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Progress with Tryfan Junction & Beddgelert Projects



Green Light for Kerr Stuart 4415

Following a meeting of the board of the FR Heritage Co on the 24th February the proposal to restore this iconic diesel locomotive by a consortium of the FR Society, Cymdeithas Rheilffordd Eryri (Welsh Highland Society), Welsh Highland Heritage Railway and Welsh Highland Heritage Group was given the green light.

This is the first joint project by all of the four volunteer organisations. It is planned for the work to be undertaken at Gelert's Farm where the loco will be on display in the museum. The project is estimated to cost about £80,000 with about half of that cost being met by volunteer labour.

Project leader Dave High said, "Kerr Stuart 4415 represents a significant step in the evolution of rail transport; it is a pioneering diesel locomotive and its restoration to full working order is of national importance."

It is planned to restore the loco to its condition in 1928 when it was trialled at Dinas on the Welsh Highland Railway.

If you would like to help with this ground-breaking project please give Dave High a ring on 01766 771275 or send an email to : david.high@tiscali.co.uk

A dedicated website has been established, with David Tidy as web master, where progress will be recorded in detail.
<http://www.kerrstuart4415.org.uk>



slate just shows to avoid a trip hazard. *Photos D Allan 24/02/2013*

Meanwhile the wainscoting to grace the interior of the waiting room is being fixed to wooden battens and a cheerful fire is kept burning in the grate to keep the volunteer team warm and dry when they take a break from their outside work!

The plan to extend the platform at Tryfan Junction is well underway. The Tryfan Team have installed the concrete edging for the extension as can be seen in the photograph - covered with a woven polythene 'blanket' to keep the frost at bay.

Three wagon loads of loco ash are ready to provide the fill which will be topped off with slate waste and compacted. Finally the slates used to define the edge of the original platform will be installed seven feet from the base of the station building; these will be arranged so that just the top edge of the

Meanwhile at Beddgelert the replica water tank has arrived and is currently parked on a wagon in the siding. It will be installed on top of the old McAlpine concrete columns as soon as possible.

Photo John Hine 23/02/2013



Give us a Buzz - Electrification & Telephones

Electricity is really just organized lightning.
George Carlin, U.S. Comedian

This article is an expansion of notes produced by John Keylock, with further detail from available photographs.

An exchange of letters and schedules between Sir Douglas Fox & Partners, and Evan R. Davies, in the period leading up to the building of the W.H.R. reveals that “the contractors are prepared to provide [a] telephone line with instruments at all halts and stations using [them] between Beddgelert and Portmadoc, as supports for the wires - the poles of the transmission line of the North Wales Power & Traction Company - [are in place] and the Railway Company agrees to obtain the necessary consent of the North Wales Power & Traction Company. The total cost of [the] telephone on this basis will be £750”.

The word “transmission” is of interest as it suggests pre-existing power supply poles but there is no sign of these on old Ordnance Survey maps, particularly any that could be described as running parallel to the railway. The only poles that seem to fit this description are the metal tubular structures, possibly of cast iron, visible in several prints of the WHR taken since the line was completed.



Above right - an enlargement of the top of the pole at Snowdon station showing the insulators mounted on brackets, but no wires, and the possible lightning conductor. There appear to be other clamps mounted on the post possibly for electrification anchor cables, or mounting brackets for the cable support arms. Left - the foot of the pole showing the parallel section and the ‘ring’ or ‘boss’, plus tensioner for the ‘guy’ cable.



The photograph taken in early WHR days at ‘Snowdon’ station, before it was renamed ‘South Snowdon’. One of the tall metal posts is clearly visible on the right hand side, with a supporting guy cable. There are two insulators mounted above one another towards the top, and what appears to be a lightning conductor atop the post. A conventional timber telegraph pole is in place alongside the station building; this was erected some years previously and appears in older photographs. The shape of the insulators suggests that this could have been an electricity supply pole, but lurking behind the visible insulators on the cross piece are two more, of the typical ‘telephone’ shape. Indeed twin phone wire can just be made out leading away from the pole..

Richard Watson with some more informed speculation

These seem to have been concentrated between South Snowdon (Rhyd Ddu) and the Afon Nanmor bridge but “sightings” further south than this remain unconfirmed.

In this context, a document published on the internet by RWE N Power Renewables, successors to NWPT, says that the overhead supply (or “transmission”?) lines were also to be used as a local electrical supply network. It is known that NWPT aspired to supply power to quarries in the Croesor Valley, amongst others.

The schedules, and the later McAlpine contract, both say in effect “subject to consent”; but whether this consent was ever given is not known. Even though the PB&SSR traction poles were originally specified as timber it has often been speculated that these metal poles were a ‘left over’ from the electrification scheme.

It must surely be these poles that were referred to by Douglas Fox for the reasons stated above. What is certain is that they appear in many images taken during Welsh Highland days at such diverse places as the Aberglaslyn Pass, Beddgelert station, the curves

above Cwm Cloch and at Pont Cae'r Gors. The posts were set in concrete, and tapered upwards from the base which was circular in cross section. There was an ornamental ring or boss of greater diameter at the transition, a couple of feet or so above ground level. A very clear photograph exists, showing one of these poles at Snowdon (later South Snowdon) station; I estimated from scaling the figures standing just behind the pole that its height must have been around 30 feet!

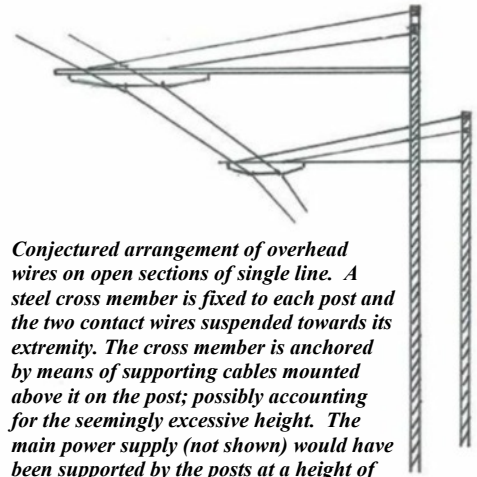
On the face of it, 30 feet is very lofty even for overhead wiring. The reasons for this are not clear, but there are a few clues. The catenary, being a simple twin-wire type, would have been similar in style to those used until fairly recently on many trolleybus systems in the U.K. Photographic evidence suggests that the “railway” poles were not paired on either side of the track, so span wires could not have been employed to support the contact wires. The alternative arrangement would have been a metal support, possibly

Stump of a metal pole near Hafod y Llyn set in a stone & concrete base





WHR train hauled by an FR England engine in the Aberglaslyn Pass, close to Bryn y Felin. Note the metal poles, mounted in staggered fashion and not paired across the railway



Conjectured arrangement of overhead wires on open sections of single line. A steel cross member is fixed to each post and the two contact wires suspended towards its extremity. The cross member is anchored by means of supporting cables mounted above it on the post; possibly accounting for the seemingly excessive height. The main power supply (not shown) would have been supported by the posts at a height of not less than 21 feet above ground level.

However the Snowdon photo *does* show telephone wires fixed to the station building pole. Boyd says that the telephone system between Beddgelert and Portmadoc was extremely unreliable, to the extent that GPO phone boxes had to be resorted to on frequent occasions. A photograph taken at Beddgelert in 1928 shows phone wires leading from the station building in a direction *away* from the nearest, southerly metal pole – towards the town's GPO system, perhaps?

As previously mentioned, metal poles seem to have been scarce – or even non-existent – south of the Afon Nanmor. A photograph of Croesor Junction appears to show conventional timber poles with telephone style insulators, mounted in staggered fashion on opposite sides. It would seem, therefore, that the W.H.R. wires were carried on 'normal' poles for at least some of the distance south of the Afon Nanmor.

Winston Churchill once said (about Russia) that it was a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. If anyone can help demystify these, their contributions will be very welcome.



FR wagons and an Austin car at Beddgelert in 1928. Just visible is a telephone wire which is going from the insulator on the roof of the building towards the town rather than to the metal pole close to the cutting. R.R.J. Plummer

tubular, mounted at 90 degrees to the post and reaching across the track. This is likely to have been supported by at least one and probably two cables fixed to clamps further up the post. Assuming the contact wire height was 11ft 6ins above rail level, as in the tunnels, the 90° support would need to have been rather more than 12 feet above the rails with the anchor cables considerably higher up than this. The main power supply slung between posts was specified to be a minimum of 21ft above rail level, so probably even higher up the pole than the anchors. (detail not shown in the accompanying sketch).

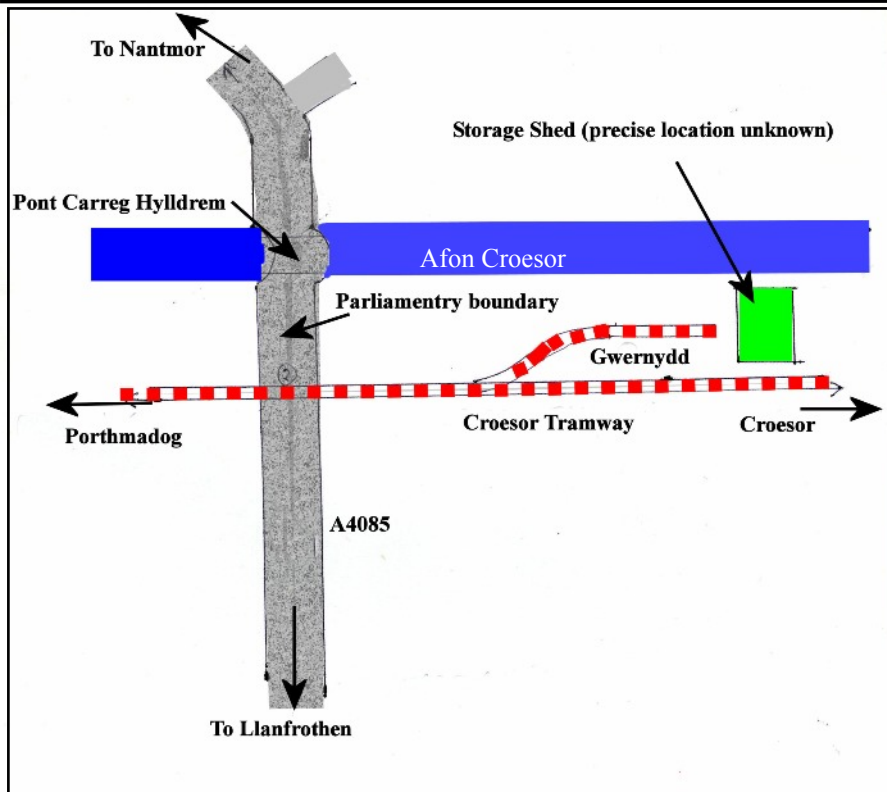
Close examination of the photograph taken at Snowdon shows two insulators of the telephone type (white porcelain 'pots') as opposed to the brown, squat electrical type shown in the accompanying pictures. The insulators observable in this and other photographs appear to be mounted at the very top of the poles, with no visible means of ascending the posts for line maintenance. This seems extraordinary, as the lack of pole steps would have made repair work very difficult. There were no 'cherry pickers' in those days!

The strangest element of all is that almost none of the photographs taken in the WHR period actually show wires suspended from the insulators on these metal poles, posing the question, were they used at all? There may be a logical reason for this, as film emulsions available in the 20s and 30s may not have been able to show such fine detail.

Croesor Junction in W.H.R. days showing the primitive station 'building' (an old FR Quarryman's Coach) and what appear to be conventional wooden telegraph poles with wires attached thereto. The pole with crossbar above the coach body has an unknown purpose but is likely to have been for telephone wires. Power lines go from left to right in the middle distance: were these a part of North Wales Power's transmission line system?



More on the Croesor Goods Runs



Gwernydd. Tanlan, Parc Quarry and farms up the road towards Nantmor could/would be supplied from here. Boyd suggests that a railway-owned 'locomotive' would on occasions shunt the 'run' from the junction to Gwernydd it being their obligation to deliver thereto. However, these 1924 invoices indicate that Kellow was organising horse-drawn haulage over the section and billing the WHR accordingly. Presumably Kellow would telephone Harbour to inform them that loaded slate wagons were ready to be picked up at Croesor Junction. Similarly for inward loaded wagons the railway would let Kellow know that a 'run' was ready for collection there. Kellow's invoice was received at Dolgarrog the following day – 23rd May – but he did not receive a cheque in payment until August 22nd 1924. The railway got three months credit! Over two George V 1d stamps is written :- 'Received by cheque Aug. 22 1924. With Thanks. M Kellow'.

An article in WHH No 58 speculated about the method of operation of Croesor traffic in the early 1930s by which time Moses Kellow's quarries – and indeed Rhosydd – had come to the end of their economical existence.

However back in 1924 a rather more positive picture is provided by the adjacent invoice, one of several at Gwynedd Archives under ref XC2/33/17. This invoice is for the carriage of goods both to and from Gwernydd, the Llanfrothen road crossing and Parliamentary boundary, the latter representing the limit of WHR ownership and operations. On the tramway side of the road crossing was a siding and storage shed. [See plan].

The goods outward from the Croesor valley would, of course, have been primarily slate products while inward goods would have been predominantly coal for domestic use in Croesor village (at a time when every home had a coal fire) and the quarries beyond. Other inward goods would have been building material, agricultural requirements and flour. Not all the loaded wagons constituting an 'inward' run from Croesor Junction would need to go even up the first incline hence the siding

(and shed to keep 'perishables' dry) at

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Telegrams: "Moses Kellow, Porthmadoc"

Bryn, Croesor,
Penrhyndeudraeth,
N. Wales.

The Welsh Highland Railway Company.
Clark Street,
DOLGARROG.

22nd May, 1924. 191

Dr to M. Kellow,
M. INST. C.E. M. I. MECH. E. F.G.S. OF LONDON.

To Haulage between Croesor Junction and Gwernydd
during the month of April, 1924:

332 Tons 1 Cwt. 2 Qrs. @ 8d per ton ... £11. 1. 4d.

Two red postage stamps (1d each) and a green 'Cup' stamp are visible at the bottom.

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W.H.R. Press Day - 17th July 1934

In *WHH* 53, page 12, reference is made to a press visit organised by Evan R Davies to launch the lease of the Welsh Highland by the Festiniog company of which he was Chairman. The visit was attended by representatives of the London press and it has generally been believed that this was the occasion when the iconic photo of (the then) Miriam Roberts waving from a WHR carriage was taken. It has to be said that if the local press were present, Davies got pretty scant (i.e. none, so far as we have been able trace) results from them!

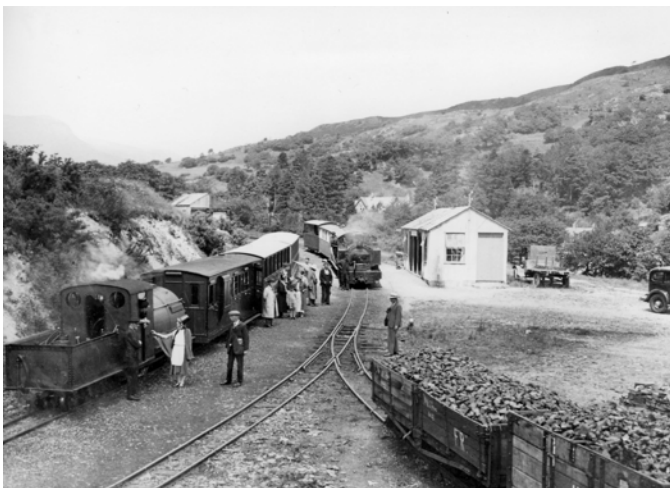
The *date* of the visit, however, had not been firmly established, although in some quar-

ters it was believed that it took place the day before public services started. Now, however, evidence pieced together from the Group's photographic collection and elsewhere leads to the conclusion that the event actually took place during the second week of services, on **Tuesday 17 July 1934**. In view of the haste with which services were resumed by the lessees it would perhaps not be surprising that the press were not invited to witness a "dress rehearsal" – nor even "first night"!

The "evidence" offered is four photographs which initially appeared in the same number series in the Topical photographic agency's

collection (although the the numbering sequence does not appear to be strictly chronological). Some have come down to us positively marked as dated 17 July 1934 and all are now believed to be from the same occasion.

*Research by
Richard Maund &
Peter Liddell*



The first (above) shows a group at Beddgelert – including reputedly the host, Evan R Davies, standing by the coal siding points, while Miriam Roberts seems to be purporting to hand the train staff to the loco crew (for the benefit of the photographer), with Mr Marks, the guard, looking on. The assembled hacks or general public seem rather underwhelmed by it all! The image went under Topical Press Agency reference L4372 and was dated 17 July 1934.



The third (above) is in the Aberglaslyn pass. That it is "posed" is attested by the guard – Mr Marks in his cloth cap again – standing alongside the second vehicle and with a door open in the preceding vehicle. This image was Topical reference L4369, also dated 17 July 1934; it appeared in the *Daily Mirror* of 24 July.



The second (above) is Miriam waving. This image went under Topical reference L4373 and appeared in the *News of the World* of Sunday 22 July 1934 – the first issue after the press trip.



The fourth (above) is another image in the pass – clearly the same occasion. It affords a clearer view of the train and confirms that the carriages seen in the third photo are indeed the same as in the first photo. This image was Topical reference L.4371.

The Topical Press Photographic Agency partnership (later Topical Press Agency Ltd) was founded in 1903 (for fuller history see www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/topical-press). When it eventually went bankrupt in 1957, the bulk of its archive was split between London Transport and the Hulton Picture Library (the latter has also subsequently gone out of business).

The photograph, of Miriam (bottom far left), features on the front cover of the Group's publication, *An Historical Guide – Part Two*. Available from John Keylock

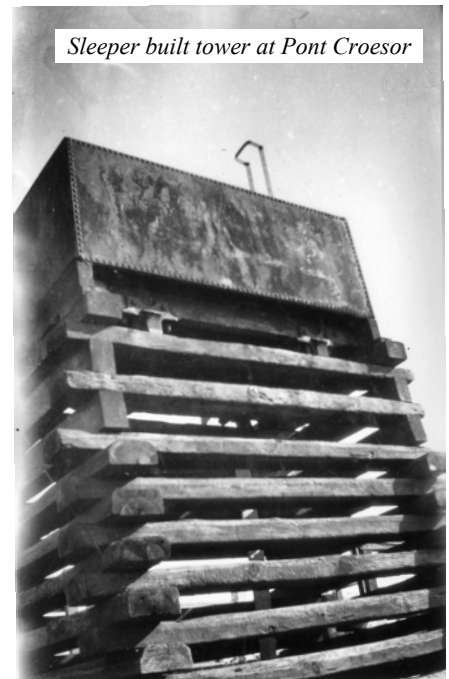
Faulty Towers

The Welsh Highland has boasted an eclectic selection of water towers over the years. This compilation attempts to portray most of them and like so many headlines this one is misleading; indeed the article was prompted by the editorial decision to use it!

The most interesting water towers were those provided by the NWNGR none of which alas remain – except as photographs. Before the availability of a mains supply,

With the advent of concrete subsequent WHR water towers had a less decorous appearance. Only two ‘permanent’ structures were built – at Portmadoc New (1923) and Beddgelert. Although there are many photographs of locomotives taking water at Beddgelert none have yet come to light showing the ‘Port’ tank in use. Perhaps this is because locomotives took on water at Harbour. Study of the various photographs of Beddgelert water tower reveal two water feed pipes – one facing the main line and the other at the back. One can only assume that when feed was put on the mains the original ram fed facility was left in situ. When the replica tank is up and functional locomotives will be able to water on both running line and extended siding.

The ram fed tank atop a pile of sleepers (a faulty



Sleeper built tower at Pont Croesor

ing the construction but served a later purpose when there were water extraction ‘problems’ at Beddgelert.



Concrete tower at Portmadoc New (1923)

water for the Dinas tank came from the nearby Afon Rhyd via a leat (see *WHH No 7 p5*).

At Bryngwyn water came from an adjacent stream and was most likely pumped up to the tank by an hydraulic ram (see *WHH No 47 p 4 & 5*) as at Dinas.

Moving south the next water available was at Snowdon Ranger/Quellyn Lake presumably installed when this location was, for three years, the railway’s temporary terminus (1878 – 1881). Having established a ram fed facility here there would have been no need for a water tower at Snowdon station (Rhyd Ddu).

tower!) at Pont Traeth (Croesor) served its purpose during the period when services were cut back to a 1929 terminus adjacent to Beddgelert Sidings and north of the Cambrian Crossing.

The final tank was on the face of the cutting north of Nantmor Station (*WHH No. 49, p11*). This already installed facility benefited McAlpine’s locomotive used dur-



NWNGR tower at Snowdon Ranger

However the versatile Baldwin loco ‘590’ carried its own water extracting apparatus on a bracket on the bunker.

The modern water tanks at Caernarfon, Rhyd Ddu and Beddgelert are constructed using ‘Braithwaite’ panels.....

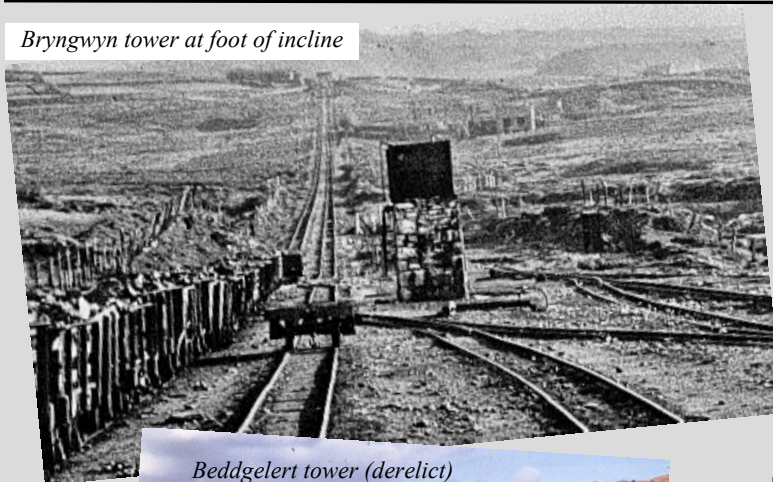


Concrete tower at Beddgelert amongst the ‘new’ railway



Remains of the brine wagon ‘tank’ at Pont Croesor

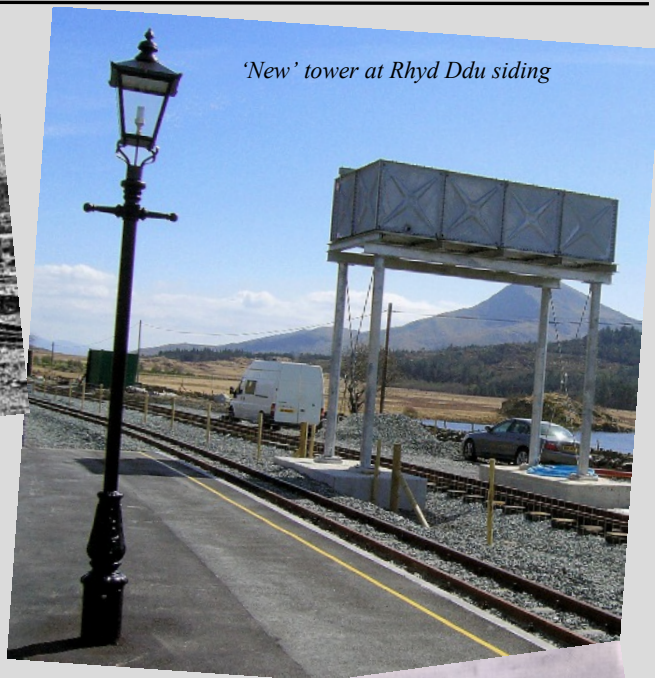
Bryngwyn tower at foot of incline



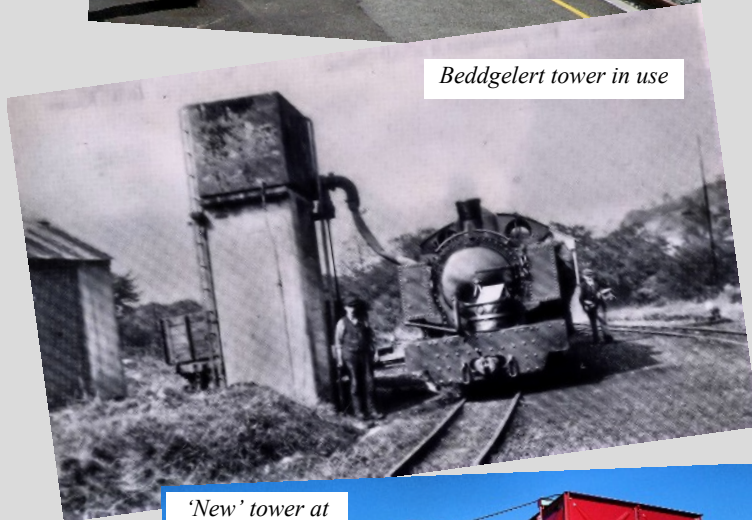
Beddgelert tower (derelict)



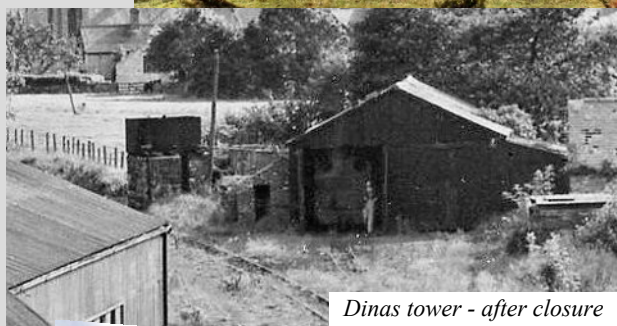
'New' tower at Rhyd Ddu siding



Beddgelert tower in use



Dinas tower - after closure



'New' tower at Beddgelert



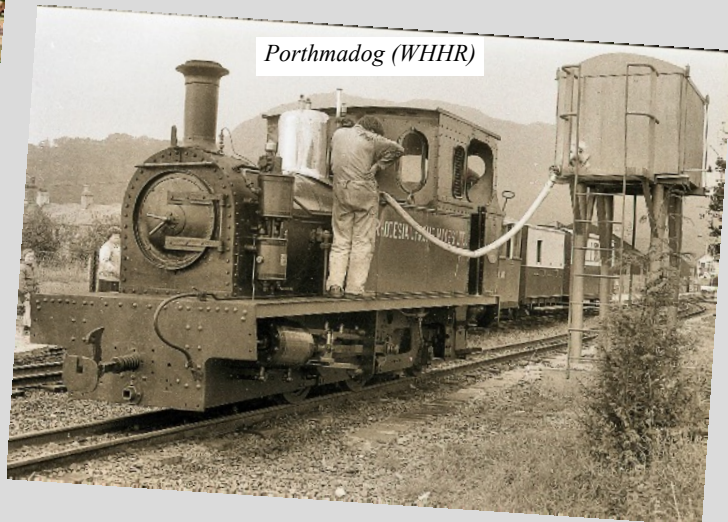
'New' tower at Rhyd Ddu



Caernarfon



Porthmadog (WHR)



Salem Quarry & Other 1922 Matters

Richard Watson's article in WHH No. 58 casting further light on proposals for the WHR in 1922 led me to delve into the Group's chronological paper archive for the period – in search of relevant or interesting peripheral matters.

McAlpines must have got their skates on to refurbish the NWNG section from Dinas to South Snowdon (and the Bryngwyn Branch) for re-opening to passenger traffic on 31st July 1922 – see timetable on p 9. However, Colonel Pringle who inspected this section on 22nd July, had several observations indicating details that still required attention; signals, posts and attendant rodding needed removal, not being required for 'one engine in steam' operation.

At Betws Garmon and Waunfawr the siding connections are 'spiked over' but if their use is to be retained they should be worked by a weighted lever locked and controlled by a key on the Tryfan Junction – South Snowdon staff. Furthermore point padlocks should be operable by one and the same key. (For those interested a copy of Colonel Pringle's report is available from John Keylock on the receipt of a SAE).

For re-ballasting the NWNGR section McAlpines opened – or reopened, if the NWNGR had used it as a source of ballast during initial construction in the 1870's – the ballast quarry at Salem which is still visible today on the west side of the line just south of the site of Salem Halt. By mid October 1922 McAlpines had obviously extracted sufficient material from that source and closed it. This is confirmed by the following extracts from memos in Gwynedd Archives.

John Keylock & Derek Lystor unearth more information from 1922

On 20th September 1922 D.O.Jones sent a memo to S.E. Tyrwhitt in which he confirmed that *the quarry had stopped and that their (McAlpine's) loco was working between Rhyd Ddu and Beddgelert.* He goes on to say that *Glennie, McAlpine's foreman, was not sure that the quarry*



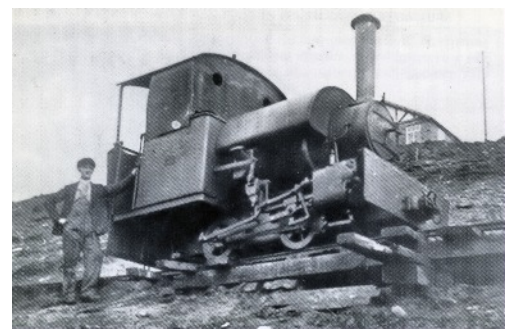
would work again after making room for ballast on the new section of line.

The loco mentioned may well have been Bagnall 0-4-0ST No. 2080 which was shedded at Dinas whilst in use on the construction works. (See photo right - Boyd)

On 13th October 1922 he writes again with the news that *Glennie had confirmed that the quarry would stop altogether at the end of that week.* As a consequence, Caradoc Jones, formerly a slate loader with the NWNGR, would no longer be required to act as Pointsman at the quarry. Whether he left the employ of the WHR at this time is not clear, but he was not on the payroll come January 1st 1924.

Also in October the railway received a letter from the Manchester based Rucksack Club who were planning a visit to Beddgelert the following Easter (XD97 / 7436) and wished to travel on the new railway. The reply stated that the con-

Photos
Top Russell & train passes the ballast quarry in 1934 - H.F. Wheeler
Lower - The quarry before reconstruction in 1997 - D.W. Allan



tractors have undertaken to complete the line by 1st April 1923 but *'it is too soon to forecast the train services but if there is no ordinary train to suit your members we will be glad to run a special on being given a guarantee of a minimum of £5 in fares'!*

In December a Mr Stilman wrote to S.E. Tyrwhitt asking for his promised consideration for a scheduled service – using a 'rail motor and observation car' between

Tan y Bwlch and Aberglaslyn! (Similar thoughts prevail today?).

This is interesting on two counts; first, the mention of Aberglaslyn as a destination (see *WHH No 58 p 2 & 3*) for at this time there was the possibility of such a halt/station on the embankment at the southern end of the long tunnel. Secondly, H.J. Jack apparently with little knowledge of 'things mechanical', but ruling the roost from Dalgarrag was trying to persuade Tyrwhitt that the way ahead for both railways, for reasons of economy of operation, was the abandonment of steam traction in favour of petrol engined 'tractors', or converted road vehicles. Jack was impressed by Col Stephen's apparent success in this area and Tyrwhitt was persuaded to make enquiries. From this involvement could stem the reference to the use of a 'rail motor' between Tan y Bwlch and Aberglaslyn

By February 1922 Mr JK Prendergast AMICE was installed at the Royal Goat Hotel as McAlpines 'chief man on site'. He wrote to Tyrwhitt requesting details of the locomotive *Moel Tryfan* (and coaching stock – but not *Russell*). The response, on an FR memo, was reproduced in *WHH No. 58*.

It was stated that WHR construction should not delay normal operations on either the NWNGR or the Croesor Tramway sections and if required by the Company (WHR) McAlpines 'might be required to transport all Croesor traffic during the construction period'. A summary of WHR expenditure for the whole of 1923 shows that McAlpines were paid £25.14s.3d for haulage on the Croesor section. Based on what Moses Kellow had been – and was subsequently – paid this would equate to some three months' work. Unfortunately there is no indication as to when, during the year, the money was paid but it is reasonable to assume that it would have been in the first six months when McAlpine was still 'in construction mode'. It is also reasonable to assume that haulage was carried out using one of several Simplex 'tractors' that he had on site. So that obligation was fulfilled.

That completion of the contract ran late is well known and the main reason would appear to have been time lost because of protracted negotiations with Tourist Hotels Ltd (owners of the Royal Goat Hotel). Land had been acquired from them by the NWNGR for their Beddgelert extension but the WHR station site was

planned for a different location so it became necessary to convey some of this back to the hotel and acquire additional land in the required location. Subsequently this delay prompted both Sunday and night shift working in an attempt to catch up on a contract running late.

It has always been this writer's assumption that the bridge over the railway at Pitt's Head was built – along with the railway to Hafod Ruffydd from Rhyd Ddu – about 1908 under PB&SSR auspices. It was the PB&SSR that benefited financially from its subsequent use by Parry the timber merchant. However, amongst the preamble to McAlpine's contract is reference to whether there should be a bridge or a level crossing at Pitt's Head. Some times this railway's history gets very complicated.....!

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY (LIGHT RAILWAY) COMPANY.

RE-OPENING

OF

Dinas to South Snowdon

(Rhyd-ddu) Section (formerly North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway),
On 31st JULY, 1922.

10 Miles of Beautiful Scenery.

Streams, Waterfalls, Lakes & Mountains.

OBSERVATION CARS PROVIDED.

Excursion Tickets are issued daily to South Snowdon Station from Great Western Rly. Stations Via Afonwen & Dinas Jct. as follows,-

From	Times of Starting.	3rd Class Return Fare.
	a.m.	
PORTMADOC	10 25	5s. 8d.
CRIOCIETH	10 34	5s. 1d.
PWLLHELI	10 25	5s. 2d.
Arrive SOUTH SNOWDON ...	1 0 p.m.	
Passengers return as under:-		
SOUTH SNOWDON STATION dept.	3 55 p.m. (Sats. except.)	6 40 p.m.
PWLLHELI Arrive ..	6 35 p.m.	8 55 p.m.
CRIOCIETH do. ...	6 32 p.m.	8 48 p.m.
PORTMADOC do. ...	6 50 p.m.	9 0 p.m.

The shortest and best ascent of SNOWDON is made from SOUTH SNOWDON STATION.

The distance is about 3 miles, and the path leads directly from the Station.

General Manager's Office,
Portmadoc, Aug. 1922.

S E TYRWHITT,
General Manager.

No. 3.

Jones & Co., Printers, Portmadoc.

A Welsh Highland Heritage Copy

RAILWAY FACILITIES ATTRACTIVE PROGRAMME

"Late holiday makers visiting the district and local residents are being specially catered for this Autumn, as facilities will be available during October of visiting the Summit of Snowdon at reduced fares, and during the first fortnight of October a train service will remain in operation on the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Toy Railways in connection with the LMS service so that many can avail themselves of the famous Five Valleys Tour and Trips for the wonderful Toy Railway from Blaenau Festiniog to Portmadoc and the interesting Welsh Highland line."

North Wales Observer Thurs-
day 27 September 1934

Coach Colours - More From 1922

In the absence of colour photographs there has always been a great deal of uncertainty and speculation about the livery and colours of NWNG and early WHR coaching stock. Snippets of written information have provided some clues but colours are so subjective that unless the original material is available for inspection then that uncertainty will always remain.

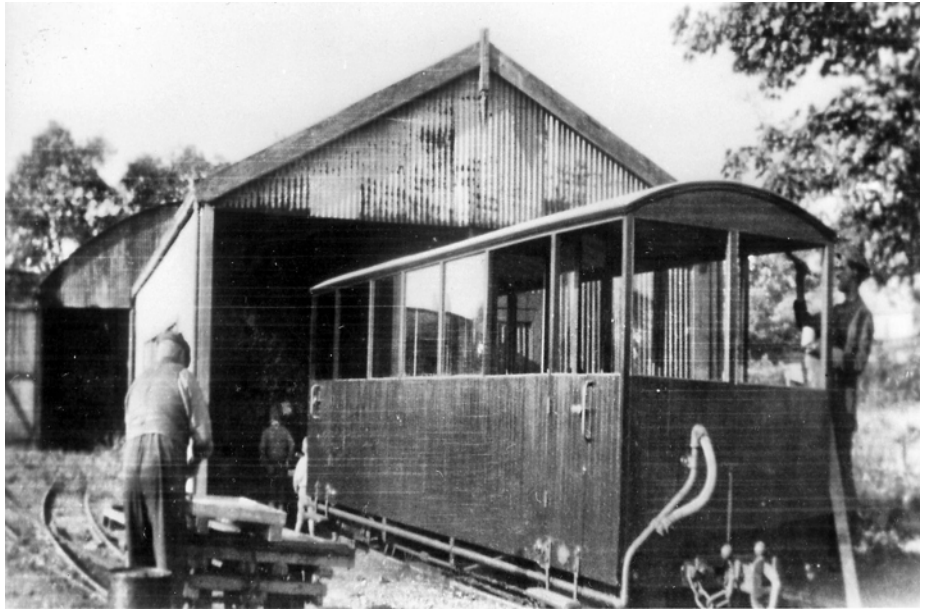
However more information has come to light recently that may shed some light on this always controversial subject. On the 3rd March 1922 Robert Williams 'coach superintendent', invited tenders for *painting and lettering the railway coaches now lying at DINAS near Carnarvon* :-

- *Number of Coaches 6.*
- *Outside of coaches to be burnt off and scraped.*
- *All woodwork to be stopped, given one coat of filler paint and one coat of DARK RED to match present colour and one coat best elastic carriage varnish.*
- *All doors to be written 1st or 3rd to suit in twelve inch letters in YELLOW*
- *Coaches to be written each side W.H.R. letters twelve inches high in YELLOW.*
- *Outside roofs to be painted two coats white lead paint.*
- *All inside woodwork to be scraped and stopped and painted two coats stone colour and one coat special hard seat varnish.*
- *Ceilings to be painted two coats white lead paint.*
- *All Ironwork of frame & bogies to be scraped and painted two coats BLACK.*

With your quotation please send samples of all paints and varnishes to be used.

There were eight responses ranging from £115.00 to £180.00 with one tenderer offering to do the job 'by the day' as he found it to be 'impossible to quote an estimate'.

So the coaches were to be repainted 'dark red to match present (NWNG) colour' and



the numbers and letters were to be in yellow and 12 inches high. This gives us a pretty definite confirmation of the NWNG colour. £1,000 had been set aside for all the necessary refurbishment work due to the neglect

David Allan looks at painting those NWNG coaches in 1922

of the final days of the NWNGR and in anticipation of the bright new future of the WHR. In the case of the coach refurbishment economic reality was soon to set in. On the 22nd May 1922, a mere two months after the optimistic invitation to tender for painting had been dispatched, we find Williams writing to Jack at Dolgarog. Williams had had a chat with 'General Manager' Evan R Davies, who had 'suggested that this work should be done by ourselves'. He went on: 'that he had looked at the coaches again in a better light' and 'that he was now of the opinion that (all the work detailed in the tender) is not required and that cleaning and one coat of varnish would suffice for 7 out of the 9 coaches with two coats of white on the roof'. He goes on to suggest that the 'supply of paint and varnish could probably be obtained more favourably if it was ordered by the Aluminium Corporation Ltd.' (Jack's main interest) and he concludes by saying that 'there is a painter at Groeslon who is willing to do the work by the day'.

So when, and on whose recommendation, were the cast iron letters fitted to the coaches; these would surely have been much more expensive than painted letters?

Goronwy Roberts lends a hand with the paint brush on the 'Inspection Saloon' ie the Gladstone coach.
Photo - GE Hughes

Although Williams invited tenders for only six of the former NWNG vehicles there were in fact eleven coaches altogether. Williams inspected these in February 1922 and his report states:-

'Nos. 3 & 7 3rd class, closed woodwork in poor condition, require heavy repairs'.

'Nos 9 3rd class, No 10 composite 1st & 3rd class. In good condition require scraping and painting inside and out'.

'Nos 12 & 14 require painting woodwork. No 5 in good condition requires light outside repairs, also cleaning and painting inside and out'.

'No 4 requires heavy repairs to woodwork' Nos 11 & 13 recently painted and only require cleaning.'

'Nos 12 & 14 Woodwork painting only' 'No 8 Inspection Saloon in good condition.....'

This means that although eight coaches would almost certainly have required painting - the six he selected are not known, but in the end it looks as though only two vehicles got the full treatment.

Report 18.2.1933:

"Extra time due to derailment on Bryngwyn Incline when 6 wagons left the rails causing work to put same back on rails and loaded others too badly damaged into another wagon to take to Dinas. Also re-splicing wire rope which was cut and repaired - considerable damage done to permanent way. Also changing rail on permanent way for one that was found broken under second bridge from Dinas."

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis

Peter Liddell has many talents, not the least of which is his ability to forensically examine a photograph with the objective of extracting as much detail from it as possible. Applying this technique to the now extensive collection of 'old' photo-

graphs of the W.H.R. he has unearthed some interesting new facts not always obvious even to the most discerning eye. This immediately presents the opportunity of sharing this 'new' information with Group members and indeed other readers.

Peter's analysis and comments however are not the last word and it is hoped that others, with a different knowledge base, may discern further facts from these well known pictures.



Beddgelert Station, Welsh Highland Railway



77842 BEDDGELERT STATION, WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY



77846F NANTMOR STATION, WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY

Old picture postcards can be a valuable source of information for the photo historian. However, when using such images it should always be remembered that some postcard publishers were given to embellishing original images. This might have been simple colouring, the stock-in-trade of Photocrom, for example, but in some cases modifications were more extreme.

Consider this postcard view [WHR146] of Beddgelert which a first superficial glance might seem to show 590 with a train of F.R. stock on a southbound working. However, a comparison with the original Frith image [WHR36] will show the extent of the 'butchery' involved.

In fact, the image is one of a series taken by Frith which shows, possibly over a couple of days in 1925, a working from Portmadoc to South Snowdon and back carried out by small England locomotives with a train of F.R. stock. It seems probable that in some of the images the locomotive was Prince and in others it was Princess.

WHR36 shows a train from South Snowdon to Portmadoc paused at Beddgelert. The locomotive has left the train and run round to the water tower for replenishment. In the early years of W.H.R. operation, a number of southbound trains were timetabled to take water at Beddgelert - an awkward manoeuvre given Beddgelert's left-hand running and a water tower location designed to suit trains travelling up-hill.

A full view of the F.R. stock, denied in the 'modified' postcard view, confirms that the same rake of carriages is seen in each of this series of photographs.

Photographs

Top - 'Doctored' Frith image (WHR 146)

Centre - Original Frith image (WHR 36)

Bottom - Another photo taken on the same occasion with the same train of FR stock - northbound at Nantmor (WHR 4)

Another 'New' Photograph



*Photo
Russell at Dinas in 1934 - Derek Burrridge*

Referring to the new 'old' photograph reproduced on the back page of No 58 John Keylock waxed almost lyrical!

Thanks to member James King we can now record 'Photographer – Derek Burrridge'; pinpointing a photograph's provenance is so much more satisfactory than 'photographer unknown' or 'author's collection'. [See thumbnail below].



In 1934 Derek Burrridge – whose son is known to James – was on a cycling holiday in North Wales and from that occasion two photographs found their way into the family album. One was the Glanrafon picture (above) and the second is reproduced here; both came originally to the Group from James via the late Ben Fisher.

There are many – but there can never be too many – photographs of Russell at Dinas but if nothing else this shows a group of people seeming intent on catching a train – (Could they have just left the booking office having purchased tickets?) – most likely the WHR one. A train crew member is checking the train and Russell's sandbox is full so departure would seem imminent.

However the photographs present a puzzle. Could they have been taken *before* the lease of the WHR to the FR on 26th June 1934? We know the photograph to be of 1934 vintage and though the carriages appear multi-coloured there is no lease period style 'No 12' on Russell's buffer beam. We also know (or assume) that Goronwy left WHR employment when the lease became effective. So the evidence points to a date pre the lease to the FR.

An interesting detail is that by this time the slate platform edging has been lifted immediately in front of the station building; perhaps as an anti-trip measure?

LETTER

Dear Sir

With reference to Goronwy Roberts' habit of referring to 'The Russell' *WHH* No 58, the same solecism was perpetrated by the late James Boyd in his own spoken commentary on the first of the three DVDs of his home movies, entitled 'On the Welsh Narrow Gauge'.

The material is confined to the Ffestiniog and Talylyn Railways, but in a scene outside the fledgling museum at Towyn, Boyd refers to 'The Russell' pushed in the background. Maybe Boyd should have known better, but Mr Roberts is not the only one to use the term

Yours sincerely

Sir Philip Williams