

WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

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Anniversaries



Pictures

Top left The grave of J.C. Russell in 1912
Centre - The same grave 100 years later with flowers laid by Nick Booker on behalf of the Welsh Highland Railway
Below - Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone opens the Watkins path up Snowdon in 1892 with a speech from the Gladstone Rock

This year one has been particularly aware of – and the importance of celebrating – anniversaries for which the railway preservation fraternity is well known; celebratory galas are generally a very good means of boosting income. The WHR is not immune but the two anniversaries of WHR relevance will be comparatively ‘low key’ and take place in Surrey and at Dinas – as well as very much in the words and thoughts of the cognoscenti.

On the 29th August 1912 James Cholmeley Russell died. It was his gritty determination that guided the NWNGR through the trauma of those early years and without him there would be no WHR today. He lies with his wife in the little churchyard of Merrow near Guildford. It was therefore appropriate that member Nick Booker paid a visit to his grave on

the 20th August 2012 to lay commemorative centennial flowers, on behalf of the WHR, in tribute to the man to whom we all owe so much.

On September 12th 1892 -120 years ago - the then Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone and his wife travelled by the L&NWR from Hawarden to Dinas Junction. The main objective of the journey was to spend a few days with Sir Edward Watkin at his Hafod-y-Llan chalet and inaugurate the Watkin Path to the summit of Snowdon. After a rousing reception at Dinas Gladstone's party transferred to a recently acquired carriage on the NWNGR for the journey to Rhyd Ddu whence the party travelled by horse drawn carriage to Hafod-y-Llan. En route the train slowed at Tryfan Junction so that Gladstone could receive the acclaim of the people gathered to see him. Ever since that newly acquired carriage has been referred to as ‘The Gladstone Car’ and like the locomotive Russell, still exists in much restored form. So let us salute both men and remember the part that each played in shaping the future of our railway and of our country.

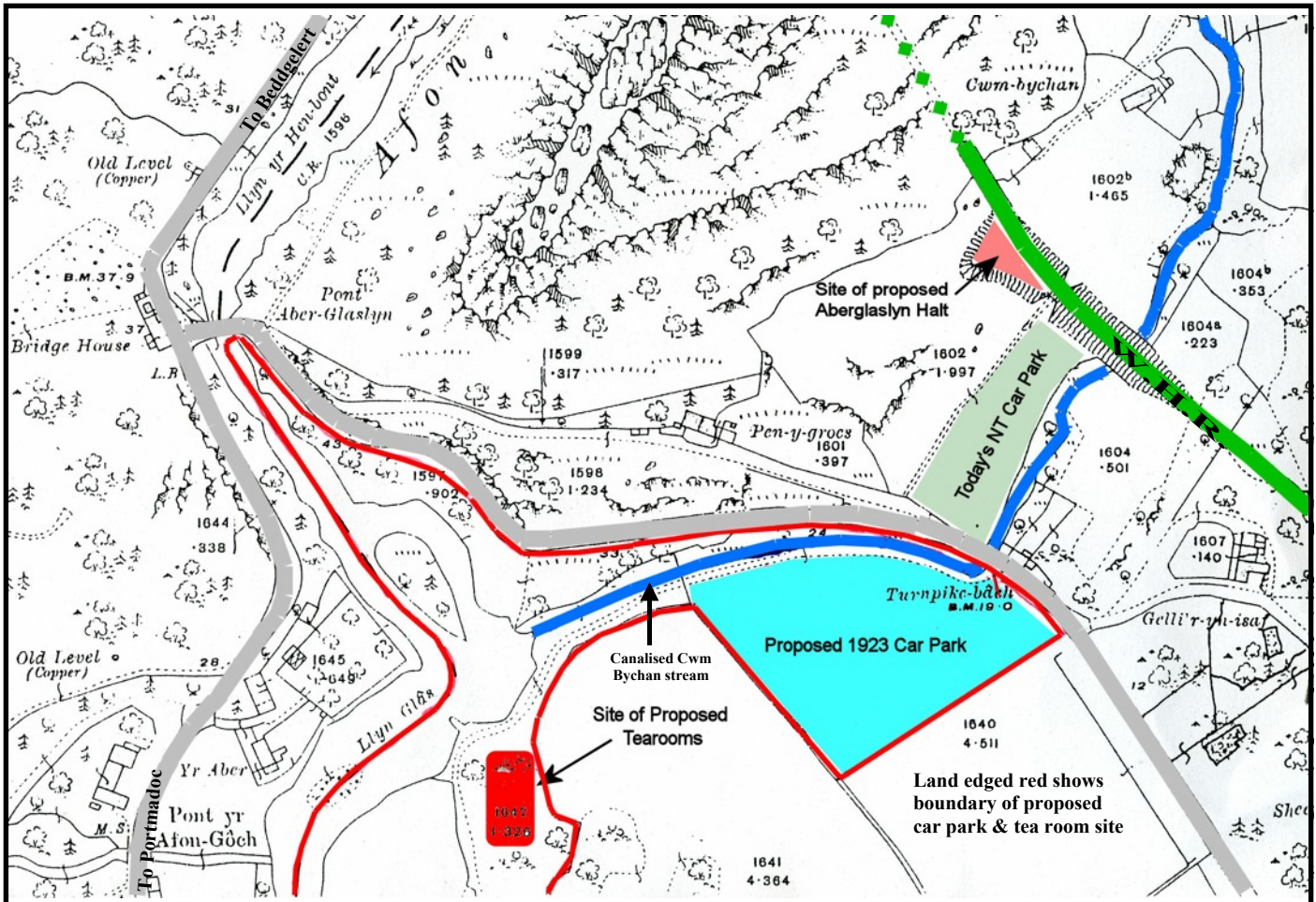
LIGHTING THE FIRE!

At Tryfan Junction on Sunday 16th September at 4.00pm there will be a minor celebration in the station building. Llanwnda Community Council donated £500 towards the cost of reconstructing the chimney breast and the provision of a suitable fireplace. Clerk to the Council, Bethan Williams will be invited to light the first fire in the grate; it is to be hoped that the smoke goes up the chimney! Furthermore members will have the opportunity to view progress. Since the May AGM weekend all the windows have been fitted; the partition (with or without its double doors from Port Dinorwic station) between the waiting and interpretation areas has been installed and the insulated ceiling may well be complete. As mentioned in the last Journal ‘Tryfan’ will be staffed during the periods of train operation over the QuarryPower weekend



Aberglaslyn Halt

‘Alight Here for Pleasure & Tea Gardens’



Early conversations with Ellen Jones (of Nantmor) covered matters peripheral to the railway; these included her father, Mr O.C. Owen, and his involvement with the Nantmor Copper Mining Co in Cwm Bychan and his selling of land to ‘the railway’. At the time I assumed that this land was that necessary for McAlpine to divert the lane on the approach to the level crossing and Nantmor village to enhance visibility for road traffic. My assumption was correct, but why should Ellen’s father have had to wait over ten years to be paid for the land? This didn’t seem to be in the spirit of McAlpine’s contract and indeed such was not the case.

Subsequently I met Tony Ellis, an ex employee of the Snowdon Mountain Railway and amongst interesting archive material of particular interest was a car park ticket used at Aberglaslyn; and so the penny began to drop!

John Keylock examines another ‘might have been’

The land sold to ‘the railway’, for which Ellen’s father was extremely patient for payment, was nothing to do with the WHR directly, but involved the Snowdon Mountain Railway. By 1923 Jack and Davies were the prime movers behind both railways as well as the FR, the Royal Victoria Hotel in Llanberis, the Snowdon Summit Hotel and the WHR.

Being very publicity conscious The Snowdon Mountain Tramroad and Hotels Co. Ltd. had produced a series of postcards portraying rather fanciful scenes along the WHR. One of these – reproduced top of page 3 – depicted Aberglaslyn Halt at the southern end of the long tunnel. Indeed the

1913/16 OS map shows the embankment here to be extended on its western flank, presumably using spoil from the tunnel excavated during PB&SSR construction works. This postcard – and others in the series – was probably produced before it was decided that such a facility could not be afforded, even in lieu of a halt at Nantmor.

Aberglaslyn Station

I think in view of the considerable extra expense in connection with moving the whole station to this location that the halt without either spur or loop will have to be agreed to, although it is certainly not so convenient as having only one station in this area.

I do not think that a telephone would be absolutely essential for the working of the railway, but it would certainly be a great convenience in connection with the proposed Tea Garden at this point

*Extract of Mr Tyrwhitt’s letter to Messrs Fox dated 26/1/23 (see T/4*p?)*





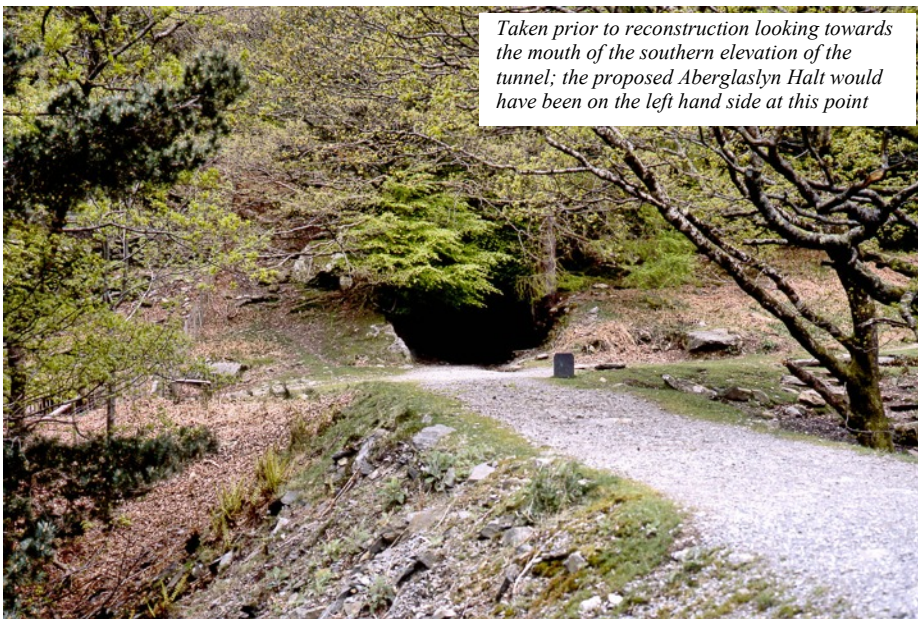
In January 1923 – only five months before the WHR opened – Mr Tyrwhitt wrote to ‘Foxes’ (Sir Douglas Fox & Partners) stating that Davies had informed him that they had said that a station at the tunnel mouth would cost about £2000 more than on the originally selected Nantmor site. However a halt could be put at the tunnel mouth at very little extra cost. This indicates a positive distinction between ‘station’ and ‘halt’; in this context a ‘halt’ being simply a level area at which passengers could alight.

Messrs Fox responded by confirming that the approximate £2000 additional cost related to the requirement for a very large quantity of material to further widen and lengthen the embankment and the installation of a passing loop. At this late stage this quantity of ‘fill’ was just not available. Davies had suggested to Messrs Fox that a halt at Aberglaslyn – with a small building and no loop – might be additional to Nantmor thus serving his envisaged ‘particular requirements’.

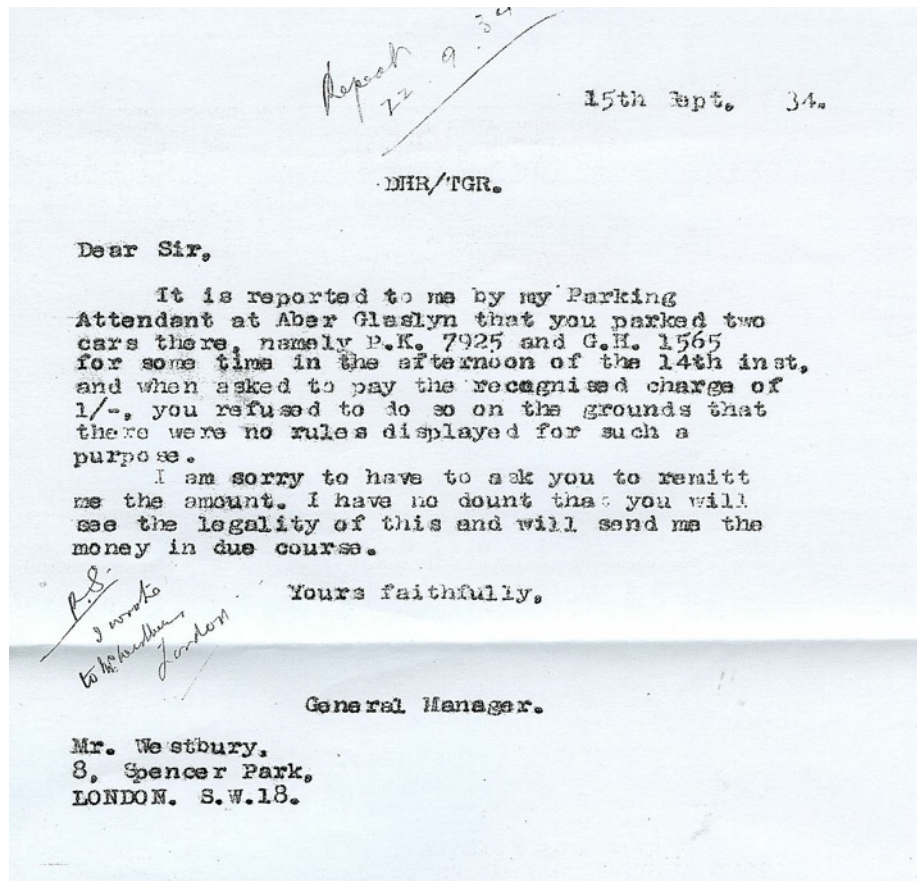
Within ten days Tyrwhitt responded to Messrs Fox (see transcript bottom of page 2).

Mention of the ‘Tea Garden’ is well within the compass of ‘particular requirements’ for in 1922 the Snowdon Mountain Tramroad & Hotels Co.Ltd. were *‘negotiating to purchase a site for pleasure gardens at Aberglaslyn’*. In February 1923 Davies reported to the Snowdon Mountain board that a 100 acre site had been located – and was available – in Cwm Bychan and the WHR would shortly run through it. The site offered *‘particular and exceptional advantages for laying out a pleasure park and tea gardens’* in an area of great natural beauty. Davies was authorised to negotiate – up to a maximum price of £2000 – with the landowner – Mr O.C. Owen.

In January 1920 the Hafod Garregog estate was sold in lots by auction at Bangor and Mr Owen purchased lots containing the 101.26 acre Cwm Bychan farm and all of Cwm Bychan mountain (170 acres). Both Davies and Jack visited Mr Owen to assess what land was available and subsequently an agreement was reached for the Snowdon Mountain Tramroad & Hotels Co. Ltd. to purchase approximately 280 acres. Included in this deal was a separate parcel of land (bordered red on the map) to accommodate a car park for about ten motor cars (the triangular piece coloured blue) and a riverside tea garden (coloured red). Mr Owen would retain water rights and grazing rights - at £1.00 per annum. Mineral rights would be retained by the Nantmor Copper Co., which lasted until 1934 and in which Mr Owen had a substantial interest. As an aside it is worth mentioning that the WHR quoted the mining company for the carriage of ore from Nantmor to Portmadoc but there is no record of any having been carried. In 1926 the possibility of additional siding accommodation was mooted at Nantmor in anticipation of traffic that never materialised.



Taken prior to reconstruction looking towards the mouth of the southern elevation of the tunnel; the proposed Aberglaslyn Halt would have been on the left hand side at this point





the Cwm Bychan stream 'several years before 1927'. In view of the foregoing it would seem reasonable to suggest that this was done before the protracted sale of his land to the Snowdon Mountain Tramroad and Hotels Co. Ltd.

So with no Aberglaslyn Halt or pleasure/tea gardens it would seem that the only additional revenues came from a car park in which Mr Owen did duty collecting the charges or arranging for the General Manager at Llanberis to write to those who refused to pay on the day, (see letter on page 3 & ticket on page 2).

One suspects that said car park only had a comparatively short life say 1934 – 1937. 1934 was the year in which Mr Owen received the final payment for land that he sold and also the year in which the FR took a lease on the WHR. By 1937 the railway had closed and the land acquired by the Snowdon Mountain Tramroad & Hotels Co. Ltd. was sold to the National Trust. As can be seen from the map today's National Trust car park is close by, between road and railway and on the opposite side of the road, (coloured light green).

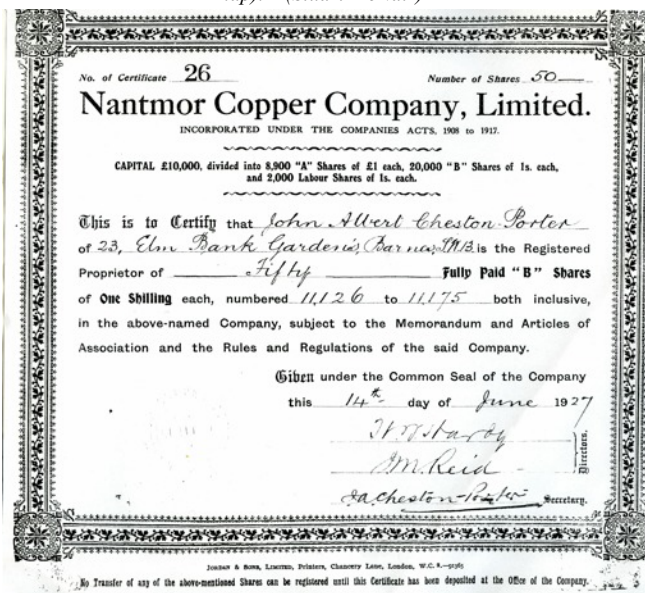
So why was Mr Owen – farmer and copper mining speculator – doing duty as a car park attendant? He needed two years of employment to benefit from Lloyd George's recently introduced pension scheme, but alas failed to qualify by two weeks having died on 19th March 1937 and as a result his wife would not have benefitted from a widow's pension.

1934 - 1937 is effectively four years but it is reasonable to assume that the car park was only in use for approximately six months in any given year.

Had the tea garden materialised there would, perhaps, not have been the need for such a facility at Bridge House or indeed in Nantmor village.



The Cwym Bychan stream flowing under the Nantmor Road. The stream would have formed the northern boundary to the proposed car park, (see map). (Stuart McNair)



Mr Owen's first payment was £165.00, i.e. 10% of the purchase price and the transaction was due for completion by 29th December 1925, with 5% interest being paid on the outstanding balance. Subsequent instalments were paid on a six monthly or annual basis – presumably based on the fluctuating fortunes of the Snowdon Mountain Railway, as styled from 1923, culminating with completion in 1934.

In the Nantmor water supply article in WHH No. 49 it stated that Mr Owen established his own water supply from

Nantlle Tramway

David Tidy has produced a superb pictorial survey of this iconic early predecessor of the WHR (Dinas to Caernarfon section). This is available on the Group's website at www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk - press the 'features' tab. Below is one of the beautifully preserved tunnels on the line.



Bryngwyn Revisited

In Journal Vol 1 Issue 4 I wrote of a memorable walk I made from Rhostryfan to Bryngwyn, and then over Moel Tryfan to Plas-y-Nant and beyond in May 1998. This was during that agonising period of nearly eighteen months when we all awaited the outcome of the Enquiry into our application for a Transport & Works Order. The hostility of the Snowdonia National Park was worrying me and I even wondered if the restoration of our railway between Caernarfon and Bryngwyn, none of which is in the Park, might be a viable alternative. Fortunately my fears proved ill founded and now, over fourteen years later, we have a most wonderful railway from Caernarfon to Porthmadog Harbour.

I have undertaken the 'Five Valleys Tour' several times now since it once more became possible to travel by train from Blaenau Ffestiniog to Caernarfon in March 2011, but each time this has been a clockwise tour.

In pre war days I think the anti-clockwise tour from Dinas Junction to Portmadoc and Blaenau Ffestiniog was more popular and throughout the 20's and 30's a train left Dinas at around 12.20pm for Beddgelert and Portmadoc.

With the reopening of Tryfan Junction, and of course the restoration of the station building, I resolved to make an anti-clockwise trip and this I did in July. I travelled as usual along the North Wales coast by train and bus via Bangor and reached Caernarfon just before noon. Here awaiting me was the 12.00 bus to Rhostryfan and Carmel and within 10 minutes we had arrived in Rhos. A rather faster journey than by train pre 1914! The bridge carrying the village street over the branch was filled in years ago but now a slope has been made each side of the road to enable walkers to descend to the track bed which was in a deep cutting. Wicket gates are in place, and an Information Board erected detailing the history of the branch with photographs. The line south from here to Bryngwyn is a concession footpath and a further



descriptive board has been placed at the second level crossing.

Michael Davies 'does' the Five-Valley Tour anti-clockwise via the Bryngwyn Branch

After a brief inspection of the line towards Bryngwyn I set off for Tryfan Junction as I was anxious to catch the 1.15pm train to Port and then on to Blaenau. Almost immediately I reached the lovely stone foot bridge depicted in Journal No 55, and it is good to know that funding is in place to repair the parapets. At the site of Rhostryfan station are picnic tables, seats, and further Information Boards detailing the history of the station and the branch. A short slate platform has been constructed, complete with running in board, and from this location one has fine views across the Menai Straits to Anglesey. It is now a very easy walk down to the Junction with the track bed formed of crushed slate and well drained. All is now fenced, with gates provided at the sites of occupation crossings to enable stock to be moved across the track. I had thought the branch to be nearly straight from Rhostryfan Station to the wide curve round into the Junction, but in fact there is a gentle

reverse curve which was for years totally obscured by the heavy vegetation. A couple of line side seats have thoughtfully been provided, welcome no doubt for those ascending the branch, but today I had to keep moving as it was already approaching 1 o'clock.

Before the 180 degree curve to the Junction I was able to admire the lovely brickwork on the final overbridge and marvel at the soot encrusted arch where no steam train has past since about 1935. Tryfan Junction can be recommended as a place to enjoy both the sounds of nature and the sound of an UP train climbing the 1 in 40 from Dinas and Wernlas Ddu. I was not disappointed on this occasion but quite pleased to join the train as a rather persistent drizzle had just started. However, the weather quickly improved and I had a most delightful run back to Port in one of the semi-open carriages. The views around Croesor Junction were wonderful with my old friends Cnicht and the Moelwyns looking at their best.

My day concluded with a superb run up on the 4pm train to Blaenau, riding in the first class compartment of carriage No 16 of 1872 behind 'Merddin Emrys'. Time in Blaenau enabled me to look at the new slate pillars being erected as part of the town's revamp and enjoy a swift half in the 'Queens' before catching the train back to Llandudno Junction. A lovely end to my first ever anti-clockwise 'Five Valleys'.

A WELSH HIGHLAND OPERATIONAL CHRONOLOGY: 1922 – 1937

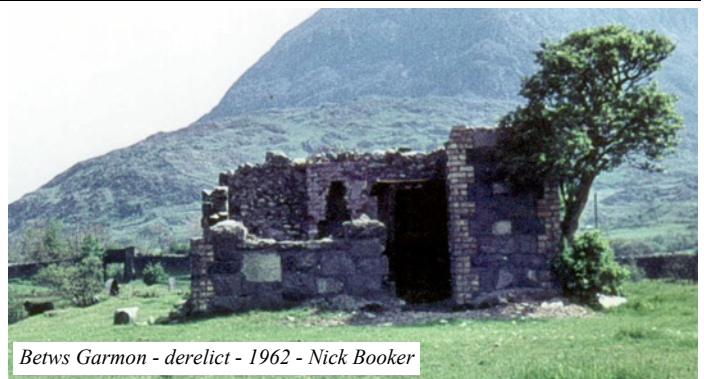
After the initial euphoria implicit in their first timetables had worn off, the Welsh Highland Railway went through the trauma of poor loadings leading to continuing attempts to contain the costs of operation by adjusting the timetable, to such a degree that it can be difficult to grasp just what level of service was applying at any given time. The recognised histories tend to skate a little warily over service details, with even some contradictory statements in places. Compilation of a complete compendium of each timetable change is a project being undertaken by some Group members, which – one hopes – will get published one day (meantime any readers who are working along similar lines unbeknown to the compiler are urged to get in touch through the Editor). Even so, such a publication (which would be too vast for inclusion in *WHH*) would have the down-side of tending to obscure the wood for the trees. Meantime, a simple (well, being the WHR, *fairly* simple) look-up table to show for any given date whether (and if so broadly what) service was scheduled to be operating is offered instead. Anything related to railway timetables could not hope to get away without a quota of footnotes, although one hopes they are not Bradshavian in the extreme – I have endeavoured to avoid notes written vertically up the column, or of the “continued on page 94” variety. The colour coding, which is now such a feature of “heritage” railway timetables, will help to identify similar service patterns. However, it is not essential to understanding the table, which would be self-standing in plain black and white – though the *WHH* page would be more drab!

Richard Maund expertly analyses the alterations to the WHR Timetable during its life

The comings and goings (and renamings) of individual stopping places have proved something of a trial to chronologists of stations working on a national basis (even without Portmadoc’s mythical north platform – spuriously up-graded by some writers to a “station” in its own right, with an ‘opening’ date upon which they are unable to agree!) so they are treated in a section below. Finally, a few general words are appended about goods services (although detailed analysis of actual operation warrants a study in its own right).



Waunfawr - derelict 1948 - Bill Rear



Betws Garmon - derelict - 1962 - Nick Booker

Passenger stopping places:

Until the 1933 season, the following places were open at the same dates as train services over the relevant section of line (unless otherwise shown below). However, it is necessary to study the notes to see which were and which were not advertised during the Festiniog Railway’s operation of tourist passenger services from 1934 to 1936.

Dinas Junction: often (including during FR operation) rendered simply as **Dinas** ¶

Tryfan Junction: downgraded to request stop from 9 July 1934; during FR operation advertised simply as **Tryfan** on leaflets but no tickets printed for this station ¶ #

Waenfawr: ¶ #

Notes to the following table (page 7):

- 1: one Down train only, no Up trains
- 2: one Up train only, no Down trains
- 3: no trains shown in WHR or FR timetables. The one Down train shown in *Bradshaw* is an error (carried over from previous year, it has no forward connection). However, *WHH* no.9, p.6 and no. 18, p.7 contain recollections of Blaenau Ffestiniog trains at New station in 1930 – presumably in connection with the single Up WHR train, for circular tour patrons
- 4: no trains shown in WHR or FR timetables. However, *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* (2nd edn.) Vol. 2, p.108 contains instruction for such connection in 1931 and *WHH* no.9, p.6 and no. 18, p.7 contain recollections of Blaenau Ffestiniog trains at New station in 1931, while *Festiniog Railway* (3rd edn), plate 49H shows such a train in 1933. Presumably connections *were* provided each summer for Five Valleys Tour patrons (even though *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* (2nd edn.) Vol. 2, p.107 seems to cast doubt).
- 5: it is questionable whether the single WHR round trip for this fortnight (always) ran through to/from Harbour – see *Chronicles of Croesor Crossing*, p.24 and *WHH* no. 32, p.6.
- 6: After the 1926 General Strike (4 - 13 May 1926) the miners remained on strike and a coal shortage ensued, because of which the WHR did not operate a passenger service (despite the existence of a timetable alteration handbill dated 24 May - 10 July). Traffic figures suggest that the last passenger trains ran on 3 May; services did not resume until Monday 19 July 1926 (Gwynedd archives file XD97/22742).

		Up direction →												← Down direction															
		Dinas Jn	Tryfan Jn	Waenfawr	Bettws Garmon	Salem	Plas-y-Nant	Quellyn Lake	South Snowdon	Pitt's Head	Hafod Ruffydd	Beddgelert	Nantmor	Hafod-y-Llyn	Ynysferlas	Croesor Jn	Ynysfor	Pont Croesor	Portmadoc (1923)	north platform	Portmadoc (1923)	main platforms	Portmadoc (1865)						
On or from	until end of traffic																												
Mon 31 Jul 1922	Thu 31 May 1923	Monday to Saturday								Line under construction																			
Fri 1 Jun 1923	Sat 12 Jan 1924	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 14 Jan 1924	Sat 29 Mar 1924	Monday to Saturday																						No pass.					
Mon 31 Mar 1924	Sat 20 Sep 1924	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 22 Sep 1924	Sat 13 Dec 1924	Monday to Saturday																						No pass.					
Mon 15 Dec 1924	Thu 29 Jan 1925	No passenger service																											
Fri 30 Jan 1925	Fri 6 Mar 1925	No passenger service												Fridays only								No pass.							
Sat 7 Mar 1925	Sat 30 May 1925	Saturdays only								No pass.				Fridays only								No pass.							
Mon 1 Jun 1925	Sat 19 Sep 1925	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 21 Sep 1925	Mon 3 May 1926	Monday to Saturday												Monday to Saturday															
Tue 4 May 1926	Sat 17 Jul 1926	Line closed to passenger traffic (General Strike and coal shortage - see note 6)																											
Mon 19 Jul 1926	Sat 18 Sep 1926	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 20 Sep 1926	Mon 28 Feb 1927	Monday to Saturday																						note 1					
Tue 1 Mar 1927	Sat 4 Jun 1927	Monday to Saturday												Monday to Saturday															
Mon 6 Jun 1927	Sat 24 Sep 1927	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 26 Sep 1927	Sat 29 Oct 1927	Monday to Saturday																						note 2					
Mon 31 Oct 1927	Sat 12 Nov 1927	Monday to Saturday												No pass.				Fridays only				No pass.							
Mon 14 Nov 1927	Sat 26 May 1928	Tues Thurs Saturday only												No pass.				Fridays only				No pass.							
Mon 28 May 1928	Sat 9 Jun 1928	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 11 Jun 1928	Sat 7 Jul 1928	Monday to Saturday												Monday to Saturday															
Mon 9 Jul 1928	Sat 1 Sep 1928	Monday to Saturday								Monday to Saturday																			
Mon 3 Sep 1928	Sat 29 Sep 1928	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 1 Oct 1928	Fri 17 May 1929	Monday Wednesday Friday only												No passenger service								No pass trains over GWR crossing				No pass.			
Mon 20 May 1929	Fri 5 Jul 1929	Monday Wednesday Friday only																								MWF			
Mon 8 Jul 1929	Sat 21 Sep 1929	Monday to Friday																								M-F			
Mon 23 Sep 1929	Fri 4 Oct 1929	Monday to Friday												Monday to Friday, Up train only and only on request												No pass			
Mon 7 Oct 1929	Fri 4 Jul 1930	Monday Wednesday Friday only Final winter passenger service												Mon Wed Fri only, Up train only and only on request															
Mon 7 Jul 1930	Fri 19 Sep 1930	Monday Wednesday Friday only												Mon Wed Fri only, Up train only and only on request															
Mon 22 Sep 1930	Sat 18 Jul 1931	No passenger service First winter without any passenger service																											
Mon 20 Jul 1931	Fri 2 Oct 1931	Monday to Friday																								note 4			
Mon 5 Oct 1931	Sat 10 Oct 1931	No passenger service																											
Mon 12 Oct 1931	Sat 31 Oct 1931	Line closed to all traffic																											
Mon 2 Nov 1931	Sat 16 Jul 1932	No passenger service (but goods & parcels resumed)																											
Mon 18 Jul 1932	Fri 9 Sep 1932	Monday to Friday																								note 4			
Mon 12 Sep 1932	Sat 15 Jul 1933	No passenger service																											
Mon 17 Jul 1933	Fri 29 Sep 1933	Monday to Friday																								note 4			
Mon 2 Oct 1933	Sat 7 Jul 1934	No passenger service																											
Tue 26 Jun 1934	Welsh Highland Railway leased by Festiniog Railway Company with immediate effect																												
Mon 9 Jul 1934	Sat 13 Oct 1934	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 15 Oct 1934	Sat 6 Jul 1935	No passenger service																											
Mon 8 Jul 1935	Sat 14 Sep 1935	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 16 Sep 1935	Sat 28 Sep 1935	Monday to Saturday												Monday to Saturday															
Mon 30 Sep 1935	Sat 4 Jul 1936	No passenger service																											
Mon 6 Jul 1936	Sat 12 Sep 1936	Monday to Saturday																											
Mon 14 Sep 1936	Sat 26 Sep 1936	Monday to Saturday																						note 5					
Mon 28 Sep 1936	No further passenger service operated over the original Welsh Highland Railway route until 2000																												
Mon 31 May 1937	Festiniog company gave notice of withdrawal of goods and parcels seervices over WHR																												

Bold type denotes multiple journeys (at least two round trips most days); light type denotes only a single round trip a day – usually a simple out and back working from Dinas Junction. There was no regular Sunday service on the line, so Sunday is regarded as a *dies non* in the table above.



Salem Halt - 1935

Bettws Garmon: downgraded to request stop 11 July 1927 †

Salem Halt: opened ca. September 1922 as request stop (for its prior history see *WHH* no.50, p.13) – first appeared (as Salem Halt) in *Bradshaw* October 1922 (initially only as footnote) and first shown in company's own timetable for 1 December 1922; "halt" suffix dropped from WHR timetables with 9 July 1923 working timetable (but continued to be used in externally produced timetable material and in excursion handbills until 1933); during FR operation advertised simply as **Salem** ¶ #

Plas-y-Nant: previously semi-official but first appeared in *Bradshaw* April 1924 and in company's timetable from 14 July 1924 as request stop ¶ #

Quellyn Lake: downgraded to request stop 11 July 1927 †

South Snowdon: inherited as **Snowdon** from NWNGR – reopened 31 July 1922 as **South Snowdon** in local handbills (*Bradshaw* used Snowdon until June 1923 and - belatedly - South Snowdon from July 1923); FR had tickets printed as **Rhyd Ddu** in 1934 but their handbills retained **South Snowdon** throughout the FR operation (*a U-turn before the 1934 season started, perhaps?*), although *Bradshaw* used Rhyd Ddu from August 1934 to June 1935 ¶

Pitt's Head: request stop †

Hafod Ruffydd: request stop †

Beddgelert: ¶

Nantmor for Aberglaslyn: request stop; renamed **Aberglaslyn** and made "definite" stop 9 July 1934 ¶ Not to be confused with a never-built proposed Aberglaslyn halt of 1923.

Hafod-y-Llyn: request stop †

Ynysferlas: request stop; renamed **Hafod Garregog** 9 July 1923 (see *WHH* No.51 p.5) †



Hafod Garregog 2008 - David Allan

Croesor Junction: available as unadvertised request stopping place – being shown as **Tanlan** on early Conductor's waybill – from *at least* August 1923 (see *WHH* no.37 p.7 and no.38 p.5); first appeared in public handbill and *Bradshaw* 26 September 1927 †

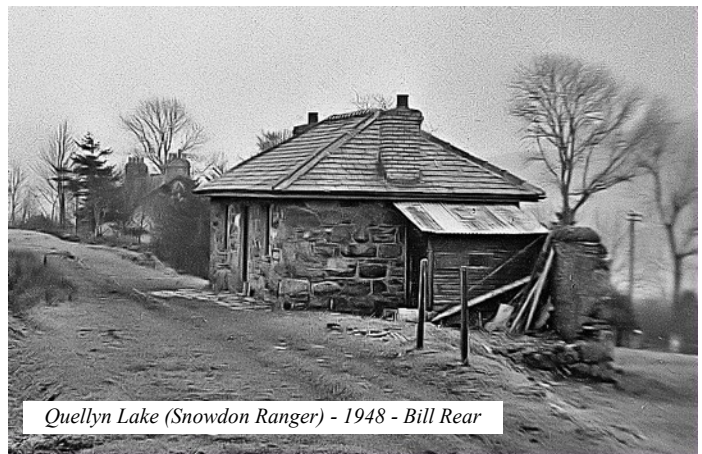
Ynysfor for Llanfrothen: request stop †

Pont Croesor for Prenteg: request stop † (even though "Croesor" appeared on leaflet map)

Portmadoc:

(north platform) : a supplementary platform of the "1923" station on the north side of the GWR crossing from 20 May 1929; never regarded as a separate "station" nor advertised as such

(1923): owned by Festiniog Railway, with Welsh Highland as "tenant"; opened as Portmadoc's principal narrow gauge station, intended to supersede the 1865 station; initially publicity and public timetables carried no suffix (apart from "for GWR"); staff returned to Old station and booking office closed September 1928; renamed **Portmadoc New** "for GWR" 8 July 1929 (although working documents and *Bradshaw* had used "New" from the outset); suffix dropped during FR operation (see *WHH* no. 46, p. 5) ¶



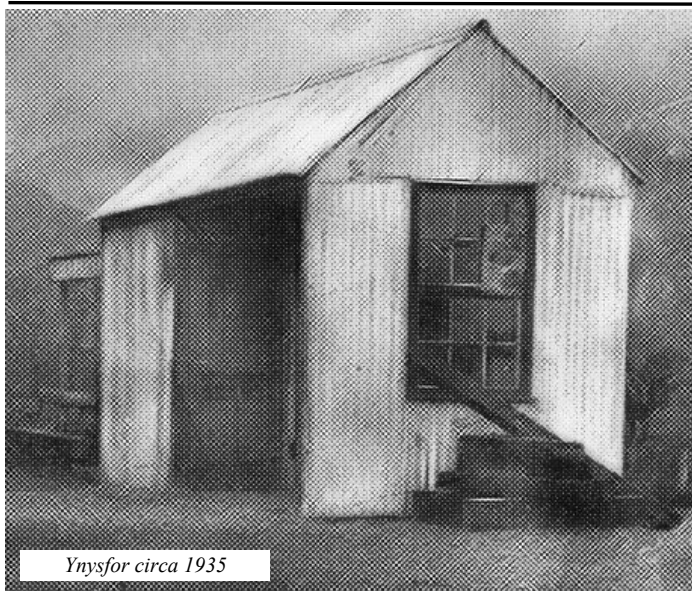
Quellyn Lake (Snowdon Ranger) - 1948 - Bill Rear

High Street Halt: appeared in *Bradshaw* from February 1929 to September 1930 (but *not* in the companies' own timetables) with the wording "Trains between Portmadoc and Blaenau Ffestiniog will depart and arrive at Portmadoc High Street Halt on the Town side of Britannia Bridge" – despite timings being shown only at Portmadoc Harbour; from this, it seems to have had no relevance to WHR services.

(1865): Festiniog Railway's original station; downgraded, briefly, from 1 June 1923 (see *WHH* no. 46, p. 5) when renamed **Portmadoc Old**; station staff returned September 1928; renamed **Portmadoc Harbour** 8 July 1929; continued in use for Festiniog services throughout.

¶ : Advertised stopping place during FR operation; FR had paper tickets printed ("Bell Punch-type" by Edmondsons) in 1934 for only the following stations – as origin or as destination: Aberglaslyn, Beddgelert, Dinas, Plasynant, Portmadoc [station not specified], Rhyd Ddu, Salem and Waenfawr. (See *WHH* No. 51 p.5)

† : As they did not appear on local handbills, and no tickets were printed from or to them, it would appear that Croesor Junction, Hafod Garregog, Hafod Ruffydd, Hafod-y-Llyn, Pitt's Head, Pont Croesor, and Ynysfor were not open during the FR operation (summers 1934 – 1936 inclusive). Bettws Garmon and

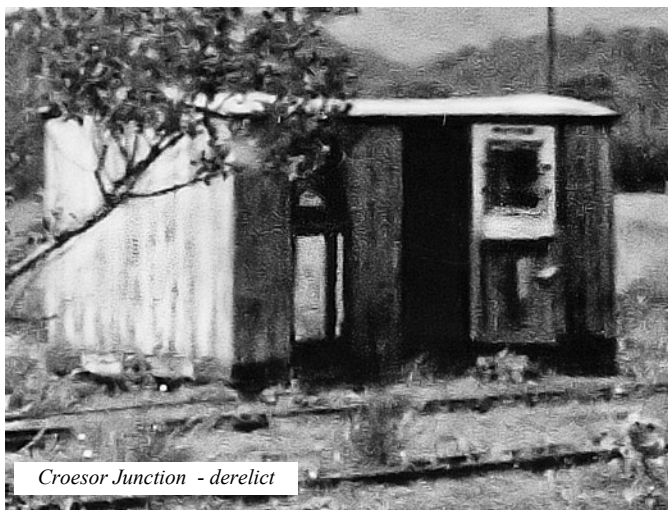


Ynysfor circa 1935

Quellyn Lake, however – although not mentioned in publicity or timetable material – *did* have printed ticket stock to them from Dinas, and were duly entered in that station's ticket register; they therefore remained nominally open (although apparently little used). (See *WHH* No. 55 p.10)

: During the FR operation these locations were advertised on local handbills (some did not appear on the map) but did not appear in *Bradshaw* until the September 1936 issue – the line's last month of service, as it turned out!

Regardless of what its tickets, *Bradshaw*, other publishers or the Festiniog Railway may have done, in their own known timetable material the Welsh Highland itself - and the Festiniog during their operation of the line - used the suffix "halt" *only* in respect of Salem, as qualified above.



Croesor Junction - derelict

Nevertheless, the following locations – when open – were served only "on request": Bettws Garmon (from 11 July 1927), Croesor Junction, Ynysferlas/Hafod Garregog, Hafod Ruffydd, Hafod-y-Llyn, Nantmor [but became a "definite" stop from 9 July 1934 when renamed Aberglaslyn], Pitt's Head, Plas-y-Nant, Pont Croesor, Quellyn Lake (from 11 July 1927), Salem, Tryfan Junction (from 9 July 1934), Ynysfor.

Bradshaw

This denotes *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* (any date quoted is the cover date) – the British railway timetable, published monthly from December 1841 until May 1961. The material it carried came, of course, from the railways themselves – although on occasion misunderstandings clearly arose and in some cases

(particularly with changes of station names in the station banks of their pages) *Bradshaw* could be somewhat dilatory – possibly because their attention had not been adequately drawn to the changes by the railways. The non-appearance of the Welsh Highland during summers 1932 and 1933 must be down to Richard Thomas Griffith (the Receiver & Manager of the time) trying to run a railway in the spare time from his various other activities! Generally speaking, information drawn from *Bradshaw* tallies well with the available surviving company-produced timetable material, although wherever possible the latter have been used for this compilation.

Goods and parcels

Apart from three weeks in October 1931 (see *WHH* no.52 page 12) the railway was open for goods and parcels traffic throughout the period under notice except in consequence of the 1926 strikes. Where practicable, this would have been undertaken by mixed train (the Bryngwyn branch, however, is a subject which requires its own article), otherwise by goods train – sometimes down to only twice, or even once, a week (see *WHH* no.48 p.9). The section south of Beddgelert must have been a somewhat "nominal" goods service at times: we know, for example, that in



Site of Hafod Ruffydd Halt

1928 goods trains ran between Dinas and Croesor Junction to exchange traffic for the lower end of the line, a similar function being performed by the "on request" Up mixed train advertised three days a week during 1929 and until September 1930 (it was advertised in only one direction so that if there was no need to go beyond Croesor Junction or Beddgelert, the train could save unnecessary mileage). And when it did run, the mixed train went only to the north side of the Great Western crossing at Portmadoc. However, traffic statistics (*Gwynedd archives files XC2/33/37 and /58*) show that by the beginning of 1930 all the Croesor valley traffic was being worked by horse through to Gelert/Beddgelert Siding at Portmadoc, for transhipment – which suggests the "on request" train would then rarely (if ever) have run south of Beddgelert, and must have left the Beddgelert ⇌ Croesor Junction section out of use during the following winter. From the end of 1930 the Croesor quarries closed so traffic (if any) at that end of the line would have been limited to coal and other goods *inwards* to the valley – and, of course, any movements between Gelert Siding and Snowdon Mill or beyond. By early 1930, movements over the Great Western crossing – freight only, of course – were down to an average of two a week (*WHH* no. 33 p.1). Even in the FR lease period the line was officially open for goods traffic, until that company gave notice of its withdrawal on 31 May 1937.

Acknowledgements

Particular thanks are due to Michael Davies for access to his collection of *WHR* timetables, to David Woodcock for sight of his research on *WHR* timetable matters and to other Group members for snippets of information.

More about the 1904 Carnarvon Extension Proposals

Two interesting documents have come to light concerning the 1904 and 1921-22 proposals to extend the railway from Dinas to Carnarvon. The first of these is an estimate of expense¹ concerning the Portmadoc, Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway (P.B.S.S.R.), produced by the engineering company of Harper Bros. & Co. of London in late 1903 ready for the Parliamentary Session in 1904.

The 1904 Scheme

The estimate relating to the P.B.S.S.R. 1904 proposal, covering Railways Nos. 1-3, was £29,660 in total. The railways in question were *No.1* (between Dinas and the tunnel at Coed Helen), *No.2* crossing the Seiont to the Eastern bank, and the Castle ramparts, and *No.3* which was to run along the Western bank to a point opposite the swing bridge. The estimated costs would have been

Railway No.1	£17,556 13s 6d
Railway No.2	£5,355 16s 7d
Railway No.3	£6,747 11s 6d
Total	£29,660 1s 7d

The costs for railways 1-3 are quoted in total and not as alternative routes, that is to say combinations of No.1 and No.2, or No.1 and No.3. This suggests that the P.B.S.S.R. proposed building *both* railways on opposite banks of the Seiont. The reasons for this, and purposes to which these two railways would be put are open to conjecture.



The information is presented below as a table to enable comparisons to be made:

A contingency of 10% was to be allowed in each case.

Richard Watson extends his research

Several points of interest emerge:

Railway No. 1 was to include 4 furlongs (exactly half a mile) of double track, the balance being single line. This was, presumably, one rather long loop at Dinas rather than multiple tracked sidings, since the fencing provision was also for 4 furlongs of double line railway. However there must be an error in the costings

relating to 'Permanent way, including fencing', as the costs for double track are exactly twice those for single. Naturally double track would use twice the amount of track materials but surely would not need twice the length of fencing.

Railways 2 & 3 were listed as single line, lending support to a view that station arrangements at the Carnarvon end had not been finalised at the time of this submission. However, money was set aside for 'sidings and cost of junctions', no doubt (in the case of Railway No.2) to cover the cost of crossing the London & North Western Railway on the quayside.

The material required to build embankments was almost the same as the quantity won from the construction of cuttings, as one would hope and expect!

The building of the tunnel under Coed Helen was to cost £1011 10s, accounting

	Railway No 1	Railway No.2	Railway No.3
Length	1m7f 9c; Double 0m 7f 9c Total 2m 3f 9c	Single 0m 4f 9.5c	Single 0m 4f 9c
Cuttings	9,270 cu.yds. through rock @ 2s 6d per yard; 64,890 cu yds. through soft soil @ 2s 0d per yard	None	23,750 cu yds (presumably rock) @ 2s 6d/yard
Embankments, including roads	61,480 cu. yds.	6,512 cu.yds	6,307 cu yds.
Bridges over public roads	1 Nr. @ £650 0s 0d	None	None
Accommodation bridges & works	£920 0s 0d	None	None
Bridge over River Seiont	0	£1600 0s 0d	None
Tunnel	£1011.10s 0d	None	None
Culverts & Drains	£246 0s 0d	£150 0s 0d	Culvert £50 0s 0d
Metalling of roads & level crossings	£160 0s 0d	Roads £100 0s 0	Roads £200 0s 0d
Permanent way including fencing	See 'Length' above. Single @ £1200 0s 0d per mile; double @ £2400 0s 0d	£1200 0s 0d per mil	£1200 0s 0d per mil
Permanent way for sidings and cost of junctions	£54 0s 0d	£350 0s 0d	£350 0s 0d
Stations	£350 0s 0d	£400 0s 0d	£400 0s 0d
Land and Buildings	42 acres 0 roods 0 perches £1470 0s 0d	5 acres 0 roods 0 perches £1500 0s 0d	7 acres 0 roods 0 perches £1400 0s 0d

Continued from previous page

for 3.4% of the total, while the bridge over the Seiont would set the company back some £1600 0s 0d, another 5.4%. Curiously, the Estimate makes no specific mention of the crossing of the Gwyrfa near Bontnewydd; perhaps this was because the old Nantlle bridge was in a reasonable state of repair in those days, and therefore capable of re-use.

One is struck by the disparity in land values, even in those days. In 1903-4 £1470 bought the purchaser 42 acres in the countryside, yet only 5 to 7 acres in the more urban environment of Carnarvon.

References:

¹ *Portmadoc, Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway Estimate of Expense*, produced by Harper Bros. & Co., Engineers, 13, St. Helens Place, London E.C. on 17th December 1903 for the Parliamentary Session, 1904.

² RW article in *WHH* No. 53

³ *Welsh Highland Chronology Year 1922*. *WHH* No. 2 page 4 (March 1998)

Welsh Highland Chronology Year 1923. *WHH* No. 3 page 4 (August 1998)

Nineteen Twenty-Two. Jim Hewett explains the 1922 'To Do' List. *WHH* No.15 page 4 (March 2002)

Yet More On What Needed To be Done in 1922. Jim Hewett. *WHH* No. 36 page 6 (June 2007)

Creating the WHR in 1922/23. Richard Watson with John Keylock. No.55, page 7 (March 2012)

Full Steam Ahead For Highland Railway WHH No.55, page 6 (March 2012)

For those not well versed in imperial measurements, the following abbreviations are used above:

m = mile. 1 mile = 1760 yards = 1.61 kilometres. f = furlong = 220 yards = 201.17 metres
c = chains = 22 yards or 66 feet = 20.12 metres cu. yd. = cubic yard. 1 cubic yard = 0.76 cubic metres
1 acre = 4,840 square yards = 0.40 hectares.
1 rood = ¼ acre = 40 square poles/1,210 square yards = 0.10 hectares. 1 pole = 30¼ square yards. 1 pole = 25.29 square metres

LETTER

Dear Editor

The article on regulations for what we must now call Cae Pawb crossing (issue No.56, page 8) is a fascinating example of the new information that keeps coming to light. Many years ago, when a successor to the "Blue Book" and the "Red Book" was published, some wag described it as "Ever so Slightly More About the Welsh Highland Railway". Little did he know how much more would really come!

However, I suggest the picture caption writer's imagination has been given too free a rein. Surely, even for a carefully posed picture (if it was such), the GWR would hardly have sanctioned a lookout man climbing up one of their telegraph poles. More likely the man up the pole is a GWR Telegraph Linesman with his own lookout man on the ground. Incidentally, does anybody have any photos of this spot looking the other way, i.e. towards Portmadoc Station? **How about this one Malcolm!**

Understandably, most are from the level crossing which now leads to Gelert's



Farm Depot. A photo looking the other way would include the telegraph pole by the level crossing, which same pole is now part of the present day Welsh Highland pole route, opposite Gelert's Farm Halt. A recent refurbishing of this pole revealed it still to have a mixture of GWR, BR(W) & BR(M) insulators and even an LMS one, although the Cambrian line remained under BR Western Region for many years after nationalisation.

More information and pictures can be gleaned from the website of the Telegraph Pole Appreciation Society (www.telegraphpoleappreciationsociety.org). I kid you not!
Malcolm Hinds
Telecomms. Dept.
WHR Ltd.

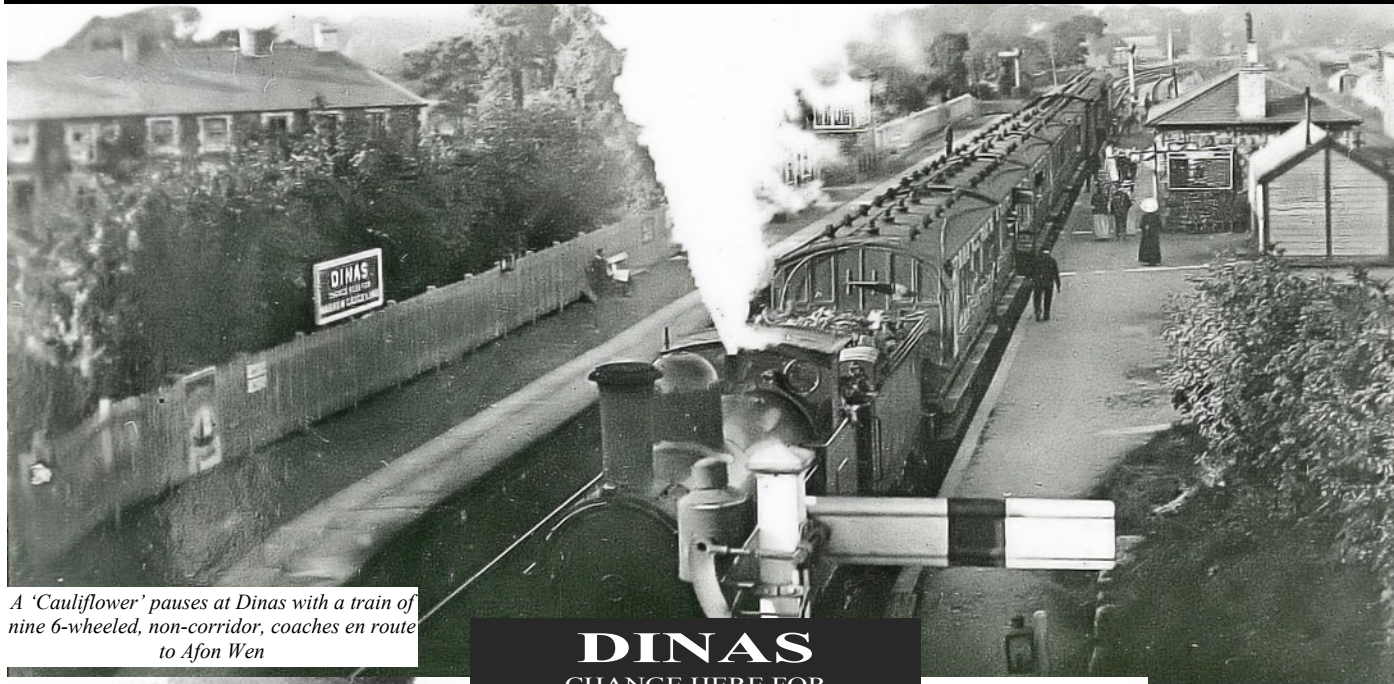
Research at Gwynedd Archives

Members will be aware that thanks to Pat Layzell Ward a new archive of FR & WHR material is now available for research at Gwynedd Archives in Caernarfon. In order to facilitate our record keeping and to help future historians may we request that members who take advantage of this new facility advise either Derek Lystor (email : dickandsuelystor@aol.com) or John Keylock (Tel : 01386 852428) of the reference number and title of any material which they access.

We will keep a record of this on the Heritage Group web site so that researchers can quickly identify the location of documents which may be helpful to their work.

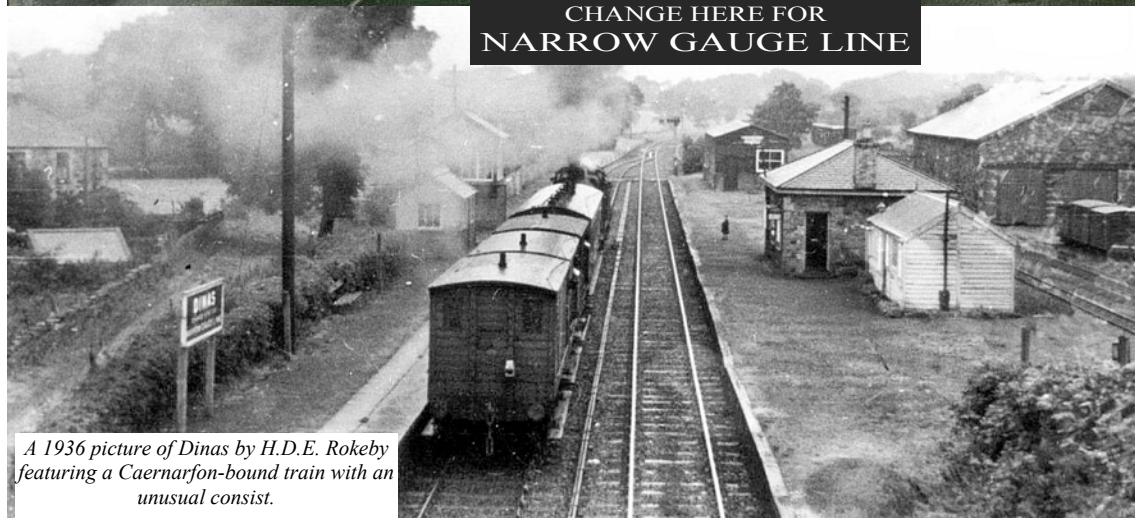
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Spot the Difference!



A 'Cauliflower' pauses at Dinas with a train of nine 6-wheeled, non-corridor, coaches en route to Afon Wen

DINAS
CHANGE HERE FOR
NARROW GAUGE LINE



A 1936 picture of Dinas by H.D.E. Rokeby featuring a Caernarfon-bound train with an unusual consist.

To turn our attention to the lower picture featuring a train ambling towards Caernarfon with the unlikely consist of an ancient coach and three guard's vans. The Snowdon Mountain Railway refreshment room is now in place and open for business; a small solitary figure waits for a train, the old NWNGR station

One of the devices beloved of newspaper editors in the school holidays was to fill columns with hand-drawn pictures with small differences which children (and others) were invited to examine closely in order to 'Spot the Difference', so we thought that it might be interesting if we did something similar for their fathers and grandfathers!

We publish here two pictures of Dinas taken from roughly the same vantage point and some 25 years apart. It is interesting to closely examine both pictures in an attempt to see what has changed.

In the top image a nine-coach passenger train pauses at Dinas Junction probably sometime before WWI. Are the Edwardian passengers making their way to the NWNG platform whence they might be about to experience the delights of Snowdonia by narrow gauge train?

The wooden ticket office with its frames and barge boards neatly painted in a contrasting colour proudly adorns the joint platform, with the chimney for the stove projecting through the roof. The noticeboard on the end of the old NWNG station building awaits the attention of the bill poster. There is no sign of the refreshment room where the culinary delights of the Snowdon Mountain Railway will be waiting to be experienced.

On the standard gauge 'down' platform a smart wooden fence, decorated with enamel advertising signs, delineates the boundary of the platform; the Dinas station sign informs passengers that this is 'Dinas' and it's where they change for the 'Narrow Gauge Line'. The station seat is occupied by a lonely passenger reading his newspaper whilst further along the platform a small waiting shelter and the signal cabin are partly obscured by wasted steam from an over-pressure boiler.

building boasts a new door in place of the notice board and the chimney for the wooden ticket office has been moved outside the building. There are two posts visible at the bottom of the ramp that led from the road to the platform, one of them adorned with a lamp presumably to light the way for after-dark passengers heading for stations to Afon Wen. The wooden fence on the standard gauge platform has disappeared to be replaced by a neatly trimmed hedge, behind which can be clearly seen the route of the old Nantlle Tramway. The station sign is retained, now on two visible posts and a telegraph pole has been added. Once again the waiting shelter and signal cabin are just visible through the exhaust steam.

Well - how many did you get?