

# WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

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## Developments at Glanrafon



**Left:** a somewhat extreme enlargement from the last issue's cover picture, taken in 2015 and showing even then how invasive the vegetation growth had become. The ellipse indicates the location of the weigh house with the shallow cutting at the foot of the incline visible to the upper left - Peter Liddell

**Right:** the remains of the weigh house photographed in August after significant vegetation clearance had been carried out. The gate at the foot of the incline, visible to the left of the image, indicates the alignment of the track passing the weigh house at right angles to the NWNHR/WHR main line. The weighbridge sat to the immediate left of the building adjacent to the large aperture in the north wall - Nick Booker

Possibly the most significant piece of North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways' architecture that remains un-conserved or unrestored is the Glanrafon Weigh House, the building at the foot of the main incline housing the weigh bridge mechanisms, the subject of Peter Liddell's leading article in the last issue of *WHH*. For many years before the coming of the 'new' Welsh Highland Railway, the remains of this building provided very visible evidence of one of the major sources of traffic for the NWNHR. Glanrafon Slate Quarry (named from the nearby Glan-yr-afon Farm) was the largest on the railway and employed some 450 men at its peak. Access to the NWNHR was by an inclined plane with, at its base, the weigh house and, beyond, the exchange sidings alongside the railway's main line. However, working ceased by 1919, although scavenging of the slate waste and minor quarrying continued. The weigh

### Nick Booker visits the site of Glanrafon Sidings to view vegetation clearance activities

house had a second use as an impromptu slate mill in the late 1940s and early 1950s wherein the scavenged slate was split, cut and trimmed.

At Whitsun 1964, I visited the site with a group from the '64 Company and the whole area was open and clear, the grass and vegetation generally kept short by the nibbling of sheep. The weighbridge building was relatively complete. (Photographs taken on the occasion of this visit and at other times in the post-closure period were included with the article in *WHH* 83.)

However, my next visit to the site was not to be until the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway Trustees Day train stopped there in October 2016 and a rather different picture presented itself. Apart from the fact that the railway formation is now much higher in

relation to the local ground level, and therefore getting down from the train was not easy, the WHR's rebuilding had caused the site to be fenced and, with the local sheep no longer having access, the whole area and the weighbridge building itself had become overwhelmed by vegetation and virtually lost from sight. What to do?

In retrospect, this is where the concept of 'nudge' has come into play. It's an idea in political theory and behavioural economics where positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions are used as ways to influence the behaviour and decision making of groups or individuals.

My predecessor as chairman of the WHRHG, David Allan, has long cherished, and discussed with whoever would listen, the idea of creating some kind of 'attraction' at Glanrafon, based upon the importance of the site to the NWNGR, and hence the WHR, bolstering the heritage content of the new railway. The quarry itself is privately owned, by a local farmer, and access to the weighbridge building and site is only possible by rail or across the farmer's land, so the extent to which the realisation of David's dream might be practicable in the long term remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, the Group itself has gradually raised the profile of the site, most recently through the aforementioned article. However, last year, the Journey into the Past trains highlighted in a very practical fashion the lost or hidden opportunity at Glanrafon to tell more of the Welsh Highland story. Without going into the detail of how it happened, passengers on the Welsh Highland trains can now see the Glanrafon weigh house revealed after many years, thanks to Dafydd Wyn Roberts and his team on the railway.

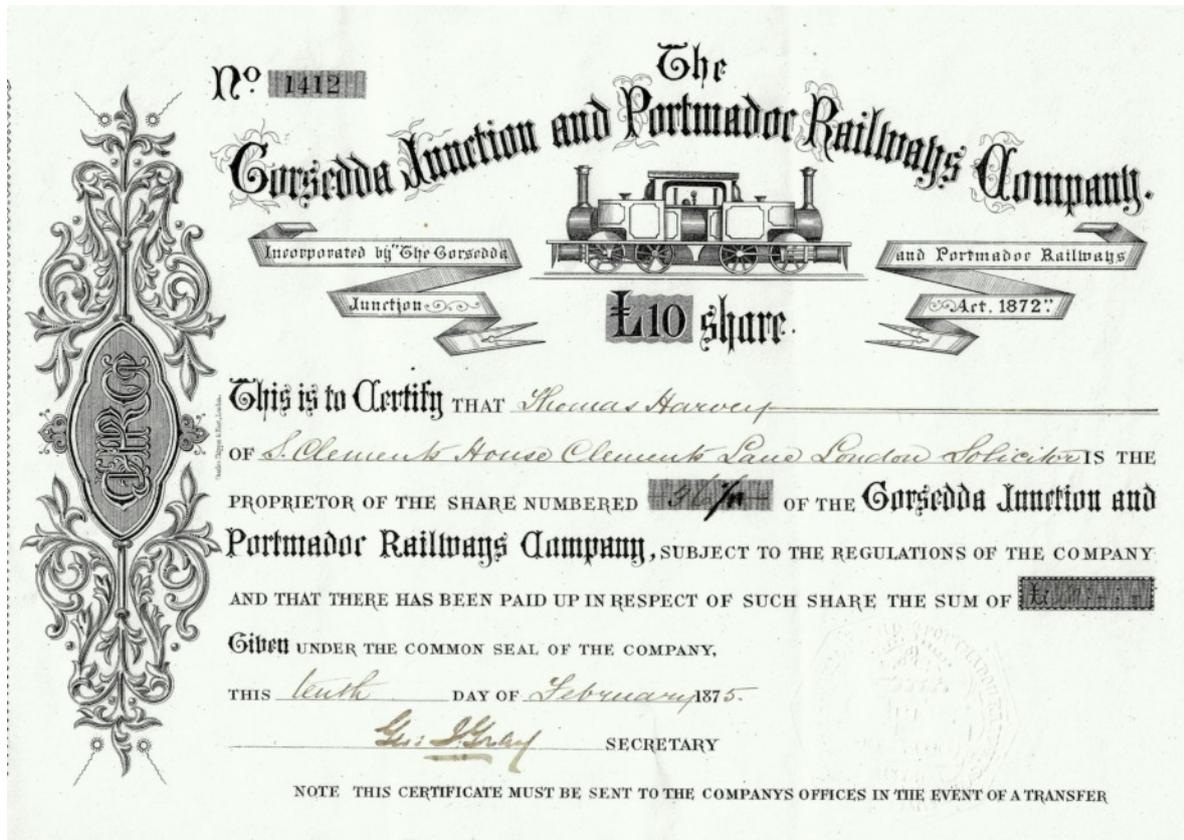
The question now is 'what next?' How much more of the area around the building might be cleared? The Group committed funds some years ago to support at the very least conserving the remains of the weigh house and we have, just recently, agreed to contribute towards the cost of moving the fence, so that once again, in the words of Salomon Franck (J.S. Bach's librettist), 'sheep may safely graze'. Over the next year or so, we need to build on the 'nudge'. The remains of the building that have been revealed in the last few weeks suggest that there is the potential to put most if not all of it back together with a roof and doors. Whether this might then serve a practical purpose is open for discussion and the creation of an agreed project plan.



**Three more of Nick Booker's photographs showing the surviving elements of the weigh house structure, again visible thanks to the clearance of vegetation.**

**What next indeed!**

# OPENING OF THE GORSEDDA JUNCTION AND PORTMADOC RAILWAYS



Fresh from his success in obtaining the Bettws Garmon parcels book, Nick Booker snapped up an original Gorsedda Junction & Portmadoc Railways Company £10 Ordinary Share to add to our archives. As can be seen by the illustration, it was issued to Thomas Harvey, a director of the company and a London solicitor. Although we have three poor quality photocopies already in the archive, this is the first original that we have managed to acquire. Interestingly enough, all the photocopies were those of certificates issued to the same Thomas Harvey.

The Gorseddau Tramway, of 3-foot gauge and opened by 1857, had been extended from an original tramway – Boyd called this the Tremadoc Tramway – built some ten years earlier to link ironstone works around Tremadoc to the harbour at Portmadoc. The extended Tramway provided an outlet for slate from the Gorseddau Quarry. Being of 3-foot gauge, Gorseddau tracks were wholly independent of Festiniog metals in the Harbour area. From Tremadoc, the Tramway followed the south-west bank of Y Cyt, leaving that to run through Portmadoc along Madoc street to reach the Harbour via a level crossing over the High Street. When a few years later the Croesor Tramway arrived at the Harbour, similarly crossing the High Street, mixed-gauge tracks were to be found to the north-west of the Harbour.

## Dick Lystor describes another of the Group's recent acquisitions

In 1872, The Gorsedda Junction and Portmadoc Railways Company was incorporated by Act of Parliament. The Bill empowered the GJ&PR to acquire the Bangor Slate and Slate Slab Company, the owners of the Gorseddau Quarry and Tramway. The new railway proposed by the GJ&PR was to follow the course of the Tramway from Portmadoc to the area of Braich-y-bib, thence to follow a new route to The Prince of Wales Quarry and the Cwm Dwyfor Copper Mine. The Bill established the Company's name as "Gorsedda...", as will also be seen on the share certificate and the Railway's crest, reproduced, for example, by Boyd.

The new railway was laid to 2-foot gauge and its route through Portmadoc was changed to continue along the bank of Y Cyt to the Flour Mill where connection was made with Croesor metals, using the latter to gain access to the Harbour. As the Gorseddau Quarry had closed by the time the new railway was built it is likely that the original section of line from Braich-y-bib to the Quarry was never re-laid to the new gauge.

The following account, reported in the *North Wales Chronicle* of 5<sup>th</sup> June 1875 (page 5 column 6), describes the ceremonial opening of the new line three days earlier, presumably for the benefit of principal shareholders and directors. However, the line had not yet obtained approval of the Board of Trade Inspector, as it was still in an

incomplete state. Approval having been gained, the line was fully opened for goods traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, this being reported at the company's AGM held on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December.

OPENING OF THE GORSADDA [*sic*] AND PORTMADOC JUNCTION RAILWAY. [*sic* – note the incorrect railway name used here – relocation of 'Junction' – both of the above errors are also to be found in the equivalent report in the *Cambrian News* of 11<sup>th</sup> June 1875]

On Wednesday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, the above line was opened. The day was beautifully fine. Some of the shareholders and auditors were present. It was subject to the inspection of the Board of Trade Inspector. The line is of two foot gauge, the same as the Festiniog railway. Amongst those present were the Chairman, Mr. Herbert C. Maudslay, the Directors, the Engineer, Mr. George Wilson C.E., Parliament Street, Westminster, and the resident engineer, Mr. Stevenson. All travelled over the line in carriages drawn by the Company's engine "Pert", which started from Portmadoc. The journey was a most interesting one, and all seemed to thoroughly enjoy the trip to the Prince of Wales slate quarry and the Cwm Dwyfor mines. It may not be out of place to mention that the line starts from Portmadoc, passes by Tremadoc, Penmorfa, Gessail [*sic* – Gesail-gyfarch?], Ereiniog, Ynyspandy, up to a summit about 900 feet above the sea. From thence it goes through the Pennant Vale to the Prince of Wales slate quarry and the Cwm Dwyfor mines, a distance of about 11½ miles from Portmadoc. There is also a line to Twydd Mawr (Cwm Straddlyn), 1½ miles in length, being a total distance of 13 miles of railway. The railway rises a distance of about 5½ miles to 900 feet above the level of the sea, and passes through a most difficult and beautiful country. The scenery is, it may be safely said, amongst the most beautiful in the United Kingdom. The gradients and curves are naturally of a difficult character, and cannot fail to interest a close observer. The ruling gradient is 1 in 25, and the maximum curve of two chains radius. Taking into consideration the physical difficulties, it was quite surprising how well the company's locomotive (specially manufactured by De Winton and Co., of Carnarvon) did its business. The object of the railway, it appears, is to open up the Dolbenmaen, Pencaenewydd and Pennant Vale districts, and the whole of the slate quarries and mines in the valley, including the agricultural and other local transport, Cwm Dwyfan [*sic*] Mine, Pennant Vale Slate Quarry, Prince of Wales Slate Quarry, Hendreddu Slate Quarry, Moelfa Slate Quarry, Gorsedd [*sic*] Slate Quarry, besides the other mines and quarries in the immediate district of the railway. The peat deposit traversed by the railway is of an enormous

extent. One deposit is certainly one of the most remarkable in this country. It is quite adjacent to the line, situated at Ereiniog. It belongs to and has been occupied by Mr. Davis of Penmorfa. If one wanted to thoroughly see Welsh scenery, they would take a trip on this line. It passes through magnificent mountain scenery. Moel Hebog is continuously seen along the line for about three miles. One thing is certain, and that is, that the line cannot fail to be of great advantage to the whole district, and will ultimately to a great extent augment the trade of Portmadoc. The Ereiniog prepared peat fuel works are situated about three miles from Portmadoc, and an extensive peat deposit is at present occupied by Mr. J. Davies, who has spent several thousand pounds in its utilisation. He has made the subject of peat from its chemical and botanical aspects an earnest study. Many years will elapse before the immense quantity of peat in this district will be exhausted. It is, we understand, at present used in one of the railways in this district, instead of coal, because in the first place it is cheaper, and in the second place possesses all the lasting qualities of coal. Some of the specimens of peat shown us were of splendid quality, - quite as hard and as dry as coal. In a peat deposit there may be noticed several stratifications; the top stratification is composed of light, spongy mosses &c., varying in depth from 3 inches to 3 feet. The gradual disintegration and carbonisation of the second stratification renders the peat more intensified, and is generally of a greasy and bituminous character. It is largely charged with oily matter, such as naphtha, petroleum, glycerine, tar &c. From the third stratification to the bottom, the peat becomes intensely hard. From these few remarks it cannot fail to be seen that these peat works alone will prove an almost inexhaustible mine of wealth, and that this railway is absolutely necessary to convey it to Portmadoc. Mr. John Penrose, senior, we are informed, was the first gentleman to report upon the Ereiniog and Cefn-coch-uchaf bogs. He then said that he considered their development to be one of the most important works of the day – they being in extent upwards of 550 acres, with an average thickness of 10 feet of very superior peat. There was enough peat in those bogs to supply the great demand that was likely to be made from such fuel for fifty years to come. If those bogs, he says, were energetically worked they were bound to prove a great success, as they are unequalled by any he had ever seen or known of. The line which has just been opened runs into the bog and passes along the side of the Cambrian Railway [*sic*]. The fact that there are plenty of vessels at Portmadoc is an advantage that should not be forgotten. The expense of cutting a large amount of peat is very small. We saw the operation gone through and it is most simply and easily worked. One man can easily cut about eight tons per day, and put it on the bank at the rate of

sixpence per ton. When dried this will produce three tons of fuel, which will fetch from 15s. to 20s. per ton. From these facts it will be seen that irrespective of coal the bogs are an inexhaustible and a most valuable property. The peat is, we are informed, actually one third dry before it is cut, as the sods when cut will bear to be placed end-ways against the other to dry. The opening of this line was most interesting. Putting on one side its undoubted utility, the journey through the wild and picturesque country along which the line runs was most delightful. Everything that was worth seeing was visited, and consequently a great many stoppages were made on the way. On arriving at the Prince of Wales quarry, a substantial luncheon was provided, and the appetites of all being accelerated by the keen

mountain air, it was done full justice to. Mr. G. J. Gray, London, was most indefatigable in explaining and pointing out the formation and peculiarities of the line. On the whole the day was a most enjoyable one to all, and if any inconvenience was experienced, it was well repaid by such an interesting tour.

Despite the apparent enthusiasm recorded by the *Chronicle's* correspondent, closure followed after barely 15 years. Ironically, perhaps, the GJ & PR 'enjoyed' a slightly longer life than did the Welsh Highland, this despite its never becoming, except perhaps for the occasional unofficial 'indiscretion', a passenger-carrying concern.

No tourists were ever to travel by rail to enjoy "the most beautiful [scenery] in the United Kingdom".

## ARCHIVING



**Patricia Layzell Ward has kindly accepted an invitation to join the Managing Committee of the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group.**

Patricia is Hon. Archivist, Modern Collections, for the Festiniog Railway Company. In 1957, presented with a woman librarian as a new volunteer the then General Manager, Allan Garraway, thought that a suitable job would be to list the drawings in his office. She subsequently worked with Michael Seymour, the FR's first Archivist (and first chairman of the FR Heritage Group) on the early records of the Festiniog and catalogued the collection following its transfer to the Caernarfon Record Office. She is currently working on the project for establishing a permanent home for the archives

Professionally she has been involved in the education of Librarians and Archivists in the UK and Australia.

### Pat writes:

"The Festiniog Railway Company has probably one of the finest collections of any railway company anywhere. The first administrator, Thomas Prichard, set such high standards that the late James Boyd found 'treasure' when examining the vast collection of papers at Harbour Station.

"Long before ready access to photocopiers and scanners were part of the working 'norm', Boyd set to work examining the records with his wife sitting at her typewriter copying out documents he needed for his research.

"Michael Seymour later became the first Hon. Archivist and nurtured the collection with the advice of Gareth Haulfryn Williams, then Senior Archivist at Gwynedd Archives, and the early records were deposited at the Caernarfon Record Office. Some years later I catalogued these records, making this information available as a DVD and, over the years, researchers have produced several major books and articles.

"Films are deposited at the National Library at Aberystwyth as it has the equipment and storage arrangements essential for this fragile format. Of course, alongside the FRC papers at Caernarfon, there sit several collections relating to the Welsh Highland Railway.

"The FRC's Modern Collections are held at various sites around the railways and work is in progress listing and appraising these paper records. But there is a challenge to be addressed concerning those records that were 'born digital' ... think of all the informal traffic that carries essential information, including the chat, around our organisations... Fortunately technology costs are reducing and some interesting equipment is coming on the market... watch this space...

"How did I come to be involved with these developments? I was originally a librarian and Allan Garraway gave me the job of listing surviving drawings when I first appeared at the railway as a volunteer in 1957. This work was interrupted from time to time by study, followed by my move to Australia. Working in Australia taught me so much about records management – the Aussies are good at it!

"My developing understanding of how information is used and how it can effectively be retrieved has been added to the skills of handling archives and records that I have gained from some of the finest practitioners in this area of activity."

**Patricia Layzell Ward, Hon. Archivist, Modern Collections, the Festiniog Railway Company**

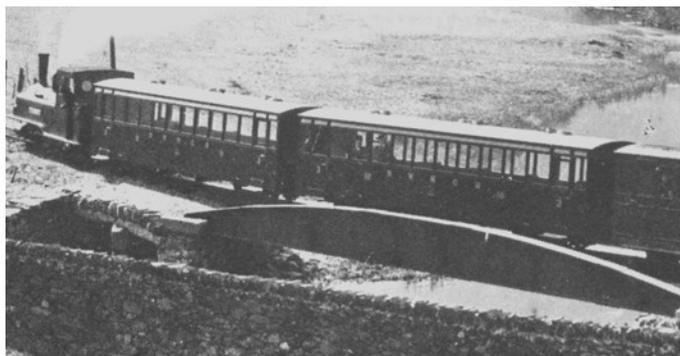
# The North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways: As Pictorial an History as Possible. By John Keylock (Part 10)

Some time has passed since these pages were graced by Part 9 of our serialisation of the draft of John Keylock's 'magnum opus' - his history of the NWNGR. We continue here with Part 10 - however, by way of a health warning, please note that this is the draft as he left it. Much work is still required to turn this into the history we would like eventually to see. We left his narrative at the end of 1893 (*WHH 76*).

## 1894

### 91.0

1894 was a good year for the railway. Expansion at Glanrafon quarry no doubt contributed to the 32,206 tons of freight carried; there would never be a greater tonnage available to the railway from all the quarries served thereby. It was to be 1911 before slate traffic dropped dramatically.



The two new 'Corridor' carriages at Plas y Nant, ca 1893. No 9, next to the locomotive, had yet to be split into separate 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class sections. Symons. WHR 4a



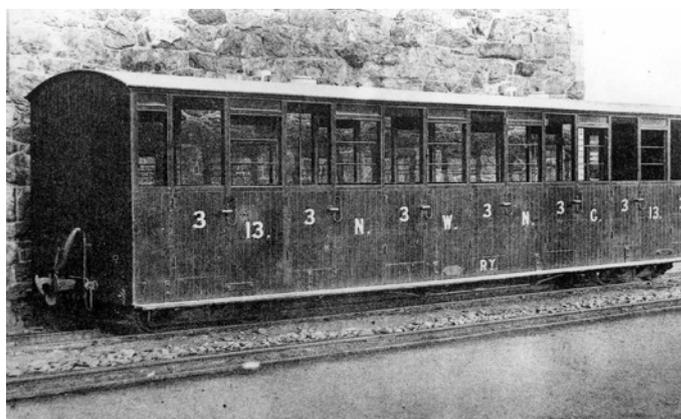
The three Ashbury 4-wheelers between the locomotives (*Beddgelert* nearest to the camera) and other carriages in an otherwise 'fitted' train, ca. 1893. Symons. WHR98

### 92.0

The two 3<sup>rd</sup> class *Corridors* – Nos. 9 and 10 – had been delivered from Ashburys in Manchester in the first half of 1893 – £254 being charged under the 'Rolling Stock and

Continuous Brakes' heading. By the year end all the passenger stock – except for the three 4-wheelers – had been fitted with continuous braking. The 'long frame on which to place three small carriages' did not materialize - had it done so one envisages a 30ft. long bogie coach. Such a principle – albeit with two 4-wheelers – was adopted on the Isle of Man Railway. The NWNG 4-wheelers continued in use – 'through piped' – until March 1897.

However, two additional carriages would not be sufficient to cope with an anticipated increase in passenger traffic. 1893 had seen an unprecedented increase to 55,220 from 39,540 in 1892. It looked as though the advertising expenditure was paying dividends so in March 1894 Russell went to Chancery for the authority to purchase four more carriages (£650) plus £1500 for a replacement for *Beddgelert*, already well-worn from its essentially Bryngwyn exertions. The four new carriages were the 7-compartment *Summer cars* Nos. 11 to 14, each accommodating 56 passengers, again built by Ashbury and delivered during the year. This additional capacity would no doubt have been instrumental in making 1895 the year in which the maximum number of passengers was carried - 55770.



Ashbury un-glazed 'Summer' carriage no. 13 as delivered at Dinas in 1894. WHR 1a

With regard to the payment for the four carriages and replacement locomotive it was envisaged that £1523 might be raised by the issue of 'A' Debenture Stock as authorised by the NWNGR Act of 1890 with the balance provided by an advance from the Company's bankers. In the event, *Beddgelert* was not replaced at this stage. At the May half-yearly General Meeting held at London's Euston Hotel, Russell reported that "the Company was in a better position than it had been for a long time". Mr E.H. Owen of Ty Coch, Carnarvon (see paragraph 95.0) seconded the adoption of Russell's report.

1894 was the year when Russell's only child, a daughter Margaret, was born (*WHH* 76 p 8).

### 93.0

In November, Tanner wrote to the Railway Dept. of the Board of Trade confirming revised working of the line - the main line from Dinas to Snowdon (formerly Rhyd Ddu) 9 mile 20 chains to be worked by Wise's 'Patent Staff and Permit' and Tyers one wire block telegraph system. "The branch, from Tryfan Junction to Bryngwyn 2 miles 50 chains shall be worked on the system of only one engine in steam or two or more engines coupled together being, upon the single line, or any section thereof at one and the same time, such engine or engines to carry a staff." This undertaking was signed by Russell and Tanner.

### 94.0

At about this time, Russell purchased Creag Mhor, Onich, on the shore of Loch Linnhe between Ballachulish and Corran to the south of Fort William. The lodge was originally built for the wife of the Bishop of Argyll and the Islands and is now a Guesthouse.



The driveway and entrance at the east end of Creag Mhor, courtesy of Evelyn Pangman - Arch 3959

## 1895

### 95.0

Mr E.H. Owen (noted in para, 92.0) was a Carnarvonshire County Councillor and a press report in March under the heading "Railway Extension to Beddgelert" (*Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1895, p 8 col 1) describes his appeal to the electors of Beddgelert to re-elect him as their representative on the County Council. He expressed his belief that the railway from Snowdon terminus would soon be extended to Beddgelert. The full press report follows:-

*Mr E.H. Owen, Ty Coch, Carnarvon, in his adress [sic] to the electors of Beddgelert, soliciting their favour of re-election as their representative on the County Council, expressed his belief that the railway from Snowdon terminus would soon be*

*extended to Beddgelert. Advantage was taken of this allusion to a matter which greatly affects the prosperity of Beddgelert and the development of the surrounding district to seek to know further from Mr Owen what were the prospects of the railway being made. A deputation was appointed to approach him for this purpose. On Saturday last, a meeting was held at Beddgelert Board School to hear from the deputation a report of their interview with Mr Owen. He informed them that an Act for the extension of the line to Beddgelert had been obtained, towards the expense of carrying which through Parliament he had contributed £135. One obstacle, said Mr Owen, to the extension of the line by the N.W.N.G. Railway [sic] Company, was the opposition of its chairman of directors to the scheme, on the ground that if the line reached Beddgelert it would soon be extended to Portmadoc, which place would then become the port for the exportation of the slate from Glan'rafon [sic] Quarry. Mr Owen further assured the deputation that if the present company did not take immediate steps to carry out the provisions of this Act, he was prepared to form a company and have the line extended.*

### 96.0

Although provision had been made in 1894 for the replacement of 17-years old *Beddgelert*, this was not acted upon; after all, 17 years is a very short life for a steam locomotive. Therefore, Russell returned to the Chancery Court in March stating that "it was absolutely necessary for the due working of the railway that the engine should be repaired as soon as possible!" Hunslet had provided an estimate based on a visual inspection but "on taking the engine to pieces discovered that further repairs would be required" (in this context matters haven't changed since!). It was estimated that the work would not exceed £400 and the summons brought a sum of £350 to be paid out of the renewals account which held £540. 9s. 4d. A similar sum was currently in the general Receiver's account.

### 97.0

Two years later than at Rhyd Ddu, a passing loop had been installed at Waenfawr to accommodate increasing traffic levels. A MacKenzie and Holland signal cabin with lever frame was already there but competitors in the signalling field - Saxby and Farmer Ltd. - were asked to produce a signalling diagram in September 1894. However, it was almost a year (August 1895) before it was submitted to the Board of Trade (BoT) resulting in an inspection visit by Lt Col Yorke, who had recently been promoted from major.

Horatio Arthur Yorke (1848-1930) joined the BOT as an Inspector of Railways in 1891. The son of the Archdeacon of Huntingdon he was educated at Charterhouse and commissioned into the Royal Engineers at Woolwich. Yorke served in the Afghan War 1879-80 and on the Nile expedition of 1884-85, this latter the eventually unsuccessful attempt to relieve General Gordon at Khartoum. In 1900 he was appointed Chief Inspector of

Railways and knighted on his retirement in 1913, whereupon he was invited to join the board of the GWR. Their locomotive *Sir Arthur Yorke* (no. 3418 of June 1906) was named after him.

PHO Ref MT/29/57  
BoT Ref 21917/95

Railway Department,  
Board of Trade,  
8 Richmond Terrace,  
Whitehall London SW

28th November 1895

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 21st August I have inspected the alterations at Waenfawr on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway.

These comprise the construction of a loop 'siding' the points of which are worked by two ground levers which are locked and unlocked by an Annett's key from the signal box. One of the ground levers is situate in a corner of the signal box and the other alongside of the points at the Dinas end of the station. There is only one key so that only one set of points can be worked at one time and there are safety catch points on the loop and the interlocking of the key with the signals is correct.

The facing points in the main line at each end of the loop must however be provided with facing point locks in the usual manner and if this is done the loop siding might be approved for goods traffic only.

If however it is intended to use the loop for passenger trains (and as Waenfawr is now a staff and block station and a passing place for trains of all descriptions I do not see how the use of the siding for passenger trains can be avoided) it will be necessary to signal the station as a proper passing place. For this purpose all trains should run into the station on the proper or left hand line; The home signals should only be capable of being lowered for the proper line; the catch points would have to be removed; starting signals at each end of the loop should be fixed and facing point locks as before provided on the main line.

The Company should in the meantime be informed that subject to the initial provision of facing point locks and to a re-inspection of the place as soon as these have been fixed the use of the loop siding is approved for goods traffic only.

I have etc  
(Sd) R.A.Yorke  
Lt Col R.E.

**A typed copy of Yorke's Waenfawr Report, dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1895 - a transcript follows:**

Sir,

I have the honour to report for the information of the Board of Trade that in compliance with the instruction contained in your Minute of 21st August I have inspected the alterations at Waenfawr on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway.

These comprise the construction of a loop 'siding' the points of which are worked by two ground levers which are locked and unlocked by an Annett's key from the signal box. One of the ground levers is situate in a corner of the signal box and the other alongside of the points at the Dinas end of the station. There is only one key so that only one set of points can be worked at one time and there are safety catch points on the loop and the interlocking of the key with the signals is correct.

The facing points in the main line at each end of the loop must however be provided with facing point locks in the usual manner and if this is done the loop siding might be approved for goods traffic only.

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The Company should in the meantime be informed that subject to the initial provision of facing point locks and to a re-inspection of the place as soon as these have been fixed the use of the loop siding is approved for goods traffic only.

I have etc

(Sd) H.A. Yorke

Lt. Col. R.E.

As already mentioned, 1895 was the year when the railway carried a maximum number of passengers; it was also the year when Glanrafon quarry had the greatest number of employees - 410.

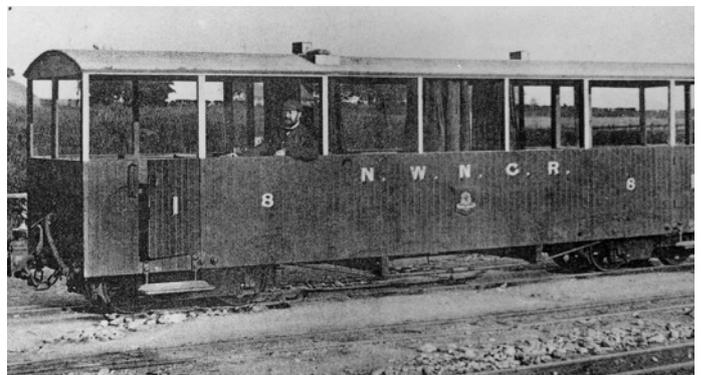
**98.0**

At this time the Lynton and Barnstaple railway was 'in embryo' and a visit was made to the NWNCR (by engineer Mr Frank Chanter, AMICE?) to get ideas and avoid pitfalls. "By the courtesy of the manager Mr S Tanner I was able to examine the rolling stock and works over the whole line and to him I am indebted for the facts and figures regarding the actual traffic".

**1896**

**99.0**

1896 saw the publication of J.C. MacKay's *Light Railways* which featured photographs taken at Dinas, one of these showed Samuel Tanner sitting in the *Gladstone Car*.



**Samuel Tanner sitting the Observation, or Gladstone, Car, NWNCR No. 8, at Dinas - WHR 2a**

1896 also saw the passing of the Light Railways Act, which as the title implies facilitated the building of railways such as branches, extensions and minor lines in lighter materials. The Act would be used for future proposals.

In March, Russell wrote to the BoT confirming that all engines and passenger stock, with the exception of the three small 4-wheeled carriages had been fitted with the automatic continuous Westinghouse brake. "The three small carriages are fitted with continuous blow through pipes and connections, it being very doubtful that they are fit for brakes."

In April, years after C.E. Spooner's visionary concept of a rack railway from Rhyd Ddu to Snowdon's summit, the completion of the Snowdon Mountain Railway was to be dogged by a disastrous accident which was to delay its

opening for a further year.

### 100.0

In the same month, Russell applied to the Chancery Division of the High Court for the transfer of £850 to the applicant. This money represented the Parliamentary deposit under the NWNCR (Extensions) Bill of 1885 in respect of the Carnarvon Extension and replacing the Bryngwyn incline with an adhesion-worked route. There being no objections resultant upon posting a notice in the *London Gazette* of May the application was successful and £845 14s 9d appeared in the 1898 balance sheet.

The Railway Department of the BoT was obviously chivvying the railway about its continuing use of the three 4-wheeled carriages even though they had been 'through-piped'. In September, Russell wrote confirming that they would be taken out of service on 31st March 1897, stating "I hope this will prove satisfactory to the BoT".

### 101.0

The saga of signalling and point-work at Waenfawr continued and in July the railway must have requested a further inspection, which did not take place until November! Lt Col Yorke's report, dated December 21<sup>st</sup> 1896, (with a transcript) follows:

P.L.O Ref MT 29/58  
BoT Ref 17557/96

Railway Department,  
Board of Trade,  
9 Richmond Terrace,  
Whitehall London S.W.

December 21st 1896

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 22nd July I have inspected the passing loop at Waenfawr station on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway.

The requirements named in my report of November 28th 1895 have been carried out with the exception that the starting signals have not been fixed it having been considered at the interview that Mr Russell had with Major Marindin and myself that under all the circumstances of the case starting signals need not be insisted upon (see R 23157)

The signal box now contains 7 levers in use and 1 spare. Facing point locks have been provided at each end of the loop and the home signals are only capable of being lowered when the points are in the proper position for the left hand road.

I noted the following requirements:

- 1) The up home signal No 2 should not be released by No 11 point lever
- 2) The locking bar at the upper end of the loop should be lengthened

Subject to these requirements being complied with I can recommend the Board of Trade to sanction the use of the passing loop at this place. In working the station it is of course essential that all trains should pass through on the proper (or left hand) line and when two trains are approaching the station simultaneously from opposite directions both home signals should be kept at danger until both trains have been brought to an absolute stand after which the signals can be lowered for the trains to enter the station.

I have etc  
(Sd) H.A. Yorke  
Lt Col R.E.

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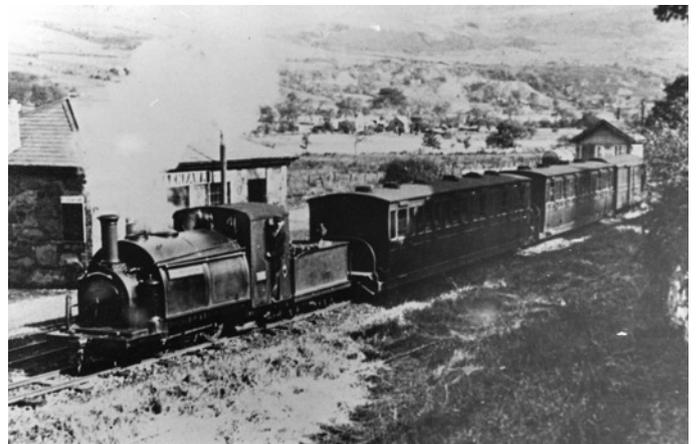
- 1) The up home signal No 2 should not be released by no 11 point lever
- 2) The locking bar at the upper end of the loop should be lengthened

Subject to these requirements being complied with I can recommend the Board of Trade to sanction the use of the passing loop at this place. In working the station it is of course essential that all trains should pass through on the proper (or left hand) line and when two trains are approaching the station simultaneously from opposite directions both home signals should be kept at danger until both trains have been brought to an absolute stand after which the signals can be lowered for the trains to enter the station.

I have etc

(Sd) H.A. Yorke  
Lt Col R.E.

To be continued.



Photographs of NWNCR signal boxes are rare - here we have a glimpse, above the rear carriage, of the box at Waenfawr seen in 1923 - LGRP 2476 - WHR 159

## N.W.N.G.R. - Links with Singapore?

I was recently reading through old newspaper archives, as you do, and was more than a little startled to discover this small article in the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1889, specifically on page 3, column 3, just above a very large advertisement for Hudson's Soap - "Remarkable Disappearance of all Dirt from Everything".

### NORTH WALES NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY CO. AND THE COMPANIES' ACT, 1867.

In the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, before Mr. Justice Stirling, Mr. St. John Clarke appeared on a petition by Mr. Lake, an unsatisfied creditor, who had obtained judgment in 1869 for a sum of £794 odd. Another judgment was obtained by a rolling stock company Sept., 1878, when Mr. Cholmondeley Raffles was appointed receiver of the company. Counsel was understood to say that that company's claim had been satisfied and the company was winding voluntarily, and a deed of arrangement had been executed in March, 1880. It was necessary to have some person to direct proceedings taken in his lordship's chambers, and what was now asked was that Mr. Raffles, besides being receiver, should also be appointed manager. The petitioner was not bound by the deed of arrangement referred to. The rolling stock company acquiesced in this application, and the railway company did not oppose. His lordship continued Mr. Raffles as receiver and appointed him as manager also.

"Mr Cholmondeley Raffles" !! - not a name with which I was immediately familiar - not on my list of NWNCR Directors, Receivers or Managers.

Then I cast my mind back forty years or so to my first visit to Singapore and a passing acquaintance with the hotel named after Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781 to 1826), the founder of Singapore. Clearly it was not he that had

anticipated T. E. Lawrence and 'disappeared' into a totally unrelated world, but was there a family connection of which I was unaware? When was Cholmondeley Raffles born? Clearly he was hale and hearty, or at least reasonably fully functioning, in 1889. How had he attained his obviously impressive presence in the business world? Was he benefiting from the achievements of an illustrious ancestor? What did he do to warrant being so thoroughly expunged from the NWNCR historical record?



The Raffles Hotel, Singapore, originally established in 1887  
Wikimedia Commons

As I came to terms with Singapore back in 1978, it never occurred to me to consider linkages between the NWNCR and this Island at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsular.

As we further develop our understanding of NWNCR history it would seem that we have questions to answer and loose ends to follow in order to ferret out the truth.

Was progression by grace and favour alive and well in North Wales of the 1870's and 1880's?



### WHR 'Past, Present and Future' Gala - 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019.

*Russell* at Beddgelert on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 with the water tower, inspection siding and 'lamp hut' prominent in the view. The locomotive was operating shuttles from Pont Croesor to Beddgelert, 'topped and tailed' with *Prince*, visible at the other end of the train.

The 4-coach train included FR Van 4 - one of the two FR re-built large bogie brake vans seen in WHR photographs taken in the post-lease period. Van 4 was rebuilt with passenger accommodation over the winter of 1928/9 (see *WHH* 83).

# From the Editor

We are all, I am sure, aware of the increasing emphasis being given to data security. We see this in several fields, e.g. G.D.P.R. No doubt readers, especially those who use electronic banking or on-line purchasing, will have noticed increasing measures to improve financial security.

One step being taken by Banks, including ours, is to check that account names match at each stage in transactions. Thus if an account has the name "X", any cheque or electronic payment linked to that account will only be accepted if it, too, carries the matching name.

Our Group account has the name:

## Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group

### Continued from Page 12

(Aberglaslyn) and 77849 (Nantmor). This breaks down as follows: 77829 to 77840 (Aberglaslyn); 77841 to 77847 (Beddgelert); 77848/9 (Nantmor). Of these 21 images, 12 are

If you are sending a payment to Dick to cover membership, to Adrian to cover a sales purchase or simply to make a donation would you please ensure that this specific account name is entered when paying electronically or by cheque.

I was recently contacted by Chris Padley who, prompted by the recent visit of WD Hunslet 303 to the railway, passed me the following link to a Spanish blog called Trenesytiempos (trains and times).

<http://tinyurl.com/y6bgddux>

Interesting material, but you will need either good Spanish or a good translator to make the most of it.

of specific railway interest (77829/30/1/2/3/4/5/6/7/41/2/8) the remainder being 'scenery'. If the photos are taken in sequence, the following list emerges:

77829	Bryn-y-Felin	Northbound train approaching B-y-F bridge
77830	Bryn-y-Felin	Southbound train crossing bridge
77831	Aberglaslyn	Southbound train between short and long tunnels.
77832	Cwm Bychan	Embankment south of long tunnel – no train.
77833	Nantmor Cutting	Southbound train approaches Nantmor level crossing
77834	Aberglaslyn	Looking north through short tunnels – no train.
77835	Aberglaslyn	Northbound train leaving short tunnel
77836	Aberglaslyn	Southbound train approaching short tunnels
77837	Aberglaslyn	Northbound train leaving short tunnels
77841	Beddgelert	View of station from footbridge – no train
77842	Beddgelert	Southbound train in loop – loco at water tower.
77848	Nantmor	Northbound train entering Nantmor Station.

**Left: Russell heads south through Nantmor Cutting (77833 - WHR 25)**

**Right: Russell leaving Bryn-y-felin Bridge with a southbound train (77830 - WHR 1)**

**Note: the train make-up is different in each photograph,**



The locomotives seen in some of these photographs are: FR Englands (predominately, if not exclusively, small Englands – *Princess* or *Prince*); WHR Baldwin 590; WHR Hunslet *Russell*. The latter, seen in 77830 and 77833 is particularly significant as, by the time these photos were taken, the locomotive had been cut down which tells us that these, and therefore the remainder of the, photographs could not have been taken before 1925, confirming, it would seem, Frith's own dating.

### References:

- (1) <http://www.johnowensmith.co.uk/histdate/friths.htm>
- (2) <http://www.oldpicturepostcard.co.uk/dating-frith-postcards.htm>
- (3) The sequence of locations visited by the photographer was (using Frith's photo titles): Borth, Tywyn, Dysynni Valley, Dolgoch, Criccieth, Llanystymdwy, Porthmadog, Morfa Bychan, Borth-y-Gest, Morfa Bychan (again), Aberglaslyn, Beddgelert, Nantmor. 'Aberglaslyn' as used here is a blanket title given by Frith to locations from Bryn-y-felin to Nantmor Cutting.

# Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis



I noted a recent conversation on the Group's Facebook page regarding the dating of a particular Frith post card, a card showing a train of stock on the loop line at Beddgelert while the locomotive, an England, is seen on the main line by the water tower. This is Frith's image number 77842 and it is WHR 36 in our collection. It is, in my view, reliably dated to 1925 but, given the content of the Facebook conversation, it seems worthwhile here to expand the arguments supporting this date.

Some years ago, when I first looked seriously into the Frith collection, I engaged in conversation with members of staff at Frith's. Several clarifications were offered during these conversations. First, they made it clear that each image was allocated a unique reference number when they were entered into their master record, so reference numbers relate to the image and not to a published version of that image that might subsequently appear. Second, it became apparent early in these discussions that they were not entirely confident in some of the dates they had found allocated to their images. They seemed perfectly happy to receive advice as to alternative dates should supporting evidence be available.

Let me first look at the reference numbers. There are lists available on-line indicating the correlation between image numbers and dates <sup>(1)</sup> <sup>(2)</sup>. In addition, I am building my own record of these images. However, particularly in the case of the earlier images, the exact dividing line between years is open to interpretation. Prior to 1886, the current dating information seems to the most part 'iffy' and establishing annual dividing lines is, at present, well-nigh impossible.

A further issue to bear in mind concerns the process whereby photograph records were added to the master list. Here, we

must ask ourselves just how many photographers were working to collect images and how they communicated their individual records to the master. Looking at the sequence of images it is possible to construct the journeys made by the photographers and the way that these sequences on occasion appear to 'interlock' suggests that more than one cameraman was at work. Clearly there was no automatic upload to Google, so it seems reasonable to suppose that a serial list of photograph numbers for any given year does not necessarily imply that that was the sequence in which all the images were made. However, thinking through the pre-digital logistics of the process, it does seem more than likely that photographers were pre-allocated blocks of image numbers before departing on scheduled journeys. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the allocations could be amended or added to if required as the journeys were carried out.

Let us look more closely at 1925. The year, according to Frith's dates, is covered by the image number range 76668 (Epsom) to 79005 (Staithe). Towards the edges of this range there might be reasonable debate regarding the precise delineation between 1925 and either 1924 or 1926, however, the 'Welsh' block of numbers, wherein our image of interest sits, running from 77758 (Borth) to 77849 (Nantmor) <sup>(3)</sup>, is well away from any 'edge' issues. However, it is worthy of note that there is a separate block of images, 77677 to 77706 (covering the Aberystwyth and Devil's Bridge areas), which logically would have been made on the same journey – note the relative locations of Aberystwyth, Borth, Tywyn and Dolgoch on the route towards Crickieth and Aberglaslyn.

Narrowing the number range, images specifically of interest to students of the Welsh Highland lie between 77829

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