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We're Getting There!



Top left - Extended platform at Tryfan Junction - photo Lewis Esposito
 Top right - David Tidy photographs the box at Pen y Mount from the rear of a passing train
 Lower - Water tank back in position at Beddgelert - photo Stuart McNair

The three months since publication of our March journal has seen progress on several fronts as the accompanying photographs indicate. The extended platform at Tryfan Junction provides an area in front of the station building much greater than originally (see panel on page 3) and shows off the building to better advantage. What is now needed is for Tryfan Junction to be promoted as a destination, particularly for walkers and hikers, to use the slate trail

and to encourage 'station to station' walks. Such promotion is very much in hand involving all interested parties.

The weekend of 18/19th May saw stage I of the installation of the crossing box within the fork at Pen y Mount Junction. By noon on the Sunday the 'shell' was up. A Welsh slate roof will be fitted almost immediately. Stage II – possibly in July – will see insulation, glazing and the fitting of cast iron guttering and downspouts.

Furthermore, as we go to press the water tank is now back on top of its tower at Beddgelert to complete the 1923 cameo – at last do we hear you say! Watering facilities for locomotives on the siding line should be straight forward, but because today's running line is further away from the tower than originally, the outlet may need to be extended and possibly have the ability to pivot.

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 for 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 on the wonderful Toy Railway from Blaenau Festiniog to Portmadoc and the interesting Welsh Highland line."

North Wales Observer

24th September 1934

Research - Richard Maund

An eyewitness account of a journey on the NWNGR in 1883

By 1883 the passenger carrying NWNGR had established itself as an attraction to adventurous Victorians and passenger numbers continued to increase until peaking in 1895. From the time of opening to Rhyd Ddu in 1881 the railway promoted itself as the best and quickest means of reaching Snowdon's summit. In 1883/4 the railway was visited by writer/journalist Thomas Llewellyn and his experiences were printed in the Liverpool Courier newspaper. At that time what better means could there have been to promote a journey on the NWNGR to those living in 'Merseyside'. Llewellyn's travels form the basis of two articles; his journey from Dinas to Rhyd Ddu and from Dinas to Bryngwyn and the Moel Tryfan quarries. It is hoped that the flavour of the period is captured.

Dinas is an unpretending railway station, three miles from Caernarfon. Upon one side of it the London & North-western Railway Company runs its trains with the ordinary breadth between the metals, and on the other is the starting-point of the North Wales Narrow-Gauge Railway Company. The narrow-gauge is frequently referred to as "the two-foot," but, to be particular, the breadth both upon this and other railways of the same appellation is 1ft. 11 1/2 in. The locomotives, carriages, wagons, and other rolling-stock have, of course, to be made to the same measurement, but it is surprising, when trial is made, to find that on so small a track there is so much accommodation for passengers. The carriages are 30ft. in length, embracing the ordinary 1st, 2nd, 3rd, saloon, and van coaches. The engines, too, are by no means toys, being constructed to ascend gradients of 1 in 85, with a considerable amount of tonnage behind them.

Leaving Dinas, the train passes through what may be termed purely agricultural land, but presenting to the critical eye, features not common to rural England. The cottages and farm buildings, if rudely built of rubble stone, are carefully roofed

Photo from the original 1883 article



with good slate and nowhere around can a thatched or tiled roof be seen. In a very few minutes the landscape appears to extend and improve in interest, the result of a gradual ascent of about 1 in 50, which would otherwise be imperceptible from the smoothness of travelling, whether on the straight or around curves. The greater part of Anglesea is displayed as on a map, fringed on the west by the Bay of Carnarvon and more southerly by the Menai Straits, Dinas Dinlle ("the bathing-place of the future" I am told) Llanwnda (an ancient Roman camp on the shore) and the isolated, blue Yr Eifl mountains show conspicuously to the north west, while the tower of Carnarvon Castle and Twt hill peep from above the wood of Coedhelen. We are now on the side of Moel Tryfan, the vast bulk of which swells above us, but as we shall have to again refer to this especially interesting mountain, from a geological point of view, we must at present dismiss it by saying that at the first station of Tryfan Junction there is a branch line running up it to Bryngwyn, which is about 500ft. above the sea level.

Next, we pass along a river called the Gwyrfa, in which the water rushes over and between its boulder-covered bed after the boisterous fashion of mountain streams in general. The station at Waenfawr is convenient for the residents, several thousands in number, of the large and increasing village of that name, which prides itself upon being the birthplace of Dafydd Ddu o Eryri (Black David of Snowdonia), a celebrated bard, and Mr.

Owens, a distinguished Welsh antiquary. Bettws Garmon, for centuries known as a religious station or "Beadhouse" devoted to St. Germanus (renowned for his "Hallelujah" victory over the Saxons at Maes Garmon, near Mold), has now also its railway station on this line. The church is a small modern structure, but the village lays some claim to the picturesque, especially where an old three-arched bridge crosses the stream.

From above Bettws the outline of Mynydd Mawr (the great mountain) sufficiently justifies tourists in calling it "Elephant Mountain" as it represents most suggestively the body, head, and outstretched trunk of that class of animal. Coming higher up the valley, the Gwyrfa loses its brawling character, and winds along, slowly and respectfully, beneath the shade of closely-planted trees—principally oak and mountain ash—which border the lawnlike meadows below.

On our left is the lofty Moel Eilio (Hill of Frost), which rises wild and sheer as the cliffs of Snowdon itself. Passing a cascade, which seems to dash almost straight down from Eilio's side, the handsome mansion of General Mannsall was pointed out as having been built on the site of a cottage which was smashed to powder by a fall of rock. Perhaps the spot was chosen on the principle known as the doctrine of chances, which minimises the probability of the recurrence of a similar accident in the same place. And now, for too brief a time, a glimpse of the old Nant



Mynydd Mawr & Nant Mill from an LNWR postcard

Mill, with its interesting waterfall and bridge, is obtained. The beauties of this scene have been the theme of the poet's song (both in Welsh and English) and the object of the painter's art for at least the whole of this century. Bingley mentions it in 1798, and David Cox painted it. (David Cox's painting, though probably disposed of by him for considerably under £100, changed owners only a few years ago for more than £1,000.) Burke says much in its praise, but, the following will serve as a sample:—"If you would behold one of these waterfalls which combines sublimity with beauty, visit the admirable instance of Nant Mill. . . . The far-famed cataract in the vale of Tempe has nothing to compare with it." Bingley, curiously enough, says "this beautiful waterfall would appear to much greater advantage in almost any other situation," as "the majestic and black mountain of Mynydd Mawr, and the more smooth and regular, though still lofty Moel Eilir on the left, attract to themselves so much of the attention, and tower so high above it, as to make it appear quite diminutive."

From one point of view Mynydd Mawr appears to great advantage, artistically speaking, towering above the tree-bidden bridge; the rock of Castell Cidwm shewing an immense cleft from its summit. This rock rises perpendicularly for about a hundred yards, from Llyn Cwellyn, the expanse of which comes in sight soon after passing the Nant Mill.

The lake is nearly a mile and a half long and is half a mile broad. It abounds with fish; principally Targoch (red trout) and Gwyniad (char) and is free to anglers, as is also the river Gwyrfa, which flows from it, and the other lakes in the neighbourhood.

The lake is very deep in the middle, and is likely to continue so for awhile, as, despite much outlay, no payable slate quarries have been found on its banks. As we skirt its side the sharp well-defined peak of Snowdon stands out clear in front. The peak is but three miles distant, and, indeed, the train is running along its base. And now occurs a most delightful surprise. The hill-side on our left, although still in some respect "with verdure clad," grows scantier in tree life, and is apparently assuming a more sterile appearance, when a new revelation is made. From summit to base appears a cleft which, broadening out, displays a series of the most picturesque cascades dashing down a luxuriantly wooded dingle, in which a profusion of wild flowers and ferns form not the least attractions of one of the loveliest spots in Snowdonia. The "Dingle Bridge," over which the line passes, has a span of above a hundred feet, and piers 54 feet in height where it crosses the ravine, and forms the best point for viewing either the upper or lower Dingle Falls. The stream, which collects in a narrowed canon the watershed of the Valley of the Precipices (Cwm y Clogwyn) on this side of Snowdon's summit, finds a more level course below the bridge, and passing through fields of bright green pasture and wheat, empties into the upper part of

Cwellyn Lake. The extensive slate-works of Glanrafon, whose inclined planes are seen running up Snowdon's flank, has a siding on this line. Since arriving at the lower end of the lake, the train has gained some hundreds of feet in height, and now, crossing above the head of Cwellyn, a beautiful scene presents itself. From here until close to the present terminus of Rhyd-ddu the line pursues a serpentine course amid numberless masses of detached rocks on the mountain side.

Coaches run between Rhyd-ddu and Beddgelert, meeting all trains. The four miles of road, though not so interesting as might be expected, is level and good. The famous cluster of rocks called Pitt's Head, from its outline being supposed to resemble the profile of that statesman, is about something less than a mile off and lies close to the road. The fine trout lake opposite is called (for some reason unknown) Llyn y gader, or the 'pool of the chair'. The river Colwyn rises on the opposite slope and unites with the Gwynant at Beddgelert. The name Beddgelert signifies the grave of Gelert, but who, or what, Gelert was is the puzzle to antiquarians.

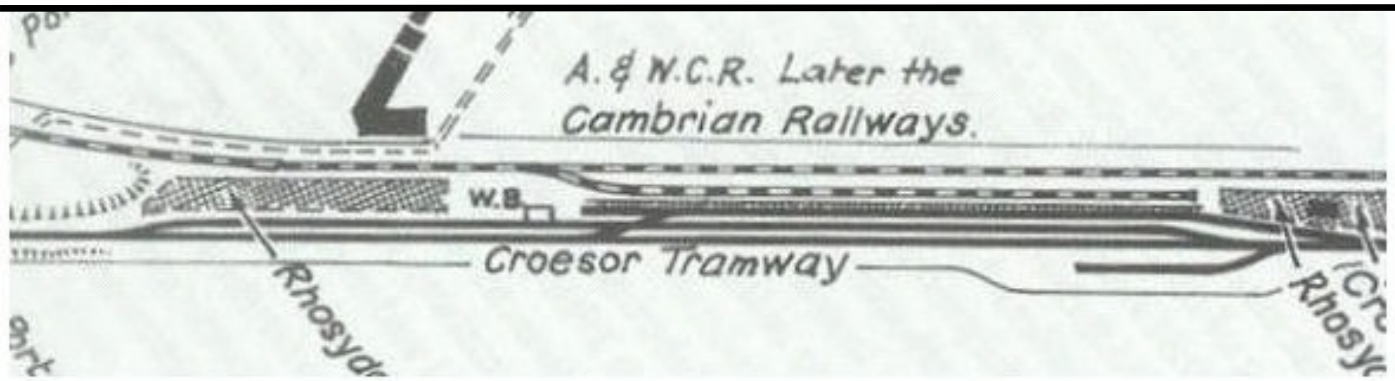
Amongst recently revisited original documents relating to the WHR for the period 1922 - 24 was Major Pringle's report covering his inspection of the NWNGR section of the WHR prior to its opening on 31st July 1922. One of his recommendations was that platform edges should be defined by a row of slates set on edge.

With the recent extension of the platform at Tryfan Junction helped by members of the Society's West Midlands Group - who have part funded the project - there has been much debate as to whether the slate edging should be reinstated, albeit flush with the new and enlarged platform surface. Potential trip hazards were a major consideration.

Major Pringle's recommendation makes it clear that slate to define platform edges was not in use during NWNG days. So in view of the fact that the external appearance of the restored station building will be 'as built' in the early 1870s it has been decided not to reinstate the slate edging.

Thank you Major Pringle for helping us overcome a potential problem!

Chronicles of Beddgelert Siding



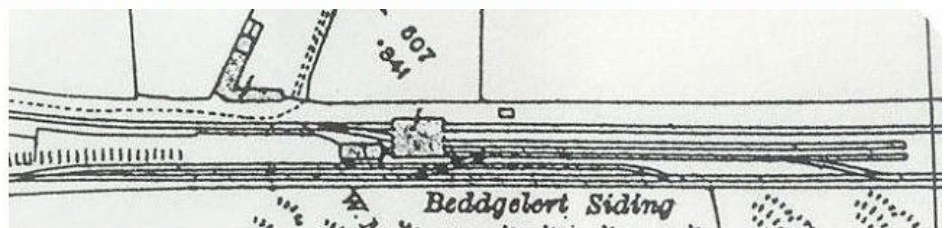
Extract from the diagram of 1864 "from deposited plans" by J M Lloyd (Boyd NGSC 1972)

(With apologies to *Chronicles of Boulton's Siding* by A.R. Bennett)

One of the least written-about sections of the Welsh Highland Railway, and its predecessor the Croesor Tramway appears to be the exchange sidings with the Cambrian line just north of the '1929' station in Portmadoc. The title *Beddgelert Siding* has been suggested as a reference to the abortive standard gauge railway of the same name. This does seem a possibility, as Jenkins¹ says, regarding those sections of the Beddgelert Railway that were at least partially built, "the Beddgelert Siding section is easy to see".

Johnson² has it that one mile of track was actually laid, which would be about the length of the Beddgelert Siding as built. Interestingly the junction with the main line faced north to east though the plans (Johnson, again) show the opposite 'hand', south to east. The facility was apparently renamed Gelert Siding after the opening of the W.H.R. in 1923, presumably to avoid confusion with sidings actually located at Beddgelert station.

The standard gauge siding began as the up running line in Portmadoc station, effectively as an extension of the loop. Trains to Dovey Junction would have left the loop by means of a crossover. Beyond this the straight line became Beddgelert Siding proper, and within a few yards a reverse shunting neck gave access to the cattle dock on the site of what is now the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway car park. The siding curved away in a north easterly direction, enclosing Gelert's Farm within the third side of a triangle before terminating near Pen-y-Mount. Meanwhile the Croesor Tramway came in



O.S. map 1915, showing goods shed served by both gauges

from the right hand side, and here a shorter siding branched off the standard gauge on that side of the line forming the actual exchange facility with the narrow gauge.

The main purpose of the layout was for the transhipment of slate from the Croesor Valley to the main line, with a little additional traffic from the Festiniog mainly in the years before the FR built its own facilities at Minffordd. However, there was carriage of goods in the reverse direction, between the Cambrian line and Portmadoc Harbour on the one side and the Croesor Valley on the other. Boyd says that this traffic was largely loose or hand shunted across the G.W.R. in W.H.R. days, and before this it would have been horse worked.

The exchange sidings on the narrow Gauge were refurbished and relaid in the period

before the W.H.R. opened, and there is an undated photograph in Johnson's 'Illustrated History of The Welsh Highland Railway Part I p37 that appears to show freshly ballasted track on the main line and loop. Unfortunately slate traffic was in decline by this time and by the 1930s had fallen to a very low level. Photographs taken around this time suggest that the long standard gauge siding was only used for wagon storage, but the narrow gauge layout found an additional use after 1929 for engines running round at the

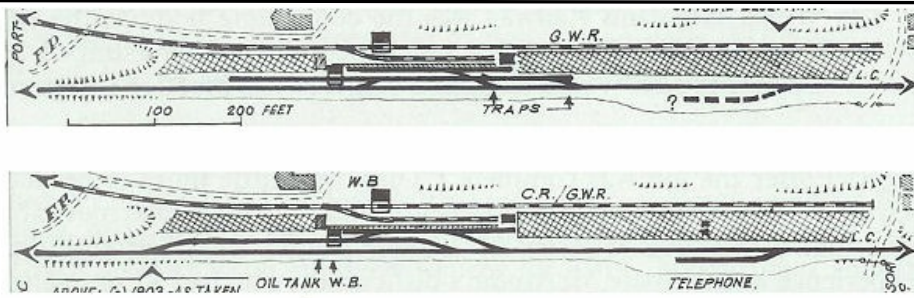
new 'station' north of the crossing. In spite of the refurbishment mentioned above derailments on the points were common, which led Col. Stephens to blame McAlpines for faulty workmanship.

Following closure of the W.H.R. the narrow gauge track remained in place until the late 1940s but the standard gauge lingered on into the 1960s. During this time the cattle dock was occasionally put to interesting uses, such as the transfer of circus animals from special trains to the Big Top in Portmadoc.

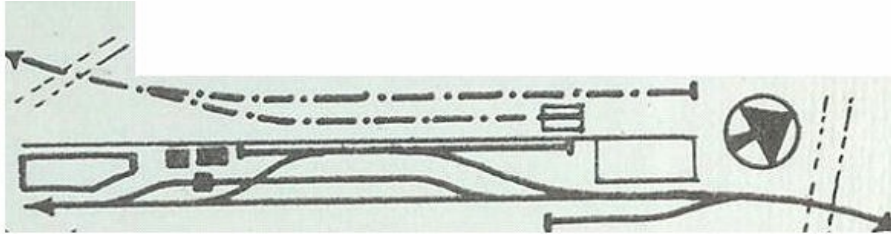
Track layouts have been published in various documents and books over the years, the earliest being from the deposited plans of 1864 though Boyd doesn't say which railway provided the plans—the Beddgelert or the Croesor.

The narrow gauge facilities can be summarised as follows:

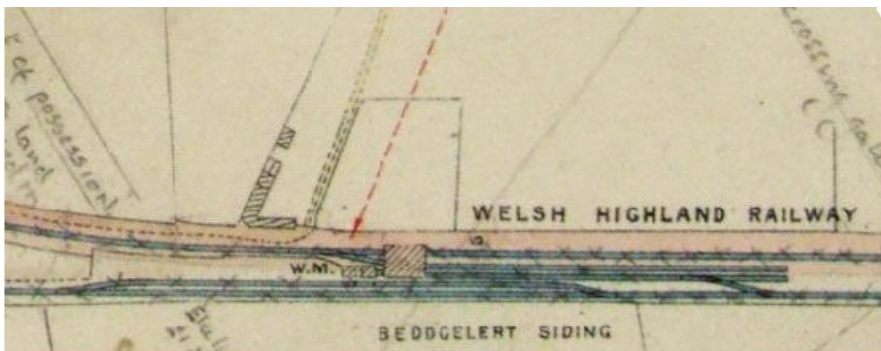
1. A long loop (250 ft) with enough capacity for two long trains to pass one another. This appears to have been in existence in various forms for the entire life of the facility.
2. A shorter loop partly overlapping the longer one, possibly used for holding wagons or



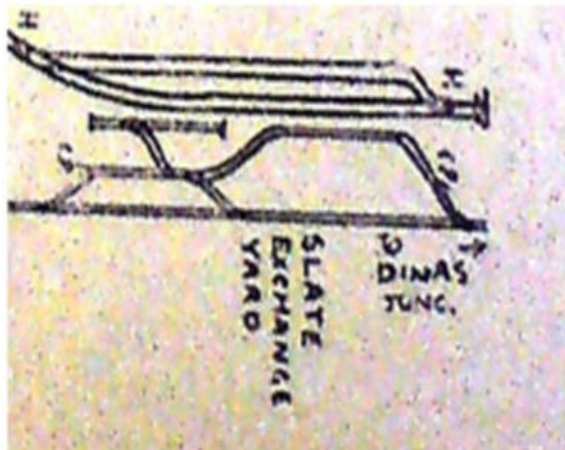
Croesor period, 1903 to "as taken over by 1923. From Official Drawing" (Boyd NGSC 1972)



Diagrammatic plan showing the Croesor period, 1910 (Boyd FR 1962)



The G.W.R. plan of 1924, again showing the goods shed



shunting purposes. According to certain diagrams this loop became a double ended siding, with crossover access, but in all its forms this was the actual interface with the standard gauge. Both sets of track were at the same level which would have made goods interchange difficult, given the height difference between the wagons.

3. A ladder crossover to enable trains to reach the shorter (and

longer) loop direct from the main running line further along from the initial 'long loop' points. This was present in 1864, but there are inconsistencies in later diagrams dated between 1903 and 1923. The crossover faced Portmadoc in most diagrams though Boyd's 1923 diagram included an apparent 'mirror image' reversal so that the points faced Pont Croesor. This does not appear to have happened in reality as the 1924 G.W.R. diagram fails to show this type of crossover.

4. There was a headshunt at the southerly end of the short loop which, if the diagrams are to be believed, was extended through a building, very likely a goods shed, to the weighbridge. This appears to have happened between 1910 and 1915.

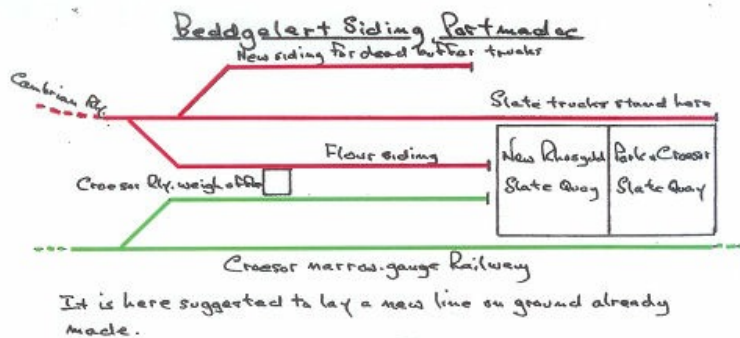
5. For a period there was a dead end siding at the northern end of the layout with its point facing Pont Croesor; this may have been for wagons awaiting repair.

There are very few references to the goods shed mentioned in (4) above. However as far back as 1919 there was correspondence between the manager of the Flour Mill, whose property it seems to have been, and the Engineer's Office of the Cambrian Railways regarding its dilapidated state. In the July of that year the Flour Mill manager 'desires to see the Engineer' about its potential replacement – it was understood by the former that the 'Railway Co.' had supplied it in the first place. (WHH 42, p11)³. It was apparently constructed of corrugated iron. The 'Red Book' diagram⁴, however, omits the goods shed which appeared in the 1915 and 1924 plans. Had the shed finally succumbed by this time?

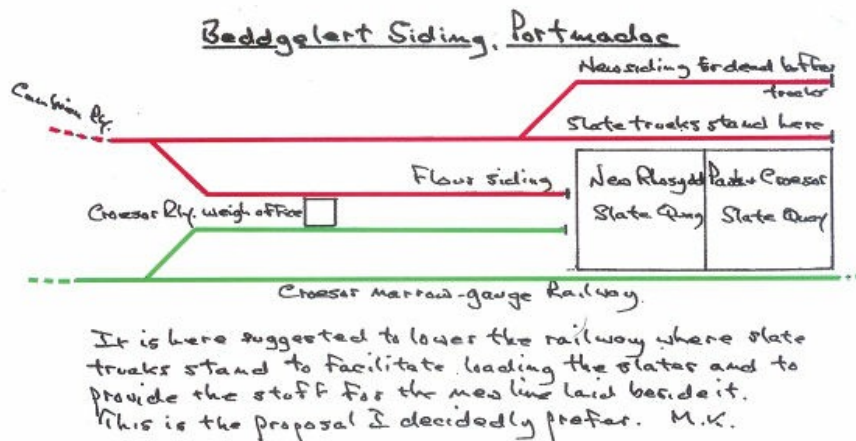
Many of the layout diagrams reproduced here appeared previously in J.I.C. Boyd's *Festiniog Railway or Narrow Gauge Railways of South Caernarvonshire* books^{5,6}. However much one accepts the provenance of these diagrams, there are inconsistencies between them which leads me to doubt their accuracy. It seems likely that they represent aspirations rather than reality.

Perhaps the strangest diagram is one dated 16.8.27. This appeared in a book of track plans⁷ kindly made available by Michael Chapman, comprising a sketch map drawn freehand from what appears to be an on-the-ground reconnaissance. However the layout is at odds with features seen in other diagrams from the same period so its accuracy has to be open to doubt.

The cartographers of H.M. Ordnance Survey (1915 map)⁸, and the G.W.R. with their plans of 1924⁹ are perhaps the most believable, since I would expect those authorities to have carried out detailed surveys on the ground. The two sources differ only in that the "ladder crossover" was extant in 1915, but not in 1924. The "Red Book" goes a stage further than the 1915 survey by agreeing with the general layout, but introducing a second crossover between the long siding and long loop, closer to Pont Croesor than the first. It also omits the goods shed that was apparent in the 1915 and 1924 plans. Had the shed finally succumbed by this time?



Moses Kellow's Option No. 1 of 1900 from WHH No.42 p.15 (see reference 10) Note the simplified narrow gauge layout



Moses Kellow's Option No. 2 of 1900 with low level standard gauge siding (WHH No.42 p.15)

One feature that seems never to have been addressed was that the standard and narrow gauge sidings were on the same level, which hardly facilitated easy transfer of slates and general merchandise since the floors of the narrow gauge wagons would have been lower than their larger cousins. Moses Kellow evidently gave this some thought¹⁰ but as the refer-

ence says, there is no evidence that his recommendations were ever carried out.

My general view is that that the layout probably remained largely unaltered down the years and that the diagrams most representative of the facilities are the Ordnance Survey and G.W.R. plans.

References:

- ¹ Jenkins, Geoff *The Beddgelert Railway*, an article which appeared in the *Welsh Highland Railway* (1964) *Journal*; transcript made available by John Keylock. Exact date of publication as yet unconfirmed.
- ² Johnson, Peter *An Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway* - 2nd Edition. Oxford Publishing Co. 2009
- ³ *The Cambrian Gets Cross* *Welsh Highland Heritage*, 42 p.11 (Dec. 2008)
- ⁴ *More About the Welsh Highland Railway* *Welsh Highland Light Railway* 1964 Ltd., 1969
- ⁵ Boyd, J.I.C. *The Festiniog Railway* The Oakwood Press. Passim.
- ⁶ "1923 Modifications Carried Out According to Official Blueprint" *Narrow Gauge Railways of South Caernarvonshire* The Oakwood Press 1972 p.299, and passim.
- ⁷ Plan of the Portmadoc area, North Wales, late Cambrian Rlys. Barmouth - Pwllheli section 16.8.27. In: *British Railways Illustrated*, Series 2. Rail and Platform Plans of British Stations Part One. c. 1927. Kindly made available by Michael Chapman.
- ⁸ Ordnance Survey (Scale) map of 1913
- ⁹ Plan of the Portmadoc area produced by the G.W.R. in 1924 as part of a survey of the former Cambrian Railways. (Author's collection)
- ¹⁰ *New Siding Proposed for the Croesor* - 1900 *Welsh Highland Heritage*, 42, December 2008

NB - In the museum at Gelert's Farm there is an informative panel explaining the original function of the sidings and their incorporation into today's Welsh Highland Heritage Railway operation.

Name Change

At their meeting on the 18th May the board of the FR Heritage Co agreed to change its name to the FR & WHR Heritage Co., thus reflecting its wider remit.

2013 AGM

The AGM was very well attended in Prenteg Village Hall on May 5th. Having been Chairman since the Group's inception David Allan announced his retirement, but will remain on the committee until the 2014 AGM.

David said that at the age of 74 he was seeking 'early' retirement to spend more time with his family - much to his wife's horror!!

As continuity is most important your committee will be electing a new chairman in due course. However David has assured the committee that he intends to remain fully involved with Welsh Highland heritage matters.



2012 had been another successful year for the Group and provided a trading profit of almost £4000. Of this, the AGM approved £2,500 to add to the Tryfan Junction building fund with the balance being held as contingency for four possible fur-

ther schemes that may require some funding during the coming twelve months.

By the time this journal goes to press the internal plastering in the station building should at least have been started.

Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, 1934

Copied, with grateful acknowledgement from "The Locomotive" of August 15th 1934. The original was kindly supplied by Paul Anderson. As usual, I have tried faithfully to copy the original, including any quirks of punctuation, etc. - P.L.H. (Paul Harris)

It is gratifying to note that these two interesting narrow-gauge railways have taken on a new lease of life and are this year making a determined effort to cater for the tourist traffic.

The Festiniog Railway is particularly interesting as being the first narrow-gauge railway in the British Isles, it being opened for traffic as long ago as 1836. Originally built for the conveyance of slates it was for a time worked by horses, but later steam power was adopted and a passenger train service introduced.

At the present time a service of six passenger trains is run from Portmadoc to Blaenau Festiniog, with five trips in the reverse direction, on weekdays.

The passenger rolling stock has recently been thoroughly overhauled and is in good condition, the coaches being painted in various colours including green, pink and blue, as a novelty. Observation cars are run on most trains for the use of which a supplementary charge of 3d. per person is made. Connection is effected at Blaenau Festiniog with the L.M.S. and G.W. Railways, the Festiniog trains terminating at the station of the latter company in that town. Duffws station is no longer used for passenger traffic although the track is still maintained up to that point for slate traffic.

It is at Tan-y-Bwlch station that the lady stationmaster in picturesque Welsh national dress is to be seen. An extensive publicity campaign has been embarked upon with the slogan of "Take a trip by the Toy Train through Faeryland." and fares have been reduced to an attractive level. Special combined circular tour tickets embracing journeys over the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, are being issued by the Great Western and L.M.S. Companies, and these and other cheap facilities together with the extensive issue of seven-day holiday contract tickets by these companies are inducing large numbers of holiday makers to take



trips over these interesting narrow gauge lines.

The Welsh Highland Railway, which is an amalgamation of the North Wales Narrow Gauge and the Portmadoc, Beddgelert, and

South Snowdon Railways, is now managed and operated by the Festiniog Railway.

At the present time a service of four trains each way on weekdays is operated over the main line between Portmadoc and Beddgelert, two of which are extended to and from Dinas Junction, and on Wednesdays and Thursdays an additional train is run between Dinas Junction and Beddgelert.

The branch line from Tryfan to Bryngwyn is still used for slate traffic but no passenger service is operated over it.

As on the Festiniog Rly the passenger rolling stock on the Welsh Highland Rly. is painted in various colours, and observation cars are available at a supplementary charge of 6d. per passenger. There is also a lady station master dressed in Welsh national costume at Beddgelert station. Connection is maintained at Dinas Junction with the L.M.S. trains to and from Carnarvon and the North Wales coast resorts, and at Portmadoc the Welsh Highland trains run into and out of the Festiniog Railway station.

Numerous cheap fare facilities are available and large numbers of holiday makers are by this means being induced to make the trip over the line which passes through some of the most delightful scenery in Wales.

The locomotive stock of the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways now consists of nine steam engines and two petrol tractors. Four of the Festiniog Railway's four-wheeled saddle tank locomotives, with coal tenders, are still in service, viz., No. 1 *Princess*, 2 *Prince*, 4 *Palmerston*, and 5 *Welsh Pony*, as are also the Fairlie double engines No. 9 *Taliesin* in and 10 *Merddin Emrys*.

The present *Taliesin* is understood to be the old *Livingston Thompson* renamed. *Little Giant*, *Little Wonder*, *James Spooner* and the original *Taliesin* have all been scrapped. Festiniog Railway No. 11 is a four-wheeled Baldwin petrol tractor, the other tractor, a "Simplex," built in 1917 by the Motor Rail and Tramcar Co. Ltd., not carrying any running number.

The Welsh Highland Railway locomotive stock now consists of the Fairlie tank engines No. 11 *Moel Tryfan* and the rebuilt Hunslet 2-6-2 tank No. 12 *Russell*, and ex War Dept. No. 590, a 4-6-0 tank locomotive built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1917.

The locomotives generally are kept in good condition and, like the carriages, are not all painted the same colour, some being brick red, others dark blue and the remainder bright green.

Help

Volunteers are required to help paint the signal box at Pen y Mount (see page 1). Please give John Keylock a ring on 01386 852 428 if you can spare a few hours.

Accident at Beddgelert – August 1924.

Around mid-day on Tuesday 12th August 1924, an accident occurred at Beddgelert station to Station Master Hugh Davies Jones, details of which are given in some detail in GAS files XD97/22737 & 22757.

On this day, the 11.25 am ex Portmadoc, with two wagons attached to the rear, had arrived on time at 12.07. The last of these wagons contained sand for loco use at the station and was due to be detached and put into the siding behind the water tank. It was during this operation that Jones received his injuries. In his statement to E.H.R.Nicholls dated September 4th, he explained that he informed the driver to pull up so as to enable the wagon to be put into the top siding. As he was unhooking the wagon, the train stopped "rather sudden" and the last wagon came on crushing him between the two. He stated that he could not remember much else until finding himself in the office, with the doctor in attendance.

At the scene of the accident were Lewis Jones, guard of the Portmadoc train, Platelayer E.O.Davies and Elfed Lewis, Beddgelert porter, all three of whom were required by Nicholls to make statements. Lewis Jones reported that after the train had cleared the points near the warehouse, he noticed the driver slackening speed. Jumping out of his van, he found Jones clinging to the side of the wagons apparently injured. It appeared to him that Jones attempted to detach the wagon whilst the train was in motion and had failed to get clear of the wagons still travelling by their own momentum after the train had actually stopped. Platelayer Davies stated that he happened to be working at Beddgelert station that day and was having his lunch near the spot where the accident occurred. He too considered that Jones had failed to get clear of the moving wagons.

Perhaps the clearest statement was given by young Elfed Lewis and is here given in full:- *"The up and down trains were in at our Station. There were two wagons attached to the down train, one containing sand which was to be shunted to the top siding, behind the water tank. Immediately the train drew*

up beyond the points, I unlocked the points. The siding being on a gradient, Mr.Jones, Station Master, took charge of detaching the sand wagon and attending to brake.

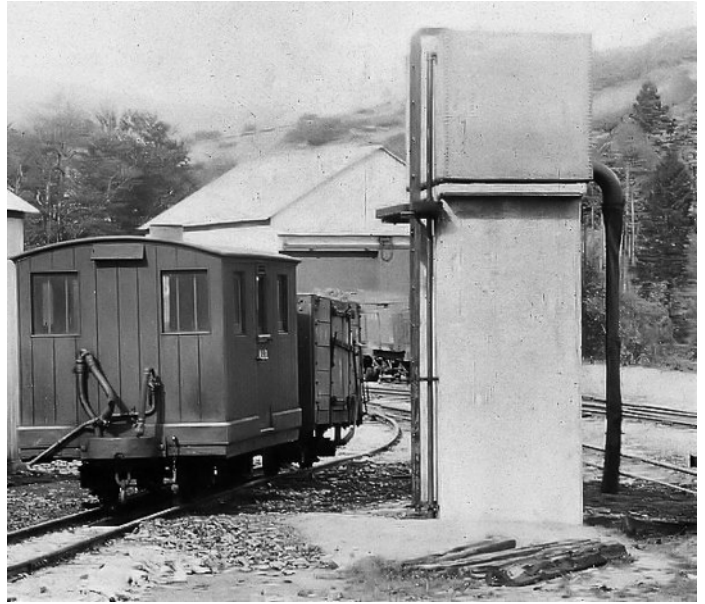
I saw the Station Master stooping to detach the wagon, when almost instantly I observed him falling backwards injured. Guard Lewis Jones and Platelayer Davies were on the spot and carried him clear

of the train. Guard Jones told me to call on my father, the up train being due out at the time of the accident. I ran down towards the train and called on my father who is a certified ambulance man. He retained his train whilst he rendered first aid and sent me at once for the nearest doctor. In a few minutes Dr.Thorpe arrived."

When all the fuss had died down, services resumed, but both up and down trains were surprisingly only some ten minutes or so late in departing.

H.D.Jones returned to work on 3rd September - his duties having been carried out in his absence by Elfed Lewis - and received £3-15-0 in compensation from the Eagle Star & British Dominions Insurance Co. A week later he received a rather terse memo from E.H.R.Nicholls which read:- *"Re your accident. Train not stopped. Before attempting any railway work ask IS IT SAFE? I trust therefore that your experiences in this connection will prevent you attempting anything of this kind again!"*

The following month an enquiry was held at Beddgelert on the morning of 12th November and later at Boston Lodge, arranged by W.W.Cooke from the Ministry of Transport. In his Report, it states that Jones, aged 29, had been on duty for 3¼ hours when the accident occurred at 12.15, and the nature of



'Siding behind the water tower' into which it was planned to shunt the sand wagon

his injury was given as crushed hips. Cooke goes on to say:-

"He attempted to detach a wagon from the rear of the 11.25am ex Portmadoc before the train had been brought to rest. He was crushed between two wagons as they closed together when the driver applied the brake. The accident was due to Jones attempting to uncouple the wagons before they were at rest. No rules or regulations with regard to precautions to be taken in working have been issued to the staff on the railway. Each station has been supplied with an extract on electric staff working but no individual holds a copy. The company should be requested to adopt a suitable code of rules and regulations and to issue a copy to each member of staff engaged in the movement or manipulation of traffic."

Signed - William Worthy Cooke. - Ministry of Transport

This report throws up some interesting points. The reference to electric staff working is a puzzle, as the Welsh Highland never adopted this system of train control, relying instead on Wise's Staff on the old NWNCR portion of the line and staff and ticket for the new section. The last paragraph infers that no rules or regulations were in place, which seems highly unlikely. However, it may have been the catalyst for the issue of the Working Instructions which came into force on October 1st 1925, nearly a year after Mr Cooke's recommendations!

A Stunning 'Russell' Photograph



This stunning 1955 photograph of 'Russell' arriving on the Tallyllyn Railway has been sent to us by TR archivist Don Newing

The photograph was taken by the late Mr J.T. Fraser in August 1955 and shows

'Russell' being prepared prior to unloading from its low-loader.

The loco was to remain at Towyn until April 1965 when it was removed by BR to Shrewsbury and then by low-loader to Kinnerley - the '64 Coy base at that time. It is hoped she will shortly be returned to

her home metals on the completion of a second repair/rebuild at Alan Keef's Ross-on-Wye workshops.

We are very grateful to Don Newing and TR archives for giving us permission to share this glorious image with our members

LETTER

Dear Editor

At the time I wrote my article (which appeared in *WHH* 50) I was not aware of the attached handbill with a revised timetable from 2 October 1922: this turns out to have been the first company issue to mention the newly re-opened halt at Salem, and accounts for the halt's appearance in *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* for that same month.

Alas, the top half of the handbill is all that remains (it's in the material gathered by W E Hayward and now at The National Archives under reference ZSPC11/641) - it got "preserved" only because the handbill had been torn in half and the back used for the carbon copy of some long forgotten memo!

Richard Maund

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY

(LIGHT RAILWAY) COMPANY.

On and from October 2nd, 1922, the train service on the Dinas to South Snowdon Section of the above Railway will be as under:-

G.W.R.		a.m.	a.m.	p.m.
	Portmadoc dept.	..	10 32	3 27
	Criccieth "	..	10 42	3 37
	Pwllheli "	..	10 55	3 55
	Dinas Jct. arr.	..	11 52	4 49

L.N.W.R.		7 40	11 5	3 20
	Llandudno dept.			
	Bangor "	8 55	12 0	4 45
	Carnarvon "	9 25	12 26	5 2
	Dinas Jct. arr.	9 37	12 37	5 11

To SOUTH SNOWDON.

		a.m.	p.m.	p.m.
	Dinas Jctn. dept.	9 45	12 40	5 20
	Tryfan Jctn. "	10 0	12 55	5 34
	Waelawr "	10 8	1 10	5 42
	Betws Garmon "	10 13	1 15	5 48

From SOUTH SNOWDON.

		a.m.	p.m.	p.m.
	South Snowdon dept.	10 50	3 30	6 30
	Quellyn Lake "	11 2	3 42	A
	Salem Halt "	A	A	A
	Betws Garmon "	11 15	3 55	A
	Waelawr "	11 21	4 2	7 5
	Tryfan Jctn. "	11 35	4 15	7 15
	Dinas Jctn. arr.	11 45	4 30	7 25

L.N.W.R.		a.m.	p.m.	p.m.
	Dinas Jct. dept.	11 52	4 42	7 55
	Carnarvon arr.	12 2	4 59	8 5
	Bangor "	12 30	5 29	8 35
	Llandudno "	2 17	6 29	9 51

Working Weekend at Tryfan Junction - Dave Southern

During March and April there were two weekends building the extension to Tryfan Junction platform. In attendance were three members of the Heritage Group and four from the West Midland Group of the WHR Society. On the first weekend a trench was dug out for the platform edge, shuttering was put in place and concrete poured. Once the concrete had set the shuttering was removed and the platform edgings laid on top.

On the second weekend the work's train arrived with three wagon loads of loco ash. This was unloaded using a mini-excavator raked level and compacted to form the basis of the extended platform. On top crushed slated was raked level and compacted. The final layer was of slate 'fines' (see photo on page 1).

On a recent visit the job looks a credit to the everyone concerned. Our next involvement with the Society's West Midland Group will be tidying up the original signal box base at Tryfan Junction. Hopefully this will reveal the 'slot' on the running line side out of which came the rods and wires to operate the signals and points. Digging out within the existing walls may well reveal elements of the lever frame.



Ash train at Tryfan Junction - both photos by Dave Southern

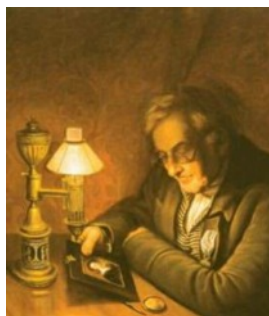
Colza Oil

Mr Boyd tells us that this oil was used for lighting the railway's lamps. It was made from seeds of plants of the brassica family – particularly rape.

The 'Cutty Sark' tea clipper operated during a period parallel with the NWN-GR and on a recent visit to the vessel there was on board an original colza oil five gallon container. Always interested in the origin or source of things the ship's colza oil was supplied by Hutton & Co of 57, Commercial Road East, Stepney, London. Today oil seed rape is a familiar crop in the countryside. Among the more unusual applications of Colza oil is the calming of choppy seas, so having it aboard 'Cutty Sark' probably served a dual purpose.

Incidentally the presentation of 'Cutty Sark' as a visitor attraction is absolutely superb and as a guide at Caernarfon Castle commented to the writer many years ago 'well worth a turn of the head' – if you happen to be down London way.

John Keylock



Croesor Tramway boundaries

In WHH 59 p4 there was a drawing of Carreg Hyldrem indicating that the Nantmor to Llanfrothen road represented the Parliamentary boundary of the Croesor Tramway. Had the writer checked his references he would have noted that the Parliamentary limit of the Tramway was in fact the bottom of the first incline, i.e. the limit of running on the level. Thank you Peter Johnson for helping us to keep the record straight. Furthermore a Boyd drawing indicates two sidings at Gwynedd and as he was there in 1947 this was most likely to have been the case.

Carriage Letters

Referring again to WHH No. 59 Peter Johnson reminds us that in 1924 four sets of cast iron letters for carriages were obtained at a cost of £2-16s!

Editor : David Allan, 132 Eastham Village Road, Eastham, Wirral, CH62 0AE. Tel 0151 327 3576 Email : david.allan132@nthworld.com
Secretary : John Keylock, Weathervane Cottage, Childswickham, Broadway, Worcestershire, WR12 7HL Tel : 01386 852 428
Membership Secretary : Derek Lystor, 14 Teign Village, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 9QJ. Tel 01626 853963. Email dickandsuelystor@aol.com

Simplex Tractors

In W.H.H 59 mention was made of Henry J. Jack having become infected by Col Stephen's enthusiasm for petrol-engined motive power as an alternative to steam for some operations. A Simplex could be started by the simple swing of a handle and switched off when not required. This resulted in a 40 hp model being acquired for the railways in 1923 for £350 second-hand from the Kent Construction & Engineering Co., Victoria Road, Ashford in Kent. It was used for trips between Minffordd and Porthmadog and shunting the wharfs at both locations. To-day we know this 'tractor' as 'Mary Ann'. Based on the successful operation of this acquisition consideration was given to using a similar machine for the Bryngwyn 'goods' (& even possibly a reinstated passenger service) and an out of season passenger service on the main line. The Simplex was trialled hauling two empty bogie coaches between Porthmadog and Beddgelert and one coach between Beddgelert and Dinas. 'It worked easily at 15 m.p.h – the maximum speed allowed', quoted John May in a January 1924 letter to the Ministry of Transport. May had been in the army from 1916 until April 1923 and was familiar with petrol tractors but not their use with passenger trains on light railways. Even at this early stage in W.H.R operations future economic viability was suspect and May did not wish to lose the winter passenger traffic by not being able to afford the running of steam hauled services. He was therefore writing to the Ministry seeking permission to use a Simplex tractor to work a passenger train based on the following criteria. 'The train will not at any time consist of more than one vehicle attached to the tractor'. 'It would be a combined bogie brake vehicle weighing about 4 tons properly fitted with a powerful handbrake. It would accommodate 22 passengers with a luggage and guard's compartment where the brake is fixed. The tractor has also a powerful brake!'

The Ministry's reply of 11th January under the signature of Lt. Col. Mount is reproduced above.

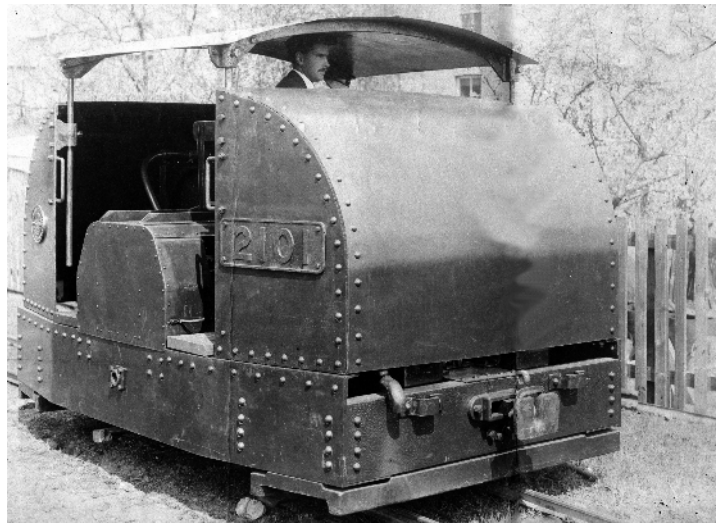
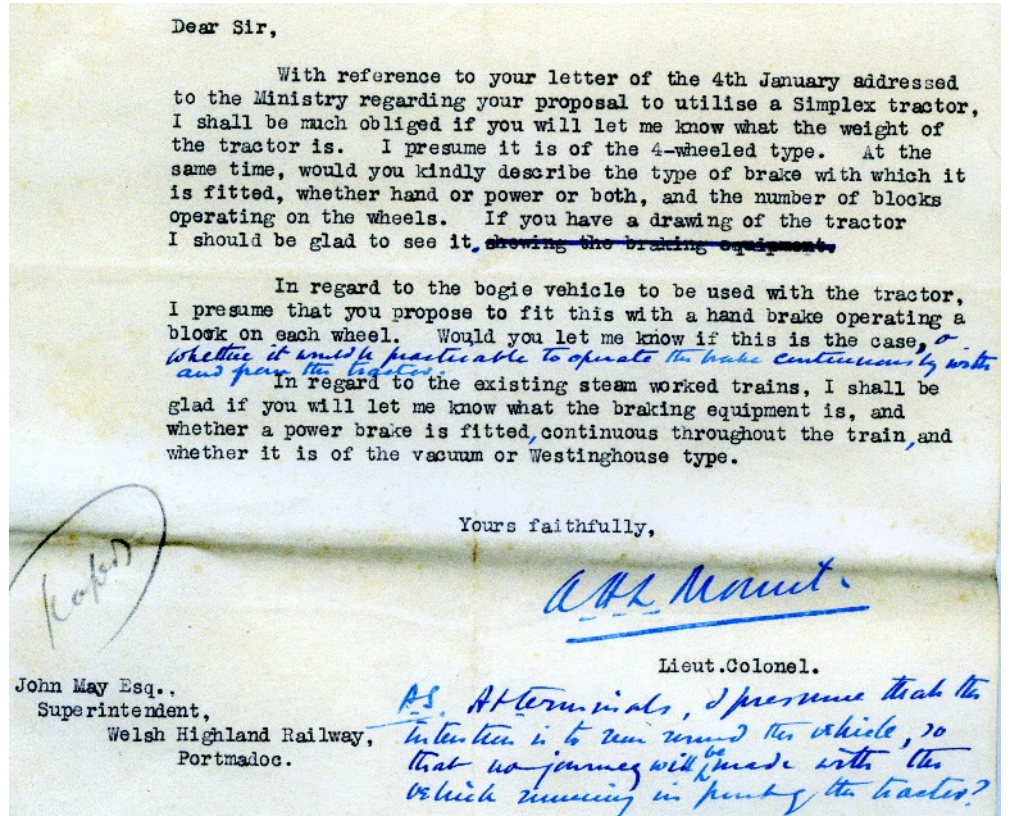
Subsequently May wrote to the Simplex manufacturers – Motor Rail & Tram Car Co. Ltd. of Bedford – asking for information about the railway's existing Simplex so that the Ministry's requirements might be fulfilled. Before being able to provide braking power Motor Rail would need to know 'the grades upon which the loco will be required to work together with the gross loads to be hauled.'

John Keylock examines the petrol tractor option facing 'The Colonel'

In their optimism Motor Rail included with their reply a quotation for a new 40 h.p Simplex at £850 delivered to Porthmadog alternatively, ex stock, a reconditioned model at £450. The latter had come from the French Disposal Board having originally been supplied for use during World War 1. Fortified with Motor Rail's information May wrote to Lt. Col. Mount on 18th January repeating details contained in his letter of January 4th but pointing out that the brake on the bogie carriage operated on all of its eight wheels but that it was not practicable to operate the brake continuously with or from the tractor'. In response to Mount's hand written question (see letter) May wrote 'If it was permitted to use the tractor no journey would be made except with the tractor in front!' Hardly surprising perhaps the Ministry responded on 7th January drawing the Company's attention to the Regulation of Railways Act, 1889, as to the provision of continuous brakes on all trains carrying passengers and how it

was proposed to meet this obligation with the type of tractor in question. May's response stated that as both tractor and bogie carriage had brakes to all wheels 'it was not proposed to provide continuous brakes as well.' By the end of February the Ministry put the matter to bed by writing that 'the Company could not properly be relieved from the obligation to use continuous brakes on vehicles carrying passengers on the line (W.H.R) in question'.

This article has been made possible by Michael Davies releasing correspondence obtained from Mr. Iggulden of Tonbridge 40 years ago. It is planned that this – and other correspondence – will be deposited at Gwynedd Archives in Caernarfon.



Anatomy of a Photograph

One Photograph - two Observations



This photograph taken at Snowdon Ranger in NWNG days continues to attract attention. Here two of our keenest observers of the railway, Peter Liddell and John Keylock, present their complementary views.

Peter Liddell writes:-

There has been speculation that this photograph might actually date back to the early 1900's and might show temporary accommodation coupled with P.B. and S.S.R. activities in the area, possibly in connection with local electrical work as Snowdon Ranger does seem a little remote from any activity that might have been in hand around Aberglaslyn and Beddgelert.

So far as one can tell from the photograph, the dress visible in the image, female in particular, does seem more akin to Victorian/Edwardian than to post-WWI Georgian and might well suggest a date before 1910.

John Keylock writes:-

Much has been – and continues to be written, in this journal and elsewhere, about the proposed Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway (PB&SSR) electrification scheme during the first decade of the 20th century. Until recently it has been assumed that the tents in the field on the above photograph represented an annual boy scouts encampment between the road and Quellyn Lake at Snowdon Ranger.

Then, recently come to light, are several photographs showing encampments (albeit with not so many bell tents) established at various locations during the erection of power transmission lines from the Cwm Dyli power station. The power line from the power station to the quarries in the Nantlle Valley crossed the NWNGR (who received an annual way leave) to the north

of Quellyn Lake, raising the suggestion that this encampment might have been associated with said power line erection. A third possibility is that it could have been an Army volunteer camp.

The photograph is certainly from the NWNG era and came originally from Gwynedd archives along with the photographs showing PB&SSR construction in 1905/06. The figures on the camp site appear to be boys in Edwardian dress; what other clues are there?! The signal post has lost its arm suggesting pre 1916, by which time semaphore signalling had fallen into disuse. The main line seems to have been recently re-laid with new sleepers and heavier duty rails; witness the row of lighter rails – bottom left. Is there also the indication that a point has been replaced? All rather confusing – any ideas?

EDITOR REQUIRED

This is a milestone journal. Having produced sixty issues of our quarterly magazine David Allan is retiring as compiler and editor. So please, we are seeking a volunteer to carry production forward on similar lines. Providing the Journal's content is seldom a problem – except possibly for the front page which tends to provide a current slant on a Welsh Highland historical subject.

It is certain that whoever may offer to take on this task will receive every assistance from David. If you are interested in this very rewarding role at the heart of Welsh Highland heritage operations then please give David a ring or send an email. (Tel 0151 327 3576 or email david.allan132@ntlworld.com)