

WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

September 2013

ISSN 1462-1371

£2.00

Issue No. 61

Web : www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk

100 Years Ago

In WHH No 57 – on the front page – mention was made of anniversaries and the importance of recognising or even celebrating them. 2013 could well be regarded as a centenary year for the NWNCR/WHR even though some 60 years of the period from 1914 saw either no passenger traffic or a non-operational railway. In this context it is noteworthy that the original WHR operated a passenger service for a mere 13 years whereas today's incarnation has already exceeded this limit!

In 1913 war in Europe was looming and James C. Russell had died the previous year so that in January 1913 he was replaced as NWNCR Receiver by G.C. Aitchison. Another solicitor, Ernest E. Lake, replaced Russell as Chairman.

The 1913 timetable from Bradshaw, reproduced here, offered two return journeys daily except in June when an additional service was run. The journey times from 'Dinas Junction' to 'Snowdon' (Rhyd ddu) was one hour five minutes; 23,600 passengers were carried during the year which produced revenue of £587.0.0. The year-end saw the

withdrawal of passenger services on the Bryngwyn branch – never to be re-instated.

In the year some 5000 tons of slate were transhipped at Dinas and forwarded to the Caernarfon quays, but it would be a couple of years before timber and iron ore movements got into their stride to provide the revenue that was always required and indeed indirectly help the war effort.

The total weight of goods carried was 18,800 tons made up essentially of slates, coal and general merchandise, but the

1913 figures were only about 50% of what they had been five years earlier. No 1913 photographs are held in the Welsh Highland Heritage Group archive but the LNWR 'official' of 1911 reproduced here gives a flavour of the period and should be compared with that printed on page 16. Taken from the opposite direction, it shows a 'Cauliflower'-hauled train facing Afon Wen on the exchange platform, crossing with a Bangor-bound train.



DINAS, SNOWDON, AND BEDDGELEERT, (NORTH WALES NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY.)

Week days.						Week days.					
	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	S		a.m.	S	B	C	S
Dinas	depart	6 35	9 40	12 55	3 10	5 23	depart	9 45			
Tryfan Junction	arrive	6 50	9 55	1 10	3 20	5 32					
Rhostyfan	arrive	6 57		1 17							
Bryngwyn		7 10		1 32							
Wanlawr	arrive	10 8		3 31	5 44						
Bettws Garmon		10 13		3 36							
Quellyn Lake		10 29		3 42							
Snowdon		10 45		4 0							
Beddgelert (by Coach)	arrive	11 40		4 40							
Runs during May only.						Runs during June only.					
Beddgelert (by Coach) depart											
Snowdon	depart	11 0		4 5	5 10						
Quellyn Lake		11 15		4 16	5 22						
Bettws Garmon		11 30		4 31	5 36						
Wanlawr		11 55		4 56	6 0						
Bryngwyn	depart	7 55		2 0							
Rhostyfan		8 8		2 16							
Tryfan Junction	depart	8 14	11 48	2 22	5 45	6 42					
Dinas	arrive	8 25	12 0	2 33	4 56	6 5	6 15				
Runs during May only.						Runs during June only.					

Snowdon station is about 3 miles from the summit of Snowdon.

Chronicles of Beddgelert Siding (II)



Figure 1 - Looking towards the Beddgelert Siding weigh house from the site of Portmadoc New (1929) - 1924
FR/WHR archives

images in my Portmadoc New (1929) set offer sufficient glimpses of the interchange sidings, at least their Portmadoc end, to add to the understanding of the layout.

These photographs suggest that the diagram described by

providing a first indication that there was no headshunt extending towards Portmadoc from this end of the loop. In other words, we see a simple turnout rather than a cross-over.

The distinct nature of this second pole allows us to place Figure 4 relative to the first loop turnout. As will be shown later in these notes, this end of the narrow gauge loop was not available for run-around manoeuvres when trains reversed north of the Cambrian Crossing.

Figure 5 shows the Portmadoc-end turnout in close up, albeit several years after the railway closed. Note the extended sleepers running to the left at the nose of the turnout,

Richard Watson's article in WHH 60 provoked quite a response. As Richard commented, "Someone has to stick their head above the parapet!" In this follow-up Peter Liddell makes some constructive observations



Figure 2 - The Baldwin awaits departure from Portmadoc New
H.B. Tours, 1936 (WHR40a)

Richard as "the strangest" and dismissed by him as of "doubtful accuracy" because it differed so much from the other diagrams, whilst not complete is arguably the most accurate representation of the layout, at least in the Welsh Highland period!

Although of indifferent quality, Figure 1 offers much of interest. The photographer was standing at the site of what would later become Portmadoc New (1929). The waiting shelter eventually installed here would stand to the left of the track, outside the gentle right-hand curve seen in the image.

The first telegraph pole seen on the right of the image can be seen in photographs that show the waiting shelter, for example the 1936 image credited to H.B. Tours.

The second telegraph pole visible in Figure 1 is distinct in that it carries two cross arms and is readily identifiable in Figure 3, taken by Geoffrey Hoyland in 1936.

Both Figure 1 and 3 will confirm that this particular pole was installed beyond the first turnout encountered on the approach to the interchange sidings. Figure 1 arguably gives the better view of this first turnout, showing the operating lever to the left of the track and

confirming that the operating lever had indeed been on that side of the track. Details of the track layout are confused by the lengths of old rail littering the site and the loop has disappeared under a stack of track materials collected when the railway was lifted earlier in the 1940s. Note the remains of the weigh house in the distance beyond these stacks.

Figure 6, taken before the layout disappeared under recovered materials, affords us a view

In WHH Issue 60, Richard Watson reviewed the various plans and maps which, each in their own way, have attempted to describe the layout of standard and narrow gauge tracks at the site nowadays commonly referred to as the "Beddgelert Siding", but which perhaps more correctly should be tagged the "Gelert Siding". Richard concluded his notes with the observation 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".

Whilst they are relatively few and far between, there are photographs of the interchange sidings which can add a degree of understanding to Richard's analysis. My collection contains 14 photographs taken in and around the area of the sidings, of which 5 were taken comparatively recently showing archaeological remains and 4 were taken shortly after closure but still show layout detail. The other 5 show an operational layout with 4 images taken during the W.H.R. period and the other taken in Croesor Tramway days. Additionally, 4 of the

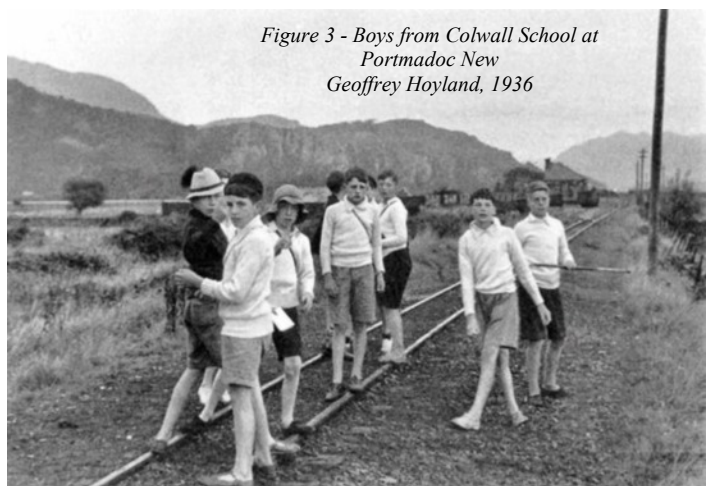
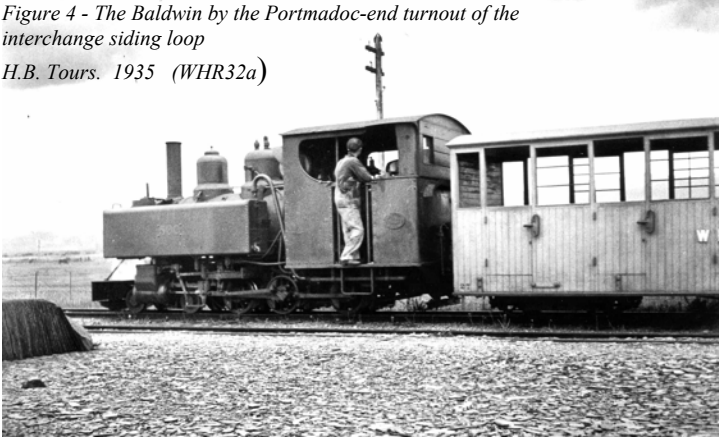


Figure 3 - Boys from Colwall School at Portmadoc New
Geoffrey Hoyland, 1936

Figure 4 - The Baldwin by the Portmadoc-end turnout of the interchange siding loop

H.B. Tours. 1935 (WHR32a)



examination of the poles on the left shows our friend with the two cross-bars to be the third in line. This pole it has been noted stood close to the turnout at the far end of the loop. It is likely that there was another pole just off the left hand side of the image, suggesting that the overall

coaches could be pushed back to the middle points of the siding and the engine would go round as shown in red underneath."

further into the narrow gauge loop and clearly shows the location of the trap point - together with its operating lever set off to the left - protecting the Portmadoc end of the loop. It would appear that when this photograph was taken the trap was operated independently of the turnout lever.

So far, most of the plans shown in Richard's original article would appear to match available photographic evidence, but the story becomes more interesting as we move towards the centre of the layout.

If proof were needed, Figure 7 confirms that the weighbridge lay directly outside the weigh house on the narrow gauge loop line (note, for the record, that in WHH Issue 19 - March 2003 - this image location was incorrectly identified as Glanrafon). This photograph offers little by way direct

loop length was approximately equivalent to the sum of the gaps between four successive poles.

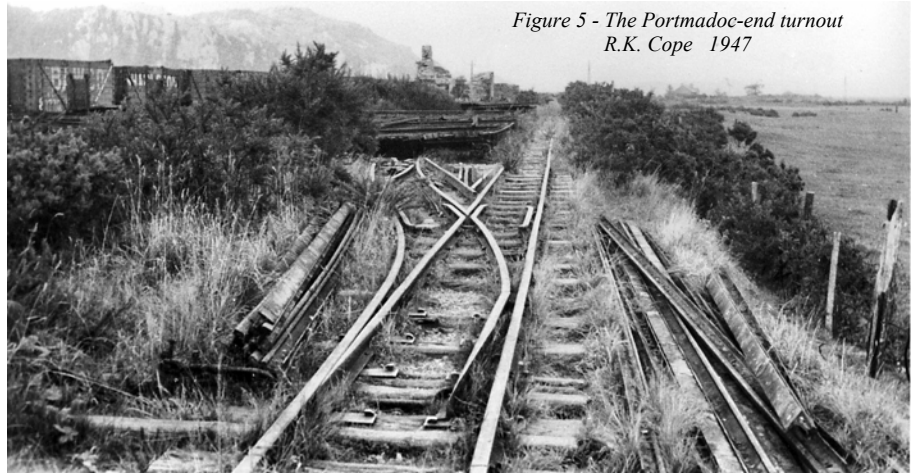
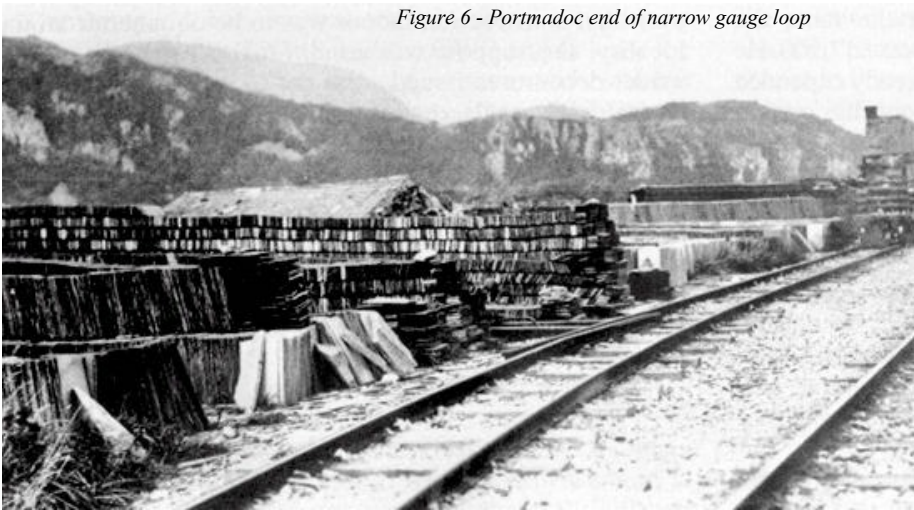


Figure 5 - The Portmadoc-end turnout
R.K. Cope 1947

Figure 6 - Portmadoc end of narrow gauge loop



evidence of the layout further to the north of the weighbridge.

However, in conjunction with Figure 7, the content of Figure 8 is informative.

In the middle distance, Figure 8 shows there to have been a cross-over between the main and loop lines, arranged facing Portmadoc for trains on the main line, and positioned somewhat nearer to the camera than the weigh house and hence the weighbridge. Although indistinct in this reproduction,

In a memorandum dated July 2nd 1927, G. Lewis Griffith, the F. R. and W.H.R. inspector of track work, wrote to Colonel Stephens regarding the possibility of a platform for trains terminating to the north of the Cambrian Crossing. In that memo he discussed the consequently required reversing manoeuvre as follows;

"With regard to getting the engine round the train, I do not consider that a tow rope would be necessary. The

Further items of interest in Figure 8 include the turnout facing the photographer just in front of the wagon parked on the loop. The narrow gauge wagons apparently abandoned to the right of the image suggest a siding running parallel to the standard gauge - note the long line of standard gauge wagons - access to which was achieved by what was in effect a crossover between the loop line and this double-ended siding.

This siding is clearly shown, looking in the opposite direction, in Antia's photograph

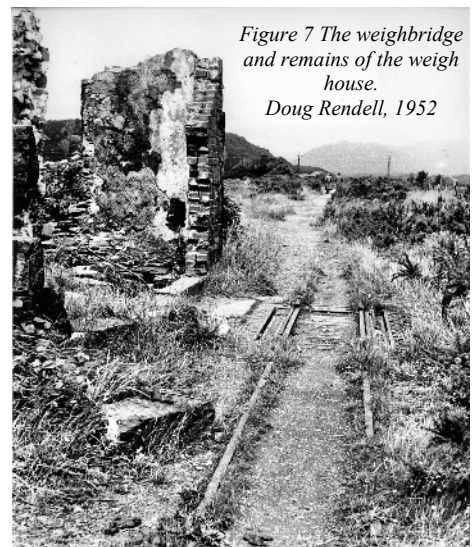


Figure 7 The weighbridge and remains of the weigh house.
Doug Rendell, 1952

Figure 8 - Looking towards Portmadoc along the narrow gauge main and loop lines.
W.D. Miller. (WHR172)



Figure 10 - Looking towards Pen-y-Mount Farm past the Rhosydd Quarry slate stacks.
C.L. Mowat. 1926/7

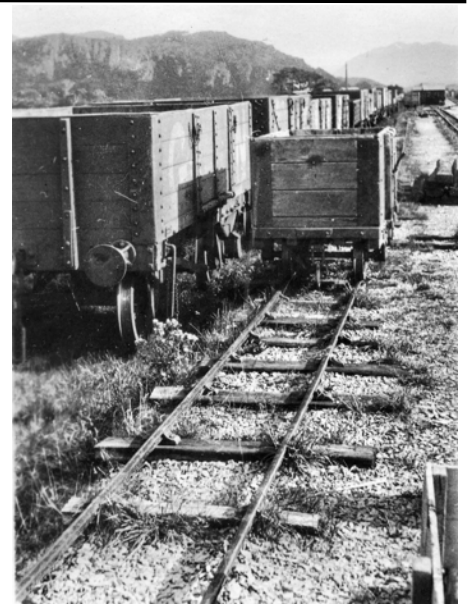
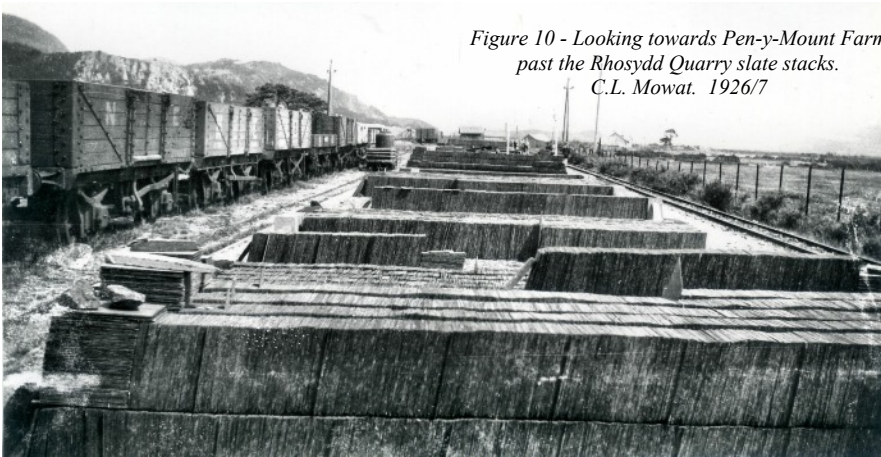


Figure 9 - The narrow-gauge siding adjacent to the standard-gauge line, looking towards Beddgelert.
K.F. Antia 1924/5 (WHHG51)

which we believe was taken either in 1924 or 1925 (Figure 9).

Note in Figure 9 the extremely light construction of the siding, using Croesor rails and chairs and, in the distance, a shed (?) located close to the position from where Figure 8 was taken.

Returning to Figure 8, note the curve to the right taken by the loop line as it approached the photographer after passing the crossover to the main line. Whereas the main line and run round loop can be seen to be laid in flat-bottomed rail, this curving track was clearly laid in a chaired rail. Given the proximity of this curve to the crossover, it can be presumed that this track would have passed to the left of the shed visible in Figure 9. Also we can see, shortly beyond the turnout to the left foreground, on the curved track what appears to be a rail stop. If as is indicated in the Welsh Highland photographic archive this photograph was taken in 1932, the question as to why a goods wagon was 'parked' on the loop and why a rail stop was fitted when, presumably, this

loop would have been in use, if only once a day, for locomotive run around purposes.

Finally, Figure 10, which was taken from more or less the same location as Figure 8, but looking in the opposite direction.

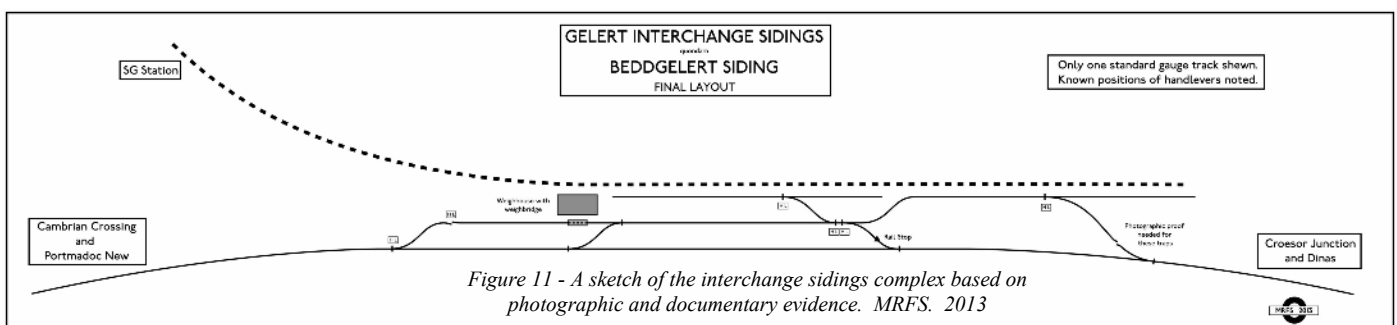
We can see clearly in this picture how far the narrow-gauge loop line has moved away from the main line, following the curve seen in Figure 8. Quite why the slate stacks should have been placed between two narrow-gauge lines is difficult to understand. Examination of this image in detail shows the track swinging to the right to rejoin the main line, beyond the people seen through the Rhosydd name board. There is a narrow gauge wagon visible in the distance close to what appears to have been the site boundary, suggesting strongly that there was a head shunt beyond the point where the track started its right-hand turn. The narrow-gauge loop line ran parallel to and close to the standard gauge line, essentially on the same axis as the double-ended siding seen in Figure 9. The line on the left of Figure 10 was therefore connected to the main line by

a crossover, albeit one with a considerable distance between each end.

The "strangest" diagram presented by Richard in WHH60 does not show the head shunt at the Pen-y-Mount end of the loop but does indicate a trap point in the middle of what would have been a crossover. Although perhaps unusual, in this case the two ends of the crossover were probably so far apart that stock could easily have been 'parked' between the two turnouts thus warranting the introduction of an additional trap. Unfortunately, Figure 10 is the only image available to us (so far, that is!) which shows the far Beddgelert end of the complex and this image is not good enough to confirm, or to deny, this detail.

The foregoing observations have been collated into a sketch plan of the interchange sidings complex (Figure 11). The similarity between this diagram and Richard Watson's "strangest diagram" is worthy of note.

Why so many plans of apparently "official" pedigree should differ so much from what can be seen in photographs is probably a question that can never be answered. However, at least in the Welsh Highland period, there seems little doubt that none of these plans, for whatever reason, shows the layout as it actually was.



Crime on The Welsh Highland!

Thefts from railway property are nothing new, and the recently deposited WHR/FR archive shows that the Welsh Highland wasn't immune from such dastardly deeds, although considering its parlous financial state, one wonders if it was really worth the risk!

A few months before the Welsh Highland reopened the NWNG section for passenger traffic, a break in at Dinas Junction was reported by Station Master Daniel O.Jones.

During the night of Wednesday 10th May, 1922 the booking office was broken into, entry being gained by forcing a window catch. In his report to S.E.Tyrwhitt the following day, Jones was glad to state that as no cash was left on the premises, only 2d in coppers and 6 penny stamps had been taken and whilst a drawer had been forced open, no damage was done to the rail tickets kept within. The matter had been placed in the hands of the police at Caernarfon, and officers had taken particulars. On 14th July, Jones further reported to Tyrwhitt that a culprit had been arrested and had confessed to the break in, saying that he had given the stamps to his wife. He was due to stand trial at the next assizes.^①

A year later, a further break in took place at South Snowdon station, where pickings were even more meagre than at Dinas! Records for the station during the Welsh Highland period are somewhat scarce, due in the main to it becoming virtually unstaffed after the departure of the Agent, Myfanwy Williams, who was made redundant in early November 1923,^② but it was during the time that the station was in her care that a theft of money took place.^③ Some time between 4.30 and 5.30 pm on Thursday 25th April, 1923, whilst Miss Williams was away for tea, the station was broken into and a purse containing 12/- of the Company's money was stolen from a drawer in the office. On investigation, D.O.Jones found that nothing else had been taken and all tickets and parcels were in

The Deputy Chief Constable,
POLICE.

Letter from H.D. Jones, Beddgelert
Station

Dear Sir,

I understand that on September 16th the windows of our South Snowdon Station were broken by some young men who were trespassing on the Station. Beddgelert constable was informed of this, and I understand he has sent in his report to you. We propose to prosecute in the matter, and I shall be glad if you will kindly let me have your version of the matter. An early reply will oblige,

order. Once again the police at Caernarfon were informed and Jones met with the constable from Waunfawr at the station to explain matters.

S.E.Tyrwhitt was made aware of this incident by a memo from Jones on Saturday 28th April, and was further informed that Miss Williams had been told not to leave any cash at the station in future

Inspector Lystor Investigates!

and to make sure that all parcels were always put in the old Ladies Waiting Room as the door was in better condition than that of the waiting room! It would appear that this and the door of the office were quite easy to open, Jones remarking that the place was really unsafe to keep tickets or anything else! Tyrwhitt immediately instructed PW Inspector Lewis Griffith to have the doors repaired as soon as possible. He also let Jones know that he was annoyed to find that it had taken two days to report the matter and that serious notice would be taken in future of any failure to report such matters promptly.

After Miss Williams's departure, responsibility of the station passed to HD Jones at Beddgelert, and the daily duties were carried out by the various train guards. These arrangements were

explained in the following letter from John May to P.W. Inspector Griffith dated 6th November, 1923:-^④

"This station is to be worked almost the same as Waenfawr for the present. It will be necessary to provide keys on the staffs, so that the guards can get into the office to change the staff, and it would be as well to have a key for the waiting room, so that this can be kept open during the day, and locked by the guard of last train at night."

The consequent lack of full time cover at the station may well have had a significant bearing on an incident of vandalism which occurred in the middle of June the following year, when it seems an intruder broke both the office door and the lock of the train staff box found therein. May sent a terse letter to D.O. Jones at Dinas explaining that the damage had apparently been caused on the morning of Friday 13th. He had already made enquiries of the men working trains from Portmadoc, who said that they had noticed the damage on arrival. May was keen to know what "Hughes & Limerick have to say", and maintained that as all the men had keys, there was no reason for them to cause such damage. Clearly the Dinas men were under suspicion!

In his reply, D.O.Jones stated that both Limerick and Hughes emphatically denied having been responsible, saying that they

Superintendent,
Portmadoc.
18th June 24

Mr. Jones,
DINAS

SOUTH SNOWDON STATION.

The door of South Snowdon station was burst open and also the lock of the staff box was burst, apparently on Friday morning last. I have made enquiries of the men working from this end, and they say they found the door and staff box in this condition when they arrived there. Please let me know what Hughes and Limerick have to say. There is no reason for damaging the property like this, as all the men are provided with keys, if they just see that they have them before leaving your station.

J.O.Thomas and his wife took possession on 15th January 1926. It was during the Thomas's tenancy that a further altercation took place when, on September 16th a stone was thrown through the bedroom window, breaking both the window pane and a lamp chimney. Once again the police were

would have had no reason to do so anymore than at Tryfan Jct or Waenfawr, as the key to all three stations was one and the same. Had they forgotten the key, they could not have exchanged staffs at the other two stations. Limerick reported that there was no damage when he left at 7pm on Friday 13th, but Hughes noticed it on arrival with the 10.46am train the following Monday. Both men remarked that there has been no lock on the outside door for some days.

May then wrote to H.D.Jones at Beddgelert seeking his opinion. Whilst saying that he accepted that the Dinas men were not the culprits, he adds "*on this occasion*" in his letter for good measure, suggesting that he wasn't entirely convinced! HDJ was able to ascertain from Guard Lewis Jones that all was well on Saturday 14th when he went through on the 3.30pm ex. Beddgelert, but found the damage done when the 7.22am ex Dinas arrived on Monday 14th. His conclusion was that the damage was either caused by Limerick, the Dinas train guard, R.Jones in charge of the Portmadoc train, or "*if both deny, by some person not connected with the railway done over the weekend*".

Armed with the news that R.Jones was the Portmadoc train guard, May was determined to get to the bottom of the matter and wasted no time in contacting the Portmadoc stationmaster asking for Jones' report, adding "*I presume he knows the key of South Snowdon station is kept at Beddgelert*". Jones said that he had found the station open and maintained that as the

Dinas train had arrived nearly 30 minutes earlier, the Dinas train guard (i.e. Limerick) must have opened it. He also found the staff box broken when he went for a ticket, although the office door was undamaged when he closed it. Limerick was now back in the frame, and D.O.Jones at Dinas was asked "*Did your man leave the key behind at Waenfawr?*" Jones replied reiterating his earlier memo stating that both Limerick & Hughes flatly denied causing the damage.

Come August, May wrote again to PW Inspector Griffith asking for the office door to be repaired as soon as possible, and conceding that he could not find out who was responsible for the damage. Griffith wrote back on 26th September informing May that the door had been repaired several times during the summer season, and that someone was breaking in after trains had stopped running for the day. The station was formerly used as a stationmaster's house, but had been used as a refreshment room in the summer by the Snowdon Tramways & Hotels Co Ltd (sic). As it was now unoccupied, Griffith suggested that it might be offered to one of the staff at a moderate rent on condition that he acted as caretaker, preventing trespass and keeping the station tidy. This suggestion was carried out fairly quickly, as correspondence in early 1925 shows that the station building was let to platelayer W.H.Rees from October 25th, 1924.^⑤

Rees left the employ of the WHR on May 2nd, 1925 and the station became unoccupied once again until Ganger

informed and they discovered that culprits were three local lads. Although the lads offered to pay for the damage, Stephens was minded to prosecute and correspondence flew back and forth between the WHR hierarchy, the police and solicitors! The solicitors were of the opinion that the offence was merely a boyish prank, not serious enough to warrant prosecution, and ultimately the matter was sorted by the payment of a postal order to the value of 4/4!!^⑥

References.

The bulk of this article is compiled from Gwynedd Archives File XD97/23087, with the following additional files:-

- ① XD97/23009 (Dinas theft)
- ② XD97/7451bb
- ③ XD97/23084 (S.Snowdon theft)
- ④ XD97/23085
- ⑤ XD97/23190
- ⑥ XD97/23194

Snippet

Lieut.-Colonel H F Stephens, Chairman and Managing Director of the Welsh Highland Railway, referring to his recent appointment as receiver and manager at the instance of the Carnarvonshire County Council points out that this does not mean that the railway will cease to run. Col. Stephens goes on to state: "We hope to give an effective service for the convenience of an increasing number of tourists who, we hope, will patronise the railway this season, and thereby enable it to overcome and remove the effects of the hard times through which the line has recently passed."

Railway Gazette 1st April 1927

Relaying the Croesor Crossing

In the Group's publication, *The Chronicles of Croesor Crossing* (page 20), it was not possible to pin down precisely the date of replacement of the Cambrian's crossing fitment at the end of 1928. Further research in The National Archives at Kew, in a fascinating collection (RAIL 279/37) of all the stencilled notices issued during 1928 from the GWR District Traffic Manager's Office at Oswestry – the erstwhile Cambrian Railways in all but name! – I have been fortunate to find notice no. 489, issued on 26 October of that year. This provides for the local permanent way inspector to have an absolute occupation of the line between Minffordd and Portmadoc on Sunday 28 October 1928 "for the purpose of relaying crossing at Croesor Crossing". There were no booked Sunday services between Portmadoc and Barmouth, a feature of the timetable that was very helpful for maintaining a single line railway – nor, of course, on the narrow gauge.

More from Richard Maund

Unlike more recent work on the crossing, the job was accomplished in one day, and apparently without heavy equipment: the gang must have been able to manoeuvre

Absolute occupation of the line between Minffordd and Portmadoc, Sunday Oct. 28th.

The Engineering Dept. will have absolute occupation of the single line between Minffordd and Portmadoc at 119m. 51 1/2 ch. on Sunday next the 28th instant, from 7.0am to 5.0pm for the purpose of relaying crossing at Croesor Crossing. Token to be withdrawn after passage of the last train on Saturday, October 27th and placed in the box provided in Portmadoc West Cabin. The token to be replaced in the box by the Permanent Way Inspector on completion of the work on Sunday, October 28th.



A DMU on the crossing
in June 2001

components into place, rather than installing a complete fitment, without the help of a crane for no movement of one was provided in the notices from Oswestry.

The completed work can be seen in close up in illustrations 4, 5 and 7 of *Chronicles*. (Available from John Keylock - contact details at bottom of page 6) This reaffirms that photo no. 4 – previously dated as summer 1928 – must have been taken *after* October 1928.

Alas, the gang's handiwork had only a limited life, for (as recorded in *WHH 58*) the crossing was removed and replaced with plain line on Monday 27 December 1937.

In consequence, the corrigenda sheet to *Chronicles* has been further amplified, and copies can be supplied – either electronically by request to both@themaunds.idps.co.uk or by sending a s.a.e. to 1 Fourseasons Close, Crewe, CW2 6TN

CHRISTMAS CARD

For this coming festive season we will have our own seasonal greetings card. This has been commissioned from Jonathan Clay whose work will be familiar to most readers. At approximately 8" x 6" in landscape format as below with bi-lingual festive greetings inside. Cards cost £7.00 for a pack of five - inclusive of 'P & P'. Orders to John Keylock, Weathervane Cottage, Childswichkam, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7 HL with cheques payable to Welsh Highland Heritage please.



ERRATA - WHH 56 & 58

A couple of errors or omissions crept into a couple of my recent articles and I am indebted to Richard Maund for pointing these out. Firstly, in *The Gestation of the Welsh Highland Railway in 1921* (*WHH 56*, p.4) the table showing the capital of the N.W.N.G.R. and P.B.S.S.R. omits to say what the P.B.S.S.R. figures referred to. I am happy to make it clear that the figures refer to the same elements as for the N.W.N.G., i.e.

N.W.N.G.R.			
	Authorised	Issued	
Shares & Stock	£106,000	£96,000	£83,390
Debentures	£54,000	£43,563	£43,040
P.B.&S.S.R.			
Shares & Stock	£318,000	£50,000	
Debentures	£106,000	£47,781	£126,430
			£124,870

In *More About the 1904 Carnarvon Extension Proposals* (*WHH 57*, p.11) there are some confusing footnotes; footnote 3 does not belong here at all but to *Further Light on the 1922 Welsh Highland Proposals* in *WHH 58*, p.7 where it appeared correctly. Footnote 2 is of general interest and does not refer to a specific location within the text. - **Richard Watson**

More than just a Trident

Just to begin, I'd better fill in a little bit of 'back story': this has grown out of a much larger project to document the FR (and WHR) signalling, and I've been interested in the signalling of both lines since reading the appropriate 'Boyd's' in my distant youth. Unfortunately, the signalling records of Portmadoc are somewhat muddled and in order to understand the situation when the Welsh Highland was operating we need to look at both before and after so a hopefully complete and cogent record can be presented.

Many of you will be familiar with the arrangements in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2:

This is where the Welsh Highland-era signalling story really starts: Portmadoc had up until c.1890 just a double-arm station semaphore and a disc signal which controlled the whole layout. Outside the bothy you can see the capstan for the disc signal out on the Cob; this remained until the disc was finally removed after 1929. Between the bothy and the nearest line (the long siding) can be seen the single upright lever that controlled the points for the line going past the Goods Shed and over the Britannia Bridge. After c.1890 a lower arm was added to the station semaphore for controlling traffic over the 'Wharf Line'.

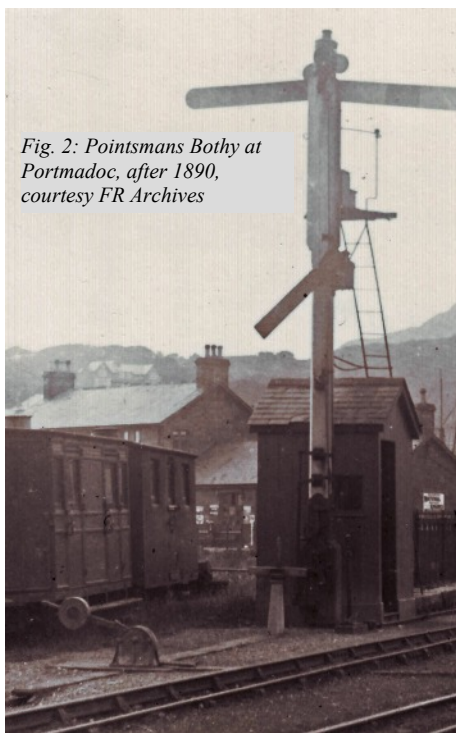


Fig. 2: Pointsmen's Bothy at Portmadoc, after 1890, courtesy FR Archives

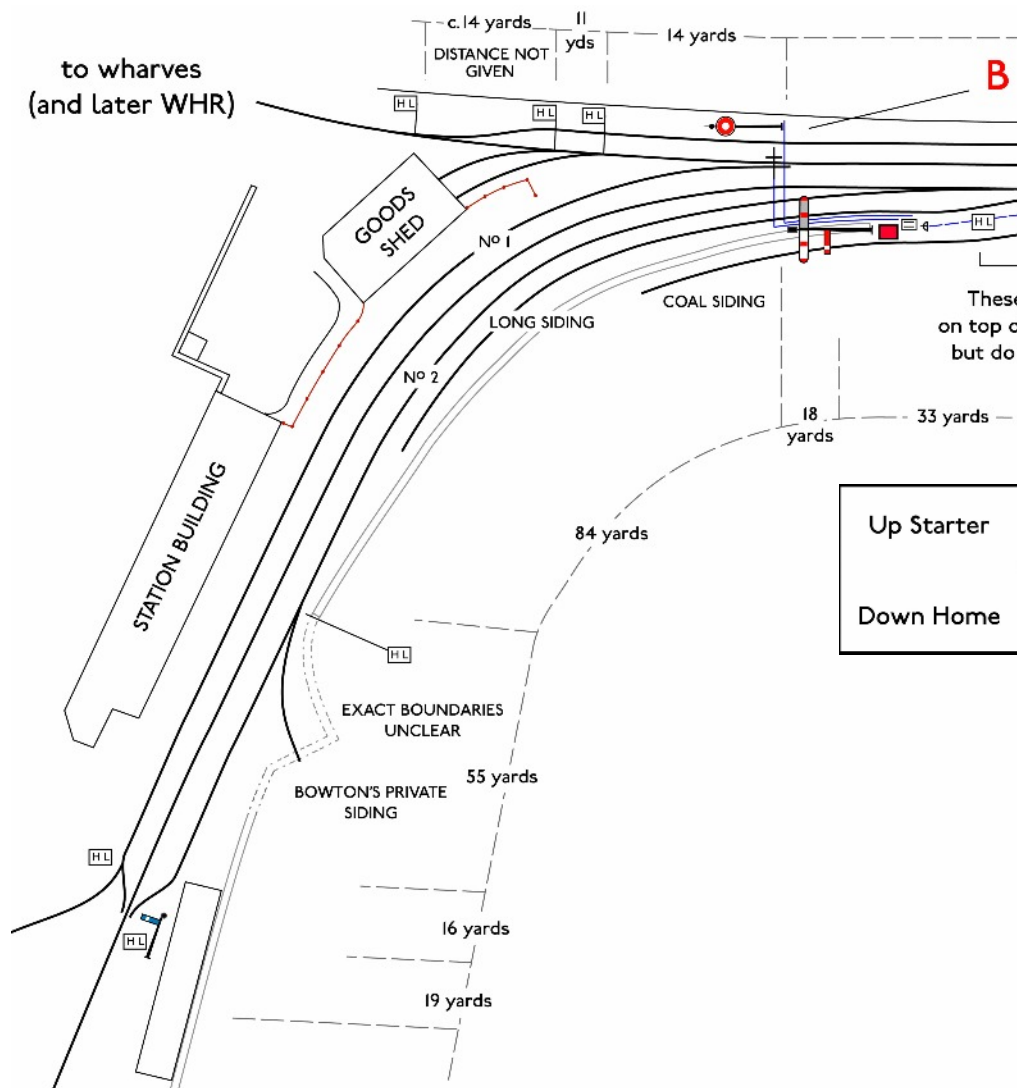
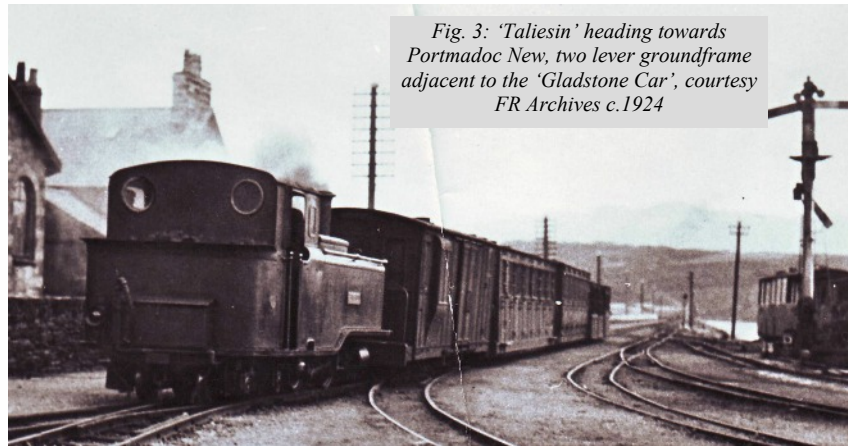
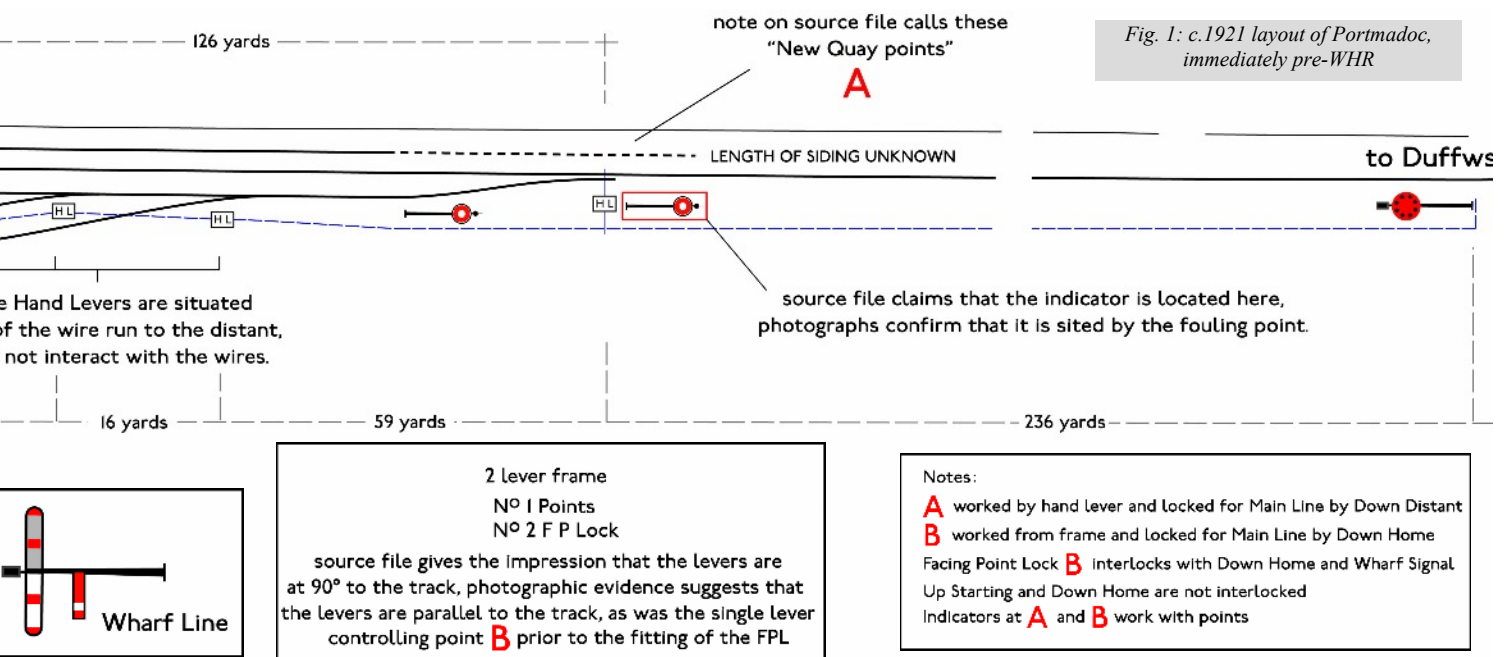


Fig. 1 is a drawing of the installation at Portmadoc immediately prior to the coming of the junction railway and the WHR. One of the many mysteries with FR signalling is that very few FR points below Glan-y-Pwll were fitted with facing point locks (FPLs), the FR trusting rather more in the older system of wire locking or if the points were within a certain distance of the controlling point they would remain unlocked. As can be seen in Fig. 2 only the 'WHR' points were fitted with a 'proper' lever, the signals were operated by cranks on the godfathered signal post. There is some vestigial evidence in the picture of the crank that operates the Wharf Line semaphore working a lock of sorts in a box behind the single point lever. I haven't been able to exactly date the closure of the pointsmen's bothy and the provision of the second lever in the frame as seen in Figs. 3 and 4. However, I would suggest that just before the opening of the link line in 1923 would be a strong contender, as there would now be passenger trains regularly working across those points when they were in either position needing a two-way FPL as portrayed in Fig. 3:

Of note is that the bothy had gone by this stage. It is recorded as being built ostensibly to house the 'locking': in practice all the locking was external to the building and the building at the most would have contained the block telegraph instruments, a booking desk and block register with a telephone. Closure and relocation of the signalling facilities into the main building would therefore be straightforward when the Light Railway Order (LRO) simplifications came into force. It is a matter of record that the Miniature Electric Train Staff (METS) was fitted to the Minffordd - Boston Lodge section on 30/5/1921 and the Boston Lodge instrument moved to Portmadoc in October 1923 when Boston Lodge closed; close examination of Fig. 3 does not easily reveal the usual FR practice of a METS drawer lock releasing the groundframe. What this picture does clearly illustrate is the unique semaphore signal at Portmadoc; it was the only double arm signal known to be fitted with external coloured spectacles. I do not know if this was as a result of confusion with ship lights: parts of the nearby



Cambrian Railways used ruby-gold and white lenses in some signal spectacles for that very reason.

In the extract (Fig 4) you can just about distinguish that both levers are reverse, this makes a degree of sense: the points have been turned to go over the Britannia Bridge and are locked by the adjacent FPL lever. The Gladstone Car is prominent on the Coal Siding, behind an FR Quarryman's coach,

and the point indicator disc is prominent in the background by the 'New Quay' points. As in the previous picture, the semaphore arms are worked by handles on the post, and there is a mysterious 'box' over the rodding about half-way between the lever frame and the cranks. This box may have been some form of locking device, but it is very hard to distinguish its true purpose; however, the 'width' of this box does give a very useful clue – it appears to straddle two runs of

point rodding, suggesting at this stage that the Britannia Bridge points had a separate FPL, though this FPL appears to have been remote from the blades and over by the fenceline. I would welcome sight of any picture that gives an indication of point locking at the actual blades of the WH points. Within the collection deposited at Caernarfon Record Office there are two very confusing sets of blueprints, not one of them seems to match up correctly with the installation as recorded by photographs and on that basis I am not at all surprised that James Boyd presents a rather confusing composite diagram in his history. The most plausible explanation is that for the period from 1923 until 1926 the three-arm semaphore signal was used with the two lever groundframe as presented in Fig. 1; eventually the layout was simplified and the remains of the 'empty wagon road' on the



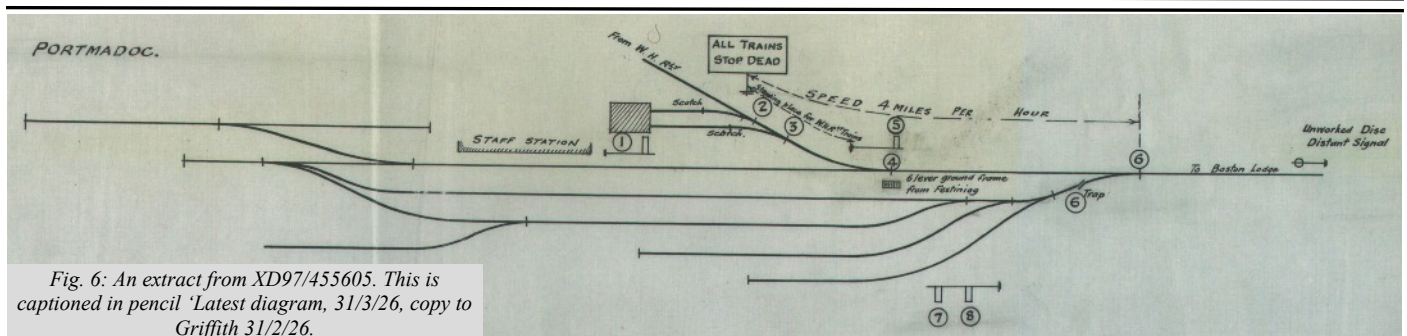


Fig. 6: An extract from XD97/455605. This is captioned in pencil 'Latest diagram, 31/3/26, copy to Griffith 31/2/26.

Clock side of the Cob were lifted, leaving just a single line past the connections to the Goods Shed. It would not make for good reading to list all the alternatives presented in the Archives for this article, but take a look at Fig. 12 – please do not take this as representative of any time-frame it is merely an illustrative overview of all the alternative positions given for either the two or three arm signals, and the two or six lever groundframes. Most (but not all) of the drawings do also indicate a fixed speed limit of 4mph through station limits [1]. In all the iterations of the drawings, there are several constants: that of the former Disc Distant signal out on the Cob being shown as fixed (even though the signal swaps sides and alignment!), the stop board for all approaching trains from the Welsh Highland and the two single arm Stop signals applicable to Blaenau bound-trains. These two signals are consistently described as 'Up starting Signal from Platform' and 'Up stop Signal for W. H. Rly'. The other constant in the ten or so known different versions of the drawings is that the furthest points out on the Cob (referred to as the 'New Quay' points in one of the drawings) are always given as being locked by the electric staff when the two separate Up signals feature in the drawings. I first thought that this must have been an operational headache, as Welsh Highland trains must have been run-round and sat on the link line before a Festiniog train departed Portmadoc or whenever a train entered the Portmadoc – Minffordd block section: of course, these plans dated from the period when Portmadoc (Old) was hardly used, so this would have only presented a problem for the Bottom Shunter. It is also worth commenting that the 'New Quay' points are shown as being fitted with a scotch instead of the later trap – unfortunately I have not seen any pictures from the 1923/6 period that confirm the arrangement at these points, but I have a strong suspicion that the economic lock shown in Fig. 5 is the most likely result. Although this picture dates from the closure period, I suggest that as part of the

simplification process under the Light Railway Order that this became a single lever groundframe when the wire lock actuated by the Disc and associated capstan was removed. Granted, there were many locations on the Festiniog when two lever groundframes were installed with separate FPLs – Dduallt, Boston Lodge turntable, Tanygrisiau – but these seem to have been part of the first tranche of simplification, the second wave seemed to use a different design of lever frame and if possible economic locks were used; however a detailed analysis of that is outwith the remit of this screed. Notably, in all the

the only completely dated drawing of the arrangements at Portmadoc: Fig 6.

Aside from the February/March confusion, I suggest that it is clear that the combined companies were attempting to sort out and modernise the signalling at Portmadoc in preparation for the 1926 season – Griffith being G. Lewis Griffith the F&WHR track inspector. In and of itself this diagram raises some very pertinent points – most notably the comment of '6 lever ground frame from Festiniog'. Students of Festiniog signalling history and readers of Boyd would be hard pressed to find this groundframe at



Fig. 7 Portmadoc Harbour Station, dated 1926; Charles Loch Mowat, courtesy FR Archives

alternatives there is one early version that still has the empty wagon road left in vestigial form with a three-arm signal out on the Cob [2]. While it is very tempting to see this as a very early suggestion for the 'Trident', I think given that the signals would have applied in both directions this is mere coincidence rather than early planning.

Although we are blessed with an abundance of drawings, we are not told all the information. The numbering used in the drawings does not follow the lever numbering and trying to untangle all this is more than complicated. As a first port of call, we need to try and work out when the ground frame mentioned by Boyd as 'actually positioned on the other side of the line' was provided; when I first read Boyd, this phrase was the indication to me that his analysis didn't quite hang together. Time for some sleuthing around: we shall start with

Festiniog: Boyd does make a reference to a '5 lever frame' at Glanypwll, replacing the second No 3 signalbox there. This is a mistake: the Archives make reference to a Tyers lever frame of Design B5. There was never a 5 lever frame at the Portmadoc end of the LNW Exchange station, instead there was a two lever frame working one pair of points with a trap and both sets of signals protecting Glanypwll level crossing. Coincidentally, this frame from Glanypwll did end up at Portmadoc during the early preservation era controlled the remaining arm on the 'Trident'. There is an excellent photograph of the amended installation at Portmadoc, taken by Charles Mowat in 1926, almost certainly during the week commencing 12th July. (Fig 7)

You will note that there is a groundframe to the left of the picture, with three signalposts in shot; the scotches in the two Goods Shed

Fig. 8, extract from Fig. 7.



lines are also prominent. It is a shame that the top of the signalpost for approaching FR trains is missing from the picture, but I am reasonably sure that there is only one arm absent and that arm would apply to Festiniog trains going into Harbour Station. The ground frame itself is interesting, it appears to be directly opposite the Britannia Bridge points; comprising a six lever frame with only five in use – lever 6 is painted white, denoting a spare. Note too that the signal has been converted to a much more ‘conventional’ signal worked by wires from

the lever frame. An extract from this picture reveals even more detail. (Fig 8)

This detail clearly shows only one operating rod going up the old godfathered station semaphore post, lever 3 is pulled and it is painted black denoting that it is most likely to be the lever controlling the points for the Britannia Bridge. No other signal levers are pulled so we cannot deduce their numbering from this picture. We must look further afield for more clues. Fortunately, with the kind help of Adrian Gray I have seen copies of two further views of this frame and there is another view published in ‘Welsh Highland Renaissance’ [3]. The first of these views was taken on the same day as Fig. 5 during the closure period.

This photograph has enough clarity to enable us to deduce that the lever frame was made by Tyer’s, unfortunately due to the undergrowth it is impossible to decide whether or not this frame is to ‘Design B5’ or not, but this is certainly the frame that was originally intended for Glanypwll. Of note in Fig. 9 is the apportionment of levers – there is some vestigial interlocking left, with the tappets for levers 1, 3 and 6 remaining. Levers 1, 2, 4 and 5 are painted in the same colour. I suggest that these are the signal levers. Exactly which signals is still up for

discussion at this stage of the article, but the second lever frame picture that Adrian dug out of the Archive (Fig. 10) is of help in this respect.

Coupled with the Mowat picture mentioned earlier, this confirms that after 1926 the elevated point indicator discs were removed. Although it is a poor quality copy, it is possible to distinguish that there are two signal wires heading off out towards the Cob and that there is an unusual arrangement of cranks in the lead-off trench in front of the frame.

Crucially for our discussions it is clear that there is only one point rod going in the Boston Lodge direction and with a little bit of digital enhancement of the picture there are two rods just about discernable heading in the direction of the Britannia Bridge points. Also from this angle lever 6 looks to be in use. Importantly too, lever 2 is reversed, and in the distance we can see the ‘Trident’. Digital enhancement and inversion of the image clearly shows that the main arm on the centre doll of the ‘Trident’ is ‘Off’ meaning that most likely there is a train due into the Harbour Platform. This is most probably the ‘Rosetta Stone’ for deciphering the frame numbering at Portmadoc. There are a lot of factors to consider in piecing this information together. We must begin with the thorny



Fig. 10: Portmadoc Lever frame looking out towards the Cob with the Trident in the distance, courtesy FR Archives.

problems of lever 6 and then move on to lever 1.

We know from the evidence of Figure 7 that lever 6 was originally spare, and that the furthest remaining points at the Boston Lodge end of the layout were originally released by the METS as recorded in the Archives blueprints. From that there would be 5 levers in use in the ground frame: 2 signals for each direction and the Britannia Bridge points. As there is no obvious separate FPL lever [4], the sole set of points must have been locked economically with a combined point and lock movement. As I mentioned earlier I have never seen any evidence of locking actually at the blades of the Britannia Bridge points, so the FPL must have been remote from the blades over by the fenceline as seen in the c. 1890 photograph – or directly in front of the Tyers lever frame. Figure 8 suggests that the economical mechanism was in the lead-off trench with a drive rod to the blades and a separate locking rod from the blades. It is also recorded that the ‘Trident’ was moved



Fig. 9: Portmadoc Lever frame, courtesy FR Archives

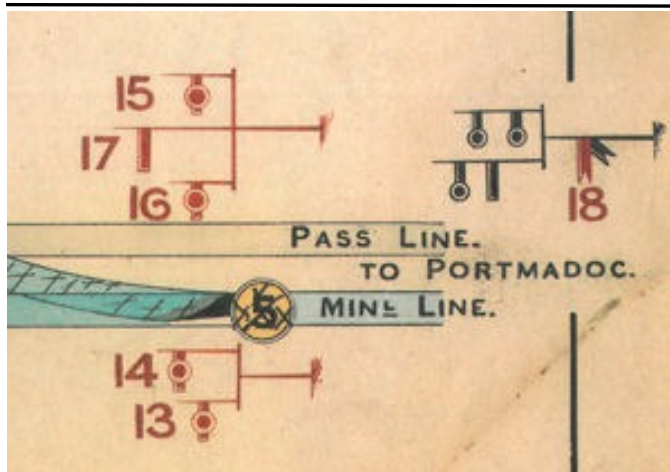


Fig. 11: extract from XD97/459027, courtesy FR/WHR Archives

down from Duffws in 1929 giving a likely window of opportunity for the alterations to the control of the points. The 'Trident' was formed of signals 15 – 17 from Duffws, as illustrated in the original McKenzie and Holland diagram, Figure 11:

Note that the two outer dolls have ringed arms with the higher centre arm being plain; when installed at Portmadoc signal 15 had the ring removed, as it was no longer reading to a goods line but applying to the passenger line over Britannia Bridge. So, we are now in the situation of having 5 signal arms and 2 points controlled from a 6 lever ground frame. Very confusing. Well, perhaps not: if you return to Figure 5 you will see that there are two square boxes driven by the angled rod from near the FPL stretcher in the two foot. These boxes are detectors (acting as selectors) that 'check' the lie of the point blades to ensure that the blades are in correspondence for the appropriate signal to clear. When the "Trident" was installed the diverging route across the 'New Quay' points must have been selected: two signals, one lever. So – where does that leave us in terms of deducing the lever numbering? In conjunction with Fig. 10 we can see only two wires heading towards the 'Trident' confirming the use of selection; the two wires for the 'Up' signals would have crossed the tracks in the same trench as the rodding that drove the Britannia Bridge

points, and there is evidence [5] that the wire run for these signals ran along the slate wall separating the railway from the road. At the time of writing, Ian Rudd reports that one of the flat wheels with chain around it for one of the two starters has been found as part of the rebuilding works at Porthmadog.

As a first approximation, based on Fig. 10 we end up with this numbering from left to right:

1. Down Home to Wharf Line/WHR
2. Down Home to FR platform/runround line (selected)
3. FR/WH points
4. WH Starter (called WH Stop)
5. FR Starter
6. Main to Run Round (New Quay points - i.e. King)

Pending sight of any further evidence, it is unlikely that we will ever be sure of the exact apportionment between levers 4 and 5: it is perfectly tenable that they could swap. XD97/455110 gives an alternative numbering scheme in pencil emendations to the print:

1. FR Starter
2. WH Stop
3. FR/WH points
4. Down Home to FR platform
5. Down Home to Wharf Line/WHR

The drawing gives only a five-lever ground frame on the clock side of the main line, situated on the Blaenau side of the Britannia Bridge line points. There is no scale, but it is very tempting to suggest given that the New Quay points are shewn as being on an Electric Staff lock and applying the 'geographic' approach to laying out the

lever frame that the operator would have stood looking towards the Britannia Foundry. XD97/455110 is by no means an 'official' signalling diagram, these are just planning doodles and may well have had no basis in reality. If you look at Fig. 12, which is a synopsis of all the different iterations in the Archives, you can easily see that many different possibilities were discussed at Tonbridge and/or Portmadoc.

Pending further photographic evidence, it is unlikely that we will ever be certain of the frame numbering beyond Levers 3 and 6 being the WH points and the New Quay points – Fig. 10 is not of the clearest. However, comparing Fig. 6 and Fig. 10, it is tenable that the 'Down' signals were levers 1 and 2 and the 'Up' signals were levers 4 and 5. Fig. 10 gives a very strong suggestion that the central arm of the 'Trident' is 'Off' with lever 2 pulled. In pre-'Trident' days this must have worked the higher one of the two remaining arms on the old station semaphore – the lower arm would have continued to apply to the Wharf Line (now the WHR) and must therefore have been controlled by lever 1. When the 'Trident' was installed, both wire runs would have been extended out onto the Cob, but removing the staff lock from the 'New Quay' points complicated matters: there were now more signals than levers. The only plausible solution I can think of is that there must have been a 'floating wheel' selector working with the two boxes visible in Fig. 5. These boxes between the wave wall and the running rails would have detected the position of No 6 point blades, so depending on the lie of the points either the centre arm or the leftmost (ringed) arm would clear. Why isn't there a third box (or evidence thereof) for the wire run from No 1 lever to the signal? Well, bear in mind that the selection/detection arrangements could be greatly simplified under the LRO, and there would be a bit of 'dead locking' (interlocking) between levers 3 and 6. Neither lever could be reverse at the same time, both levers would be free when both were normal [6] but as soon as one lever



Fig. 12: 'Overview' diagram of the planning for the signalling of Portmadoc.



Fig. 13: c.1926 signalling diagram, after Fig. 8

was pulled the other one would be locked. Pending further photographic evidence I suggest the following numbering schemes for Harbour station:

You will note that I've drawn only the 'ALL TRAINS STOP DEAD' board [7], this only appears in the series of plans with the Up signals and as they were actually installed, I

is near the truth given by Fig. 9 – taken during the closure period with the tappets left on levers 1, 3 and 6. This suggests that the remaining arm on the 'Trident' was controlled by lever 1. This is a sensible conclusion, given the arrangement of the interlocking between levers 3 and 6. After the WHR closed then the easiest alteration to the interlocking would be to use one lever

of drawings in different hands: as a general rule XD97/455111/x have no signalling and the 'Max. Speed 4 mph' and XD97/455110/x have the two semaphore signals that were actually installed with scotches and traps and the 'All Trains Stop Dead' sign

[2] XD97/455111/3 – unfortunately undated, but with the omission of the scotches, traps and METS lock, suggesting that it is nearer 1923 than 1926 in its composition.

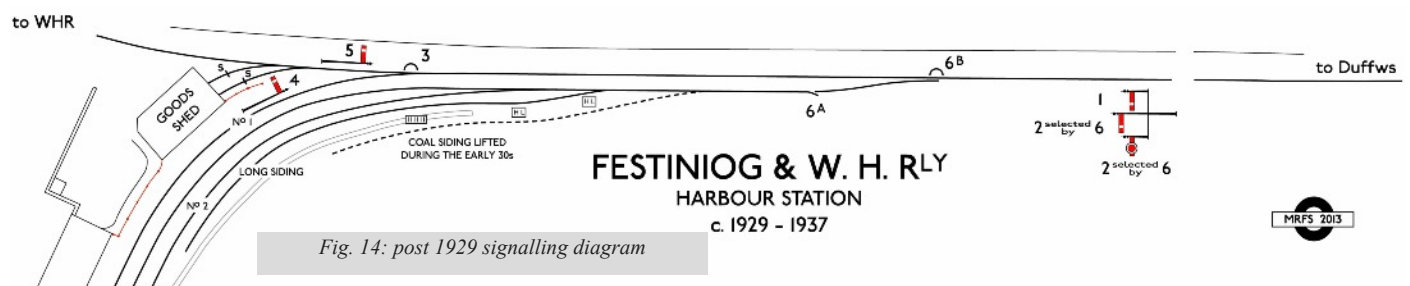


Fig. 14: post 1929 signalling diagram

think that this is the most likely result. The length of running line between the Stop Board and the WH Stop signal is denoted in the blueprints as the 'Stopping place for WHR trains' with a dashed line between the stop board and the stop signal. I do not know what precipitated the use of the 'Trident', but as the signal must have been at least 60 years old then the old post would surely have been ripe for replacement in 1929, resulting in figure 14. Photographic evidence has recently come to light of the 'Trident' and the original disc in situ. I do not know when the disc signal was recovered, but it would appear to be after 1929.

We are left with the conclusion that although the points are numbered correctly according to the geography of the layout, the signals are actually the wrong way round. This can only have been as a result of the lever frame being originally planned to be on the site of the empty wagon road with the operator overlooking the Harbour. Remembering that lever 6 was spare until (most likely) 1929 there is perhaps the hint that there may have been another signal provided for departing WHR trains [8] but there is no record of this in any of the signalling diagrams in the archives, there is one further suggestion that my interpretation

to lock either set of points in either position and that would most easily be accomplished by using lever 1 with additions to the existing locking.. All other signal levers would then be redundant.

I would like to thank Messrs Gray, Liddell and Woodcock for their assistance in drawing this article together. There are still many unanswered questions, and I would be grateful if anyone else can come up with alternative interpretations or more photographs.

Of necessity this is a condensed version of a much longer article, which is still being added to on a regular basis pending further research - it is hoped that the full version will be eventually published with the results of the far larger project on Festiniog and Welsh Highland signalling. "

Notes & References

[1] XD97/455110/1 has a lot of inked emendations to the blueprint; these appear to correctly triangulate the original station semaphore, which would be difficult to place in the blueprints. XD97/455111/4 gives the two indicators, speed boards reading 'Not to Exceed 4 miles per hour' on both approaches and no other signals, both XD97/455111 and 455111/4 give either stop blocks or scotches as noted, but again no signals. There are two separate series

[3] *Welsh Highland Railway Renaissance*, p395 top.

[4] even allowing for the relaxed detection and selection locking demands permitted by the Light Railway Order it is very rare indeed to see a location where an economical FPL is so remote from the blades; it also seems highly likely that there were only very minimal detection arrangements, if any were provided they would have been in the trench immediately adjacent to the lever frame. The exceptional clarity of Fig. 7 suggests that there was in fact no mechanical detection of the WHR points.

[5] Top photograph: Portrait of the WH Railway, Johnson 1999 p.59. The wire stakes can be just discerned at the foot of the wall and the FR starting signal has its pull-off chain heading off towards the wall where the stakes are situated.

[6] 'normal' in this sense does not mean 'usual', it means 'not-pulled'; 'reverse' means pulled.

[7] This stop board seems to have had a fairly ephemeral existence – there are not many published photographs of this location: there is one c. 1923 view of it with the Simplex (A Portrait of the FR, p 75 top) and a post-1929 view (Illus. Hist. of FR, 2nd edition, p77 middle) with no evidence of the stop board. It would appear that it was only there from 1923 until 1929, but further research is needed to prove this either way.

[8] Boyd suggests something 'signalling' at the mouth of the High Street in NGRlys in S. Caerns, 2nd edition, p21 top (Jim Lloyd drawing 20323)

Richard Thomas Griffith – a profile



affairs, in matters such as public health (providing clean drinking water, sewers, street cleaning), local planning, council housing, playgrounds and cemeteries (whereas matters such as education and roads were the responsibility of county council). The councils were also responsible for poor relief under the Poor Laws until that responsibility was transferred to the counties in 1930. Today the Clerk would doubtless have the grander title Chief Executive Officer! By this stage, he resided at Pen y Buarth, Llanrug, where he lived for the remainder of his life.

As an active local Labour party member and frequent speaker at local meetings, he was elected a county councillor and member of Caernarvonshire County Education Committee; an obituary claimed him to have been the first Labour member to chair that body (although this may refer to the county council itself, of which he was Chairman for twelve months from 2 March 1933). He also served on the County Industrial Development Committee and acted as Food Executive Officer for the Caernarvon and Gwyrfaï districts, as Clerk to Llanrug Parish Council, as a member of the Seiont & Gwyrfaï Fishery Board, and as a trustee for the Port of Caernarvon, being awarded the MBE for public services during the

Investing Authorities, as successor to Stephens as Receiver & Manager to the WHR – particularly as he spent much of the time thereafter seeking to disengage from the role! It would be interesting to know more about who sought to break the Tonbridge connection: maybe the committee saw Griffith as local and cheaper – his appointment attracted an annual salary of £50 (today's purchasing power equivalent would be some £3000) against Stephens's remuneration for 1928/9 which had been £179.3.4 (made up as under: Engineer £50, Locomotive Superintendent £50, Manager, £66.13.4, Receiver £12.10.0); or maybe William Austen regarded the appointment as not worth the effort!

That Griffith had no professional qualifications (legal or accounting) for the post seems to be borne out by his purchase of the then-equivalent of *Receivership for Dummies* – an expenditure disallowed (not by D G Jones, the County Clerk, but by the Chancery Court), leading to his plaintive: "I never asked to be appointed". Nor can it be thought he regarded running a (near-moribund) narrow-gauge railway as "JGF" (to borrow a phrase from another era, another railway †). Nevertheless, Griffith was so appointed – the position is a Chancery Court appointment and the office holder's obligation to manage the business in accordance with the Court's directions leads to disallowed expenditure having to be met from the office holder's own pocket. That he adopted a cautious and unadventurous approach to managing the business is thus hardly

surprising. He was appointed Receiver and Manager of WHR from 12 April 1932 – and first sought the Investing Authorities' approval to be relieved of the office in a letter of 21 July 1933 (county archives XC2/33/41) but was

dissuaded. Their meeting of 24 October 1935 noted that he had formally tendered his resignation as Receiver & Manager, although discharge from the role could only be granted by the Chancery Court. Because of the delay in his presentation of his account to the Court, he was not succeeded by George Gregory Williams (county treasurer) until 8 February 1939.

His period in office covered only two summer seasons of passenger operation – neither appeared in *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* (it's hardly likely Griffith was unaware of the publication) – and saw him seeking to reduce the winter operation (to

After the death of Lt-Col Holman Stephens at the age of 65, on 23 October 1931, he was succeeded as Receiver & Manager of the Welsh Highland Railway by a local government official, Richard Thomas Griffith, who held the appointment for seven years. Some misconceptions about him exist in published sources (including *WHH* no. 21 p.5) so it may be appropriate to provide a brief profile.

Griffith was born into a Cwm y Glo family at the turn of 1888/9, and was educated at Llanrug's primary and grammar schools, followed by the University College of North Wales at Bangor. His initial employment was as a school teacher in Llanrug. During the First World War he joined the Royal Artillery and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. After the war, he turned to work in local government, the field in which he spent the remainder of his career. From the rating department of the Gwyrfaï Rural District Council, he was appointed Clerk to the same Council in 1928, at age 40; this was a salaried position he held until his death in 1950. He was responsible for the administration of the council's

Richard Griffiths succeeded the legendary Col Stephens as Receiver of the WHR. Richard Maund provides some biographical details

second world war. He was a Freemason, a gifted public speaker and conductor of local eisteddfodau and concerts, and a member of Pontrhyallt Calvinistic Methodist Chapel (of which he was appointed deacon), serving also as secretary and later president of Caernarvon District Sunday Schools Meeting. He died – after a short illness at Bangor County Hospital – on 23 January 1950, aged 61, and was buried four days later.

With these manifold duties and outside activities one wonders why he allowed himself to be put forward, by the committee of Representatives of the

one day a week – the staff were paid by hours worked, not a guaranteed week – in autumn 1933) and to close down the whole operation in spring 1934, when his view was that “there will be no alternative but to close the Railway unless it can be disposed of by lease or otherwise”. In an affidavit to the Court, dated 8 May 1934, he said: “I am of the opinion that the receipts of the railway in respect of goods traffic would be sufficient to cover working expenses but nothing further with regard to passenger traffic, this can only be profitable for ten weeks in the year from the middle of July to the end of September, and even then the receipts would be little more than enough to cover the extra expenses occasioned by running passenger trains, but it will be out of the question to run any passenger traffic this year [summer 1934] owing to the unsatisfactory state of the permanent way and the condition of the rolling stock.” (This, incidentally, was dated two days before the Festiniog company expressed their interest in leasing and running the line). His final contribution – the background is set out in more detail in *Chronicles of Croesor Crossing* (copies still available at £6 from John Keylock, address on page 6) – was to fail to react to the GWR’s notification of their intention to remove the flat crossing at Portmadoc in December 1937 (*WHH* no. 58, p. 8)

because (as he said in a letter to D G Jones of 4 February 1938) “...I was under the impression, in view of the fact that the whole of the Undertaking had been leased to the FR Co, and that there was a clause in the Lease that on the expiration of the Lease they were to give up the property in the same condition as they took it over, that it was not part of my duty to interfere in this matter.”

The relationship between Griffith and Jones, the then County Clerk, is an intriguing one, about which one would like to know more. Both men worked in Caernarvon and were closely involved in county council and WHR matters – and yet there seems a “remoteness” in their dealings: simple situations where one would pick up the ‘phone and discuss matters seem to have been dealt with (slowly) in correspondence, and Griffith seems not to have received (or not to have asked for) guidance - legal and otherwise - to which he surely ought to have been entitled, having been dragooned into the Receiver’s job. He was finally discharged of his Court-ordained responsibilities on 2 February 1940 with approval of his final account by the Chancery Master.

Griffith married his first wife, Maggie, in 1921 and his second, Jane, only three weeks before his death.

† = “Jolly Good Fun” - credited to John Routly (Festiniog Chairman 1972-1993) at a tense meeting with the paid staff

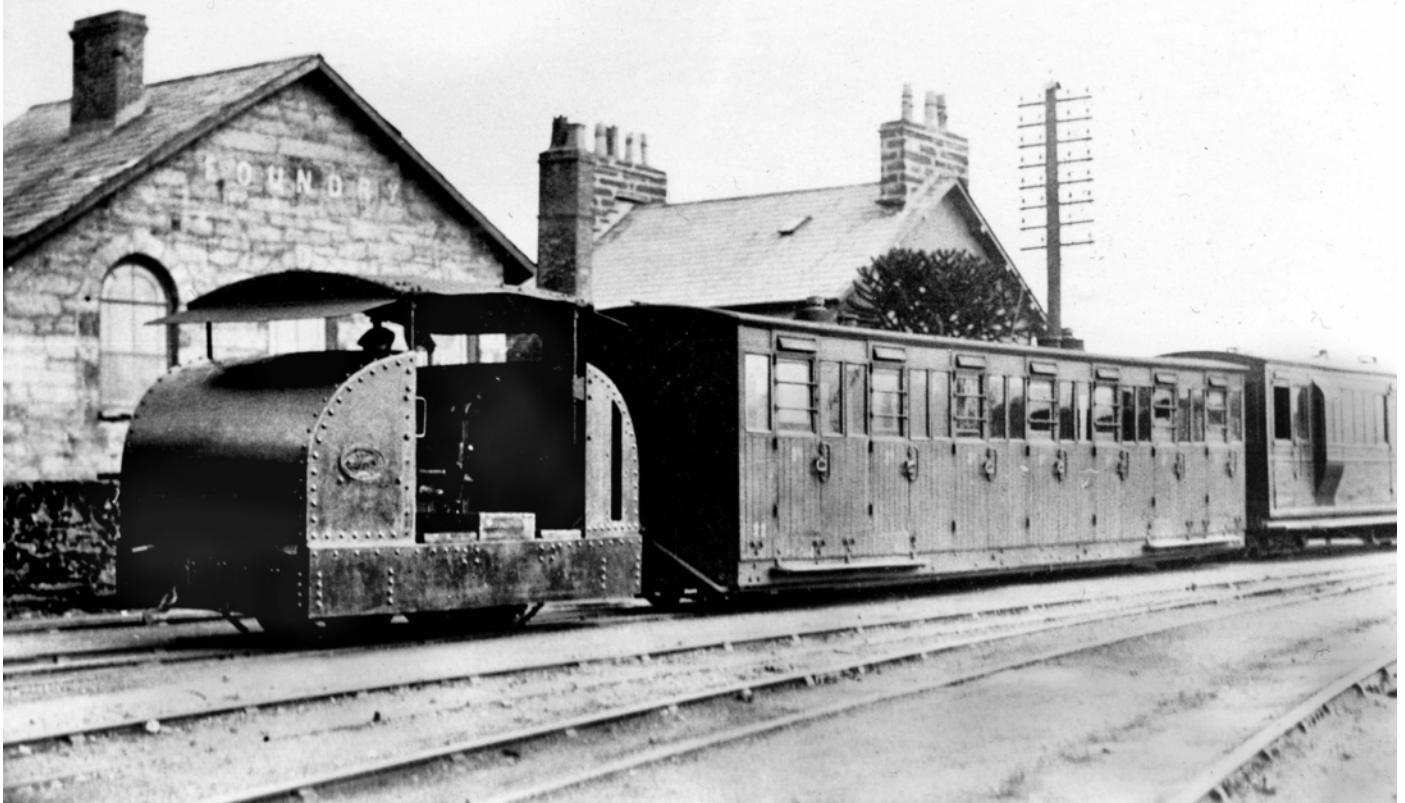
SNOWDON ELECTRIC SCHEME GOOD PROGRESS MADE THE EXTENSION TO CAERNARFON

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

As soon as certain debates have been settled work will be started.

Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald 19th May 1905

Col Stephens tests the Simplex



The above photograph – from Peter Johnson’s collection – shows the Simplex and its test train with which Col Stephens flirted as a possible solution to working the Bryngwyn branch and a winter service on the main line, reference to which was made in *WHH* No 60. Attached to the petrol tractor is FR carriage No. 22 and WHR Pickering brake composite. The photograph appeared in the *Railway Gazette* for November 1923 and was taken by a representative of that magazine who had been invited to attend the trials

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis



Peter Liddell comments on this clearly posed 1925 print taken at Dinas Junction. Mention has been made that the standard gauge loco in this view is running 'wrong line'. The standard gauge lines within the Dinas Junction layout were signalled for bi-directional running. In other words, either line could have been used in either direction. This can be confirmed by examination of photographs that show the pairs of signal at either end of the platform. Consequently, there was no question of "wrong line" running — the station authorities could, presumably, select the

preferred line for each movement. If trains were not scheduled to cross, it would presumably have made sense for north-bound trains to stop at the east platform instead of the "usual" western road, easing interchange with the Welsh Highland and passenger access to the road and the village.

Ashbury "Corridor" No. 23 is coupled next to Moel Tryfan with the other "Corridor", No. 25 beyond, the third carriage is one of the Pickerings. Both No. 23 and No. 25 have been cut down, but No.23 had had safety bars fitted to the opening windows

whereas No. 25 has not.

Thanks to the LNWR practice of applying numbers only to the sides of locomotives or tenders, the "Cauliflower" cannot be specifically identified.

The footplate crew are standing next to the loco and the man on the right looks like Willie Hugh Williams, the company's main driver.

The station name board is the original smaller version, subsequently extended to include additional intermediate destinations.

To The General Manager, Welsh Highland Railway

Sir,

22nd April 1924

It would be a great boon and convenience if some different methods were adopted re issuing return tickets when travelling by W.H.R.

Two friends and myself went to Beddgelert yesterday and the guard informed us he had no return tickets. I experienced the same thing last August. It is no wonder one hears so many complaints re the W.H.R. There is no inducement for the general public to travel by the W.H.R.

We purchased the tickets at Beddgelert, and found out by taking returns we saved 7d on each ticket. I trust this matter will receive due consideration.

NOTE on bottom of letter:- Why don't we issue return tickets at halts?

John May replied to this query on 23rd April:-

"There has been hardly any demand at the halts for return tickets, and it is not considered advisable to continue the fares. However, I will look into the matter and see what can be done for the summer".

Derek Lystor comments :-

The passenger was a holidaymaker staying at Waenfawr. At this time the old NWNGR station was classified as halt, and the single fare to Beddgelert was 1/3, a total of 2/6 for the return journey. A return purchased at Beddgelert to Waenfawr was 1/11, 7d cheaper as the passenger noted.

No return tickets were printed in the Colley's series, only singles. Taking 2 singles would have been more profitable for WHR — but this passenger obviously took advantage of this anomaly — to the detriment of WHR takings! Guards obviously did not have books of paper Local Return tickets on board train, which would have alleviated this problem.

Ref GAS XD97/22935