in

railway parlance) so that a simple comparison of starting and closing numbers multiplied by that fare gave the amount for which the guard had to account at the end of his shift; much quicker to issue and easier to account for than paper excess fare dockets which had to be written out. Nominally, at least, no ticket was valid for travel until it had been punched to indicate the relevant journey - anyone coming by un-issued tickets nefariously would also need a ticket punch but could anyway quickly be rumbled if the ticket number was not in the same series as held by the guard on the issuing (single or outward) journey. To avoid an unnecessary multiplicity of tickets in the rack, different journeys sharing the same fare would be accommodated on one ticket - the punching of the ticket would demonstrate which journey was applicable. The downside to this was that it was not possible to analyse how many journeys at a given fare were made between which stations - only the total issues at that fare could be obtained.

Each ticket comprised four elements: fare and issue number across the top; set of station names down the left hand and right hand columns; and company name and conditions of carriage up the middle column. The pairing of stations opposite each other indicated the available journeys at the fare in question - valid in either direction.

When stations name pairs ran out (as they did in all cases) pairs of numbers completed the left and right hand columns (serving no apparent purpose other than filling otherwise blank boxes - unless anyone has any theories to the contrary!).

In the fare table, above, single journeys are in the left lower sector, returns in the right upper sector. Fares shown in black had known printed tickets at these prices while those in red are derived from the fare table ("Cheap Excursion Fares") published in the 1934 public timetable handbill, rather than

from known printed ticket stock. The fares for which Edmondson punch tickets were available are shown in the lower portion of the table.

Fares for which no printed station pairs appeared on the tickets themselves are highlighted in green - although it will be seen that all the return fares at these prices existed in the published fare table. There is a fairly consistent relationship between single and return fares (but not absolutely so - for example, shouldn't the Dinas - South Snowdon return be 1/3?) so one can play at fitting values to the few "blank" squares in the fare table below!

There are those who argue that all intermediate stations and stopping places were available as request stops during the lease period and that such locations were covered by issue of a ticket from the previous station or to the next beyond station, or by use of multiple punch tickets to make up a relevant fare - as presumably must have

Richard Maund

	PORTMADOC	ABERGLASLYN	BEDDGELERT	SOUTH SNOWDON	PLAS-Y-NANT	SALEM	WAENFAWR	DINAS
PORTMADOC	-	1/-	1/3	1/6	1/9	1/9	2/-	2/6
ABERGLASLYN	6d	-	4d	1/-	1/3	1/3	1/6	2/3
BEDDGELERT	9d	3d	-	9d	1/-	1/-	1/3	2/-
SOUTH SNOWDON	1/3	9d	6d	-	4d	4d	9d	1/6
PLAS-Y-NANT					-	3d	6d	1/-
SALEM	1/6	1/-	9d	3d	2d	-	3d	9d
WAENFAWR	1/9	1/3	1/-	6d		2d	-	6d
DINAS	2/-	1/9	1/6	1/-	9d	6d	3d	-
Denotes single fares				Denotes return fares				

Single	2d	3d	3d	4d	6d	9d	1/-	1/3	1/6 or 1/9	1/9	2/-
Return	3d	4d	6d	P	9d or 1/-	1/- or 1/3	1/3 or 1/6	1/6	2/-	2/3	2/6

been the case for Plas y Nant and Tryfan (the Junction suffix had been dropped). Such a conclusion does, however, seem doubtful when none of the "missing" locations - apart from Tryfan - ever featured in "lease period" timetable publicity. If such journeys were officially countenanced, it seems implausible that none of the 2d/3d/4d tickets carried any of the missing station pairs - not even for journeys to (a) adjacent stations, or (b) Portmadoc, particularly in the case of stopping places south of Aberglaslyn (which would have had to be charged at 6d single, the Aberglaslyn - Portmadoc fare).

A bit of (quite modern) History

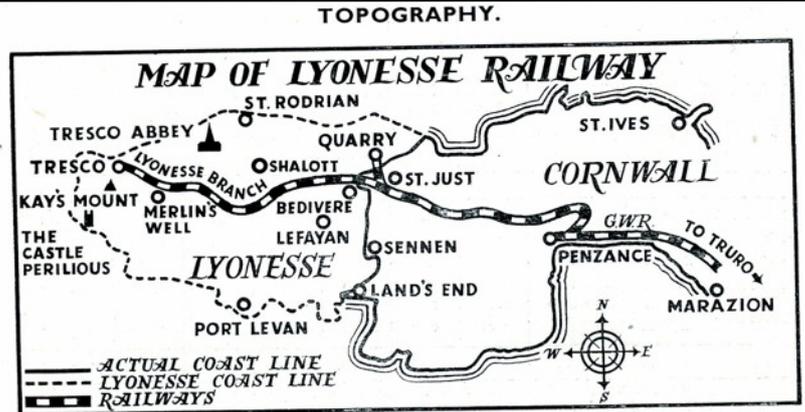
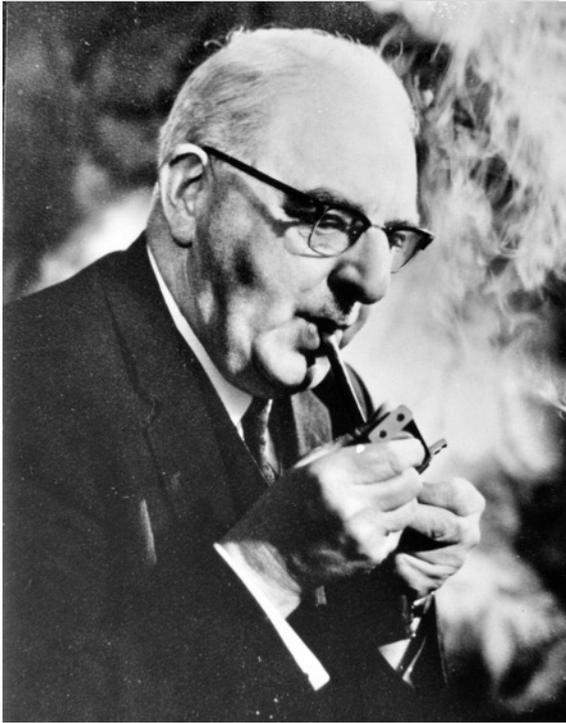


Fig. 1.

Most readers will be familiar with the names of V. Boyd-Carpenter and J.F. Bolton. The former features standing in the doorway of Tryfan Junction station building in 1942 while visiting with Mr Bolton, who, on the same occasion, photographed various aspects of the WHR being dismantled. At this time both gentlemen happened to be in the Manchester area. Boyd-Carpenter was assistant secretary at the Manchester District branch of the F.B.I. (Federation of British Industries) based in Spring Gardens, whilst Bolton had his business as sewage purification engineers at Heywood (Lancashire) not far north of the city. Until recently the writer had often wondered how the two had become acquainted in the first instance. Then due to the kind offer of member David Rowlands I received a copy of a booklet entitled 'Our Railway Histories' which

the one of relevance is The Lyonesse Railway which ran from Penzance to St Just and then over the land of Lyonesse to Tresco on the Isles of Scilly. This railway company had a chairman, a board of directors and a comprehensive list of principal officers of which Boyd-Carpenter was Manager and Secretary; Edward Exley was Mechanical Engineer and Mr Bolton was one of eight directors. So it was most likely that model railways brought Boyd-Carpenter and Bolton together and it is therefore no surprise that the former would have contacted the latter to arrange visits to witness WHR dismantling in 1941/42. Boyd-Carpenter I met but once in the 1970s when he was trading as 'Edward Exley' from The Ridge, Baslow, Derbyshire. Impulsively I bought a

coarse scale 'O' gauge, 3-rail, GWR Pannier Tank – which I still have somewhere!

It is now thirty years – or more – since I would quite regularly visit Mr Bolton in retirement at his home in Norden, near Rochdale. Answering the front door Mrs Bolton would direct me through the house into the garden where Mr Bolton had his office and library in a smart 'garden room'.

John Keylock goes off at a tangent

Knocking on the door one was invited to enter to be met with a cloud of pipe smoke. Perhaps pipe-smoking had provided the antidote to

the unsavoury odours to which his former business would have exposed him! On reflection it was a privilege to have known someone who was 'in at the death' and we must always be grateful for the photographic record that Mr Bolton has bequeathed to us. When he died money raised from the sale of his railway books was donated to this Group. To Boyd-Carpenter we must be grateful for his ensuring that both Russell and 590 plates were deposited at what is now the National Railway Museum.

Continued from previous page

Nevertheless, in the Dinas ticket register during the lease period Bettws Garmon and Quellyn Lake were dutifully entered (at least two tickets were sold to the former station, while Geoffrey Hughes records joining a train there - see *WHH No. 32* page 6). Card day returns were printed for 1934 by Edmondson from Dinas to South Snowdon, Beddgelert, Aberglaslyn, Portmadoc and Blaenau Festiniog, plus singles to Beddgelert, Portmadoc and Blaenau Festiniog; their fares match the

above table. Old stock card tickets were used for Bettws Garmon, Quellyn Lake and the other WHR stopping places in the table.

Hence this writer is drawn to the conclusion that – while Bettws Garmon and Quellyn Lake had a sort of unadvertised twilight existence – Croesor Junction, Hafod Garregog, Hafod Ruffydd, Hafod-y-Llyn, Pitt's Head, Pont Croesor, and Ynysfwr were not officially regarded as "open" for regular passenger traffic during the FR period of operation (summers 1934 – 1936 inclusive),

It will be noted that, when the punch ticket stocks were ordered, Nantmor had become Aberglaslyn but that the shilly-shallying about Rhyd-Ddu / South Snowdon had not yet settled upon the latter (as used for card tickets and publicity through the lease period) – the punch tickets appeared with the Rhyd-Ddu name.

My thanks to Derek Lystor for information to help me avoid a couple of pitfalls - even though he may not endorse all the conclusions I have reached.

