

# WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

March 2015

ISSN 1462-1371

£2.00

Issue No. 66

Web : [www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk](http://www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk)

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AT TRYFAN JUNCTION

**D**evelopments at Tryfan Junction continue apace! Internal detailing continues and the building now sports a ticket window and booking office details as part of the effort to recreate the ‘atmosphere’ of a typical Victorian or Edwardian station building. Steps are being taken to acquire additional embellishments, for example an original Edmondson ticket rack and tickets further to refine the detailing of the ‘office’ area. As noted in the last issue of W.H.H., any donations of artefacts which could contribute to achieving this final objective would be most appreciated.



Two views of the interior of Tryfan Junction Station building - a view looking from the ‘office’ (left) and from the ‘waiting room’ (right) - Lewis Esposito

## The N.R.H.A. Award

**A**s readers will no doubt by now be aware, our Tryfan Junction Station restoration won the N.R.H.A. Award in its class at the Association’s Awards Ceremony in London last December.

The commemorative plaque which accompanied the Award is to be installed at Tryfan Junction and will be officially unveiled on the morning of Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup>, probably at 10:15 a.m. or thereabouts.



Sir Peter Hendy, Commissioner for Transport London, Michael Davies, Nick Booker and John Ellis, Chairman of the N.R.H.A. Awards Management Committee, with plaque commemorating the N.R.H.A. Volunteers Award to Tryfan Junction

# HOLMAN STEPHENS MEETS THE WELSH HIGHLAND....

As the dust settled after the Great War, the “Dolgarrog consortium” from the Aluminium Corporation Ltd were gathering their forces to make what might be considered a “reverse take-over” by the uncompleted Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon (which they owned) of the Festiniog and the barely active North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways, replacing the former Festiniog board on 16 July 1921. With great zeal Henry Joseph Jack and Evan Robert Davies – the driving

## Richard Maund considers Colonel Stephens’ early involvements with early Welsh Highland Railway developments

but the W.H.R. work was under the local supervision of J. K. Prendergast, based at the Goat Hotel, Beddgelert, who probably should be credited with the design of the line as built.

miles, to be improved by a series of loops, which allowed the ruling gradient to be reduced....”

This claim refers to the elongated replacement for the steeply graded, never-opened alignment constructed in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Cwm Cloch, north of Beddgelert, which was already included in the L.R.O. plans (and worked up into the contract specification) more than a year before Stephens’ formal appointment as Engineer (the F.R. Board Meeting of 27 August 1923



Excavation of the ‘new’ deep cutting above Beddgelert on the re-aligned Welsh Highland route - Williams - ca. 1922

forces behind the whole project – set about financing and building what was to become the Welsh Highland element of their railway “empire”. The engineering consultants for the Corporation’s Dolgarrog schemes, (Sir) Douglas Fox & Partners, were given the task of developing the plans for the 1922 Light Railway Order and later supervising the building, by McAlpines, of the new line. They already had an out-base at Clark Street, Dolgarrog,

However, at the time of the W.H.R.’s 1937 closure by the Festiniog, the trade magazine *Modern Transport* (21 August 1937, page 1) carried an article about the W.H.R., including the following statement:

“On the advice of the late Colonel H. F. Stephens, some of the earlier works near Beddgelert were abandoned. This enabled the railway, which now totalled 21¼

recorded that Stephens had been appointed “to act as Engineer ... of the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways from the first day of May”) <sup>1</sup>. So had Stephens previously made some input to Fox’s design of the new line?

Curiosity is piqued by the following questions:

- 1) what might have brought him into contact with the nascent W.H.R.

- before* the design work was drawn up by Fox in spring 1922?;
- 2) why was such early involvement (if any!) apparently not acknowledged until 1937?;
  - 3) why didn't it lead to his earlier appointment as Engineer?;
  - 4) why – if he was involved so early – did he (and, indeed, Prendergast) *at that stage* not also recognize the need for the realignment *below* Beddgelert – the subject of the Light Railway Amendment Order of 1923, developed in the later months of 1922?;
  - 5) if not influential in the 1922 design work, how did Stephens come to be appointed in spring 1923? <sup>2</sup>

The earliest correspondence from Stephens to be found in the Festiniog Railway records at Gwynedd Archives at Caernarfon is a letter of 27 May 1907 concerning the intended formation and objectives of an Association of Smaller Railway Companies. As the War drew to a close, and railway nationalisation or grouping began seriously to be discussed politically, Stephens increased his activities through the Association: the Festiniog maintained an interest in the Association – and doubtless Stephens maintained an interest in the Festiniog! Gratton and Band in their book, *The Ashover Light Railway* (Wild Swan, 1989), state on page 15 that Stephens was in the north of Wales in the summer of 1918 “...interesting himself with the moribund P.B.&S.S.R....” despite or because of his wartime activities with the Territorials. The P.B.&S.S.R. was already firmly within the Dolgarrog ambit – but while both Jack and Davies were active in Carnarvonshire affairs, the resuscitation of the 1914 Light Railway Order does not seem to have developed actively between them until Davies moved to 10 Downing Street in 1919. Stephens spent much of 1919 and 1920 in Whitehall, attempting to influence light railway legislation in the run up to the Railways Act 1921, which brought him into close contact with senior officials working for the Minister concerned (Sir Eric Campbell-Geddes), of whom at least two became close acquaintances; he was also a member of the Liberal Club. He was thus close to the centre of the political heartland – it seems very likely that he met Davies in this milieu.

Nevertheless, Jack – with his Aluminium Corporation hat on – seems to have been firmly committed to the Fox partnership,

which was a well-established part of the Dolgarrog operations – and it was to them that he and Davies turned when they did revive the pre-war L.R.O. application.

So did Stephens advise them in 1921/2 or did he not? His own published C.V. – believed to date from late 1918 – makes no specific mention (but it *might* come under “General consulting work and reporting on various schemes, cases, &c., from 1890 to present date”). Even recognizing that – like other professionals – his emoluments had to bear the costs of his Tonbridge office and staff, he never seems to have been backward in coming forward to get paid for his railway work. Although his military service ceased to be full time after 1916, his involvement with the Territorials was much reduced by 1918 when he began to become very active in lobbying through the association. One is prompted to ask: if appointment as Engineer to the F.&W.H.R. was a *quid pro quo*, why was it so long delayed?

Some have claimed the W.H.R. didn't *need* an engineer before 1923 – but remember that the N.W.N.G.R. never actually closed, and passenger services re-started in July 1922, so that does not hold water – and anyway the P.B.&S.S.R. had an engineer as did the N.W.N.G.R. until Aitchison departed when the Dolgarrog regime moved in. The F.R. clearly needed one, for the new regime had appointed James Williamson (the Cambrian's Assistant Engineer) as recently as 1 October 1921 – surely within the time-frame in which any input from Stephens to the W.H.R. plans would *already* have had to have been made. If the F.&W.H.R. “owed” Stephens and he were so close to matters at that stage (as would surely have been necessary if he had prompted the redesign of the route through Beddgelert) why did he not get the job *then*, rather than in spring 1923? During the period 1919-1923, however, he was heavily involved in other detailed railway matters – buying the Selsey and the Snailbeach, negotiating for funding for the Gower proposal and the North Devon & Cornwall Junction Railway, building both the latter and the Ashover – as well as running his existing lines in the very difficult economic times prevailing. These matters became more settled after 1923 and the heavy-weight political lobbying would have been over with the passing of the Railway Act; this may explain why Stephens then had time to take a more formal role with the Portmadoc railways – perhaps even to “canvass” for such a role?

On the other hand, if Stephens had had no part in the route redesign, why did Charles F. Klapper, the canny *Modern Transport* editor, cause (or allow) the claim to appear posthumously in 1937? Klapper is known to have been well acquainted with Stephens so the information presumably came from the man himself.

By the bye, it may be noted (again from Gratton and Band) that Stephens did not return empty handed from his North Wales sojourn of 1918, for this was the beginning of his relationship with the Ashover Light Railway, through a meeting with General Jackson of the Clay Cross Co.

Brian Janes, Hon. Curator of The Colonel Stephens Railway Museum (who has kindly contributed to these notes), adds: “On a purely superficial and speculative note, Stephens’ free pass for the L&NWR for 1922 (which is in the possession of the Museum at Tenterden) is very well used, perhaps more than you might expect for simply travelling to Shrewsbury for the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire and Snailbeach!”

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> : The dates of appointment and posts to which Stephens was appointed in 1923 are a source of confusion among the “established histories”: Boyd’s *Festiniog Railway* vol. 1 (1975) p. 196, the same author’s *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* vol. 2 (1989) p. 26, Johnson’s *Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway* (second edition 2009) p. 63 and Shaw’s article in *Festiniog Railway Heritage Group Journal* no. 65 (2001) all have Stephens appointed to both posts from 1 April 1923 whereas Johnson’s *Illustrated History of the Festiniog Railway* (2007) p. 116 gives 1 May 1923 (also for both posts for both railways). Boyd’s *Festiniog Railway* vol. 2 (1975) p. 569 gives May 1924 as Loco Supt. and p. 570 gives April 1924 as Engineer but both are clearly in error. Johnson’s states (*IHRF* page 116) that Stephens visited the railways on 16 April 1923 (implying *before* appointment) and the fact that he seems to have played no part in the Ministry of Transport inspection on 24 May 1923 (which might seem curious had he been in post since April) suggest that the minutes may be correct, at least regarding the engineer’s post. So far as the Loco Supt’s post is concerned, none of these tallies with Robert Williams’ continued appearance in that post in *Cambrian News* at the time of the W.H.R. opening in June 1923 and in the 1924 edition of *Railway Year Book* (for which data would have been supplied by the company in that spring), nor with Huson’s report of W.H.R. personnel as at 31 December 1924 (Gwynedd Archives item XC2/33/58) which shows Stephens merely as Engineer and Williams as Loco Supt at that date.

<sup>2</sup> : Johnson’s *Illustrated History of the Festiniog Railway* (2007) p. 116 states that Davies and Jack sought Stephens (“they went to see him.”)

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16 September 2014

# STAFFING BEDDGELERT

During its short operating period from 1922 – 1937, the Welsh Highland Railway provided employment for over fifty staff, ranging from stationmasters to cleaners. Some, such as the stationmaster at Dinas, Daniel O. Jones, driver Willie Hugh Williams and guard Dafydd Lloyd Hughes, spent most, if not all, of their working lives on the system, having started with the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway. Indeed, Willie Hugh, having retired in 1928, came back to the W.H.R. in 1934, continuing to drive until the line finally closed. Most however only enjoyed comparatively short periods of employment, due in the main to the serious financial situation that continuously plagued the company. From time to time staff were made redundant or laid off in an effort to reduce costs, especially in the winter months when services were reduced or later withdrawn completely. With the reinstatement of passenger services to South Snowdon in June 1922, the line was staffed by the existing 18 ex N.W.N.G.R. employees, this number rising to over 25 when additional new staff were taken on when the line was extended through to Portmadoc the following year. These figures contrast sharply with the situation at the end of the 1933 season when staffing levels had dropped to only 5 full time and 3 part time employees. The final three years under F.R. lease control saw an increase in passenger services and it is assumed that the necessary additional train crew were purely that company's own employees.

Through the survival of various documents, especially those contained in the Quellyn Lake hoard and the recently catalogued F.R./W.H.R. (XD97) archive at Gwynedd Archives, we are fortunate to be able to give a fairly accurate account of staffing levels at Beddgelert station. First mention of staff arrangements at the station is given in a notice issued from Portmadoc on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1923 giving details of arrangements for Lt.Col. Mount's Inspection of the new section of line from South Snowdon to Portmadoc taking place 2 days later. Station Master H.D. Jones was to be on duty at Beddgelert from 8.30 am until the inspection train had left for Portmadoc, and was to keep the station clear of the public as best he could. Confirmation of the transfer of staff from the F.R. to the W.H.R. is given in the following letter from S.E. Tyrwhitt to H.E. Jones (Portmadoc S.M.) dated 29<sup>th</sup> May 1923:-

## Dick Lystor reviews Welsh Highland employment arrangements at Beddgelert

*"Owing to re-arrangement of staff in connection with the Welsh Highland Rly, Guard E. Lewis is to be a guard on the new line. Clerk J. Roberts will take charge of Tanybwllch in lieu of H.D. Jones who is to go to Beddgelert. Porter R. Jones will be transferred to Beddgelert as Porter Clerk and Porter T.J. Williams will come here in his place. The above arrangements are temporary and are to come into force on June 1<sup>st</sup>."*

It is interesting to note that these arrangements were classified as temporary, and apart from Hugh Davies Jones (H.D.J.),



**In this indifferent photograph from 1923 we see the Beddgelert Stationmaster (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) with the crew of an F.R. Train headed by double-Fairlie James Spooner. From the date, we speculate that this was H.D. Jones. (WHR 104)**

this was certainly the case for most employees who came to Beddgelert station! H.D.J. had been employed by the F.R. since 1919 at both Penrhyn and Tanybwllch. It is apparent that he came over to Beddgelert some time before Tyrwhitt's letter was written, maybe to arrange accommodation at Sygun Terrace where he and his wife took up residence. Throughout his tenure as Station Master at Beddgelert he had a number of employees under him, most of who acted as porters. A full account of these appeared in Journal 16, so only brief details, with minor corrections, are given here.

From July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1923, Porter/Clerk R. Jones, formerly a porter at Portmadoc Harbour who had been at Beddgelert from day one, temporarily transferred to Minffordd in place of T.J. Williams who took his place. A further F.R. employee, R.T. Owen, a signalman at Blaenau, was appointed Resident Guard from Monday 9<sup>th</sup>. Later

that month, H.D.J. was asked to arrange for the carriages to be cleaned (there was a rake stabled at Beddgelert overnight at this time in readiness for the early morning Beddgelert to Portmadoc turn), but there is no evidence that

a cleaner was employed, the job more likely being delegated to Williams. Coinciding with (and probably as a result of) the withdrawal of this early morning service on October 1<sup>st</sup>, Guard Owen moved back to Blaenau and H.D.J. had to look for a suitable lad to become porter, which led to the appointment of Lewis Parry Jones of Nantmor on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October. The poor boy could not have foreseen what was in store for him! The archive contains many references to the drastic economies that were being discussed in an effort to cut expenditure, wages and staffing levels on both the W.H.R. and F.R. 11 days after being taken on, with the decision to reduce daily train services from Dinas to just two trains from November 1<sup>st</sup> having been made, he received notice of redundancy, thus becoming the holder of the dubious record for being the W.H.R.'s shortest serving employee!

Another casualty due to this reduction in services was Miss Myfanwy Williams the Agent at South Snowdon. She received her notice of redundancy by letter on October 27<sup>th</sup> and was given one week's notice, her duties being taken over by H.D.J. He was assisted with this extra workload by former guard Lewis Jones, who almost immediately was transferred to Dinas to relieve Dafydd Lloyd Hughes whilst he was on holiday! His temporary replacement was Porter Roberts who came up from Portmadoc for the week. Throughout this period of uncertainty, T.J. Williams had retained his place as Resident Porter, but the axe fell for him on November 3<sup>rd</sup> when he learned that he would be returning to Minffordd on Monday 5<sup>th</sup>, presumably coinciding with Lewis Jones' imminent return from Dinas. Things remained settled for the next few months, but Williams resigned from his post at Minffordd in February 1924. Lewis Jones transferred there in his place, and Elfed Lewis, son of Ellis Lewis the W.H.R./F.R. guard, was brought in from Portmadoc as his temporary replacement. A recently discovered memo dated 31<sup>st</sup> May, shows that Lewis Jones had resumed his duties as Porter at Beddgelert by then, being one of two employees charged with having responsibility of a key for the hut at Croesor Junction in which was housed the

staff and ticket box for the new staff sections from Portmadoc to Croesor J and Croesor J to Beddgelert which came into force on and from June 2nd. However, Elfed Lewis remained at the station as porter/clerk until being made redundant some time after 20th September 1924. The letter that his father wrote to E.H.R. Nicholls three days earlier regarding future employment for his son can be found in Journal 15. It would seem that young Elfed had impressed the F.R. hierarchy during his stay at Beddgelert, as he found employment on the F.R. as a porter/clerk from 1925 – 1931. Meanwhile, August had not been a good month for H.D.J. He suffered an accident on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> whilst uncoupling wagons, and remained on sick leave until resuming his duties on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Elfed had worked overtime during this period, and H.D.J. wrote to Nicholls at Portmadoc asking that this be entered on the next pay sheet.

Although an increased passenger service had been run in 1924, and income from goods traffic was slightly up on 1923's figure, the wet summer had an adverse effect on passenger receipts and the W.H.R. showed a deficit of £2331 for the year. The mounting losses led to a meeting of W.H.R. directors and representatives of the Investing Authorities, the outcome of which was covered in an article in Journal 26. As a result, H.D.J. was laid off on and from December 15<sup>th</sup> and Beddgelert station effectively closed. Consequently his name was not among the list of employees as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1924 drawn up by the company, which showed that the current workforce was by then down to 16. Lewis Jones was also missing from this list, although he had been reinstated in his former job as Guard by September. Although there were no passenger trains running, a goods service of sorts continued throughout the winter of 1924 and spring of 1925, and it would seem that D.O. Jones dealt with any such traffic bound for South Snowdon and Beddgelert in H.D.J.'s absence. Passenger services were re-introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1925 and H.D.J. resumed his duties as S.M. from this date. Whilst he continued to run the station apparently without any assistance during that year, the uncertainty of continued employment on the railway must have been on his mind, and in November he applied for a job as an insurance agent with the Prudential. Although he received a glowing reference from E.R. Davies, his application was unsuccessful. The state of the W.H.R. was clearly shown by Evans' remarks that *"owing to the financial position of this Company, we are glad that he is seeking a post that will bring him a better salary"*.

The following year he at last received some help in the shape of W.S. Jones, a local coal merchant. He acted as an unpaid part time delivery agent and may well have held such a position before this. However the first official mention that we have is a memo dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1926 in which R. Evans asked H.D.J. to clarify W.S. Jones' role and to make the *"best arrangement regarding the matter"*. Replying on the 20<sup>th</sup>, H.D.J. suggested a payment of 10 shillings per week, to which Evans told him to try and get better terms as this was unaffordable until traffic improved. The financial battle continued into April when at last a figure of 6/- a week was agreed upon! On 4<sup>th</sup> May, the General Strike came into force, affecting train services on the railway. Although it only lasted 10 days, the miners stayed out until the end of October, causing acute coal shortages. The railway managed to get some supplies of Belgian coal, but there were no passenger trains until 19<sup>th</sup> July and the line was effectively closed for 2½ months, save for the occasional goods working. Perhaps recalling events back in November, Evans felt it necessary to write to H.D.J. asking him if he was prepared to resume duties on that date!

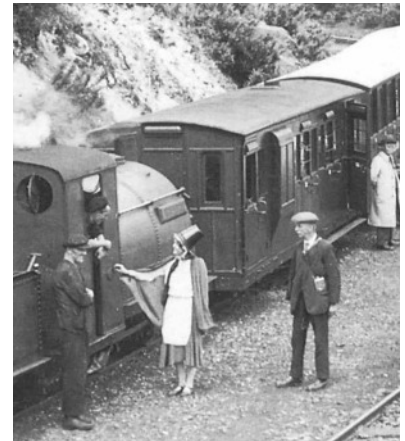
The two Jones' ran the station throughout the remainder of 1926, but the following year was to prove to be H.D.J.'s final one with the W.H.R. That year's summer service came to an end on 25<sup>th</sup> September



**In this 1928 photograph we see the Beddgelert 'Stationmaster' working on the coal siding lock watched by Dafydd Lloyd Hughes. The bicycle clips suggest a quick visit to the station. Was this perhaps W.S. Jones? - R.R.J. Plummer**

1927 and it would appear that he left around this time. He moved from Sygun Terrace to Bulkeley Terrace behind the now demolished chapel, of which he and his wife became caretakers. With the commencement of the winter timetable on 26<sup>th</sup> September, train services were vastly reduced to a single return trip from Dinas to Beddgelert, with no trains at all southward from here, apart from a Friday's

only goods train (with added passenger coach) from Portmadoc to Croesor Junction. As a consequence, apart from seven tickets issued in October, the booking office at Beddgelert saw no business until May 1928. Entries for this month in the station's ticket register, although incomplete, are in an unidentified hand, so as yet, we are unable to discover who ran the station that year. It would hardly have been an onerous task, with a maximum of only 3 trains daily at the height of the season, and less than 300 tickets issued up to the time the booking office closed for



**Miriam Roberts chats to Welsh Pony's footplate crew on the occasion of the 1934 'Press Day'. John Marks looks on. Topical (WHR37)**

good at the end of September. Entries in the train book at this time were recorded in a number of hands, suggesting that various employees may have been seconded to Beddgelert as and when required. One such employee was T.R. Thomas, slate loader at Dinas, who was there from January to June 1929, providing C.H. Rennie, the auditor, with monthly returns. Throughout this period in the late twenties, assistance may have been given by W.S. Jones, still employed on a part time basis as delivery agent. He was one of the 14 employees listed on the payroll in 1930, but his weekly pay had been cut to only 3/-. He was still there in 1933 on the same rate, as one of the eight staff mentioned earlier in this article.

For the final three years of the station's life, John Marks, a former F.R. guard, was taken on as Travelling Agent, and, as there was still a goods service of sorts, it is probable that W.S. Jones continued to act as Delivery Agent. But finally of course, we must not forget Miriam Roberts, the famous girl Station Mistress who was employed for the princely sum of 5 shillings per week. Her story is given in full in Journal 46.

The documents consulted from the XD97 archive were 7442ff, 7450c, 7451bb, 22737, 22742, 22739 & 23118.

# The North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways; As Pictorial an History as Possible. By John Keylock (Part 3)

## The Route and Infrastructure.

42. 1877 is perhaps an appropriate year to consider the infrastructure between Dinas Junction and Bryngwyn which, after all, was initially conceived as the Moel Tryfan Undertaking's main line in view of its potential for anticipated and lucrative slate traffic.

At Dinas a large goods shed was provided with access for both standard and narrow gauge tracks. A central raised platform was a 30 cwt. capacity crane helped with the interchange of dry goods. Parallel with the goods shed, and on a higher level, was a standard gauge siding allowing coal to be unloaded into N.W.N.G.R. wagons with the aid of gravity. At the Caernarfon end of the complex were the slate exchange sidings

a waiting room with a fireplace in the end wall. Leading off was a door giving access to two lavatories. Entrance to a gent's urinal was by a side door in the opposite elevation. A second front door was the entrance to the station master's office. Platform edges were defined by 2 in. thick slate slabs set on edge.

Engine watering facilities were provided at both Dinas and Bryngwyn and there were signal boxes at Dinas, Tryfan Junction and Bryngwyn. Signalling and point operating equipment was supplied by McKenzie and Holland of Worcester and in his report to the Board of Trade (see paragraph 45) Major Marindin noted some necessary modifications for improved operation. 8-lever frames were provided at Rhostryfan and Bryngwyn. Particularly in the boxes, the number of levers is difficult to confirm photographically - fortunately Marindin's notes appear quite specific.

Within the Dinas complex was (and is) the first characteristic road over bridge with its arch defined by a fan of yellow bricks. Soon after is a similar

bridge carrying the Caernarfon to Pwllheli Road followed by the unique bridge at Cae Moel - mentioned later. At Bod Aden level crossing access to the farm was augmented by a delightful under bridge. At Wernlas Ddu the Rhostryfan road crossed the railway and there were two further road bridges with a stream crossing between just before the line enters Tryfan Junction at 2 miles 15 chains. The first of the latter road bridges, which gave access to Cae Hen farm, has now gone.

Tryfan Junction was unique in being the only 2' gauge junction in the Kingdom and it remains an isolated location with but a narrow lane for vehicular access. Being a junction the signalling



Early days at Dinas before the development of the Standard Gauge Facilities (ca 1880)

arrangements were to be the most complex on the whole of the completed line. Because the then route to Bryngwyn was originally designated as the main line the station building at Tryfan Junction was on the 'platform' serving that destination. Trains to and from the Rhyd Ddu direction used the adjacent line, beside which was the signal box, to access the then 'branch'.

From Tryfan Junction the line to Bryngwyn curves through 180° before passing under the same lane that gave access to the junction. The line was then almost straight but rising before reaching Rhostryfan station on the outskirts of the village at 70 chains from the junction and an altitude of 482'! OS maps of the period suggest a signal box for four



N.G./S.G. Slate Exchange Sidings at Dinas - ca. 1920 (L&GRP 2461) (WHHG 20)

The N.W.N.G.R. provided an island platform to serve both standard and narrow gauge passenger trains as at this stage the line to Afon Wen through the station was but single. In common with all locations on the N.W.N.G.R. the narrow gauge platform had no raised edge. Sited centrally on the platform was the station building of a characteristic style and design to be found at most other locations. In March an agreement was reached between the L.N.W.R. and the N.W.N.G.R. as to how facilities at Dinas could be shared.

Station buildings to similar design were also provided at Tryfan Junction, Rhostryfan and Bryngwyn. Typically about half of the interior was taken up by



The Water Tank at the east end of the Bryngwyn layout with the incline to the quarries beyond. (WHR 109)

signals (hardly necessary for one engine in steam) and one siding point. The siding had a catch point which

presumably worked in unison with the point connecting to the main line.

Beyond Rhostryfan station in rapid succession were a novel footbridge, stream bridge and over bridge carrying the village 'high street'. Emerging from the shallow cutting there was a level crossing after which the gradient became severe and was followed by a horse shoe curve and Bryngwyn Farm. Immediately beyond the next level crossing was Bryngwyn station at 2 miles 35 chains from the junction and an altitude of 650'. The line had climbed 260' from the junction.



N.W.N.G.R. Track passed through Rhostryfan in a cutting - the girder bridge carried the 'High Street' over the railway. Bill Rear 1948.

We will examine the route and infrastructure of the 'branch' later.

### Receivers and Inspections – 1877/1878

**43.** In 1877 Grant & Co., who had loaned money to the railway, took them to court for non-repayment and were successful in getting a receiver appointed from December until May 1878. The railway contested this decision in the Court of Appeal and were successful. Consequently at the August meeting the Chairman was able to congratulate the shareholders – led by Fitzgibbon – on their success 'thus relieving the Company of a threatened liability of about £10,000' (or even £16000)

**44. Major Francis Arthur Marindin** (later Colonel Sir Francis M. – Knighted in 1897) was an interesting character. Born 1<sup>st</sup> May 1838 in Weymouth, after schooling at Eton he went to the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich and served in the Royal Engineers until 1879. He saw service in the Crimea and was a member of the Board of Trade Railway Inspectorate, an interest he continued to pursue after leaving the R.E. He was

also passionate about Association Football, founding the Royal Engineers team in 1869. He played in the first F.A. Cup Final in 1872 and again in the Final of 1874. The R.E. team finally won the F.A. Cup in 1875, but by then Marindin had moved on. From 1874 to 1879 he was President of the Football Association. He refereed the 1880 Final and all Finals from 1884 to 1890. He was a Board of Trade Inspecting Officer/Senior Inspecting Officer from 1875 to 1895. He died in April 1900.

**45.** In July 1877, Major F.A. Marindin R.E. inspected that part of the system just opened for goods traffic and his report is reproduced here in full. In August he visited again and sanctioned passenger traffic subject to various works being fulfilled. This second report is also reproduced in full.

Railway Department  
Board of Trade  
13 Downing Street,  
London, SW

Sir,

I have the honour to report for the information of the Board of Trade that in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst. I have inspected the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways, distinguished as the Moel Tryfan Undertaking Nos. 6 and 7. Their construction begins at Llanwnda to the present termini at Bryngwyn and Quellyn.

These lines commence at a point alongside the Carnarvonshire Railway about ½ mile on the Carnarvon side of the Llanwnda station on that line.

The London and North Western Railway Company have constructed a Passenger platform and Goods sidings at this Point to work in connection with the new narrow gauge lines, and the North Wales Narrow Gauge Company propose to alter the name of the station to Dinas in order to avoid confusion with the other Llanwnda Station ½ mile distant.

No. 6 Line is 4 m. 36 c. in length, and has four stations Llanwnda (or Dinas as it is to be called), Moel Tryfan Junction, Rhostryfan and Bryngwyn, the terminus.

No. 7 Line is 6 m. 25 c. in length commencing from Moel Tryfan Junction and has three stations Waenfawr, Bettws-y-Garmon and Quellyn the temporary terminus.

The line is single throughout and land has not been purchased for additional line of rails, nor has there been any arrangement made with a view to adding an additional line at a future time.

The width of the line at platform level is 10 feet.

The gauge of the line is 1' 11 ¼" [sic].

The width between the rails is 6 ft.

The rails employed are iron of Vignoles section, 8 yards long, and 35 lb. weight per lineal yard. The rails are secured to the Sleepers by fang-bolts and dog spikes.

The joints are fastened by fish plates with 4 bolts.

The sleepers are of Larch 4 ft. 6 in. x 9 in. x 4½ in. Many round, fixed at 2 ft. 8½ in. from centre to centre, except at the joints where they are 2 ft. apart from centre to centre.

The Ballast is gravel mixed with a clay shale and is said to be 7 in. deep under the sleepers. There are no Engine turn tables.

The fencing on portions of the Line is of post and wire; posts 4 ft. high, 9 ft. apart with a prick-post with 7 wires tensioned by straining.

The fencing on other portions is stone walling 4 ft. high coped with slates on edge, set in mortar with two strained wires on the top, fixed to iron standards 10 ft. apart.

There are no tunnels on the Line or Level Crossings of Public Roads, and no heavy embankments or cuttings.

The Engines are single boiler Fairlie Engines on two bogies with a total wheel base of 14 ft. 11½"

The wheels of the leading bogie are coupled together, 3 on each side, are 30 in. in diameter and carried on a wheel base of 6 ft.

The wheels of the trailing bogie, 2 on each side, are nineteen inches in diameter and have a wheel base of 42 in. The total weight is 15 tons, 10½ tons on the leading and 4½ tons on the trailing bogie. The diameter of the Cylinders is 8½ in. and the stroke 10 in.

There are many steep inclines on No 6 Line and sharp curves on both lines the steepest incline being, on No 6 1 in 39.76 and on No 7 1 in 50.38; and the sharpest curve having a radius on No 6 line of 3¼

chains and on No 7 line of 3½ chains. There are no check rails on any of these Curves for in the case of similar narrow gauge lines it has not been found necessary to provide them.

There are several alterations in both gradients and curves but principally improving them and only in two instances (one to avoid a bad level crossing) to any great extent, and in all cases with the consent of the proprietors concerned.

On No. 6 Line there are 9 over bridges, one of which has cast iron girders, and the remainder masonry arches and 11 under Bridges (including Culverts and cattle creeps) all of small span and constructed in 3 cases Iron Girders, and in the remaining cases with masonry arches: or slab covers.

On No 7 Line there are 6 over bridges all of masonry except one which has Cast Iron Girders and brick arches; and 9 under bridges (including Culverts and Cattle Creeps); 3 river bridges which are of 48 ft. Span with Wrought Iron longitudinal and cross girders; and the remainder of small span with masonry arches or Slab covers.

All the Iron Bridges are of sufficient strength [two words - indistinct] and also [two words - indistinct].

The stations are not provided with any platforms, the floor of the carriages being only 1 ft. 10 in. above the level of the ground. Proper shelter has been provided and the signal apparatus is of various patterns, and well arranged in proper cabins at all the stations except at Quellyn, which is a Temporary Station with only 2 signals and one set of points At Llanwnda there are 12 levers of which 3 are spare.

At Moel Tryfan there are 20 levers of which 6 are spare

At Rhostryfan there are 8 levers of which 2 are spare

At Bryngwyn there are 8 levers of which 2 are spare

At Waenfawr there are 8 levers of which 2 are spare

At Bettws-y-Garmon there are 18 levers

At Quellyn there are 2 levers

There are no means provided for carrying out the Block system and it is therefore intended to work the Line with only one Engine in steam, or two coupled on the Line at the same time; the slate trains which down run by their own weight being considered in the same light as one Engine in steam. Generally speaking the works on these lines have

been well carried out and the requirements of the Board of Trade have been complied with, with the following exceptions;

1. The minimum space allowed between the sides of the carriages and the standing work is only 2 ft. 0½ in. instead of 2 ft. 6 in. At nearly all the overbridges, and in some of the Rock-Cuttings the carriage doors when open will not clear, and it will be necessary to obviate this by cutting away the projecting masonry and rock and in some instances by altering slightly the super-elevation, and slewing the rails.

2. The masonry requires pointing in places and the Iron work of Girders repainting. This will be done at once.

3. The rails on longitudinal sleepers on some of the Bridges are fastened only by dog-spikes. Fang bolts should be inserted or substituted for every alternate spike.

4. There are no outside clocks at the stations. Those provided for the Company but not already fixed might be made available. Name boards at Stations and Clocks in Signal Cabins are not yet fixed but have been provided.

5. The fencing at the wing-walls of some of the under bridges require slight adjustment. This will be at once attended to.

6. The Ladies' space and seat width in the 3rd class carriages is insufficient for the number of passengers they are constructed for. Viz. 4 on each seat. Here only 3 should be carried.

7. The view from the Cabin of the Distant Signal at Llanwnda requires to be cleared by the cutting away of a few branches.

8. At Moel Tryfan, No 9 lever should be back locked with Nos. 3 and 6 and the view of the Distant Signal cleared by cutting the top of a high hedge.

9. At Bryngwyn the points to Goods sidings at the foot of the Quarry incline, beyond the end of the Passenger line should be weighted so as to keep open the siding and so form an additional protection to the Passenger line.

10. If at any future time these lines are provided with Telegraph and worked on Block with more than one Train on the line it will be necessary to provide passenger loops and runaway points, and second platforms at Moel Tryfan, Rhostryfan and Bryngwyn which are on steep inclines.

I have therefore to report that, by reason

of these requirements, the opening of these lines cannot be sanctioned without danger to the public using them, until the necessary alterations be made.

I have &c

(signed) F. A. Marindin  
Major R.E.

Board of Trade  
13 Downing Street  
London SW  
20th August 1877

Sir,

I have the honour to report for the information of the Board of Trade that being at Llanwnda on other duty on the 14th instant, I re-inspected the North Wales Narrow Gauge railway at the request of the Secretary of the same, and found that the several requirements noted in my report of the 29th ult. had been fulfilled with the exception of the widening of the bridges, which is in progress, and which will require re-inspection when complete.

I enclose an undertaking as to the working of the Line which is satisfactory, and which I received this morning.

I have &c

(signed) F.A. Marindin  
Major R.E.

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1878, Major Marindin wrote to the Board of Trade a third time to report progress regarding his previously stated requirements;

Carnarvon  
January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1878

Sir,

I have the honor to report for the information of the Board of Trade that in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 5<sup>th</sup> instant I have reinspected the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways and find that the over bridges, and rock cuttings have been widened and that all the other requirements specified in my report of the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1877 have now been complied with.

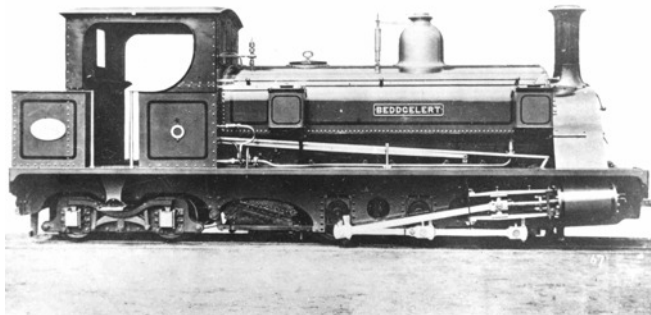
I therefore recommend that the use of these lines for passenger traffic may be finally approved of.

(signed) F.A. Marindin  
Major R.E.

46. It was shortly after the time of Marindin's visits to the Railway that Edward Vignes visited the N.W.N.G.R. (in September 1877) whilst technically recording other railways in North and Mid Wales. The three Cleminson flexible wheelbase 6-wheeled carriages had recently been delivered by the Gloucester Carriage & Wagon Works and the 4-wheelers and two bogie carriages were in use. There were already available for use over one hundred 'goods wagons' (120 according to the Board of Trade Return) the majority of which will have been for slate transport. Vignes records the use of coal wagons based on the Cleminson principle. Although Vignes spoke in the plural, the existence of more than one of these vehicles cannot be confirmed from photographic or other records.

47. With the partial opening of the railway it became necessary to recruit staff. In April, Robert Henry Livesey (1854 - 1923) was appointed traffic

valuable experience in railway working. After three years he went over to the L.N.W.R. goods department at various locations in North Wales where he further increased his knowledge.

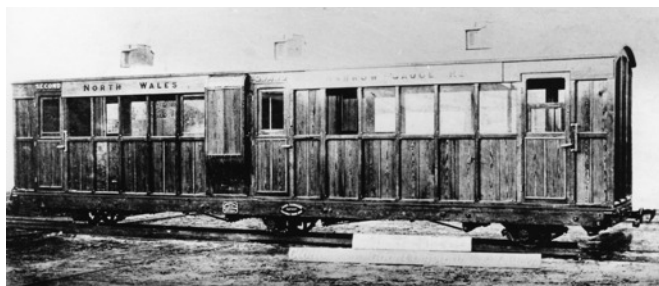


In addition to the two single-Fairlies Snowdon Ranger and Moel Tryfan, Russell's purchases included the newly-delivered Hunslet 0-6-4T locomotive Beddgelert (WHHG 15)

Robert must also have married young – in 1872 in Bermondsey – for his wife Elizabeth ('Eliza' Hastings Martin) bore their first son (Robert Martin) at Llanystumdwy in 1875 followed by a daughter (Elizabeth Maud) at Cwilog in 1877. These births perhaps give a clue

comparatively tender age of 13. Like his father, who had retired by 1901, he became a driver and served the railway until its demise. Furthermore in 1927 (now with the W.H.R.) he was able to celebrate fifty years of employment and retired aged about 65. However, with the railway being short of train crew, he was persuaded to return to the W.H.R. in the mid-1930s while he was still living at Dinas Cottages. He died in August 1946 aged 83 and is buried with his parents in Amlwch churchyard.

48. At the adjourned half-yearly meeting in mid-August 1878 - by which time the section between Quellyn and Snowdon Ranger had opened for both goods and passenger traffic - it was reported that £2250 (which included the three Cleminsons) had been spent on rolling stock and a sum not exceeding £5000 was necessary to complete the line to Rhyd Ddu. Because of its dire financial situation the Company had been unable to meet the quarterly rentals



Russell's purchases included the Railway's three Cleminson 6-wheel carriages Nos. 6, 7 and 8. The three comprised one All-3rd Saloon and two Brake/2nd/3rd Composites - WHR 186 (left) and WHR 187 (right)

superintendent at the comparatively early age of 23. Robert Henry was the third surviving son of James and Alice Livesey of Great Broughton, Chester and when his father died he was locomotive superintendent of the G.W.R., having been recorded on 1871 and 1881 censuses as a locomotive department foreman living in Corwen. So Robert Henry Livesey would have had an early railway indoctrination.

Having assisted his father for about two years he joined the joint G.W.R. & L.N.W.R. line between Chester and Birkenhead, employed initially under the stationmaster at Birkenhead. Subsequently he was appointed joint superintendent of the line gaining

to where he was working at the time. The family took up residence at Garth-y-glo off the main road out of Dinas towards Penygroes in 1877 and two further sons (John Heath and Stanley Martin) were born in Llanwnda in 1879 and 1880.

In June, Joseph Oldham became Secretary and Manager presumably in succession to Henry Watts who had held the position since the Company's onset. He lived on North Road, Carnarvon.

At 'footplate level' were the Williams, father and son. Described as 'stoker' (fireman) on 'a railway' in 1863, the father joined the railway in November 1876 along with his son, 'Willie' Hugh [1864 - 1946], the latter at the

falling due on engines since September 1877, waggons (sic) since January 1878 and carriages since February last. In order to save some of the stock and keep the line open a Mr. Russell, one of the Directors, purchased the Company's three locomotives (the rigid wheelbase 0-6-4T 'Beddgelert' had been delivered the previous month from the Hunslet Engine Co. in Leeds), three carriages (the Cleminsons, nos. 6, 7 and 8) and four coal wagons (nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12) from the makers and owners (there is more on the coal wagons on page 10).

In Mr. Russell we have another new name on a scene which he would effectively dominate until his death in 1912.

# N.W.N.G.R. 5-Plank Coal Wagons

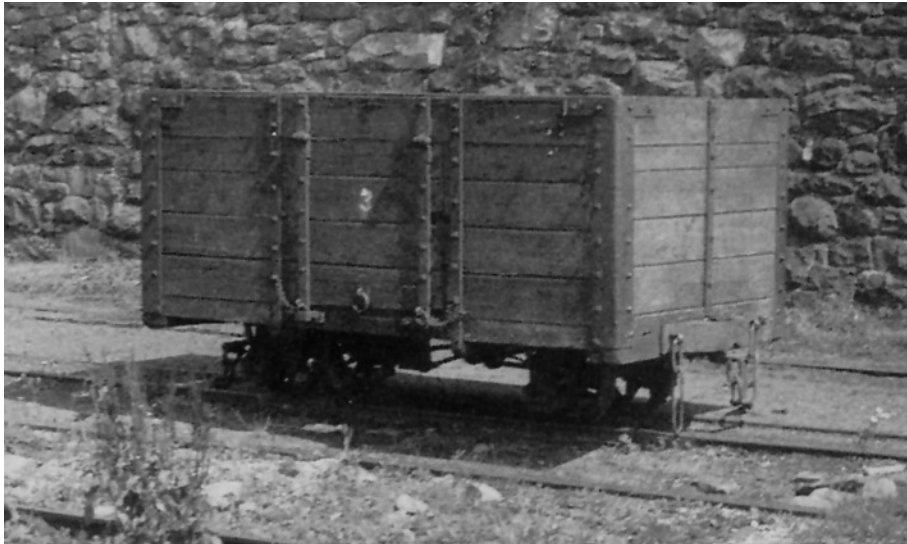
In W.H.H. Issue 64 we started an occasional series looking at N.W.N.G.R. goods stock, hoping that we might prompt discussion and focused

agreements associated with this move include itemisation of the stock involved, including specific references to “coal wagons numbered respectively 9 10 11

‘coal’ wagons and carried one of the numbers ‘missing’ from the list above.

However, the wagons we DO know of are not without interest as photographs show two quite distinctly different patterns of construction.

Examination of the photographs of no. 3 and no. 12 will show that many of the design features are common between the wagons, yet there are obvious differences in the treatment of the corner straps. Some of the wagons were built with straight rows of attachment bolts (as no. 3) and some with two staggered rows of bolts in a larger corner strap (as no. 12). Reference back to our notes on the covered vans will show that both no. 2 and no. 4 had single rows of bolts on the narrower corner strap. If we examine all of the photographs available to us we find that staggered corner bolts were a feature of wagons no. 9, 11 and 12 whereas we see



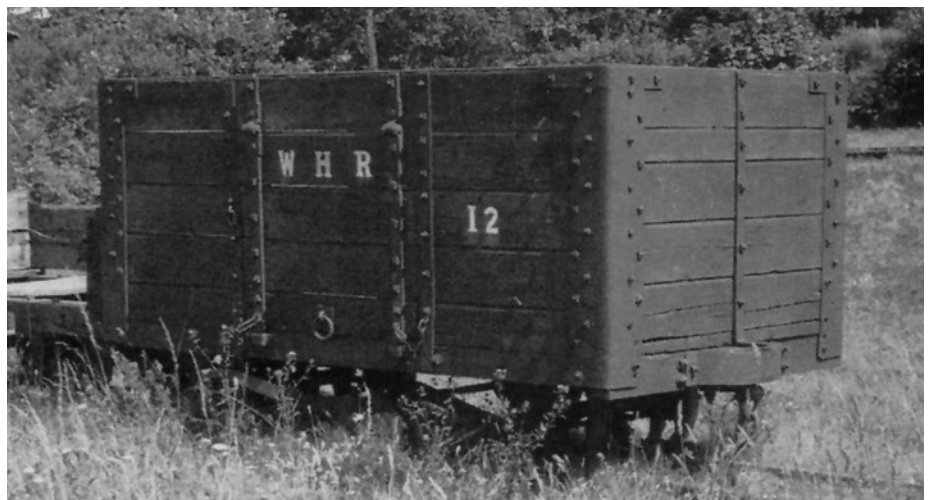
N.W.N.G.R. 5-plank coal wagon no. 3 photographed at Dinas Junction in W.H.R. days - H.F. Wheeler - 1935

research that would clarify what is undoubtedly at the moment a somewhat ‘murky’ picture. In that first article we looked in particular at the Railway’s covered vans, comparing the two vehicles which survived into Welsh Highland ownership with the original N.W.N.G.R. ‘ridge top’ wagons. We noted that, in all probability, the W.H.R. vans, numbers 2 and 4, had been converted from two of the Railway’s large coal wagons.

At this stage in the development of our understanding of the goods stock, it seems appropriate to look at the some of the ‘peculiarities’ of these large coal wagons.

The earliest available N.W.N.G.R. goods stock returns show; 3 ‘covered goods’, 90 ‘slate’, 10 ‘ore’, 12 ‘coal’ and 5 ‘timber trucks’ – 120 vehicles in all. These figures continued until 1891 when the number of ‘slate’ wagons was increased to 118 whilst ‘timber trucks’ reduced to 4, raising the total number of wagons to 147. The declared number of ‘coal’ wagons remained at 12 until the December 1897 return when the figure increased to 14.

We know that the early finances of the N.W.N.G.R. were aided when J.C. Russell personally bought some of the locomotives and rolling stock. He subsequently sold this stock to the Moel Tryfan Rolling Stock Company when that was established at the end of 1878. The



Coal wagon no. 12 at Dinas Junction in 1935 - H.H. Wheeler

and 12”. However, one question we will have to address is “how many of these wagons were there?” It is tempting to suggest ‘12’ based on the Stock Returns, but the railway did operate one larger coal wagon using Cleminson’s 6-wheel suspension system. Are we to assume that this wagon was one of the 12? If not one of the 12, then where in the returns was this large wagon reported?

We have definite photographic evidence of wagons nos. 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12 and one photograph which appears to show no. 1, but this is indistinct and could well be showing another single-digit number. We can speculate that the 6-wheel wagon was numbered in the series of 12, later 14,

single rows of bolts on, as noted above, nos. 2 and 4 and also on nos. 6 and 11. We have no photographs clearly showing nos. 5, 7 or 8.

If we return to J.C. Russell and the Moel Tryfan Rolling Stock Company, of the wagons he bought and subsequently sold we see that 3 were fitted with staggered bolts and one, no. 11, with straight bolts. This would appear to suggest that the appearance of the more complex staggered-bolt standard was not simply dependent on chronological factors. Are we perhaps seeing evidence of there having been more than one supplier or were some wagons perhaps rebuilt at some stage in their lives?

# From the Editor

## An Interesting Postcard

David Laing has sent me a copy of a postcard, found “accidentally”, which shows a number of scenes from the clay mining areas of Dorset, including the Isle of Purbeck. The card was produced by Dalkeith’s Cards of

Style, and it was a product of the Dalkeith Publishing Co. Ltd., Bournemouth BH8 9SS. On the reverse of the card, the captions to the images read;

FAYLES TRAMWAY, near Corfe Castle, used several narrow gauge locomotives to haul their clay wagons from the pits, and

the last was RUSSELL, an ex-Welsh Highland Railway engine used from 1948 to 1953.

PIKES TRAMWAY was situated further from Corfe. With its extensive claypit network, they had numerous tank engines including QUINTUS as illustrated.



THE BLUE POOL, several miles north-west of Corfe, was a claypit dating back to the mid-1800's. After abandonment, it filled with water and was opened to the public as a beauty spot in 1935.

SHIPMENT OF CLAY, the fine 'ball' china clay was originally taken to jetties in the creeks between Wareham and Poole Bay. Barges would take it to Poole Harbour for transferring to sea-going vessels. In later days, the main railway line transhipped the clay direct to the potteries.

An interesting reminiscence from the immediate post-war period, not without interest to students of the Welsh Highland or the narrow gauge in general.

## Electronic Copies of W.H.H.

A number of members responded to my earlier appeal to switch to electronic receipt of W.H.H., however the vast majority of the copies distributed are still handled via 'snail-mail'.

Should any member wish to receive their future copies by e-mail, please let me know. The Journals are distributed electronically as .PDF files. Should any members be thinking of switching but are concerned about quality or readability, please let me know and I will be happy to forward an electronic copy of this Issue so

that a direct comparison between the paper and electronic copies can be made, hopefully aiding a final decision in this matter.

My e-mail address is on the back page of this Journal.

**Dick Lystor** has asked me to post the following two notices;

## 2015 Subscription Renewals.

Just a quick reminder that 2015 subscription renewals are now due. Please send your cheques to the Membership Secretary, D.L. Lystor, 14 Teign Village, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, Devon,

TQ13 9QJ, enclosing an SAE should you wish to receive your new membership card.

## Tryfan Junction Ticket Register – Fact or Fiction??

Readers of our excellent new book, the Bryngwyn Branch by John Keylock and Dave Southern, may have noticed on page 22 the mention of the Ticket Register held

at Tryfan Junction, which appears to intimate that it possibly still exists.

John left no mention of the whereabouts of this register whilst he was gathering information, and Dave is equally in the dark. Is there anyone out there that can confirm that this Register is still in existence? If anyone has any information, please contact me by email, dickandsuelystor@aol.com.

## The A.G.M.

By way of a reminder, the Heritage Group's Annual General Meeting is to be held on Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the Prenteg Village Hall (Canolfan Prenteg), just west of the A 498 in the centre of Prenteg Village, which is located between Tremadog and Beddgelert.

**Finally, if somewhat belatedly, in this first Issue in 2015 may I wish all readers best wishes for a prosperous and successful year!**

# Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis

## More on the Baldwin

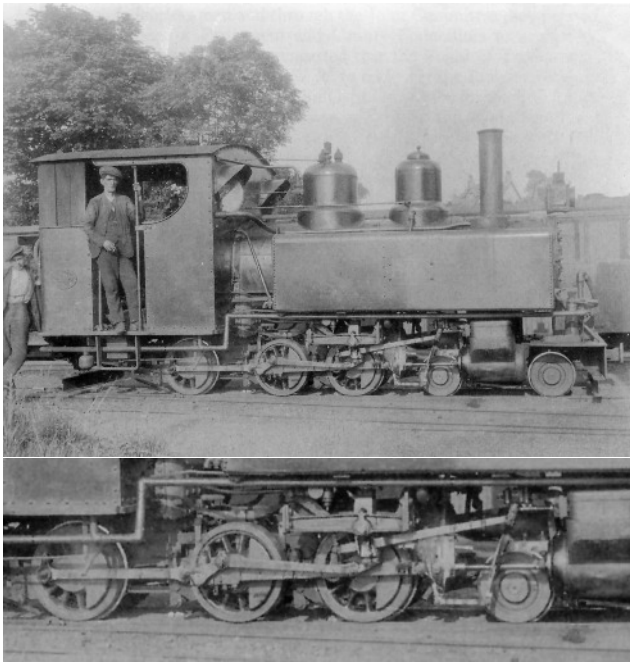
In this column in Issue 63, we commented on the potential usefulness of Walschaert's valve gear when analysing photographs of locomotives.

enlarged views shown below the full photographs.

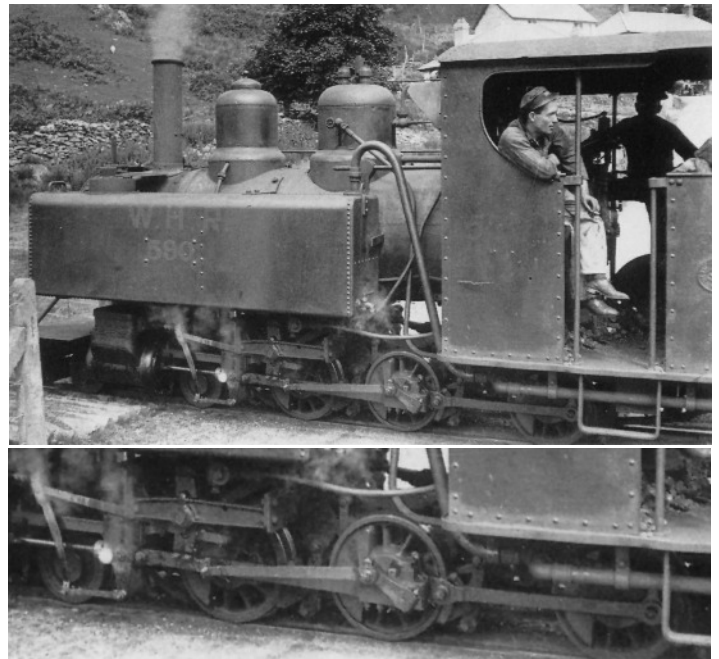
The locomotive retained these flange-less wheels throughout its life on the Railway. A photograph of the locomotive being scrapped at Dinas also clearly shows the flange-less wheels.

longer than Russell's so the absence of centre flanges was presumably beneficial given the allegedly tight minimum curve radii of the original N.W.N.G.R./W.H.R.

In 2003, the Welsh Highland Railway signed an agreement with the Imperial War Museum at Duxford under which the



**590 photographed at Dinas Junction shortly after delivery to the W.H.R. in 1923 - A. W. Croughton (WHR 216)**



**590 awaits the green flag at Nantmor in the mid-1930s - Henry Tours (WHR 33a)**

For this exercise in analysis, let us look again Baldwin No. 590, delivered to the Welsh Highland Railway in 1923. The two photographs reproduced here show the locomotive at opposite ends of its service life with the Railway, the first taken in 1923 at Dinas Junction and the second at Nantmor after the establishment of the F. R. Lease in 1934.

In these photographs, referring back to the subject matter of the previous analysis, the locomotive was in forward and mid-gear respectively when the pictures were taken. However, what these two photographs show particularly clearly are the 'flange-less' centre driving wheels fitted to the locomotive. These are hopefully more clearly visible in the two

The use of flange-less driving wheels on some model locomotives has been a well-known 'dodge' to accommodate long

Railway would reconstruct their Baldwin, No. 794, as '590' to run trains on the Welsh Highland. '794' was delivered to Gelert's Farm in June 2004. However, as the photograph of 794's chassis, taken on the day of delivery to the Railway, shows, in the case of this locomotive all six driving wheels were flanged.



**794's rolling chassis on delivery to Gelert's Farm in June 2004**

wheel-base locomotive designs with the typically unrealistically small curve radii found on some model railways. 590's rigid wheelbase, at 5 ft. 10 in., was some 4 in.

Quite how many of the Baldwins actually were fitted with flange-less centre drivers is a moot point - were they a majority or a minority? Was the fact that 590 lacked these flanges a deciding issue when the loco was acquired? Was the lack of these flanges, effectively converting the rigid chassis into a four-coupled layout, actually in any way beneficial to the locomotive's operations on the W.H.R.? Hopefully, the all-flanged layout on 794 will not prove an issue!

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