

WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

December 2016

ISSN 1462-1371

£2.00

Issue No. 73

Web : www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk



The Trustees' Train stops at Tryfan Junction on October 5th, 2016. - Nick Booker

A Message from the Chairman

For the Group, 2016 has mostly been a period of consolidation with your committee and its members quietly getting on with a number of different activities and considering potential future heritage projects, more of which later. A recent highlight has been the commissioning of the Beddgelert Water Tower on the 'main line' side in time for Super Power 2016, following the Herculean efforts of Cedric Lodge. Some detail work remains to be done but it was much appreciated by the train crews and now provides additional photographic opportunities. We have agreed with Dafydd Thomas of the WHR Society that any monies from the John Ewing memorial fund should go to finishing off the Tower and to the provision of an interpretation board that acknowledges both our contribution and that of the J. E. Fund, providing a practical memorial both to John and to John Keylock.

That same weekend Mike Hadley was station master at Tryfan Junction, with Helen providing teas and cake and their dog Pip on 'guard duties'. We have also contributed archive photographs to the FR/WHR Ashbury coaches project. With this current journal is a 'sales flyer' for the PBSSR book. I have come to realise that books such as this are very much a collaborative effort. While the research and writing consumes much time and thought, equally the design, production and publication is also demanding of the same, so my thanks to John Manners, Mike Bishop, David Allan and others for the words and pictures, but also to Peter Liddell for the design and layout and for turning it into the book I hope you will be buying for Christmas - it's a jolly good read!

This year, the 5th October was the FR/WHR Trustee Day when a special train conveyed directors, trustees and guests, including your chairman, from Minffordd

to Tryfan Junction, stopping at various places along the way, to be followed by a walk up the Slate Trail.

I was asked by Dr Prideaux to talk to the assembled multitude, both at Glanrafon and Betws Garmon, on our views as to what might be done at either or both sites, as well as talking to particular individuals on the issues over the very enjoyable and sunny day.

better access, allowing perhaps the creation of a 'holiday let'. Of course, this latter option raises all kinds of issues. The most drastic option would be to accept that there is no point in a building on the site and using the remains to create a 'heritage' building at Waunfawr, as some would like to do. I wouldn't put any of this in the same category as - 'should we



The Weigh House at Glanrafon photographed in 1964 by Barry Gray (left) and in 1997 by David Allan (right). Although there had been significant structural decay over the intervening 30 years, the site was still essentially clear, thanks to the efforts of the local sheep. Since the arrival of the new railway this scene has changed significantly, and for the worse, as fencing has allowed nature to take over. It is a salutary thought that another 20 years (almost) has passed since David took his photograph.

Glanrafon Weigh Bridge is extremely overgrown and the building - four walls and no roof - is gradually deteriorating, while parts of the site are very wet. The site is remote and has no pedestrian access and is thus not suitable as a volunteers' independent project. It has heritage value but little future potential use apart from as platelayers hut. In the very long term it might feature as some kind of visitor access point to the Quarry. I indicated that the Heritage Group would be prepared to make a financial contribution (unspecified) to site clearance/stabilisation as part of a Company inspired/led project. It now seems likely that a volunteer project to clear the undergrowth and stabilise the building will emerge, supported by the Company. The railway line could then be fenced to allow the sheep to keep the site clear as they used to do before the railway came back. A cleared site would reveal the building and provide another heritage view for passengers on the trains.

Betws Garmon presents us with a number of options which we as a Group should consider and develop a view upon; they are not all mutually exclusive. These might involve financial support, support 'in kind' or a combination of these as per Tryfan Station. The options include stabilising the remains and erecting an interpretation board and/or running in board; rebuilding in the present location for use as a store etc; moving the building away from the track to provide

have another runway at Heathrow?' But in either case there are no easy answers.

For the future, any option/potential project we adopt or favour has to my mind to be justified on a number of criteria - namely is it:

- Conserving/restoring/recreating some element of NWNHR/WHR heritage?
- Useful / beneficial to the railway in some way?
- Likely to generate a positive income stream, or at least be cost neutral, avoiding a future liability in maintenance or management terms?
- Appealing to WHRHG members, and to non members, for the purposes of generating moral, physical and financial support?

What weight one applies to each of these elements can be debated.

Please let me know your thoughts, preferably sooner rather than later, as I have a FR/WHR Heritage company board meeting very shortly and I would hope to take along to that meeting some Group view(s) on what we would like to do that is feasible, meets our own internal aims and objectives and is likely to be acceptable to the FR/WHR Company as a whole.

Finally the Committee and I wish you a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year!

William Henry Rees:- Platelayer/Underman 1923 - 1925

The staffing of South Snowdon station from its earliest days when William Foulkes Morris was NWNCR station master through to 1926 when ganger John Owen Thomas and wife took up residence has been well covered in previous articles in our journal, but thanks to further delvings in the XD97 collection, more details can be given concerning the period from October 1924 to September 1925 during which William Henry Rees was in attendance, and the circumstances by which the Thomas's took over. Up to now little has been known of Rees, but it transpires that he was a platelayer/underman who joined the WHR in 1923. Rees appears in the list of staff employed at 31st December 1924 (supplied by W. R. Huson, the WHR company secretary to the Joint Committee of the Local Investing Authorities) as Underman on a wage of 41s/0d. per week. ⁽¹⁾

After the incident regarding break ins at the station and Inspector Griffith's recommendation that a caretaker be installed (see *WHH61*), the station was visited by a Mr Price, a representative of the Snowdon Mountain Tramroad & Hotels Co. In a letter dated 30th August 1924, it was stated that Mr Price had found the roof leaking in the room formerly used by the SMT as a kitchen. On 3rd October, Inspector Griffith found nothing wrong with the roof, but reported that rain water had been coming down the chimney and running over the stove and grate causing them to become rusty. He suggested that if the place was occupied, and a fire kept in the grate, the problem would be solved.⁽²⁾ Meanwhile, Rees had applied to rent "South Snowdon Cottage" on 25th September 1924, saying that he could "look after the station and keep it in order". He had sent his letter to D. O. Jones at Dinas, under whose control South Snowdon laid at the time. Jones passed his letter on to E. H. R. Nicholls (FR Managing Director) at Portmadoc and from his covering memo we find that Rees was a member of the permanent way gang on the South Snowdon section. (see *footnote*)

Nicholls was prepared to let Rees occupy the "stationmaster's cottage" as he referred to it, for a rent of £5 per year on the proviso that he looked after the station property generally and kept it clean, and also free from trespassers when no trains were about. After enquiring whether the £5 included taxes etc, Rees accepted the terms, but asked if the boarding could be replaced in the dining room to make two bedrooms. This had been taken down by the Snowdon Mountain Tramroad & Hotels Co when they converted the stationmaster's quarters into a refreshment room, opened in the summer of 1924, but presently unoccupied. (Some alterations to the waiting room here had been carried out in late 1923 by J. Carney & Co., of Penrhyndeudraeth as part of a contract for repairs and painting of all stations, a final certificate being issued on 15th January 1924.⁽³⁾ The work at South Snowdon may well have been as a result of the break ins, the closure of the ticket office after the station had become un-staffed due to the redundancy of the Agent, Myfanwy Roberts, or in anticipation of the conversion into a refreshment room. Unfortunately, the file gives no clear clues.) Nicholls

wrote back to Griffith saying that the company could not afford to replace the partition and that Rees would have to take the place on as he found it. A week later he wrote again to Griffith asking for the matter to remain in abeyance for the present, and not to allow Rees access to the cottage. Rees was in a quandary after hearing this about turn and in a letter to Griffith dated 18th

October he explained that he had given notice at his old residence and had begun to decorate South Snowdon cottage. There was no other place in Rhyd ddu to be had and he had "taken your word by your agreement".

Griffith passed Rees's letter on to Nicholls and in his accompanying memo stated "It appears that he

thought that his acceptance of the terms on which you were prepared to let him occupy the cottage was sufficient, and he took steps without my knowledge to prepare the cottage for occupation". Nicholls wrote back saying that under the circumstances he agreed to Rees occupying the cottage, and asked when he was planning on taking up residence and how he was going to pay the rent. Rees replied to say that he was in the cottage on 25th October and would pay his rent quarterly. Robert Evans (Chief Clerk and assistant to the Managing Director at Portmadoc) was quick to point out that there was an arrangement in force with their employees that rent was deducted from their wages on a weekly basis, and it was suggested to Rees that he followed suit and had 1s/11d taken from his pay, to which he agreed by letter on 3rd November. Naturally, this made life much easier for accounting purposes, but the last line of the letter to Rees read "Of course, you must understand that I am only suggesting this for your convenience"!

In early January 1925 Stephens instructed Griffith to have one of the closets at the station put in order as he wanted a watchman there. After Evans had reminded him that Rees was already in residence, Stephens replied that he was aware of this as he had had a partition fixed in the bedroom for him! No hint of forgetfulness on his part, or indeed where the money had come from to replace the partition, a job which only a few months earlier was apparently unaffordable!⁽⁴⁾ In fact, despite what Nicholls had said back in October 1924, on 5th December Stephens had instructed Robert Williams, the FR Locomotive Superintendent, to get the Dinas carpenter (David Daniels) to put up a the partition, and to put a stove in the bedroom.⁽⁵⁾ Stephens added that he wanted the work completed by the 16th December. There is nothing further in the files until late March 1925, when it appears that Rees asked for a stove to be fitted in the cottage, a job obviously not carried out as Stephens had earlier requested, and for his wife to be paid. Stephens regretted that Mrs Rees could not receive any pay as it would appear that it was understood that she would assist at the station in return for living there. However he agreed to have the stove from Nantmor station installed and the erection of a chimney pot on the living quarter's chimney may have been as a result. Without giving any notice, Rees left the company's service on Saturday May 2nd 1925 and as a consequence Stephens told



Although taken after the end of Rees's tenure at South Snowdon, this 1927 photo by Mowat shows what almost certainly was 'his' trolley by the near end of the building. The photo was taken as the train from Portmadoc, in the charge of *Palmerston*, reversed at South Snowdon. This was the first season of Buffet Car operations - No. 24 is clearly visible.

Griffith to get another man to take his place, and Evans to get Rees out as soon as possible and to report back when the cottage was vacant. Rees duly received a month's notice to quit on May 13th. Evans sent a letter to Rees on 10th June reminding him that he had to be out of the station house by the 13th, but he was still there on the 24th, Evans being told by Mrs Rees that they would be out as soon as there was somewhere for them to go. A month later, with no sign of them leaving, Evans wrote to say that the rent was being increased from 1s/11d to 3s/10d per week and that the place was needed by another employee. He also noted that Rees kept chickens around the station and allowed them into the building itself, and told him to get rid of them! Stephens was of the opinion that it was no use asking the police to shift Rees, and went as far as suggesting that he be made station agent! Not surprisingly Evans didn't agree with this idea and wrote back to him saying that the place looked more like a farmyard than a railway station and that Rees was simply ignoring all the letters asking him to vacate the premises. Stephens's response was to write to M. E. Nee (Chairman of the Investing Authorities and WHR Director) at Caernarvon asking him if he could get Rees ejected, whilst Evans asked H. D. Jones at Beddgelert to make enquiries at Rhyd Ddu for suitable alternative accommodation. These various ploys had the desired effect, and Rees and family finally moved out of the station into a house in Bower Street, Rhyd Ddu on 12th September, but, according to Jones, they left the place in a terrible state with paper stripped off the walls and pieces of timber pulled off the walls in one of the bedrooms.

Instructions were given to Griffith to have the station buildings thoroughly cleaned, and Evans reported that platelayer J. O. Thomas and his wife were prepared to take over the tenancy once this had been done. He was of the opinion that Mrs Thomas would be ideal to deal with the delivery of goods and parcels, and the Thomas's were quite happy with this arrangement. As regards rent, Stephens suggested a sum of 2/- per week, to be returned to the tenants as an honorarium for attending to the telephone and acting as agent. After sorting out the problem with the missing station key, (see *WHH39*) the Thomas's took up residence on Friday 15th January 1926. A twist in the tale of the missing key was reported by H. D. Jones on 23rd January, when he was told by Ganger J. B. Williams

that the key in his possession was his own property, and that the key to the warehouse also fitted his trolley! Evans was having none of this and wrote back to Jones on the 26th saying that he didn't think it right that Williams should hold a key to the station, or one that fitted both the warehouse and the trolley. Jones was told to get both keys back and hand them to Mrs Thomas, and to tell Williams to apply to the Permanent Way Inspector for a new lock to be put on his trolley. "*We cannot have keys fitting our premises held by several persons*".

In a memo to Evans of 30th January, Jones confirmed that the Thomas's were quite willing to the terms regarding rent, and pointed out that the house was now clean and tidy and that all goods received there were being signed for. In a second memo the same day, he reported that he had informed Ganger Williams that he had to give up his key, to which he replied that if he was shut out of the station, he would have nowhere to eat his dinner and he was going to take the matter up with Inspector Griffith!

The final record in the file is a letter from Evans to Stephens dated 26th April 1926, in which he reported that he was informed by H. D. Jones that the waiting room at South Snowdon was being kept very clean by Mrs Thomas, "*especially during the previous week, before any instructions had been given to her*", and that she would attend to this in the future.

Footnote. In several items of correspondence, Rees's occupation is given as "Platelayer No. 6 Gang", which is a little at odds with available records. Lists of employees show that the maximum number of pw staff was in 1923, when there were only 4 gangs, each made up of a Ganger and 2 undermen, reduced to 3 gangs – Ganger plus 1 underman – by the end of 1924, this number continuing until at least April 1927.

References.

The main bulk of this article is taken from file XD97/23190, with the following additional sources:-

- (1) XC2/33/58
- (2) XD97/23187.
- (3) XD97 22996.
- (4) XD97/23089.
- (5) XD97/21460d.

KS4415 Update

We last reported on the KS4415 restoration programme in *WHH68* (September 2015). In that report it was noted that the WHRHG had agreed to support this programme financially, committing a £1500 contribution. We agreed with the KS4415 team that this contribution would be made in three annual instalments.

As our 2nd instalment is paid it seems appropriate to present this summary of progress over the last year kindly provided by David High. His notes are reproduced here in full. All photographs are by Rob Bishop unless otherwise stated.

“It would be nice to report steady progress on KS4415, but the reality is that progress has at times been erratic, particularly when the team, en-masse transferred their efforts to ‘*Moelwyn*’ & ‘*Mary Ann*’ for the trip to Froissy. While we do not have the rolling chassis we had hoped for by Summer 2016, the majority of the work to achieve that goal is complete and good progress has also been made on Stage 2, the engine and gearbox. The nitty-gritty of progress is described in our blog

ks4415.blogspot.com

“The frames have been stripped and grit blasted and all of the poor areas have been removed and replaced, taking particular care to match material sizes and fastening techniques (a rivet for a rivet, a BS bolt for a BS bolt). Having a full set of works drawings is a joy; and makes replacing missing components so much easier. In the case of the screw buckle axle box tensioners (which Kerr Stuart describe as ‘radius rods’) the original drawings have been copied into a CAD format to enable the missing bits to be CNC machined. Modern technology can produce a 1½” Whitworth LH thread if you need it.

“The springs have also been repaired and replaced and the missing or damaged bolts to fit the springs to the axleboxes manufactured. While the wheel sets have a lot of life in them, the back to back dimension is more suitable for a 2’ gauge, rather than a 1’11 ½” gauge railway. A replacement wheel profile has been identified which will allow the loco to run on railways of both gauges and the wheel sets are now in a rather long queue, waiting for a turn on the Boston Lode wheel lathe.

“KS4415 is of course a Diesel pioneer, and when built was fitted with a 60 HP 4 cylinder McLaren MDB4 engine. This was replaced in 1945 with an 80 HP McLaren MR4. The MR4 looked rather derelict when the loco returned to the UK and it was clear that restoring it would take a considerable amount of effort. In 2007 another 1945 90 HP McLaren was acquired, an M4 Mk2. The M4 engine was the one which the team had running at the 2014 Superpower weekend. However, the M4 and the MR4 do not appear to have very much in common and on stripping the loco it became apparent that the M4 would not fit inside the locos frames.

“Restoration of the MR4 has being contemplated, however a rumour that Armley Mills Museum in Leeds had an MDB4 in store proved to be true. After some patient negotiation we now have agreed a loan of this engine (which is also in need of restoration). Fitting the MDB4 will allow the locomotive to be restored to its original condition. Exciting stuff. The MDB4 has now been stripped down. This has revealed damage to both the cylinder block and the crank case that originated from a catastrophic failure of the crankshaft. So of the 3 engines we have, the one that works (M4) does not fit and the MDB4 is in far worse condition than the MR4 it arrived with. But the MDB4 is a very rare beast and the opportunity it provides so to return the loco to original condition is compelling, so despite it requiring the most work this is the horse we are now backing.

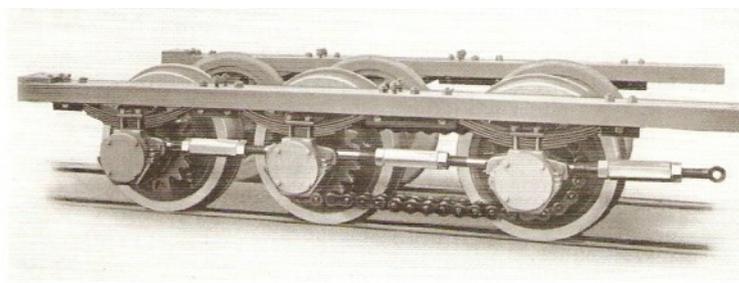
“One of the selling points in the Kerr Stuart Works brochure ‘15 Shillings Change’ was that they had cracked the problem of starting Diesel engines by fitting a petrol donkey engine (in an era before electric starter motors were man enough). A lot of texts describe the donkey engine as a JAP V twin, but the illustration in the brochure shows a single cylinder engine. The works drawings we have do not show the donkey engine in detail, but there is a drawing for the donkey engine exhaust pipe. When you read the small print there were two options, a JAP or a single cylinder Blackburne. KS4415 had the Blackburne option. There is a degree of serendipity in our failure to buy a JAP engine off e-Bay at a time when we still thought we needed one. Three weeks later the correct model of Blackburne turned up, on e-Bay in Spain, with no piston. Now we have the correct 2 engines to restore the loco to its 1928 condition. The fact that neither of them work is but a detail...”



Photo 1 - As we finished our last report, the main frames were about to be grit blasted. This photo by Andy Savage shows the freshly blasted and painted frames upside down on an ex WD wagon, viewed from the cab end.



Photos 2 and 3 - One area of rear frame stretcher had been badly damaged and subject to a rather agricultural repair. This was cut out (October 2015) and a replacement piece welded in (March 2016). A replacement stiffening plate and angle have been riveted on. The slot provides the anchor point for the rear axle tensioner - the provision of a slot rather than a hole allows the use of the common frame with various gauges of wheel sets. The several holes in the angle are witness to this as this is where the sub frame bolts to the main frame. Holes 5 & 6 (counting from the left) are for 2' gauge and holes 1 and 3 for 3' gauge (the loco ran briefly on the Castlederg & Victoria Bridge Tramway in Ireland). But what are holes 2 and 4 for?



The Running Gear of an 0-6-0 Kerr Stuart Locomotive, showing clearly how all wheels are positioned by radius rods which are fully adjustable for maintaining correct chain tension. All wheels are positively driven.



Photos 4 and 5 - The locomotive's six wheels are located in a sub-frame, formed from two longitudinal channel members, mounted under the main frames. The maker's photograph (left) of a complete sub-frame assembly shows how wheels, axle boxes, springs and axle box tensioners fit together. When 4415 was stripped down, some of the tensioners were missing. Will High took the KS drawings and re-drew them in CAD format. Lazer Centre UK then manufactured them from Will's drawings, complete with 1½" Whitworth LH thread. The shiny components (right) are new, the others original. The longer set fit between the centre and rear axles (as can be seen in the KS photograph).



Photo 6 (Above left) This is the right hand sub frame channel after two heavily wasted sections of the channel had been cut out and replaced by Rob Bishop. In other areas wasted steel has been built up by welding. The 2 holes in the pad at the LH end of the channel are those which secure it to the main frames (see photo 2 above).

Photo 7 (Above right) There is a series of photos of KS4415 taken in Minffordd yard in 1929, by which time the loco had been fitted with chopper couplings, side chains and vacuum brakes, presumably to allow its brief use on the thrice winter Dinas to Beddgelert passenger trains. One of Rob Bishop's little side projects has been to produce some vintage style chopper couplings. These combine old 'split face' choppers, with new hooks and eccentrics and recovered bob weights. Coupling to slate wagons will use the 'twisted 8' link in the rear coupling hole, secured with a French pin.

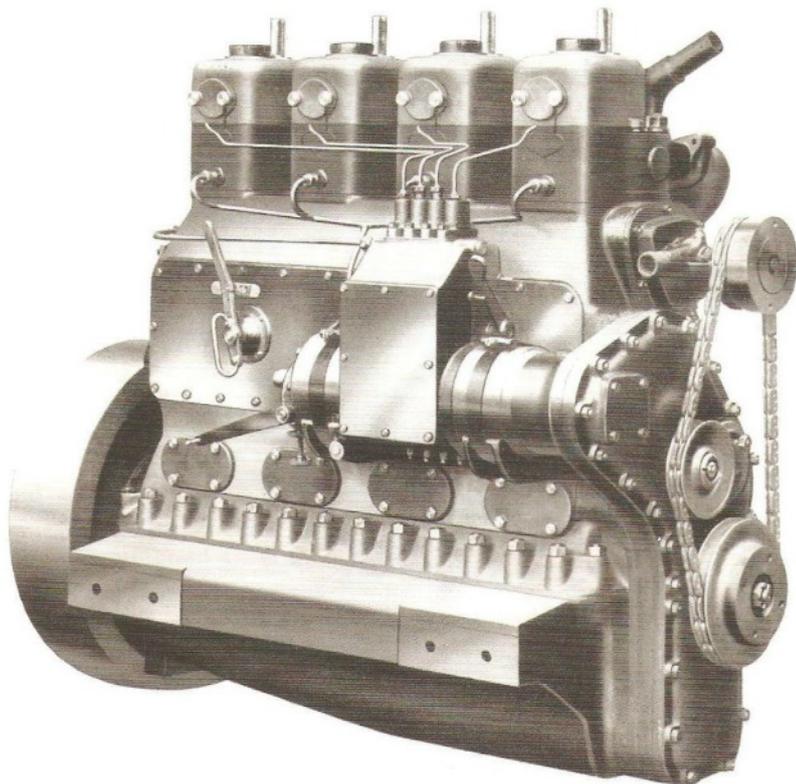
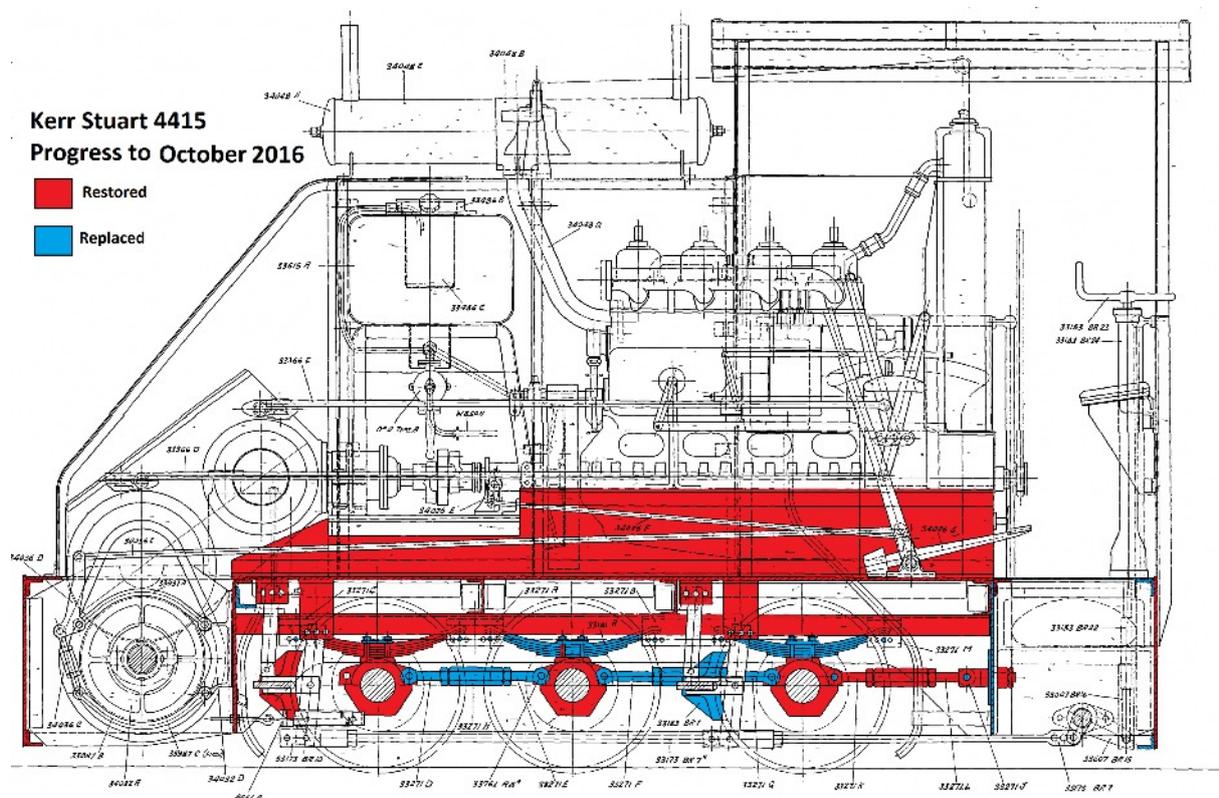


Photo 8 (Above left) - The Maclaren-Benz 4 cylinder 60 HP Diesel engine of the type fitted to KS4415 when built new in 1928. The lower crank case is fastened to the cylinder block by the row of studs. Above the cylinder block are 4 separate castings containing the inlet & exhaust valves and the fuel injectors, fed by the small fuel lines from the fuel pump (the large rectangular block) which shares a drive shaft with the governor.

Photo 9 (Top right) - The crank case and the cylinder block at Boston Lodge ready for dispatch to Cast Iron Welding Services to repair damage sustained by failure of the crank shaft at the end of its previous life.

Photo 10 (Lower right) - Cracks in the cylinder block (inverted in the photograph).



A marked-up engineering drawing showing the areas of the locomotive where work has been completed so far, either through restoration or replacement of original parts.

NWNGR Guards

Searching the 1881 census for Llanwnda, as one does, I came across an entry for Owen Thomas, aged 26, lodging just over the main road from Dinas Station at Caer Moel and announcing proudly that his profession was “Guard in the Narrow Gauge”. The story of the early days at Rhostryfan is told by John Williams in *WHH13*, as translated by his grandson E Pennant Jones, recalling the important part played by Owen Benjamin Thomas on the Bryngwyn branch with a portrait of a busy, child friendly man full of fun who was living at Caer Moel before moving to Rhostryfan.

In 1891 Owen B Thomas, a railway guard, lived with his wife Mary and their first four sons at Bryn Hyfryd in Rhostryfan. This house does not seem to exist today under that name but on the census return it was recorded between Bryn Horeb and Bryn Eithin which still do exist. The excellence of John Williams memory is attested by the census records but a puzzle emerges. The 1881 census locates Owen’s birthplace as Llanwnda, in 1891 it is Bangor.

Moving forward in his life: after over 20 years’ service he left the NWNGR to farm, as John Williams states, at Tyn y Coed near Llanddeiniolen about 1900. He was there by the 1901 census but all his children before this date were born in Llanwnda, the youngest being one year of age. By 1911 Owen and Mary had produced a total of 13 children, most of them boys who were helping on the farm. His place of birth also becomes clearer as in 1901 he records Pentir as his birthplace and in 1911 Capel Graig. Both of these places are between Y Felinheli and Llanddeiniolen which enables me to possibly trace his early life.

The most likely candidate is the son of John Thomas, a gamekeeper, and Catherine his wife who lived at Pentir Hall in both the 1861 and 1871 censuses. In 1871, aged 16, their son Owen’s “Rank, Profession or Occupation” is recorded as quarryman. It might be interesting to note that he never stated officially that his second name was Benjamin. Twice he lets an Owen B Thomas creep in. There are so many Owen Thomas’s that I have not yet identified his date of death.

The other, even longer serving, guard on the NWNGR was Tom Morris who was roundly castigated by Major Marindin after the accident in 1883.

I believe (if I have got the right family, there are two possibilities) that Thomas Morris was born in about 1852 in Llaniestyn, towards the tip of the Lleyn Peninsula, but his family moved to Llanwnda soon after he was born. By 1871 this family were living in Bontnewydd next door to the factory. His father was a labourer and Tom, his elder brother Robert and the four younger children all have the unusual appellation “labourer’s child” implying they did not have paid employment.

It may well have been a shortage of work in the area which caused him to leave the place he regarded as home. In the

1883 report he states he had been a fireman with the LNWR. There are certainly LNWR records of a Thomas Morris of the right age being employed in that role between 1873 and 1875. His marriage is recorded in Carnarvon in 1874 and his eldest child was born in Crewe about 1875. Further evidence of his wanderings is that his wife, Emily Eldridge, came from Marchwood in Hampshire and his reference with the LNWR was given by Mr Thos. Williams, Blacksmith, Great Tenbury, Salop.

However by 1877 Emily and Thomas were back in Llanwnda for the birth of their second child and in the 1881 census he was a “Guard narrow gauge Railway”, and had been since the opening in June 1878 according to his evidence to Major Marindin. In 1881 they were living in the parish of Llanbeblig, which at that time included much of Bontnewydd, almost next door to William Roberts, Platelayer, aged 50, born in Anglesea. Soon after this, in 1882, Emily died leaving Thomas to look after three young children. Presumably the existence of his parents and sister in Bontnewydd enabled him to carry on working. In 1883 he remarried. His second wife was Grace Jones born in Llangadwaladr on Anglesea and they added to the family in 1886.

By 1891 they were established at Bryngwyrfaï at the Dinas edge of Bontnewydd. By 1901 they have moved even nearer to his work to live at Glan Rhyd Cottages at the Bont edge of Dinas. Thomas’s children from his first marriage have left but William, the son of Thomas and Grace, is still at home. The house name has changed to Glanrhyd Villa by 1911, William has left but Grace and Thomas are still around and he is still a “Railway Guard NWNGR”.

Perhaps the last sighting of him is in the list which Boyd includes of staff in 1922 ⁽¹⁾. “T Morris – General Duties – weekly gross wage not stated”. Even at 70 years of age, possibly unable to carry on with his old job, he was seen as part of the team. This is a fitting tribute to a man who was one of the few to serve the NWNGR throughout its existence.

On the other hand it is possible that he was the elderly guard (called back to duty as was Willie Hugh Williams) encountered by P B Whitehouse in 1933 and that even the WHR owes a debt to him.

Thomas Morris, aged 83, of Glanrhyd Villa died in 1935.

(Editor’s Note:

Despite the additional time available to us following postponement of publication in our last Issue we still have not been able to find reliably provenanced photographs of the individuals discussed here.)

¹ Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire, Vol 1, p. 254 - 1988 - ISBN 085361 365 6

Heritage Group Sales

Christmas is coming!!

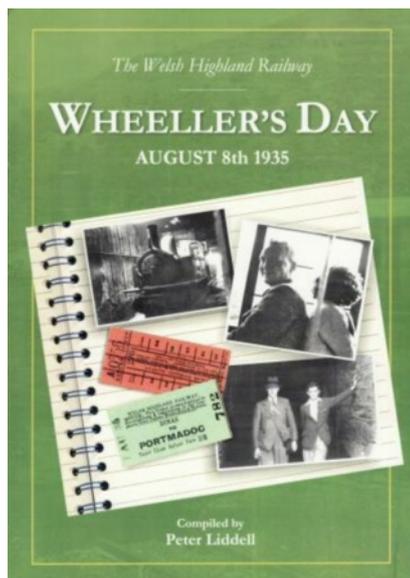
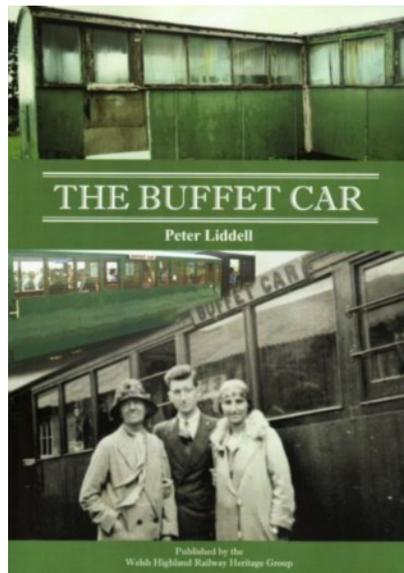


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From the Editor

Imagine my delight, and surprise, when I received my copy of Issue 378 of the *Lytham St Annes Civic Society Newsletter* (August 2016) and read the headline “*Heritage makes you happy*”. The headline was expanded by the sentence “*A survey recently showed that people who actively participate in heritage have a higher average happiness score compared to those that don’t*”.

We surely are on the right track (pardon the pun) I thought!

The ‘survey’ in question was “*Heritage Counts – Heritage and Society 2016*” carried out by Historic England.

I mulled over these conclusions for a while and I found I was asking myself “why are some people apparently resistant to ‘heritage’ if these findings are indeed correct?”

We have a railway running the length of the original Welsh Highland – indeed more than the length of the WHR as the NWNDR dream of narrow gauge rails reaching Caernarfon has finally been realised. We choose to call this railway the ‘Welsh Highland’ yet the one genuine surviving Welsh Highland locomotive, for some reason apparently, isn’t allowed to retrace the miles it ran between its arrival on the NWNDR in 1906 and the final closure of the Welsh Highland after the 1936 operating season.

Why? Surely this is ‘Heritage’ and, apparently, ‘Heritage makes us happy’.

It never ceases to amaze me what can be achieved when we set our minds to it. There can be few better examples than the new (I cannot in all conscience use the term ‘restored’) railway from Caernarfon to Porthmadog.

OK it took a long time and there were numerous hurdles along the way, but the railway is there.

By comparison, arranging for *Russell*, together with other original Welsh Highland assets such as the Gladstone and Buffet Cars, to operate on this railway must be a trivial problem - yet even years after the new railway opened still it doesn’t happen.

It is a truism that when people really want something to happen then, generally, it happens. The corollary to this, of course, is that when something doesn’t happen it is usually because one or more people don’t want it to happen.

Quite why genuine heritage is apparently being resisted is difficult to understand. Whatever the reason, one can only assume that someone, somewhere, isn’t perhaps as ‘happy’ as they might be.

In a previous column I mused whether I would attend this year’s Super Power weekend or would instead make my way the following weekend to Coed-y-Parc to renew my acquaintance with *Winifred* as she returned to Penrhyn Quarry metals. For those who might be interested I have to confess that Coed-y-Parc won!

If, and I really hope when, F&WHR Galas truly encompass Welsh Highland Heritage I will no doubt view matters differently.

Meanwhile I will seek my own happiness through interest in, and activities to support, ‘heritage’ - particularly Welsh Highland heritage.



Russell with a southbound train at South Snowdon in 1923 (WHHG 35)

The photograph allows us to see two carriages behind the locomotive - a Pickering Brake Composite and an Ashbury semi-glazed 'Summer', neither of which had had their roofs lowered when the photo was taken. The two NWNDR Pickerings had their roofs lowered early in 1924 - March in the case of No. 4 (WHR No. 8) and May in the case of No. 5 (WHR No. 9). The semi-glazed 'Summers' had their roofs lowered in April and May 1924 so the latest date by which this photo could have been taken was late March/early May 1924, depending on just which Pickering we see in the photograph. We could make an intelligent guess here, noting that one of the Pickerings (NWNDR No. 4/WHR No. 8) was fitted with dual brakes to allow operation in trains of mixed stock and behind FR locomotives. The other Pickering had to operate in air-braked trains behind NWNDR/WHR locomotives until such time as vacuum brakes were fitted throughout. This photo shows us that, when it was taken, *Russell* was still air-braked. *Russell*, we believe, had the air-brakes removed and vacuum brakes fitted over the winter of 1923/4 indicating that this picture was taken during the 1923 operating season. Probability suggests, therefore, that the Pickering was the air-braked No. 5 (the WHR no. 9 was not applied until mid-1924, so at the time of the photo it would still have been No. 5) The WHR was designed for left-hand running and *Russell's* south-bound train was on the eastern loop line. Visible on the western, north-bound, line was FR wooden open wagon No. 58.

(Continued from p. 12)

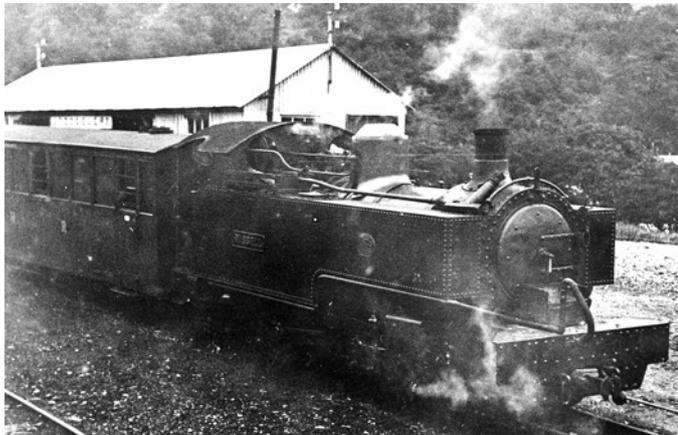
reversed at Beddgelert. WHR 210 shows *Princess* recently arrived from Portmadoc and WHR 64 would seem to show *Russell* departing for Dinas with that same train.

If *Russell* really was departing in WHR 64, then it must have arrived, with its train, BEFORE the Portmadoc train arrived - otherwise it would have been 'trapped' at the wrong end of the station. If this supposition is correct, we can postulate that Casserley took WHR 211 first, followed by WHR 105. After taking water, it would seem that *Russell* would either have been placed in the inspection siding, or simply waited up the main line for the Portmadoc train to arrive.

Casserley then would have photographed *Princess's* arrival at Beddgelert (WHR 210). After uncoupling from its train, *Princess* would have taken water, or more likely waited until after *Russell's* departure for water, drawn forward up the hill and reversed into the loop, waiting at the uphill end of the Dinas to Portmadoc train. Once she was out of the way, *Russell* would have dropped onto the uphill end of the Portmadoc to Dinas train ready to depart northwards. It would seem that we are seeing this departure in WHR 64, therefore this was the fourth photo in his sequence chronologically.

Following the departure of the Dinas train, *Princess* would have been free to run around to the 'business end' of the southbound train.

The 1926 timetable is very nearly consistent with this analysis. We see at 14:25 the arrival of the 12:55 from Dinas Junction.



Above: *Russell* recently arrived at Beddgelert with train from Dinas - H. C. Casserley - 31st August 1926 (WHR 211)

Above right: *Russell* takes water during run-around manoeuvres at Beddgelert - H. C. Casserley - 31st August 1926 (WHR 105)

Right: *Princess* recently arrived at Beddgelert with train from Portmadoc. The locomotive was still coupled to a Festiniog bogie carriage when the photograph was taken. Note the open tank filler and headlamp also to be seen in WHR 64 - H.C. Casserley - 31st August 1926 (WHR 210)



The 14:10 from Portmadoc arrived at Beddgelert at 14:58, allowing plenty of time for *Russell* to take water and prepare for departure. Unfortunately, if our timetable is correct, things then became somewhat hectic!! Apparently, the northbound train was scheduled to depart at 15:01, only 3 minutes after its arrival from Portmadoc. If *Russell* was fully prepared, conceivably this could have been achieved. The timing would have been such that *Princess* would only just have detached from the northbound train and presumably would have travelled only a minimal distance onto the loop line. The snag is that the timetable showed the Portmadoc departure BEFORE the Dinas departure - at 15:00. This would have been quite impossible if it was the intention to swap locomotives.

However, in summary, our main photograph shows a situation where two locomotives were present at Beddgelert, therefore presumably there were two trains also. Both locomotives were at the north end of the layout, a situation which could only sensibly occur if the train from Dinas had arrived there first. But, one of the locomotives is apparently departing northwards whilst the other was also apparently still at the north end of the layout. Of itself, this was not unusual, except that the apparent departure was from the main line and not the loop and, given this, the south-bound locomotive would appear, at first glance, to have been at the wrong end of a train standing on the loop!

With the benefit of the other three photographs all becomes clear - even if apparently at odds with the timetable!

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis



Princess, with *Russell* beyond, photographed at Beddgelert by H. C. Casserley - 31st August 1926. (WHR 64)

In this Issue I will look at a series of photographs taken on one day at Beddgelert by one photographer - H. C. Casserley - to see what we can deduce from looking at the full 'set'. There are four images in this group - WHR 64, 105, 210 and 211. The locomotives in these pictures are clearly identifiable as *Princess* and *Russell*. Casserley took one additional picture on this date (that we know of), WHR 106, showing semi-glazed 'Summer' no. 24 at Dinas.

In *WHH* 70, I looked at another series of photographs, taken by Ken Nunn, showing two locomotives 'swapping' trains at Croesor Junction. The Nunn photos were dated to April 1926 whilst these Casserley images are dated to August 1926. It is immediately apparent that *Princess* had been turned between these two dates.

To return to WHR 64, just what we see happening in the image appears problematic. *Princess* is standing on the goods shed turnout. We can see the first two carriages of the train being moved by *Russell*: next to the loco we see one of the two FR Brown Marshall 6-compartment bogie carriages (no. 17 or 18); behind that and largely hidden by *Princess* and by steam we see the Welsh Highland Ashbury "Corridor" no. 25 in its early WHR. Livery.

As another dating 'guideline' we can see that the interlocked trap point mechanism on the goods shed siding had not yet been installed - the trap point was still operated by a separate lever when this photograph was taken.

So - which train was *Russell* moving? What was *Princess* doing sitting on the loop line? If there were two locomotives at Beddgelert, where was the other train? All in all, a rather odd composition!

However, if we look at all of Casserley's photos taken at Beddgelert on this one day, we can deduce the sequence of events. As noted in the opening paragraph, there are 4 of his August 1926 Beddgelert photos in the WHR collection. WHR 105 shows *Russell* taking water with no other locos or stock in view. This photo shows clearly the pre-lease numbering style on *Russell's* front buffer beam. WHR 210 shows *Princess*, apparently recently arrived from Portmadoc, just below the water tower, still coupled to one of the Festiniog bogie carriages. Only the front balcony is visible so the carriage cannot be identified positively. However, comparison with WHR 64 strongly suggests that this was one of the Brown Marshall 6-compartment vehicles. Finally, WHR 211 shows *Russell* recently arrived from Dinas, still at the front of its train on the loop line at Beddgelert. *Russell* is coupled to Ashbury 'Corridor' no. 23, still in its pre 'Buffet Car' form. That it was still no. 23 can be confirmed by examining Casserley's Dinas photograph (WHR 106) which shows Ashbury semi-glazed 'Summer' no. 24 - one of the last photos known to show this carriage still in WHR ownership.

What we appear to be seeing in WHR 64 is a situation where rakes of carriages travelled through from Dinas to Portmadoc and vice-versa, but where locomotives (**continued on p. 11**)

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