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The Upper Parc Winding House Croesor Tramway A Photographic Acquisition



Our Group recently bought, at auction, some 300 slides, taken in the 1980s and 1990s covering the slate industry in Gwynedd. Many of these are relevant to our railways' histories and will now find their way into our Archive. The photos were taken by Clive Stephens to support an illustrated talk on the subject by Nick Pell.

The process of scanning these images is well under way and, hopefully, these will be entered into the Archive shortly and thus gain individual Archive numbers.

I thought it appropriate to include just one of these photographs here and I show one which, it seems to me, naturally fills a 'gap' in our current collection. I refer to a Clive Stephens' April 1990 photograph of the Drum House at the top of the Upper Parc Incline on the Croesor Tramway, looking from the north. These slate industry remains were developed by Clough Williams-Ellis into a "Banqueting House" for Christabel, Baroness Aberconway, in the early 1960s. The building, which offers views down the incline towards Portmadoc and the sea, was also known as a "Summer House". Christabel was the wife of, by then the late, Henry McLaren, the 2nd Baron Aberconway.

Although this was a substantial development, the building's roots remained visually obvious.

To help understand the new building's detail, Figure 1, below, shows the remains of the original Winding,

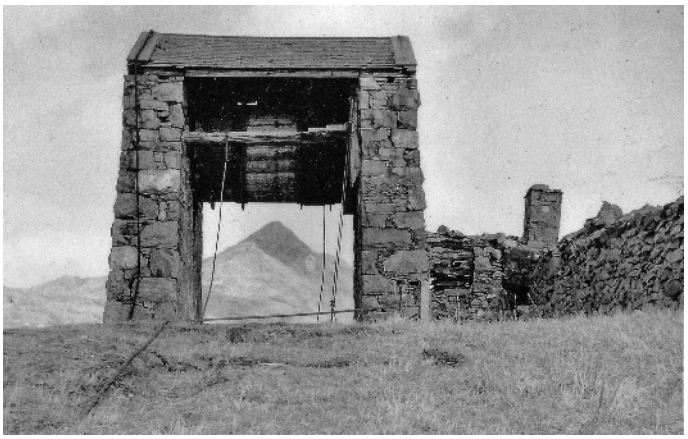


Figure 1 - The remains of the Upper Parc Incline Winding House, looking up the incline with Cnicht artistically framed by the remains - Tudor Rose - 1953

or Drum, House, looking up the incline. The remains to the right include what would have been an elevated platform whence the brakeman could see down the length of the incline when controlling traffic movements .



Figure 2 - The developed Drum House viewed from the east - Adrian Barrell - October 2014

In Figure 2, the remains of the Winding House are clearly recognisable to the rear of the building. Tramway traffic approached from Croesor Village (from the right in this image) and passed between the two tall walls to 'hook up' and start its descent of the incline. The track gained access to the Winding House and incline head by virtue of a long slate-built embankment crossing the lower ground between the village and the head of the incline (Figure 3)

The newly-acquired photo is useful in that it shows the rear of the building from the side unseen in Figure 3, looking from the north, now with the tramway trackbed approaching from the left of the image. From this side we see a doorway allowing access to the main floor of the extension.



Figure 4 - The Drum House, south-west elevation - Adrian Barrell - October 2014

Figure 4 was taken looking up the incline towards the large bay window built on the line of the original trackbed to offer, when dining, the views noted earlier.



Figure 3 - The embankment heading south-west from Croesor Village towards the head of the Upper Parc Incline.

The 1960 Drum House is visible in the distance. Note that we can see right through the body of the house and, to the right, through the roofed but open northwest side of he building

April 1990

WELSH HIGHLAND AND FESTINIOG MANAGEMENT: 1922 – 1925

Introduction and Summary

Introduction

We first published Richard Maund's notes on this topic back in 2009 (*WHH* 43 and 44), but, in Richard's own words:

> *Since this article was originally compiled for WHH, the Festiniog Railway's archive material has become available at Gwynedd Archives, under reference XD97. This has prompted a review of the information which originally appeared in 2009, to fill some holes and to reconsider one or two assertions or statements.*

The two referenced issues of *WHH* can be accessed on our website at: http://tinyurl.com/2zx4yh67

The revised document runs to about 11 pages, depending on presentation choice, so we have decided that our best course of action is to present his complete article on our website.

However, as a lead in to this complete document, the very short précis below, comprising the introduction and the summary table, will hopefully provide a flavour of, and set the scene for, the complete work. As Richard's analysis is followed through, a number of specific individuals, it is noted, warrant individual 'biographies'. The first of these, addressing Septimus Tyrwhitt, was published in *WHH* 93 (find at: http://tinyurl.com/3bskz3nd) and the second, examining H. F. Stephens, follows these notes in this issue of *WHH*.

The remaining key figures in Richard's analysis will be the subjects of an occasional sequence of biographies in future issues of our journal.

Richard's new work can now be found, in full, on our website at:

http://tinyurl.com/yacjbfkp

WELSH HIGHLAND AND FESTINIOG MANAGEMENT: 1922 - 1925

by Richard Maund

Summary of Revised Analysis.

During the years of 'joint management' of the FR and WHR – including the period covered by this present article – correspondence about both railways co-mingled and thus Welsh Highland matters are to be found in the FR archive. In reviewing available information about the railways' senior management, in the absence of the Welsh Highland limited company's directors' minute book, it has been invaluable that the FR minute book (XD97/5 for all references in this article) for that period usually explicitly stated that appointments (or sackings) related to both railways. All this supplemented the material already available from Carnarvonshire (as it then was) County Council and the Investing Authorities, under XC2/33. This present version of the original article is the result.

The "heritage" of our railways depends much on the personalities who directed and managed them, and it is appropriate that their biographies should be recorded in addition to the history of the artefacts (particularly motive power and rolling stock, which seems to loom so large in many railway histories). The two men who were probably the main driving forces behind the post-Great War developments which led to the construction of the WHR were **Henry Joseph Jack** and the many-facetted Pwllheli lawyer, **Evan Robert Davies**. Likewise, there is a considerable following (near deification in The Colonel Stephens Society) and much biographical data for **Holman Fred Stephens** who – with "man management" skills that seem to have reflected his military provenance – expanded from his engineering role to take the railways forward from the fall of Jack in late 1924. He fulfilled this role for five years, until his retreat to the Lord Warden Hotel, Dover, with the illnesses from which he there died on 23 October 1931. So much for direction, but what of the general management from 1922 until Stephens assumed all his multiple roles in January 1925? Unfortunately, relatively little has been published (in two cases their full Christian names seem to have escaped record in railway circles - until the publication of the original version of this article in 2009), and various apparently definitive works on the two railways contain fanciful figments of imagination to trap the unwary about these officials. This article certainly does not claim to be "the final word" – but perhaps it may prompt those whose forté is genealogy to probe further. . .

In 1920, as the dust settled after World War I, the "Dolgarrog raiding party" 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 of the partially moribund North Wales Narrow Gauge and the active Festiniog.

Extract of entries in *Railway Year Book* - editions 1921 to 1925 - for FR, WHR, NWNGR and PB&SSR

Railway	Secretary	General Manager	Engineer	Loco. Supt.
1921				
FR	A G Crick, Portmadoc	F Vaughan (Managing Director)	Rowland Jones (Acting) {1}	R Williams
NWNGR {2}	G C Aitchison, 14 Dale St., Liverpool {3}	G C Aitchison {3}	G C Aitchison {3}	G C Aitchison {3}
PB&SSR {4}	C E Hemmings, Clark St., Dolgarrog {5}	H J Jack (Managing Director)	G K Paton, Dolgarrog {5}	[none shown]
1922				
FR	A G Crick, Portmadoc {6}	F Vaughan {7}	J Williamson {8}	R Williams
NWNGR {2}	E J Deane, 14 Dale St., Liverpool {9}	S G *(sic)* Tyrwhitt {10}	[none shown]	[none shown]
PB&SSR {4}	C E Hemmings, Clark St., Dolgarrog {5}	H J Jack (Managing Director)	G K Paton, Dolgarrog {5}	[none shown]
1923				
FR	W R Huson, 7 Victoria St. London SW1 {11} {12}	S E Tyrwhitt {10}	J Williamson, Oswestry {8}	R Williams, Portmadoc
WHR	W R Huson, 7 Victoria St. London SW1 {12}	S E Tyrwhitt {10}	[none shown]	[none shown]
1924				
FR	W R Huson, 7 Victoria St. London SW1 {12}	Capt. J May, Portmadoc (Superintendent) {13}	Lt.Col. H F Stephens {14}	R Williams, Portmadoc {15}
WHR	W R Huson, 7 Victoria St. London SW1 {12}	Capt. J May, Portmadoc (Superintendent) {13}	Lt.Col. H F Stephens {14}	[none shown]
1925				
FR	W R Huson, Wellington Ho., Buckingham Gate, London SW1 {12}	Lt.Col. H F Stephens, Tonbridge (Managing Director) {14}	Lt.Col. H F Stephens, Tonbridge {14}	Lt.Col. H F Stephens, Tonbridge {14}
WHR	same as for FR			

{1} = died 10 May 1921

{2} = at this stage operating only Dinas - Bryngwyn, for freight; entry did not appear in later editions, having been subsumed within Welsh Highland Railway (Light Railway) Co from 1 April 1922

{3} = the Liverpool address is that of Deane & Davidson's auditing firm; their address had been NWNGR registered office since 1914. Bradshaw's Manual for 1922 (recording the situation at 31 December 1920 (sic)) shows for NWNGR Secretary & Manager: E(dward) J(ames) Deane based at 14 Dale Street, Liverpool. He seems to have been installed to these managerial roles in lieu of Aitchison when the Dolgarrog consortium acquired control in 1920. Aitchison was replaced as Receiver by H J Jack 9 April 1921.

{4} = at this stage operating only Portmadoc - Carreg-hylldrem (former Croesor Tramway), for freight; entry did not appear in later editions, having been subsumed within Welsh Highland Railway (Light Railway) Co from 1 April 1922

{5} = Clark Street, Dolgarrog were the local offices of the Aluminium Corporation Ltd. and of its subsidiary, North Wales Power & Traction Co Ltd

{6} = resigned as Secretary 13 June 1922 [FR Board minute 24 June 1922]

{7} = resigned as Managing Director 16 July 1921 but remained as General Manager to 31 March 1922

{8} = James Williamson, Assistant Engineer of the Cambrian Railways: appointed 1 October 1921; engagement terminated 31 March 1923 [FR Board minutes 8 Dec 1921 and 1 Dec 1922] (but appointed again in 1937)

{9} = Deane (see also note {3}) was a chartered accountant and acted as auditor for the FR for a number of years as well as for the PBSSR and, later, the WHR(LR).

{10} = should read S E Tyrwhitt; appointed to NWNGR post early 1922 and to FR and WHR posts from 1 April 1922 (under secondment from GWR), resigned (at end of secondment) 30 September 1923 (see text of article)

{11} = appointed Secretary of FR 24 June 1922

{12} = the address is that of the offices of Evan Davies & Co. (the London practice of Evan R Davies, a solicitor and FR board member); William Richard Huson was an employee of that firm

{13} = appointed 1 October 1923; employment ceased September 1924. Replaced by E H R Nicholls (Managing Director FR and General Manager WHR, 17 May 1924 - 31 December 1924 (see text), having tendered his resignation in November 1924; Nicholls' departure is confirmed by the company's submission for the 1925 edition.

{14} = Holman Fred Stephens. Appointed Engineer 1 May 1923 (FR board minute of 27 Aug 1923). In Huson's report to the WHR Investing Authorities of WHR staff at 31 December 1924 Stephens was described as "Engineer" (and Williams as "Loco. Supt." – although Stephens was in fact the proper holder of that office). Appointed Chairman and Managing Director (while retaining existing posts) 1 January 1925; died in office 23 October 1931 (see text of article)

{15} = Robert Williams. Boyd's Festiniog Railway vol. 1 p. 196 and Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire vol. 2 p.26 have Williams replaced by Stephens 1 April 1923 whereas Johnson's Illustrated History of the Festiniog Railway p.116 gives 1 May 1923 and Boyd's Festiniog Railway vol. 2 p. 569 gives May 1924. Williams' continued to appear in this post in Cambrian News 42 at the time of the WHR opening in 1923 and in the 1924 edition of Railway Year Book (for which data would have been supplied by the company in that spring). In Huson's report to the WHR Investing Authorities of WHR staff at 31 December 1924 Williams was described as "Loco. Supt." although Stephens was the holder of that post for signing the annual certificate. Jim Hewett has stated that Williams "was retired in 1924" (aged 59) but that is not commensurate with Huson's report; Williams remained on the payroll at Boston Lodge until spring 1927.

NWNGR and Welsh Highland personalities - an occasional series (2)

In *WHH* 93, we presented notes prepared by Richard Maund. His introduction to those notes read :

The heritage that has been passed down to us is very much a product of the manifold personalities who held sway during the railways' nascence and operational periods, so it is appropriate to record their personal histories and details, just as much as it is to study the minutiæ of the physical assets they left us.

It's also appropriate gently to correct some of the minor myths that have grown up about some of these characters,……

Having addressed Septimus Tyrwhitt in his first notes, Richard has now provided the following appraisal of Colonel Stephens' involvement with our railways.

Further assessments of key individuals will follow.

H. F. Stephens' appointments at the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways

The date in 1923 from which Lt.-Col. H. F. Stephens was appointed an officer of both companies has been the source of considerable confusion among the "established histories" – as noted in the first footnote to my article *Holman Stephens meets the Welsh Highland…* in *WHH* 66 (March 2015).

> Boyd's *Festiniog Railway* Vol. 1 (1975) p. 196, his *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* Vol. 2 (1989) p. 26, Shaw's *Colonel Stephens at Portmadoc* (in *Tenterden Terrier* (Spring 1982), *FR Heritage Group Journal* no. 65 (2001) and *Colonel Stephens – Insights into the man and his empire* (2005) ch. 21 (not paginated), and Johnson's *Illustrated History of the Welsh Highland Railway* (2009) p. 63 all have Stephens appointed to Engineer and Loco Superintendent 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 *(sic)* as Loco Supt. and p. 570 gives April 1924 *(sic)* as Engineer, while Festipedia (at 21 December 2023) has him as Engineer from April 1923 and Loco. Superintendent from May 1925.

There has been similar confusion about when Stephens became a Director, Managing Director, and Chairman of the companies, which this paper also sets out to address.

Fun Fact 1: Stephens' first given name arose from his mother's fascination with William Holman Hunt, OM (1827-1910).



The Festiniog Board Meeting minute 6 of 27 August 1923 (XD97/5) confirmed in no uncertain terms that Stephens had been appointed to two posts on each railway from **1 May 1923** in these terms: "… the Directors had arranged with Colonel H F Stephens to act as **Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent** to the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways from the first day of May last *[1923]* at an annual salary of £100 payable monthly plus any necessary out of pocket expenses … It was resolved that the appointment be and is hereby confirmed."

It does seem to have been the first confirmation that the new appointment embraced both roles, not merely that of Engineer.

That his appointment did not immediately follow expiry of the period of office of his predecessor, James Williamson of the Cambrian, is explained by the earlier minute 8 of 14 April 1923 (XD97/5) and shows why Stephens could not have been appointed from 1 April 1923: "Engineer. It was reported that Mr J. Williamson's period of office had expired on the 31st March 1923, and that the Chairman *[Henry J Jack]* and Mr Evan R. Davies *[a Director]* had met Col. Stephens, who is managing several Light Railways in England very successfully, with a view to his accepting appointment as Engineer to the Company and the Welsh Highland Railway Company. Col. Stephens had promised to inspect the two Railways with the Directors next Monday *[16 April]*, after which further consideration would be given to the matter, and the Chairman was authorised to arrange such terms as he thinks would be advisable

in the interest of the Company alone, or in the interests of this Company and the Welsh Highland Railway Company acting together."

Historians' confusion may well have arisen from a letter from Jack to General Manager Septimus E Tyrwhitt dated 4 April 1923 (XD97/7506g) which states: "We have arranged for Lieut. Col. H F Stephens to act as Engineer both to this Railway and the Welsh Highland Railway as from 1st instant." As can be seen from the minute book, this should have read "1st. proximo".

Likewise, there is confusion in published texts as to whether or not Stephens was formally appointed as Loco Superintendent – despite the Board minute being quite clear, Jack's letter does not mention the Loco Supt. post and there was already an incumbent in the shape of Robert Williams (see below). The first traced letter with Stephens using printed headed paper showing both titles and his Tonbridge address was 9 June 1923.

On Eric H. R. Nicholls' arrival as Managing Director – his first traced correspondence at Portmadoc was 10 May 1924 – Jack wrote to him on 20 May (XD97/7518) that "… in view of all the circumstances it would be advisable for him *[Stephens]* to relinquish his appointment as Engineer in three months' time." – the intention was to give Nicholls the opportunity to obtain a replacement for the Engineer's role, presumably from his erstwhile contacts on the Great Western or Egyptian State Railways. But nothing came of this, and Jack wrote to Nicholls on 21 August (XD97/7518): "I am glad to inform you that Col. H F Stephens has kindly consented to continue to act as Engineer for the two Railways until we are able to make new arrangements." – which they never did. Thus, Stephens remained in post throughout – there was no break in his service. Again, no mention of the Loco Superintendent role – that's simply taken as read.

Fun Fact 2: Stephens' second given name was Fred not Frederick.

So far as the Loco Superintendent's post is concerned, Robert Williams continued to appear in that guise – for example, in *Cambrian News & Welsh Farmers Gazette* 8 June 1923 reporting the WHR opening. Although – confusingly – retaining the title, he was promptly put in his place as being subservient to Stephens; a manuscript endorsement, made at Harbour station, on a letter dated 4 July 1923 from Stephens (XD97/7506g) reads: "Mr Williams has again been spoken to on this and it is now certainly in order." Thus it was that the Certificates of Responsible Officers in the Annual Reports from year ended 31 Dec 1923 were signed by Stephens for both Permanent Way and for Rolling Stock etc. – in other words, as both civil and mechanical engineer – whereas they had been J(ames) Williamson and R(obert) Williams, respectively, for the previous year.

Despite this, the 1924 edition of *Railway Year Book* (for which data would have been supplied by the railways in that spring) shows Stephens merely as Engineer and Williams as Loco Superintendent.

By FR Board resolution of **20 October 1924** (XD97/5) Stephens was **elected a Director** of both companies; a letter of 30 October 1924 from Jack to Nicholls (XD97/771) reiterated this.

In consequence of the resignations of both Jack as Chairman and Nicholls as Managing Director, the FR Board meeting on 16 December 1924 (XD97/5) resolved to appoint Stephens as Chairman and Managing Director at salary of £200 p.a., in addition to present remuneration *[quantum not stated here but presumably the £100 given at 27 Aug 1923]* as Engineer and Loco Superintendent and service in respect of management of Welsh Highland Railway, the appointment as Managing Director to "date from his taking over from Mr Nicholls."

***Fun Fact 3*:** Stephens' rank of Lieutenant-Colonel stems from his service with the Territorials, rather than the regular army.

In the report to the WHR Investing Authorities of WHR staff as at 31 December 1924 (XC2/33/58), Nicholls was still described as Managing Director, Stephens as "Engineer" and R Williams as "Loco. Supt." Apart from the somewhat misleading role ascribed to Williams, that is correct at that date for Nicholls' period of notice as Managing Director nominally did not expire until 22 April 1925. However, the date of his last correspondence traced (XD97/7492) from Harbour station was 31 December 1924; he was not seen again at Portmadoc after that day – he returned to his London home in Cumberland Road, Acton. Stephens took on the additional roles of company **Chairman and Managing Director** from **1 January 1925**, as set out in a circular to all staff of that date (XD97/7520), that being in addition to Engineer and Loco Superintendent. Despite this, on 22 April 1925 Stephens wrote that he "took the company over" - i.e. assumed Jack's Chairman role and Nicholls's Managing Director role - "about ten

weeks ago", i.e. mid February 1925, so it's perhaps not surprising that historians (including me, in letters to *WHH* 47 and 48) have given confused accounts of just when he adopted his various guises.

From 4 March 1927 his roles with the Welsh Highland – which had gone into receivership – were different from those with the Festiniog. For the WHR he was then Receiver and Manager (XC2/33/25), while retaining his two engineering roles.

After suffering a stroke in January 1930 Stephens was incapacitated and eventually repaired to the Lord Nelson Hotel at Dover. The FR Board meeting of **30 April 1931** noted his letter "**resigning his position as Chairman** … owing to his continued ill health" and on **23 October 1931** he **died** (primary cause: coronary thrombosis) at the Lord Warden Hotel just eight days short of his 63rd Birthday. The FR Board meeting on 2 November 1931 (XD97/5) noted that he had been unable to carry out his duties "… for upwards of 18 months and the work had been done mainly by his staff at Tonbridge …" (this minute credits Stephens with roles as Managing Director, Engineer and Loco Supt.). Despite this, Stephens' last letter to Portmadoc (XD97/7649) was dated 29 September 1931!

File references XC and XD are to be found at Gwynedd Archives, Victoria Dock, Caernarfon.

Richard Maund
December 2023

WHRHG On-line Photo Data Base - Developments

It has been some time now since we announced the availability of our On-line photo database. Initially we opened up access to our 'Official' photograph series – the WHR, WHRa and WHHG images. These collections amount to 329 images in 3 Albums.

Since that initial release, I have been adding further photographs as and when possible. At the date of writing these notes, the total uploaded photograph count has reached 1,148 and these have been assigned to 47 Albums (so far!).

Perhaps an explanation of my process might prove helpful. All of our images have been allocated Archive numbers – this process dates back to David Allan's initial personal archive-building activity. The original archive included David's personal photographs, which we have removed, explaining the blocks of 'missing' Archive numbers. As the archive grew, new images were allocated Archive numbers in turn, so there is no intrinsic evidence as to the nature of individual entries to be derived from this basic reference number.

Photographs have been, and are being, uploaded to our new on-line data base in strict Archive number order. The organisation of these images is being managed through the generation of a series of Albums. One of these sets of Albums reflects the Keylock Collection, wherein all of our prints are stored, by establishing one Album for each of the files in that collection. This currently comprises 12 Albums but this will increase to 21, perhaps more with the addition of new prints. A second set of Albums covering locomotives has also been established, this time, as of now, a set of 27 separate Albums.

Photographs uploaded to the data base can be assigned to as many separate Albums as its contents indicate. In essence, this can be described as the "upload once, link to albums many times" process, enabling search by looking at Albums of interest.

Matters have escalated somewhat with the acquisition of David Allan's negative collection. In *WHH*101, apropos David's negatives, I noted that my negative count had "already passed 3,730". My current count has passed 10,800! Many of these are the negatives for specific prints in the Keylock Collection. However, many of the negatives show images that are outside the current scope of that Collection.

Our current Archive stands at 5180 entries, some of which contain more than one image, representing Archive numbers up to 5562. The addition of David's collection, whilst there is significant overlap, can only drive this figure higher, probably much higher, which bring me to my current position.

When I started this exercise, I held the notion, with hindsight the naïve notion, that Albums should be released when complete. However, from the above notes, if one major conclusion emerges it is that Albums are unlikely to be complete for a long time, if ever. Consequently, I have suggested, and it has been accepted, that Albums should be 'rolled out'

progressively, a process that will have started by the time you are reading this *WHH* Issue.

My first 'release' will be David Allan's collection of reconstruction photographs. 175 of the photographs uploaded so far fall into this category and can be viewed by logging into the Archive, once you have registered for access, of course (see instructions under Welcome at: http://tinyurl.com/4s7xbhk7)

The Album starts with 42 colour images (Arch 0633 to 0674), all dated to 25th August 2006. I have yet to track down the negatives from which these were made to verify that they were indeed a sequence limited to one day. Most of the images were taken between Pitt's Head and the then head of steel on the approach to the bridge over Afon Cwm-dû (below). The exceptions – 0641 to 4 – were taken at Bryn-y-felin.



Arch 0656 - 25th August 2006.

This block of images seem 'out of sync' time-wise with those that follow. The image following Arch 0674 in this Album is Arch 0832, one of David's black-and white photographs taken using 120 format film. His negative number is listed (F51-11), and this has been confirmed against the contents of his negative collection. The photograph was taken on the 16th May 1997, along with a further 11 images.

The next photograph reproduced here, Arch 0834, was the third taken on that day by David and shows very early signs of Phase 1 track laying, which started from Dinas and worked progressively north until Caernarfon was reached in September 1997, some 4 months later.



Arch 0834 - 16th May 1996 - Allan F51-15

Working through this collection, there is evidence of just where and when the Phase 1 head of steel was during this intensive track-laying period.

As well as showing track laying progression, this Album also records building repair and development, including the refurbishment of the Station Building at Dinas.



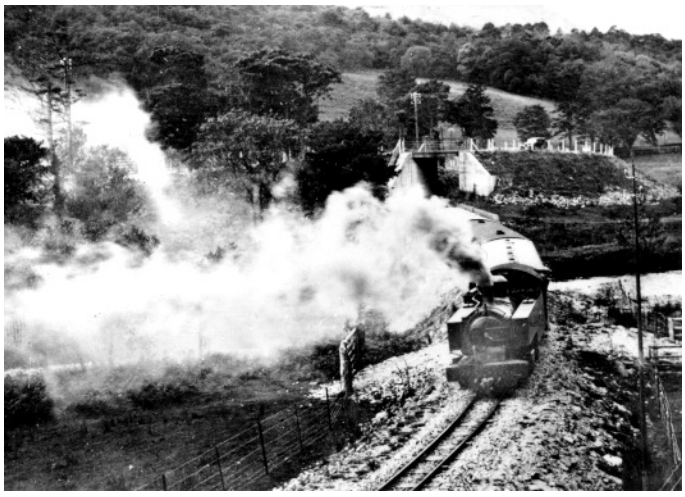
Arch 1230 -11th December 1998 - Allan H93-08

As the Album stands at the time of writing, the final entry is Arch 1230, David's H93-08 taken in December 1998.

This picture is one of a series covering the final internal plastering and panelling of the Dinas building.

My second release should be the Locomotives Album which comprises a series of individual Albums dedicated to particular locomotives or, occasionally, classes of locomotive. As noted above, these now contain a total of 304 entries spread across 27 Albums. Of these, the two currently most populated are *Russell* (76 images) with the WHHR Bagnall locomotive *Gelert* running a distant second at 55 images.

Russell is, of course, a subject of our first Archive entry – Arch 0001 – showing the locomotive crossing the bridge at Bryn-y-felin with a south-bound train heading towards the Pass and Portmadoc (see below).



Gelert makes her first appearance in Arch 0334, interestingly alongside *Russell*, in a photograph taken at Gelert's Farm on 1st May 1993 (David's F04-09).



The locomotive first appears 'solo' in the subsequent image, Arch 0335, David's F04-11 from that same day (below).



The most recent addition to this set of Albums is Arch 1223 which shows Garratt No. 138 at Dinas in November 1998 (David's H92-13). This is the 8th image so far added to that loco's dedicated Album.



Finally, there are currently 12 Albums within the overall Keylock Collection Album. This Album will, with the addition of necessary sub-Albums, eventually replicate electronically the file structure and contents of John's collection, which consists mainly of photographic prints.

Currently, the largest number of images is to be found in Album 12, WHHR Photographs, followed by Album 01, Caernarfon to Dinas, both a consequence of David Allan's building of the original Archive. I have already looked at David's construction photographs which, thus far, are predominately Phase 1 images. A quick look at Album 12 shows the first and last images to be Arch 0311 and 0730 respectively.



Arch 0311 (above), taken in April 1993 (David's F02-03), shows the head shunt at Pen-y-mount and the view towards Beddgelert, capturing future ambitions, perhaps?

Keep watching the Archive to follow the progressive release, and updating, of these Albums.

Who wanted the Cambrian Railways to acquire the Croesor & Portmadoc Railway in 1870?

An intriguing episode in the Croesor & Portmadoc Railway's life – inevitably more often referred to as the Croesor Tramway – is revealed in Cambrian Railways' records at the National Archives. Of the Croesor's chroniclers, neither Johnson (*An Illustrated History of the WHR* (2009)) nor Southern & Barrell (*The Croesor Tramway* (2018)) appears to make mention of this episode. Boyd (*Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* Vol. I (1988)), p. 100, had clearly read the Cambrian engineer's report below and had – perhaps wrongly? – concluded that the initiative came from the larger company. I'm by no means convinced that that was the case – so let such evidence as there is speak for itself.

The question is also whether the proposal relates merely to that part of the C&P between Beddgelert/Gelert Siding (or the Croesor crossing) and the harbour, or the whole line from Carreg Hylldrem. The fact that the estimated costs given by Owen would be roundly one hundred times greater at today's prices suggests the proposal related to the whole C&P.

Engineer's Report 5 January 1870: Croesaû (sic) Tramway at Portmadoc

I have in obedience to your instructions inspected the above Tramway which leads from a siding on the present Beddgelert Railway to the Harbour and Wharves at Portmadoc. I find that there would not be any Engineering difficulties in converting the same from its present guage (sic) *of 2 feet into that of 4 feet 8½ inches, which would fall in with the guage* (sic) *of the existing Railway. The embankments are for the most part of sufficient width, and the bridges strongly constructed with the curves and gradients sufficiently easy. My estimated cost amounts to from £1500.0.0 to £1600.0.0.*

Traffic Manager's Report 6 January 1870: Portmadoc

I now beg to report that I visited the Croesor Tramway along with Mr G Owen [the Cambrian Engineer] *who will report to you with regard to the practicability of extending our guage* (sic) *along it.*

The traders and many proprietors whose yards will be accessible are very much in favor (sic) *of it.*

I have had a conversation with Mr Breese and some of the Directors of the Croesor Tramway and they suggest that we should do the work and get repaid by participating in the 1/- Toll.

They also want us to do the haulage which we could do very well, so that the only question is the proportion which we should get of the Toll towards repayment.

The estate claims 3d. which would leave 9d. to divide between us and the Croesor and as we should do the haulage we should have 6d. and give them 3d.

I believe the haulage can be done with two horses and 2 men.

The quantity at present hauled over it for us is about 350 tons per week which at 6d. per ton would be £8.15.0 whilst the cost of the men and horses would be but £3.8.0 leaving a profit of £5.7.0 per week or about £260 per annum, which would be the minimum even if the Junction is made by the Festiniog Company at Minffordd Crossing. This junction will be very useful so far as passenger traffic is concerned but it will not be convenient for Transhipment of Goods and Minerals inasmuch as it is on a curve as well as upon an incline. The goods and slates will therefore in my opinion still be transhipped at Portmadoc and I anticipate we shall double our present weight in a very short time which would amply repay us for the outlay on the Croesor, independent of its increasing our Main Line traffic which is of course the great object in view.

It is not clear from the available Cambrian records whether the initiative for this arose from the Croesor & Portmadoc or from the Cambrian, nor do we know who gave George Owen, the Cambrian engineer, the instructions that led to the initial reports. Boyd (page 100) implies the Cambrian. On the other hand, the first Traffic Manager's report – and more particularly that dated 8 June – rather suggest the initiative was from the C&P.

Traffic & Works Committee Min. 1523 7 January 1870: Croesor Tramway

The Committee recommend that it would be advisable to carry out this work as suggested if the Board deem it advisable.

Board Min. 1524 21 January 1870: Croesaû (sic) Railway

Resolved that this question be referred to Mr Howell [then still the Cambrian's solicitor] *and Mr Breese Portmadoc and that they be requested to consider and report what Agreement could be made satisfactory to all parties.*

Traffic & Works Committee Min. 1474 3 March 1870: Croesor Tramway

The Traffic Manager submitted and read two letters he had received from Mr J A Massey respecting the tramway. Committee ordered that enquiries be made from Mr Howell [by now the Cambrian's former solicitor] *as to whether he had discussed any agreement with Mr Breese.*

Traffic & Works Committee Min. 1396 31 March 1870: Croesor Tramway

The Committee recommend that Mr Mann [a Cambrian director] *be requested to see Mr Breese of*

Portmadoc before next Committee and endeavour to come to some satisfactory arrangement as to this.

Letters "submitted" are not bound in with the record books so we do not know what they said.

Traffic Manager's Report 8 June 1870: Croesor and Portmadoc Railway

I beg to submit the prospectus of a company which is being formed to purchase this little tramway and I have also to state that Mr Breese sent me word that he desired to see me on this subject and upon seeing him he informed me that he was very desirous that we and the Croesor should come to some permanent arrangement either as to working or purchase and if purchase that Beever Roberts would now reduce his price to £13,000.

If, however, we did not take any further steps in this matter he should consider himself at liberty to open negotiations with Mr Blenkinsopp.

We are now loading about 100 tons per day of slates by means of this tramway.

Traffic & Works Committee Min. 1612 10 June 1870: Croesau (sic) and Portmadoc Railway

The Committee recommend that the Deputy Chairman be requested to endeavour to arrange with Mr Breese for the purchase of a portion of the land on which the Beddgelert line is laid.

This latter minute seems a rather different proposition: the purchase of freehold of the Beddgelert Siding, rather than the C&P itself.

No further references appeared in the Engineer's or the new Traffic Manager's (Henry Cattle) reports, nor in the minutes of either the Traffic & Works Committee or the full Board (which have been read through to 1872). We cannot tell, therefore, whether it was the C&P or the Cambrian which initiated the flurry of excitement, nor who it was that lost interest.

The Engineer (George Owen) reports are at RAIL 92/20, the Traffic Manager (Elijah Elias) reports are at RAIL 92/34, the minutes of the Traffic & Works Committee are at RAIL 92/9, and the Cambrian Board minutes are at RAIL 92/2.

Richard Maund
December 2023

Continued from Page 12.

We have an 1896 photograph showing a long train heading north over the bridge at Plas-y-nant (Arch 3320(2) - Valentine's 24343.JV - see *WHH*80. Page 5), the leading carriage of which train was a Cleminson Brake composite carrying the number 5.

In anticipation of the 1891, 1893 and 1894 carriage acquisitions, coupled with the the continuous brakes 'saga' and the Board of Trade Order giving the Railway a deadline of the end of 1893 to introduce such braking, it seems that the Cleminsons were renumbered in late 1890 or early 1891, possibly to 9, 10 and 11. Further, given that the two Ashbury Corridors were to be 9 and 10 on receipt in 1893, they were renumbered again to 4, 5 and 6. The Railway declared the 4-wheelers to have been withdrawn in 1897 but they appeared in declared returns until 1909. It seems likely that, during the brake saga, they were permanently coupled and issued a single identity, possibly 3.

When the Pickerings were acquired in 1907 they were instructed to apply, pre-delivery, the painted numbers 4 and 5. Boyd maintained that, on acquisition, the Pickerings replaced the Ashbury brake composites (*Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire*, Vol. 1, 1988, p. 224) but, as they appear to have been numbered 1 and 2 throughout, this seems unlikely. Given that two of the Cleminsons carried numbers 4 and 5 after the 1890s 'reshuffles' it not only appears that it was the Cleminson Brakes that were replaced by the Pickerings, but also that, of the three Cleminsons, it was the two brakes that latterly were numbered 4 and 5. The Symons 1893 photo of a very long train at Dinas (Arch 0098 - WHR 098) shows, reasonably clearly, that the non-Brake Cleminson indeed carried the number 6 at that time.

NWNGR Carriage Numbering is discussed at some length in the article of that name, available on our website at: http://tinyurl.com/3fr547cy

Arch 4933 additionally offers one of our best images of an NWNGR ridge-top goods van. The Railway's Accounts declare there to have been three "covered wagons" up to 1897. This number was reduced to two by 1906 and then to one by 1909. The Van in this photograph clearly carries the No. 1.

These Vans have been described as 'Gunpowder Wagons' but in fact it appears they were simply Goods Vans. The wagons were quite sophisticated, for example fitted with chopper couplings rather than the more usual dumb buffers seen on other NWNGR goods stock. Additionally, the design of these wagons' ends appears more sophisticated than the large NWNGR coal wagons which appear to have been the base from which the WHR vans were later developed.

There clearly is a link, if only tenuous, between these NWNGR Vans and one of the two Covered Vans eventually operated by the Welsh Highland and this photograph offers detail that has contributed to understanding the likely development of the WHR Vans. I contributed notes on the two vans to *WHH*64 (September 2014) and *WHH*70 (March 2016). This latter was expanded following Stuart Baker's contribution to *WHH*71 and a complete 'final' version of these notes appeared in Welsh Highland Heritage Railway (WHHR) *Journals* 187, 189 (March and November 2018) and 191 (July 2019). I am currently producing a single article based on the three separate WHHR *Journal* inputs with a view to this being added to the Articles section of the Group's website.

The contribution to our understanding of the Covered Vans from Arch 4933 will be explained therein.

Overall, it would seem, this one image has made a particularly significant contribution to our understanding of our railways' histories.

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis



I recently noticed interest in this photograph, our Arch 4933, showing *Moel Tryfan* recently arrived at Rhyd-ddu in the early years of NWNGR operation. It reminded me of the contributions this one image has provided to different aspects of our studies. In our Archive, the photo is credited to the F.R. Archives.

A number of features are of particular interest. First as to the date, the name of this station was officially changed from Rhyd Ddu to Snowdon in January 1893 and the picture clearly shows the station building carrying its early name.

The train, in the charge of the single Fairlie *Moel Tryfan* comprises one of the NWNGR 'ridge-top' goods vans, one of their two 6-wheel passenger brake vehicles, the *Gladstone Car*, the *Workmans Car* and one of the railways Ashbury brake composites. The *Gladstone* and the *Workmans* were built by Metropolitan and acquired by the railway in 1891. Their next carriage acquisitions were the two Ashbury Corridor vehicles, received in 1893, neither of which is visible in the train.

The *Gladstone Car*, originally NWNGR No. 8, gained that description, and probably its first-class status, in anticipation of its use by Prime Minister Gladstone, in September 1892, en-route to visit his friend Sir Edward Watkin and to open the new Watkin Path, from Nant Gwynant to the summit of Snowdon. The markings on the side of carriage clearly indicate first-class status, suggesting a date no earlier than late 1892?

The station building itself still shows its original geometry – it had not yet been extended up to the end of the Station Master's cottage, an extension that photographic evidence suggests was undertaken most probably in 1896.

We have photographs that show the station building in its original form, named Snowdon, with a double track layout to its front, i.e. the long reversing loop had been installed. In Arch 4933 we see the original single track layout, on half-round sleepers, in front of the building. If the building's name board was updated promptly, 4933 appears dateable to no later than 1892 and no earlier than 1891.

However it was in *WHH* 41 (September 2008) that Michael Bishop drew attention to the number applied to the 6-wheeled Cleminson brake seen in the photograph, "NWNGR No. 10".

When the NWNGR carriage stock was first numbered, these were applied essentially as carriages were acquired. The two Ashbury Brake composites were numbered as 1 and 2, the three Ashbury 4-wheelers as 3, 4 and 5 with the three Cleminson carriages being given the numbers 6, 7 and 8 with 8, we believe, being the non-brake vehicle.

However, when the two Metropolitans were acquired in 1891, they were given the numbers 7 and 8, numbers already applied to two of the Cleminson vehicles clearly still in service at that time. How was number duplication avoided?

Continued on Page 11.

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