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A FOND FAREWELL



It was Saturday 5th April 2014 and under lowering skies a sombre group of Welsh Highland Heritage supporters gathered below Salem Halt to bid a final farewell to their friend and colleague, John Keylock.

Thanks to Lewis Esposito, John's ashes were to be scattered on Lew's water meadow just below the track of John's beloved Welsh Highland Railway. It was the water meadow in which some years earlier John had planted many bulbs of his favourite, spring-flowering, Snakes Head Fritillary that he knew would thrive in the damp conditions.

Under the frowning gaze of Mynydd Mawr the party made its way from Lew's house – Ty Salem (The Old Chapel) at Betws Garmon - across the road to the meadow with the rain still seeping down from grey skies. Susan

placed the urn of ashes carefully on the ground and planted a few more of John's favourite fritillaries. Ellen Jones, formerly from Nantmor, and now from Criccieth, said a few words that were swept away on the breeze.

breeze – following perhaps Ellen's words.

Well John, together we walked the old track bed here on many occasions, long before the restoration scheme got underway. Together we shared the same dream that one day the valley would echo once again to the mournful sound of a narrow gauge steam locomotive's whistle. Together we watched the restoration taking place, and tried to preserve the old elements of the line. Together we travelled on the restored railway and now together we are saying that poignant final goodbye.

David Allan
23rd April 2014

Photographs by David Allan



Then followed a few minutes of quiet individual contemplation and mental thanks to John for his heroic efforts in the cause of Welsh Highland Heritage. Each then took a spoonful of ashes from the urn and allowed them to blow away on the



Tryfan Junction

Lewis Esposito reviews the restoration of the Tryfan Junction station building and the development of the Slate Trail to Bryngwyn

The decision to restore the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways' station building at Tryfan Junction was announced at the Heritage Group's 2000 A.G.M.; I wasn't there and it took another two years before a wiry and weathered gentleman, but with a friendly face, walked up our driveway. It was the start of a long friendship with John Keylock and my association with the Heritage Group. He became an informal B&B guest at a time when we never did B&B!

In the year 2000 I surveyed and drew scale drawings of all the existing N.W.N.G.R. station buildings to form a useful starting point should their restoration be eventually tackled.

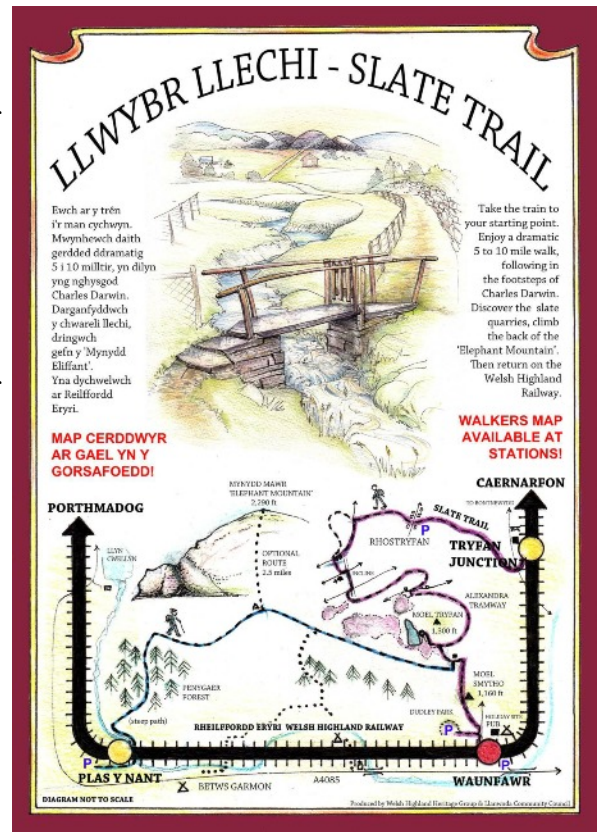


Many will recall the opposition that the railway faced during the planning and reconstruction in those early years. I have endeavoured to make the railway

work for the community in particular by promoting the building of more stations so that the financial rewards of tourism would have a wider impact throughout the Snowdonia National Park. (The Heritage Group played an important role in the reconstruction of Plas y Nant Halt too in 2005, working with 'Friends of Plas y Nant' - a community group and supporters of the 'Plas y Nant' centre, led by Mike Worthington).

Fortunately for the Heritage Group, Llanwnda Community Council (spearheaded by councillors Bethan Williams and Elwyn Jones, a director of the W.H.R.S.), were already determined to complete the conversion of the Bryngwyn branch-line to a footpath. The upper section from Rhostryfan to the Bryngwyn lane at Carmel had been turned into a very basic footpath in 2002. There was no doubt in our minds that the whole branch-line would be converted into a footpath before long. This would potentially help to open up the superb but under-utilised Moel Tryfan and Mynydd Mawr region to walkers. The footpaths to the Alexandra Quarry and to the other local Welsh Highland Railway stations could also be promoted, creating stunning 'one-way-walks'. Tryfan Junction station could act as a feeder to the new 'Slate Trail', as access roads are very narrow and cars should be discouraged. Elwyn Jones visited other National

Parks to see how successfully steam railways and footpaths worked together. This information helped to formulate a presentation plan for their very successful grant applications



made between 2010 and 2013 to the Welsh Assembly government. In all £110,000 was awarded to Llanwnda Community Council to complete the footpath to Tryfan Junction and to create a picnic and parking area at Rhostryfan. There still remains a small section of track bed to convert at Bryngwyn Farm which is outside of their parish but Llandwrog Community Council are making attempts to complete this work.

We were most fortunate too, that in those earlier years we had the enthusiastic and generous Derek Buckles and his wife Jayne living at Tyddyn y Gwydd who helped no end with the station project and are sorely missed.

In 2004 Stuart McNair played a major part in determining what needed to be done, providing a thorough set of drawings and costings based on returning the building as closely as possible to the original in appearance but providing a waiting room, a display area, and a store room. It was

estimated that the building alone would cost £50,000 to repair plus the cost of a platform which could be £11,000 (based on Plas y Nant Halt price). For his enthusiasm he was briefly awarded the task of Project Leader before being seconded by the

In August 2009 the insulated concrete floor was laid to the main building followed by a well-attended and buoyant barbecue.

That year ended with the agreement from Mike Schumann that the group could utilise the remaining materials recovered from Waunfawr station. These were collected from the Waunfawr station site and from Dinas south yard and deposited at Tryfan Junction yard.

February 2010 saw the building of the main station

John Keylock was forever guiding the group (and finding bits of broken blue and white china for my wife Gill to arrange into a well-known pot). Lime mortar taxed us a bit, but November 2011 arrived, and we were ready for our contractor, a very obliging Dafydd Davis to put the roof on before the winter. The scaffolding was up and before most people knew it the roof was on and the chimney rebuilt! Our comrades in the W.H.R.S. west midlands group volunteered to construct the windows led by Maurice Castle, alas no longer with us, and they did a fine job.

February 2013 saw the completion of the station platform and footpaths.

Today the building is almost finished, complete with an antique fireplace (courtesy of a grant from Llanwnda Community Council), and grained wall panelling; the internal doors are from Port Dinorwic railway station, circa 1877. We must also thank Colin Scrivener and David Stevens for sponsoring the fixed memorial seating, and Bob Le Marchant for the oil lamps.



F.R. Co for the railway reconstruction. I had been working with Stuart but after he left I took on the general management of the project in conjunction with John Keylock. I tried to make John's ideas work the best I could (and I hope he would have approved of the result). It was a difficult task but John was a pleasure to be with.



Mike Hadley stepped in and provided the Group with a detailed condition report, followed in 2006 by a structural report by John Sreeves. David Allan and John Keylock worked closely together and presented the project to the attention of the F.R. Co board.

The station project was approved in principle by Michael Whitehouse of the Ffestiniog Railway Company in September 2005, subject to more detailed planning.

Work on the station building stalled until 2008 whilst funds were raised and the site was improved to make reconstruction easier; meanwhile Stuart McNair prepared the plans for the main platform.

After a large site meeting in February 2009, including Peter Gray, it was agreed to start the rebuild in earnest.

platform. On May 1st 2010 a special Heritage Group train travelled to Tryfan Junction from Caernarfon, plied with special replica W.H.R. Tickets.

On the 21st of May 2011 the lower section of the Bryngwyn branch

footpath opened, and a year or so later the Rhostryfan station site was fully landscaped, complete with a slate platform and running in board!

The main reconstruction of the station building then started in earnest, relying heavily upon John Williams for his stone masonry skills and Ian Lord for his overall ability but terrible jokes.



The 'Slate Trail' footpath has proved to be a very popular amenity for local people and visitors are beginning to seek it out too.

We are almost there. It's been a long restoration, and sadly we've lost a few along the way, but the effort's been worth it.

Four N.W.N.G.R. 'Characters'

The two major N.W.N.G.R. accidents involving locomotives and their crews were the derailment caused by a drunken driver on the 23rd Feb 1883 and the collision of a coal truck with a passenger train on the 31st July 1906. Studying these accidents has led me to investigate census records to find Driver Jones and Fireman Williams, who were involved in the first incident, and Driver Beaumont, who is mentioned in the second. The other N.W.N.G.R. driver I have identified (from Festipedia) is Willie Hugh Williams, one of whose driving logs has survived.

In preparing his report on the 1906 accident in which a runaway coal truck struck a following train making its way from Waenfawr to Rhyd Ddu, Lt.Col. Druitt interviewed Driver Beaumont. The evidence included the statement that he had been employed since about 1891 as a driver. This, it appears, was not quite the full truth. Tom Beaumont was, in fact, employed as the fitter. In the 1922 return of wages paid quoted by Boyd (ref. 1) the fitter earned considerably more than the drivers and I am sure this was true in earlier years. That Tom Beaumont was able to drive locos is in no doubt. That he was consequently called upon to do so in cases of illness and holidays is probable. He might also have been called upon to drive when there were three fit engines, all of which were needed out on the line at the same time. This might well have been the case on this day as it is probably relevant that Beaumont's train is referred to as 'an excursion' and there was a service train ahead with probably another up at Bryngwyn at the time of the accident.

Just as an aside, I do wonder which Fairlie he chose to drive. Both Moel Tryfan and Snowdon Ranger had relatively recently been re-boilered

and overhauled. Beddgelert was, according to Boyd, pretty well shot but Russell had arrived about two months before.

Tom Beaumont (never Thomas from birth to death) was born in Stantonbury in 1858 when his father was a fitter at the L.N.W.R. works at Wol-

Dave Rogerson has been reviewing census entries for selected N.W.N.G.R. employees

verton. By 1871 the family had moved to Coppenhall, Crewe, and the following year Tom followed his father as an apprentice fitter. By 1881 he was employed as a fitter in Walsall. In 1883 he married a Walsall girl



The Williams Family grave, St. Gwyndaf's Church, Llanwnda (see detailed view on page 5)

called Mary Jane Pinson and seems to have moved soon afterwards to Blackburn as his eldest child was born there in 1884 and a second in 1887.

By 1891 his family was established in the Bay View Terrace, Llanwnda, just

beyond the junction of the A487 and the A499 south of the village. By 1901 the family had moved to Gwyr-fai Cottages at the southern edge of Bontnewydd and their third child had been born. In 1911 they had moved a short distance to No 1 Libanus Terrace. By this stage their eldest child, Maria, was a schoolteacher living at home: the middle child, Frank, had left home and the youngest, Edward was still at school. In all three censuses Tom declares his occupation as Engine Fitter although the entry for 1901 actually reads Engine Maker-Fitter.

By the time the list copied by Boyd (ref. 1) for 1922 was compiled, the fitter was A.E. Bailey and Tom Beaumont had retired after at least 20 years attention to the locomotives committed to his care. He died later that year at the home of his son in Crewe aged 64. Probate was granted to Mary Jane Beaumont, widow, and Frank Pinson Beaumont, railway clerk.

The first mention of John Williams was as the Fireman in the drunken 1883 trip from Rhyd Ddu which caused Major Marindin to comment on the quality of N.W.N.G.R. employees. The consequence of the accident was that Driver Jones, who it is as yet impossible to identify in the censuses, was sacked whilst Fireman Williams and Guard Morris continued to be employed for many more years.

This might indicate the Company's perspective on its staff. John appears at that time to have been a fairly recent appointment as I can find no record of a railway employee of this name living in the Llanwnda area in 1881. This census contains 119 John Williams's of about the right age born in Caernarvonshire, none specifically in Llanwnda or its environs. If I had to choose one of those who do not specify their place of birth, only the county, I would point towards an ordinary

seaman on the “Robert Williams” out of Caernarvon berthed in Falmouth on the night of the census.

By 1891, at the age of only 29, John Williams had been promoted to Engine Driver and had become easy to find in the census. He lived at Maen Coch, next door to Robert Hughes the Bryngwyn Stationmaster, and by this time was married with four young children. He states he was born about 1862 in Llanwnda. This same family unit is to be found again in 1901 at Maen Coch and in 1911 at Bryn Eden, Rhostryfan. The final mention of John Williams, N.W.N.G.R. employee, is on the list of staff for spring 1922 printed in Boyd (ref. 1). His death later that year is recorded on his gravestone in St. Gwyndaf’s churchyard. His family were obviously proud of his over 40 years faithful service in which he must have passed under the bridge out of Dinas well over 10,000 times.

One of the few links between today’s heritage era and the N.W.N.G.R. is the recorded memories of early preservationists being driven on the W.H.R. by driver Willie. He seems to be one of the very few regularly named in picture captions and the epithet “doyen” has been accorded to him. An earlier issue of this journal (ref. 2) includes an article by John Keylock which records many family memories of ‘Willie Hugh’, some of which are included below.

The family remember that they originate in Amlwch but the census record consistently states that William Hugh Williams was born in 1863 in Llanbeblig. His father, Hugh Williams, was working on the mainland at that time and records his occupation in 1861 as Railway Stoker, presumably on the Bangor and

Caernarvon. By 1871 the family were back in his home town of Amlwch where he was listed as a “labourer on railway”, one assumes on the newly opened Anglesey Central Railway. At the opening of the N.W.N.G.R. the family believe that his father took a job as a railway engine driver which brought him to Church Cottages which lie between Dinas Station and St Gwyndaf’s church. The family record also says that Willie Hugh, aged 13, was employed from the opening of the

away. In 1911 the two men lived at Tyn Llan just beyond the church with Elizabeth’s three youngest children in their household. The three eldest children were living as an independent household in Church Cottages. Elizabeth and her husband cannot be found in that Census.

Over the next few years Willie’s family responsibilities diminished; his father passed away in 1916, his nephews and nieces made homes for

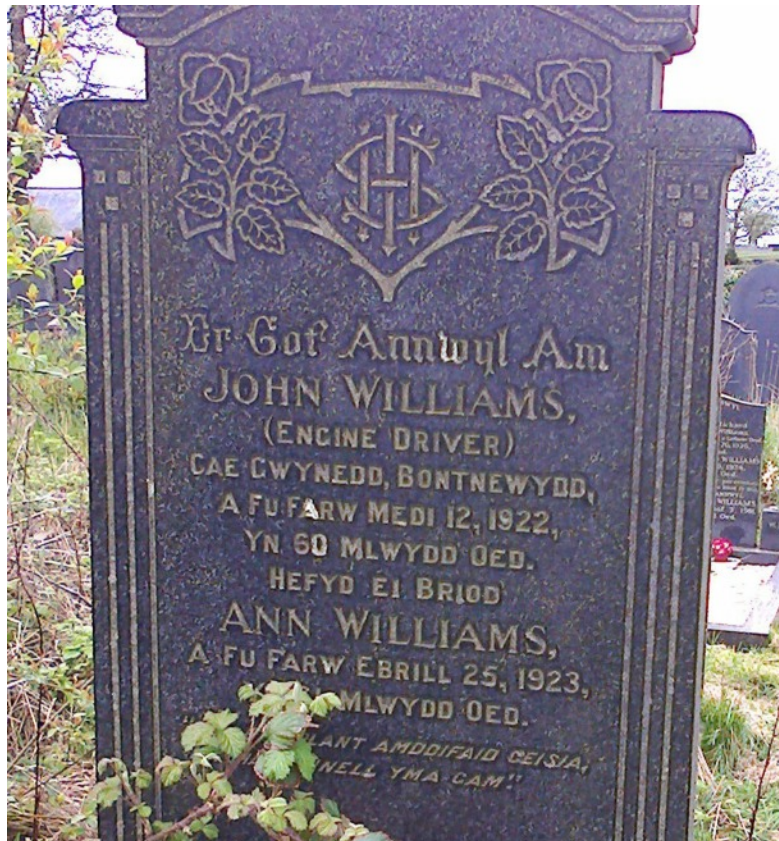
themselves and Willie carried on driving. He was certainly still employed by the N.W.N.G.R. in 1922 as Boyd notes; Festipedia quotes rumours of him still driving for the W.H.R. in the mid 1930’s, family memories record that in fact he was called out of retirement due to staff shortages in 1934 to act as a fireman. The gravestone in Amlwch records that he passed away in 1946 aged 83.

Returning to the 1906 accident it now seems highly probable that either John Williams or Willie Hugh Williams had taken a Fairlie to Bryngwyn, the other full time driver had taken the service train with Russell on the front to Rhyd Ddu and had lost a coal

wagon on the way which crashed into Tom Beaumont following on in the other Fairlie. I wonder which of them Tom was cursing for all the extra work he had to do to sort out the broken buffers and couplings, cracked cylinder and steam chest covers and the bent headstock plate?

References:

- 1) Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire, Volume 1, page 254 – J.I.C. Boyd (1988)
- 2) “A Family Affair” - Welsh Highland Heritage, Issue 30, Page 8 (December 2005)



The Williams Family grave - headstone inscription.

railway. The family grave in Amlwch records the death of Willie’s mother in Llanwnda in 1880. In 1881 Willie, at the age of 17, was a stoker and one imagines Williams ‘père et fils’ working together on the N.W.N.G.R. Willie’s unmarried sister Elizabeth was living with them. By 1891 Elizabeth had married and the menfolk were now lodgers in her husband’s household in Church Cottages, but were still ‘engine driver’ and ‘fireman’. In 1901 the two men were living in the same row, now renamed Dinas Cottages. Hugh had retired and Willie had been promoted to driver. Elizabeth’s family were five doors

NORTH WALES NARROW GAUGE RAILWAYS AND WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY (LIGHT RAILWAY) : A STATION CHRONOLOGY

Richard Maund explores the history of N.W.N.G.R. and W.H.R. Stations, Halts and Goods Facilities

Some confusion exists in various published works about the original and subsequent names of stations during the N.W.N.G.R. era – particularly the name “Snowdon” – and about when changes took effect, as well as about events in the subsequent W.H.R. period. The following tables endeavour to lay out the best available data for opening, closure and renamings of stations (passenger and

goods) and other stopping places. In particular, the tables supersede the details in *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire*: first edition. (1972) pp. 147, 250 and 372, and second edition (1988) Volume 1, pp. 151 and 260, and Volume 2, pp. 2 and 120.

Dates are given in accordance with the “with effect from” convention (i.e. rather than date of last train, in the case of closures). Where only a month is given, this may be the first/last appearance in a timetable (such as *Bradshaw's Guide*), rather than actual date of change. The mileages differ from those given in *Narrow Gauge*

Railways in South Caernarvonshire, which – in regard to the N.W.N.G.R. – appear to have been taken from the Railway Clearing House Official Railway Junction Diagram no. 136, North Wales District, which was for charging purposes and not necessarily reflecting “actuality” (it added 15 chains to the physical distance at Dinas). The mileages shown here are from W.H.R. working timetables of 1923/4, estimated from Fox drawing A.33395, or (for the Bryngwyn branch) taken from the 1934 lease.

Notes in tables

* = mileage from Tryfan Junction.

= estimated mileage.

A. Passenger stopping places: Table 1 deals with the **N.W.N.G.R. period**, Table 2 deals with the **W.H.R. period**.

Table 1: North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways period

Mileage m. ch.	Original name in N.W.N.G.R. period	Opened	Closed	Renamings and other observations
0 0	Dinas	15.8.1877	1.11.1916	Formally renamed Dinas Junction on reopening in 1922 (although the suffix was occasionally used before then).
2 0	Tryfan Junction	15.8.1877	1.11.1916	
1 0*	Rhostryfan	15.8.1877	1.1.1914	
2 20*	Bryngwyn	15.8.1877	1.1.1914	
3 60	Waenfawr	15.8.1877	1.11.1916	
4 40	Bettws Garmon	15.8.1877	1.11.1916	
5 40 #	Salem Halt	<i>probably</i> ca.1881	1.11.1916	Unadvertised – <i>initially</i> for quarrymen to Glanrafon or Bettws Garmon (see <i>WHH</i> no. 50 and 52)
6 0 #	Plas-y-Nant	-	-	No evidence of it being open in N.W.N.G.R. era
6 30 #	Quellyn	15.8.1877	1.6.1878	Temporary terminus. <i>There is no evidence to support Boyd's contention that it was named Quellan: according to company's opening timetable it was Quellyn.</i>
7 20	Snowdon	1.6.1878	1.11.1916	Renamed Snowdon Ranger 7.1881, Quellyn Lake 1.1893
8 10 #	Glanrafon Siding	<i>probably</i> 14.5.1881	<i>by</i> 10.1901	Unadvertised – for quarrymen (see <i>WHH</i> no. 50). Sometimes referred to as Glanyrafon.
9 20	Rhyd Ddu	14.5.1881	1.11.1916	Renamed Snowdon 1.1893, South Snowdon on reopening in 1922

Table 2: Welsh Highland Railway (Light Railway) period

Mileage m. ch.	Original name in W.H.R. Period	Opened/ re-opened	Closed	Re-namings and other observations
0 0	Dinas Junction	31.7.1922	28.9.1936	Renamed Dinas Junction on reopening in 1922 (but sometimes still rendered simply as Dinas, particularly on tickets)
2 0	Tryfan Junction	31.7.1922	28.9.1936	Request stop and renamed Tryfan from 9.7.1934
3 60	Waenfawr	31.7.1922	28.9.1936	Request stop from 11.7.1927
4 40	Bettws Garmon	31.7.1922	28.9.1936	
5 40 #	Salem Halt	2.10.1922	28.9.1936	
6 0 #	Plas-y-Nant	ca.4.1924	28.9.1936	Request stop. <i>May</i> have opened slightly earlier. "Halt" suffix deleted 9.7.1923. Request stop (previously semi-official). <i>Plas-y-Nant was not on the map in Railway Magazine, December 1923, so presumably post-dates that.</i>
6 30 #	Quellyn	-	-	Not open in W.H.R. period
7 20	Quellyn Lake	31.7.1922	28.9.1936	Request stop from 11.7.1927
7 55 #	Glanrafon Siding	-	-	Not open in W.H.R. period
9 20	South Snowdon	31.7.1922	28.9.1936	Renamed South Snowdon on reopening in 1922. Nearly renamed Rhyd Ddu from 1934 (only tickets so appeared – continued to be advertised as South Snowdon).
10 24	Pitt's Head	1.6.1923	2.10.1933	Request stop
11 20	Hafod Ruffydd	1.6.1923	2.10.1933	Request stop
13 25	Beddgelert	1.6.1923	28.9.1936	Proposed halt – never opened
15 31	Aberglaslyn	-	-	
15 43	Nantmor for Aberglaslyn	1.6.1923	28.9.1936	
16 25	Hafod-y-Llyn	1.6.1923	2.10.1933	Request stop. Renamed Aberglaslyn and made "definite" stop 9.7.1934
17 25	Ynysferlas	1.6.1923	2.10.1933	Request stop. <i>Handbook of Stations</i> rendered name as "Hafodyllyn"
17 77	Croesor Junction	by 8.1923	2.10.1933	Request stop. Renamed Hafod Garregog 9.7.1923
18 27	Ynysfor for Llanfrothen	1.6.1923	2.10.1933	Unadvertised request stop (also known as Tanlan) prior to 26.9.1927
19 27	Pont Croesor for Prenteg	1.6.1923	2.10.1933	Request stop. "for" suffix quickly dropped.
21 18 #	Portmadoc – north platform	20.5.1929	28.9.1936	Request stop. "for" suffix quickly dropped.
21 22	Portmadoc	1.6.1923	28.9.1936	Supplementary platform north of G.W.R. crossing; not a separate "station", nor advertised as such (despite spurious references to (1929), (1931), (1933) station). Station owned by Festiniog Railway. Booking office closed 9.1928. Renamed Portmadoc (New) 8.7.1929. It is not entirely clear what function - <i>other than</i> public access to reach its north platform - that part of the station south of the crossing had during the lease period (see WHH no. 46).
21 51	Junction with Festiniog Rly	1.6.1923	28.9.1936	End of W.H.R. passenger line at High Street - not a passenger stopping place

The Bryngwyn branch was not reopened for passengers by the W.H.R. (although the Railway Clearing House *Handbook of Stations* continued to show both stations as "passenger" until

the W.H.R.'s final demise). The railway had an erratic pattern of winter operation after winter 1923/4 – sometimes with parts closed or limited days of operation, particularly south of

Beddgelert. Winter passenger services were *entirely* withdrawn after winter 1929/30 and the railway was thereafter seasonal. During the 1926 General Strike and

subsequent coal shortage, the whole line was closed to passengers from 4.5.1926 until reopened 19.7.1926. No passenger operation over the G.W.R. crossing from 1.10.1928 until resumed 9.7.1934. W.H.R. leased by Festiniog Railway with effect from 26.6.1934 (seasonal passenger services

ran from 9.7.1934 until 26.9.1936). Although there were neither tickets nor advertising during the lease period for the stopping places shown closed 2.10.1933, some do not regard this as evidence of their having “closed” (readers must form their own view). It is questionable to what extent (if

any) passenger trains ran south of the Portmadoc *north platform* during the final fortnight of passenger operation. For analysis of services during the W.H.R. period and amplification of the above table – particularly details of seasonal closures – refer to *WHH* no. 57.

Table 3a: Goods Stations opened by the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway

Mileage m. ch.	Original name	Opened	Closed	Renamings and other observations
0 0	Dinas	21.5.1877	31.5.1937	Also interchange with L&N.W.R./L.M&S.R. Renamed Dinas Junction 1922 (but sometimes still rendered simply as Dinas) G
2 0	Tryfan Junction	21.5.1877	31.5.1937	Siding removed by 1900 (no traffic recorded in 1919, which is not surprising for a site serving principally as a junction). Unstaffed by 1922. <i>Junction facing Dinas.</i> G
1 0*	Rhostryfan	21.5.1877	31.5.1937	G
2 20*	Bryngwyn	21.5.1877	31.5.1937	G
2 60*	Drumhead	21.5.1877	31.5.1937	Top of Bryngwyn incline – interchange with various quarry lines (regarded as part of Bryngwyn station). Those quarries still working had not used the W.H.R. since the end of January 1935. ¶
3 60	Waenfawr	21.5.1877	31.5.1937	G
3 70 #	Dudley Park	29.3.1926	31.5.1937	Granite quarry (<i>WHH</i> no. 62); new facility inspected for MoT on 6.10.1926 ¶
4 20 #	Treflan	1901 (<i>by</i> 5.1902)	early 1930s	Slate quarries: Treflan and Garreg Fawr (<i>WHH</i> no. 48); new facility inspected for BoT on 7.5.1902; siding operable in 1926; Treflan closed ca. 1928 ¶
4 40	Bettws Garmon	21.5.1877	31.5.1937	Also siding connection to Victoria (Hafod-y-Wern) Quarries (closed in mid 1920s – <i>WHH</i> no. 11). Station unstaffed by 1927. G
5 0 #	Ystrad Isaf	1909	13.9.1919	Ironstone quarry (sometimes erroneously referred to as Garreg Fawr ironstone quarry – <i>WHH</i> no. 39); connection lifted by 1926 – possibly in 1922. ¶
5 35 #	Salem Halt	-	-	No goods facilities
5 45 #	Salem Quarry	?	16.10.1922	Small slate quarry – source of material during railway’s refurbishment (<i>quarry closure and redundancy of pointsman: memo in WHRHG archives</i>). ¶
6 0 #	Plas-y-Nant	?21.5.1877	1886	Slate quarry (<i>WHH</i> no. 25). ¶
6 30 #	Quellyn	21.5.1877	1.6.1878	Limited, temporary facilities with no pointwork, <i>so was goods traffic actually handled here during its brief life?</i>
7 20	Snowdon	1.6.1878	31.5.1937	Renamed Snowdon Ranger 7.1881, Quellyn Lake 1.1893. G
8 10 #	Glanrafon Siding	<i>probably</i> 14.5.1881	<i>c.1928 - 1931</i>	Slate quarry (<i>WHH</i> nos. 8, 15 and 18). Limited use after ca. 1901; siding operable in 1926; no traffic by 1931. This location does appear in the <i>Handbook of Stations</i> – but not as a general goods station. ¶
8 60 #	Rhos Clogwyn	? 1902	by 1915	Slate quarry (<i>WHH</i> no. 17); a siding existed here at one or more periods but traffic was apparently loaded on the main line in the 1920s. ¶
9 20	Rhyd Ddu	14.5.1881	31.5.1937	Renamed Snowdon 1.1893, South Snowdon 31.7.1922. G

B. Goods stations

This table deals with both the pre-W.H.R. and the W.H.R. periods, for – despite what may be suggested in some publications – the predecessor companies continued to operate

a goods service during the First World War and until the W.H.R. took over (even McAlpine’s contract for refitting the N.W.N.G.R. and up-grading the P.B.&S.S.R. required them to afford facilities for goods traffic

during that process). However, during the 1926 General Strike and subsequent coal shortage, the whole line was closed to passengers (as mentioned above – and possibly also to freight, to some degree) from

4.5.1926 until reopened 2.11.1931. "Goods" will have as a garage, in kit form, 19.7.1926. The railway was included less-than-wagonload unloaded at Hafod Ruffydd. also formally closed to all traffic consignments which may not from 12.10.1931 until reopened have required a siding – such

Table 3b: Goods Stations opened by the Welsh Highland Railway

Mileage m. ch.	Original name	Opened	Closed	Renamings and other observations
10 24	Pitt's Head	-	-	No goods facilities
11 20	Hafod Ruffydd	1.6.1923	31.5.1937	No <i>declared</i> goods facilities
	<i>Coed Mawr</i>			<i>See footnote below</i>
13 25	Beddgelert	1.6.1923	31.5.1937	G
15 31	Aberglaslyn			Proposed halt – never opened
15 43	Nantmor for Aberglaslyn	1.6.1923	31.5.1937	Renamed Aberglaslyn 9.7.1934 G
16 25	Hafod-y-Llyn	1.6.1923	31.5.1937	<i>Handbook of Stations</i> rendered name as "Hafodyllyn" G
17 25	Ynysferlas	1.6.1923	31.5.1937	Renamed Hafod Garregog 9.7.1923 G
17 77	<i>Croesor Junction</i>	-	-	No goods facilities. <i>Junction facing Portmadoc.</i>

Table 3c: Goods Stations opened by the Croesor Tramway

Mileage m. ch.	Original name	Opened	Closed	Renamings and other observations
<i>see note</i>	(Pont) Carreg (or Carrig) Hyllidrem	-	-	This ca. 40ch branch (presumably opened 1.8.1864 or thereabouts and ceased to be used when the W.H.R. withdrew goods service) from Croesor Junction was horse-worked, by contractor, serving a goods station known as Gwernydd and an end-on connection with the non-statutory section of the tramway (which served the various Croesor valley quarries and Croesor village). ¶
18 27	Ynysfor	1.6.1923	31.5.1937	G
19 27	Pont Croesor	1.6.1923	31.5.1937	No <i>declared</i> goods facilities
20 03 #	Farmyard Sand siding (Portreuddyn)	<i>by</i> 10.1926	31.5.1937	Sand pit; new facility inspected for MoT on 6.10.1926. ¶
21 0 #	Gelert Siding	1.8.1864	31.5.1937	Initial Croesor Tramway/Croesor & Portmadoc Railway Portmadoc terminus. Latterly interchange with Cambrian/G.W.R.'s "Gelert Siding" (<i>Handbook of Stations</i> name). <i>Name as stated by S E Tyrwhitt to MoT 28.5.1923 and in memo 19.9.1925. Shown as "Gelert's Sidings" in W.H.R. 1924 working timetable and as "Gelert Interchange Sidings" on plan supplied for 1926 MoT inspection; often referred to (erroneously) as Cambrian or Beddgelert Siding</i>
21 18 #	Portmadoc – north platform	-	-	No goods facilities
21 22	Portmadoc	-	-	Station <i>owned</i> by Festiniog Railway. No goods facilities at this site. The G awarded in the 1929 <i>Handbook of Stations</i> presumably refers to Gelert Siding which is not otherwise mentioned for the W.H.R.
21 37 #	various sidings	11.1864	-	After 1937, continued to be served by Festiniog Rly. Flour/corn (Snowdon) mill, Glaslyn Foundry and Gorseddau Junction sidings
21 51	<i>Junction with Festiniog Rly</i>	-	-	Not a goods station. From 1923 replaced direct line to Portmadoc wharves.
22 19 #	Portmadoc Wharves	?1865	-	After 1937, continued to be served by Festiniog Rly. Recorded in <i>Handbook of Stations</i> only as "Dock Extension" – Festiniog Rly.

The section of line from Rhyd Ddu to Coed Mawr (Beddgelert Forest) – originally constructed by the Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway (but not opened for public traffic) – was used as a “private siding” by a timber merchant under a 3-year agreement dated 12.12.1912; agreement subsequently extended and arrangement still operative until at least 1919.

The reporting to the Railway Clearing House for inclusion in their *Handbook of Stations* seems to have been a slightly haphazard affair: of the “new” Welsh Highland locations only Beddgelert and Portmadoc (plus the renaming of Snowdon to South Snowdon) had appeared by 1926 – the others were later still. The failure to delete reference to passenger facilities at Rhostryfan and Bryngwyn has been remarked on above.

Locations (eventually) recorded in the *Handbook* as open for general goods traffic are marked **G** above, whereas

those marked ¶, having no *general* goods facilities and being for specific traders only, got no mention in the *Handbook* (apart from Glanrafon). For more details of these quarry siding connections see *WHH* no 11.

The Festiniog Railway’s (as lessors) formal cessation of commercial goods traffic took effect at the end of May 1937 (variously quoted as 31 May or 1 June: Monday 31.5.1937 has been used above). *Railway Magazine* June 1941 stated: “goods and mineral traffic was conveyed for the last time on June 1, 1937 and the railway has since closed” but this dating seems questionable. Closure dates quoted later in June confuse closure to *commercial revenue traffic* with subsequent movements to repatriate Festiniog-owned and Welsh Highland-owned rolling stock to their respective lines. Such a movement ran on Saturday 19.6.1937 (C E Lee, *The Welsh Highland Railway*, 1962) (and possibly caused *Clinker’s Register* to give the following Monday 21.6.1937

as the “with effect from” closure date); another movement was needed from Beddgelert to Dinas Junction, apparently on Friday 25.6.1937, which date was the last such movement – but this was not *revenue* traffic. The Great Western’s Chief Goods Manager’s circular R1534481 of 28 June 1937 laconically records that “The above Railway [*W.H.R.*] has now been closed altogether” and goes on to instruct that traffic for the southern area it had served was now to be dealt with by Country Lorry Service from Portmadoc, G.W.R.

Caernarfon spelling: prior to 1926, the spelling of town and county was Carnarvon. From 2 February that year the town became Caernarvon, the L.M.S. station following suit on 27 March and the county from 1 July. The current spelling was not adopted until well after the Second World War.

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6 March 2014

John Prideaux and John Alexander have submitted this follow-up to their notes on bogie carriage development published in *WHH* Issue 62.

At the end of our article *N.W.N.G.R. Coaches - the Prototypes?* in Welsh Highland Heritage No. 62, we expressed the hope that more would emerge on the history of the development of the Spooner bogie carriages for the N.W.N.G.R. and the Festiniog.

In particular, we had been intrigued by an undated drawing in the F.R. Archives at Caernarfon showing a 2 ft 9 in gauge bogie carriage¹ and wondered if it might have been intended for one of the eight 2 ft to 2 ft 9 in gauge railways proposed in North Wales that were contained in the draft Bill sent to Parliament in April 1872². However, it appears that this is more likely to have been proposed in connection with the debate on the proposed gauges for Indian Railways that was taking place in 1871³.

We are grateful to Mike Davis for confirming that the axle box covers now on No 24 came from the bogies of No 23, which were replaced by overhauled F.R. Bogies. Some of these had N.W.N.G.R. lids and others were plain. Some of the current lids are original N.W.N.G.R. and some are modern replacements.

As our continuing research has yet to find anything further on the N.W.N.G.R. carriages, but has revealed much on Spooner’s development of bogie carriage for the Festiniog Railway, this will be reported in the Festiniog Railway Heritage Journal in due course.

However, at the beginning of May we did find that, at about the beginning of 1906, a number of drawings were lent to Bruce Peebles & Co Ltd by the

Festiniog Railway and these were subsequently destroyed in a fire. These could well have included drawings relating to both the F.R. and the N.W.N.G.R.. Is there any further information in the Bruce Peebles archives?

John Prideaux and John Alexander

¹ XD 97 460007 *Double Bogie Iron Girder Passenger Carriage. Third Class for 2’ 9” gauge*

² *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* J I C Boyd pp 154-156

³ *Issues of Engineering and The Engineer* between September and December 1871

From the Editor

“How do I follow that?”, I thought when first the e-mails and phone calls started to arrive.

Following his announcement at the 2013 A.G.M. we all knew of David Allan's decision to vacate the Chairmanship of the Heritage Group and, after the production of 60 Issues of this Journal, to pass on its Editorship. Unfortunately, David's announcement was followed by John Keylock's untimely death later in the year which, naturally, delayed succession planning and he soldiered on to produce Issues 61 and 62 (September and December 2013).

Issue 62, with its heartfelt tributes to John proved a fitting valediction to Dave's reign as Editor.

I had previously discussed the future Editorship of the Journal with both David and John and I did make clear to them my view that the ideal choice for the new incumbent would be an enthusiast of comparatively tender years who could ensure the longevity and continuity characterised by David's tenure.

The Heritage Group, as with so many like organisations, seems unable to attract the levels of younger membership that might be hoped and, clearly, John and David struggled to find a suitable replacement. In January of this year, the direct representations resumed, this time from our new committee. Unfortunately, due to family circumstances, I was in no position to agree to their requests at that time, nor at any time during the first three months of this year.

However, circumstances have clarified and I was able, somewhat reluctantly given my earlier arguments with David

and John, to accept the task at the beginning of April.

Sadly, as a result of this hiatus we have 'missed' our traditional first issue date of the year leaving me with the

has been the envy of many for the period of nearly 17 years since the first Issue appeared in November 1997.

From now on, I will strive to produce a regular Journal to the quality that our members have come to expect, however I will be critically dependent on members' contributions to future Issues. My thanks go to Richard Maund, David Rogerson, David Allan and Lewis Esposito who's particular contributions make up most of this Issue.

However, my very special thanks must go to David Allan for his sterling efforts producing the previous 62 Issues. There can be little doubt that it was these publications that cemented my desire to join and to support The Heritage Group as progressively they documented and presented the Railway's history together with its development through the years following its closure.

“Recording Yesterday for Tomorrow” says it all, I think. Not only does this phrase neatly summarise

what we are about, but it also serves as a salutary reminder that today's documentation quickly becomes tomorrow's research resource.

We owe it to the future to get it right!

Thanks again, David, and, of course, John - you will be an extremely hard act to follow!

Peter Liddell



**John Keylock and David Allan at
Waenfawr July 2003**

unenviable decision as to whether this year we will see only three, or the usual four, issues of Welsh Highland Heritage.

Inevitably, I think, this Issue 63 will be the first of only three to appear this year and 'normal service', hopefully, will be resumed next year.

Of course, as any editor of a regular publication will know, his product can only be as good as its contributions. David was blessed with a significant volume of high quality submissions and was able to produce a Journal that

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis



H.B. Tours (WHR32a)

God bless Mr Egide Walschaerts for his wonderful valve gear, invented in 1844! Unlike Mr Stephenson's link motion, which more often than not is tucked away from prying eyes, Mr Walschaerts' radial gear is usually there for all to see. At a glance, his valve gear tells us such great deal, for example we can see instantly whether a locomotive is fitted with inside-admission (piston) or outside-admission (slide) valves.

The photograph reproduced above showing the Baldwin coupled to a train of, presumably, Welsh Highland stock (we can only see the leading carriage) has, to this author's knowledge, been published twice. In one instance, the caption read;

"Another view of 590 passing Beddgelert Siding in July 1936"⁽¹⁾ and in the other;

"Baldwin No 590 is seen at the second Portmadoc (New) station, with coach No 27 in tow, around 1935..."⁽²⁾

The picture tells us so much more than is captured in these brief comments.

First, as to the location, the picture was not taken at "Portmadoc New (1929)" but rather at the Portmadoc-end of the main Gelert Sidings loop.

However, of much greater significance is the observation that the locomotive was in reverse gear when photographed. Far from No. 27 being "in tow", the train was in fact being propelled back towards Portmadoc New. That portion of the train which we can see was devoid of any passengers and, whilst this might not have been uncommon on some services, it is less surprising, or disappointing perhaps, when we realise the train was being pushed towards the station.

This photograph, it would seem, captured 590 returning to Portmadoc New after completing a run-around manoeuvre further up the Gelert Sidings complex. As noted in recent discussions on the Gelert Sidings

layout, the portion of the loop visible in this photograph was not available for locomotive run-around as it would have entailed the locomotive crossing the slate weighbridge.

However, the photograph was definitely taken in the mid-1930's after the establishment of the F.R. Lease and the re-opening of the standard gauge crossing – note, for example, the orientation of 590.

It has been suggested that even after the re-opening of the crossing some Welsh Highland trains nevertheless terminated and reversed north of the standard gauge and this photograph certainly appears to confirm that this was actually the case.

1) An Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway, 2nd Edition, P. Johnson, Page 68.

2) The Welsh Highland Railway, Volume 2: Halfway to Paradise, J. Stretton, Page 123.