WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

£3.00

Issue No. 97

December 2022

ISSN 1462-1371

Web : www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk

End of Year Roundup

Nick Booker



Moel Tryfan **at Rhyd-ddu (Snowdon) in 1922 - visible carriages are an Ashbury Corridor and a Pickering - C.R. Clinker - Arch 3307(2)**



Russell **at Rhyd-ddu in 2022 - again, visible carriages are a Pickering and, just, an Ashbury Corridor - Mark Herbert**

Celebrating the Centenary of the reopening of the old NWNGR from Dinas to Rhyd-ddu went off in grand style this year, and next year we celebrate opening the line from Rhyd-ddu to Portmadoc, the extension that the directors of the NWNGR and others dreamed about but never quite managed to pull off. It took the Swansea-born Henry Joseph Jack, his Dolgarrog colleagues and national and local government money to make that happen. The 14 years or so that then elapsed before final closure in 1937 are already significantly less than the 'new' WHR has been operating. It's therefore apposite that some of us are asking questions such as 'what is history?', 'what is heritage?', coupled with 'what should we be doing about it?' in the context of our Group's focus.

One definition of history is that it is 'the study of people, actions, decisions, interactions and behaviours'[1] while the Oxford English Dictionary defines heritage as (the) 'legacy of people, culture, and environments inherited from the past. In its broadest sense, heritage includes natural and built landscapes, physical artefacts, and cultural forms (e.g. music, literature, art, folklore, monuments), intangible culture (values and traditions, customs and practices, spiritual beliefs, language), and biological traits.'

So, plenty for the WHRHG to address, but note that neither definition mentions the time dimension, except by referring to 'the past'. Elsewhere in this issue (page 12), Dave Kent asks of the Group and its Journal 'Where do we finish including material relating to the railway?'

My own interest lies in the history and heritage of the NWNGR and the early WHR but also in what happened subsequently, particularly as I was involved at various times in the WHR Society / '64 Company' activities right up to the time of the public enquiry and the emergence of the FR as the main player in the game. My first contact with anything to with the WHR was in 1963, almost a lifetime ago.

I guess that most our members are Boomers and older, but what of those who only became involved as, say, teenagers in the 1990s? To them L. P. Hartley's line from his 1953 novel *The Go-Between*, "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there," surely rings true. Certainly, we did do things differently in 1963.

The recent heritage of Generation X (see my table below) is the public enquiry and the debates and activities that occurred subsequently. Just as we understand better than we did, through diligent research, people such as James C. Russell, Gowrie Aitchison and Holman Stephens, there remains much more to be unearthed of the history of the new railway that now runs between Caernarfon and Porthmadog. Gordon Rushton, to mention just one individual, attempted to chart the heritage and history of the current railway with his 'Renaissance' book. However, I'm sure much remains to be discovered and explained both at the strategic or 'political' level. Many besides Dave

[1] Francesca Morphakis, PhD Candidate in History at the University of Leeds, / https://www.historytoday.com/archive/head-head/what-history

Generation	Born	Ages
Gen Z	1997 - 2012	10 - 25
Millenials	1981 - 1996	26 - 41
Gen X	1965 - 1980	42 - 57
Boomers II	1955 - 1964	58 - 67
Boomers I	1946 - 1954	68 - 76
Post-War	1928 - 1945	77 - 94
Pre 1945/Silent	1922 - 1944	78 - 100

Table 1 - Generations 'Boomers' are in two different cohorts because the span is so large; the older of the generations tend to have different sensibilities than the younger. The term "Silent Generation" describes an age group that, rightly or wrongly, were taught to be "seen but not heard". However, like all generalisations there are very significant exceptions. One has only to think of the dramatist John Osborne (1929), the designer Terence Conran (1931) or the architect Norman Foster, etc., to appreciate that 'Silent' is not necessarily appropriate and perhaps lazy.

Kent must be in possession of items equivalent to '…the instructions I received as the Track Gang Supervisor which give the precise coordinates for the alignment of rail that we should layout as the head of steel progressed…'

My fellow Committee members and I have our own interests and life experiences that shape our present focus on 'our' railway. While we may strive to strike a balance in, say, carrying out and reporting upon research or even buying WHR material at auctions, we nevertheless run the risk of forgetting that 'yesterday' is history to everyone and that to Generation Z the Public Enquiry of 1993 is 'ancient history' and therefore is worthy of our attention and interpretation. I am sure that what we do as a Group must remain relevant to both the interests of our current members and to those of potential new members if we are to continue to thrive. Please let us know your views.

As you will be aware from previous articles, we have initiated transition into an Incorporated Organisation. Our initial application hit an issue with the Charity Commission regarding the use of the word 'Welsh' in our title. However, thanks to a letter from Iain Wilkinson, the chairman of Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways Heritage Limited, noting that 'the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group has since 1997 played a pre-eminent role in securing and promoting the heritage and history of the Welsh Highland Railway and its predecessors, covering the line between Caernarfon and Porthmadog' that problem has been overcome. Also, the Festiniog Railway Heritage Group provided us with a copy of their successful application, which has enabled us to fine tune aspects of our submission. We now await a further response from the Charity Commission.

The Group's AGM held in September, at the splendidly restored Y Gweithdy at Minffordd Station, provided a forum for several interesting discussions including the point that Dave Kent has highlighted in his letter. There were also debates on members, membership services and administration. Your committee subsequently discussed these matters via Zoom. These discussions are summarised in the paragraphs that follow. I have also included (above) a chart identifying in marketing terms the age segments into which we may or may not fit and which impact the debate on 'what is history?'

The following notes from those discussions are largely verbatim.

Should we adopt A5 for *WHH* and thus save on postage?

On the face of it, the switch to A5 could provide the same paper area spread over twice the number of pages and, as the total paper area would remain the same, the weight of each issue should apparently not change. However, with the current A4 layout we can set photo sizes as small as one column width. If the pages were reduced in size to A5 that might not be possible. It is a great advantage to be able to present a photograph over the full 2-column width of the current layout.

Comment

Royal Mail prices are based on a combination of size, weight and thickness of the mail item. Ignoring overseas mailings, *WHH* costs £1.05 pence to send out 2nd class as a 'large letter' – an A5 version could still be a 'large letter', if its thickness exceeded 50mm. There might be some small saving in envelope prices if A5 were adopted, but probably very marginal.

We reprinted a copy of *WHH* 96 on 150 gram glossy paper, this increased the weight of the copy from 39 grams to 64 grams and would increase the printing cost by 10p per copy. Reading the two copies side by side – and this was not just one reader – the differences appeared slight at best. Thus for the time being we have decided to stay as we are.

We have been talking lately of delivering better services to members and so it seems to me that reducing the size of *WHH* would not be in the spirit of that ambition.

If members agree to get *WHH* by email, should they pay less?

It would be no bad thing if we were to reduce the costs (to us) of producing and distributing *WHH*. However, whether we should credit those who contribute to such savings, or penalise those who don't, is a moot point. It seems wrong to penalise, implying a credit to those to take *WHH* electronically. This seems to be normal practice in areas where 'e-subscriptions' often cost less than regular memberships. A tiered membership level might well encourage more members down the electronic route.

Comment

At the moment, we have a substantial credit balance in our bank accounts. It would therefore be hard to justify an increase in subscriptions without a commensurate increase in the quality and/or range of our services such as the provision of photographic database or a major new project. Should we decide to increase subscriptions, then anyone agreeing a move to electronic copies could remain on the current rate. Encouraging an 'optional donation' line on the subscription reminder is worthy of adoption.

Apart from anecdotally, do we know the age range of members and could we/should we collect age data?

No, we don't, and I am not sure we need such information. However, if as a group we find ourselves discussing succession planning then we really should be familiar with the ages of potential candidates.

Comment

The age question lies in the realm of nice/useful to know. Anecdotally, and based on the known ages of the committee, the median age is probably around 74. In recruiting for the future, we should aim to lower that.

Do we know why new members join (10 this year)?

How do we recruit members?

Shall have an insert of the membership leaflet into the WHR Soc/FR Soc magazines?

We really should be pro-active rather than re-active here. One of our committee members recalled "I joined the original 64 Co. at a model railway exhibition where they happened to have a stand. That happenstance might never have occurred and my interest might well have drifted off in other directions!" Perhaps we need to rethink our 'presence' in the public domain, for example flyers on every train, lest we simply rely on coincidence.

It would be easy enough to ask new members via the application form why they joined and what special interests they may have. The forum (for talking to members and non members) outside direct meetings and railway events seems to be Facebook. Another forum is *Snowdon Ranger*, with snippets about our objectives.

Comment

I set up, and look after, the WHRHG Facebook page, and post and share to some other pages – such as the WHR Fanpage and the Friends of The Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways – on a fairly regular basis. I have no idea whether anyone has joined us because of this information! We don't do Twitter or other social media.

Over the last few years thanks to a personal contact, and complimentary copies of *WHH*, *Heritage Railway Magazine* has covered subjects such as Dick Lystor's article on the coalman at Nantmor, the Spooner Graves and most recently the Centenary. We had quite a significant piece in *Steam Railway* in 2015 following the Tryfan Junction NRHA award.

As for articles in, say, the FR and WHR Society magazines, we must showcase what we have done and do and the benefits of joining rather than offering just a generic piece.

Ideally, we would generate a piece of news say every three months or so which would warrant sending out as a press release to all likely publications. The occasional attendance at model railway/heritage railway exhibitions would be useful, particularly if we could flog a few books!

Where shall we meet for our AGM next year?

Perhaps the obvious answer is 'wherever people are most likely to turn up'. Our basic problem, I guess, is that our members will congregate around WHR, and perhaps FR, oriented activity. However, where this happens, an AGM might well not sit high on their priority list on the day. Before lock-down, we had arranged to run a special to Waenfawr and to hold the meeting in the building there, creating an attraction with the lack of significant distractions. Even had we done this, I fear some members might not have considered a special train to be a sufficient 'carrot'!

Statfold could be fine again, especially if there is an event. The 2021 AGM was the best attended for many years, and we should heed the lesson. Should Statfold not be possible then, if not North Wales, somewhere in the Chester area?

Comment

While we do not know members' ages we do know where they live, so that should give us a clue to possible places to meet. Statfold certainly worked last year. My gut feeling is that we should meet in North Wales but not necessarily every year. I think that the costs of travel and accommodation have both now become significant parts of the equation in deciding to go anywhere quite apart from attending AGMs and we (and the railway) need to take that into consideration.

Relevant to the debate on attendance at AGMs is Dick Lystor's letter on proxy voting (see this issue, page 12).

The Group's existing Constitution is 'a low-key document', composed by Messrs. Keylock and Allan, and designed, in 1997, to be simple. The inclusion of proxy voting dropped by the wayside. However, there has been nothing to prevent a member writing in and asking to vote by proxy following receipt of the AGM Notice. The Group's new Constitution, written for the CIO application, does include provision for proxy voting and will be available for our 2023 AGM.

I hope the foregoing provides some indication that your committee is concerned about the future of the Group and its activities and that it should remain relevant. We would welcome any comments, observations etc., either on the issues highlighted above or others that may concern members. Just drop me an e-mail or send me a letter – I always like receiving post! Finally best wishes for Christmas and the New Year and I look forward to seeing you in North Wales in 2023.

Where was "Quellyn 1877"?

Peter Liddell



The NWNGR trackbed as seen from the over bridge at Castell Cidwm looking towards Snowdon Ranger. The area within the shallow cutting was suggested by Boyd as the location of the original temporary terminus, opened in 1877, serving as terminus until the line was extended to Snowdon Ranger the following year David Allan - 18/8/1998 - Arch 1128.

When the NWNGR first opened, the then mainline was complete to Bryngwyn but the Cwm Gwyrfai Branch terminated somewhat short of its initial objective near the Snowdon Ranger Hotel. It has been postulated, e.g. by Boyd, that this terminus was sited on the Snowdon Ranger side of the road over bridge near Castell Cidwm (OB71 in today's parlance). Indeed, there are photographs in our Archive identifying this area as the terminus site, although these notes are sprouting question marks as we ponder this location more carefully.

The opening of the original NWNGR was dependent on receipt of a positive inspection report. This report was presented to the Railway Department of the Board of Trade on 31st July 1877 by Major F. A. Marindin of the Royal Engineers. His report described the Railway as follows:

> These lines commence at a point alongside the Carnarvonshire Railway about ½ mile on the Carnarvon side of the Llanwnda Station on that line.
>
> The London & N" West Ry Co. have constructed a Passenger platform and Goods sidings at this point to work in connection with the new narrow guage lines, and the Nth Wales Narrow Guage Co. propose to change the name of the station to Dinas in order to avoid confusion with the other Llanwnda Station ½ mile distant.
>
> No. 6 line is 4m 36c in length, and has four stations Llanwnda (or Dinas as it is to be called) Moel Tryfan junction, Rhostryfan, and Bryngwyn, the terminus.
>
> No. 7 line is 4m 25c in length, commencing from Moel Tryfan junction and has three stations Waenfawr, Bettws-y-garmon, and Quellyn, the terminus.

Key here is the statement that No. 7 line was, at that time, 4m 25c in length running from Tryfan junction to Quellyn, the terminus. This definition presents any analyst with one obvious problem – where was Tryfan Junction? This may sound trivial, but, ideally, we need to know precisely from where Marindin 'measured' his quoted distance. It should be noted, however, that Marindin probably did not wander around with a tape measure but rather the measurements were either derived from official records or were given to him by NWNGR engineers. Nevertheless, the problem remains - where was the 'zero-point' for No. 7 line?

As we probably will never know exactly the 'zero-point' location, analysis straight away starts with a necessary tolerance band. For example, measuring from the Tryfan Junction Signal box, the actual junction between the then main line and Railway No. 7 lay some 90 yards, or 4.1 chains, towards the north-east. Additionally, it appears that Marindin quoted distances rounded to the nearest chain, implying a measurement tolerance of ±11 yards.

For the purposes of this analysis, distances have been measured from the actual junction, in other words the interpretation of 'Tryfan Junction' that places his declared location for Quellyn as close to Snowdon Ranger as possible. As we will be mixing historic and current measurements, it



Left - the Survey Party on their trackbed walk in April 1997 (see *WHH* 45) entering the stretch of trackbed where, according to Marindin's measurements, Quellyn 1877 was actually located - David Allan - Arch 0821. On the right, we view the same stretch of trackbed from atop the road over bridge. The walkers visible in the left-hand photo were approaching the power pole visible to the right of the trackbed in the right-hand photo. The 'road' crossing the trackbed, more clearly visible in the right-hand image, ran from the road near Plas-y-nant to the weir that controlled the Llyn Cwellyn outflow into the Gwyrfai - David Allan - taken in April 1998 - Arch 1128.

follows that this article contains a mixture of measurement units.

A cross check on these measurements is taken from Marindin's report on the extension from Quellyn to Snowdon Ranger (28th May 1878), wherein he describes the new line as follows:

> ….the Extension of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways Narrow Gauge Railways from Quellyn Station to Snowdon Ranger, a distance of 7 furlongs.

As a furlong is a length of 10 chains, I will henceforth record this distance as 70 chains. As Marindin previously reported miles and chains, I presume this 70-chain figure is subject to no more than the previously noted ± 11 yards tolerance.

By way of comparison with today's measurements, the TWA Maps show a 'chainage' of 7,466 between the Tryfan Junction signal box and the west face of the road over bridge at Castell Cidwm. As these 'chainages' are distances measured in metres, this figure equates to 4 miles 51.13 chains. If we deduct the distance between the signal box and the junction previously noted, in other words push the 'zero-point' as close to OB71 as possible, this measurement to that bridge would reduce to 4 miles and 47 chains, i.e. still 22 chains more than indicated by Marindin.

Again, taking readings from the TWA maps, the 'chainage' from the west face of OB71 to the station building at Snowdon Ranger measures as 1,130 metres. Converting units as before, this equates to 0.702 miles or 56.172 chains (5.62 furlongs), well short of Marindin's declared figure.

The traditionally accepted location of Quellyn 1877, to the east of OB71 by over 4 chains, if correct would simply increase the discrepancies from Marindin's Quellyn and Snowdon Ranger 'measurements' by this additional 4 chains.

Taking the most generous location for Marindin's starting point, adding another 4 chains to the measurement to the west face of OB71, the length of Railway 7 would have been 4 miles and 51 chains – c.f. Marindin's 4 miles and 25 chains. Similarly, his 7-furlong measurement to Snowdon Ranger would reduce to only 5.2 furlongs.

In TWA terms, the uncertainties at Tryfan Junction when coupled with measurement tolerances indicate a 'chainage' range, within which Marindin indicated Quellyn to lie, between

> 9,775 metres (225 metres before OB71) (from Tryfan Junction Signal Box, minus rounding tolerance)
>
> and
>
> 9,880 metres (120 metres before OB71) (from the actual Junction, plus rounding tolerance)

The west face of OB71 lies almost exactly at 'chainage' 10,000 metres.

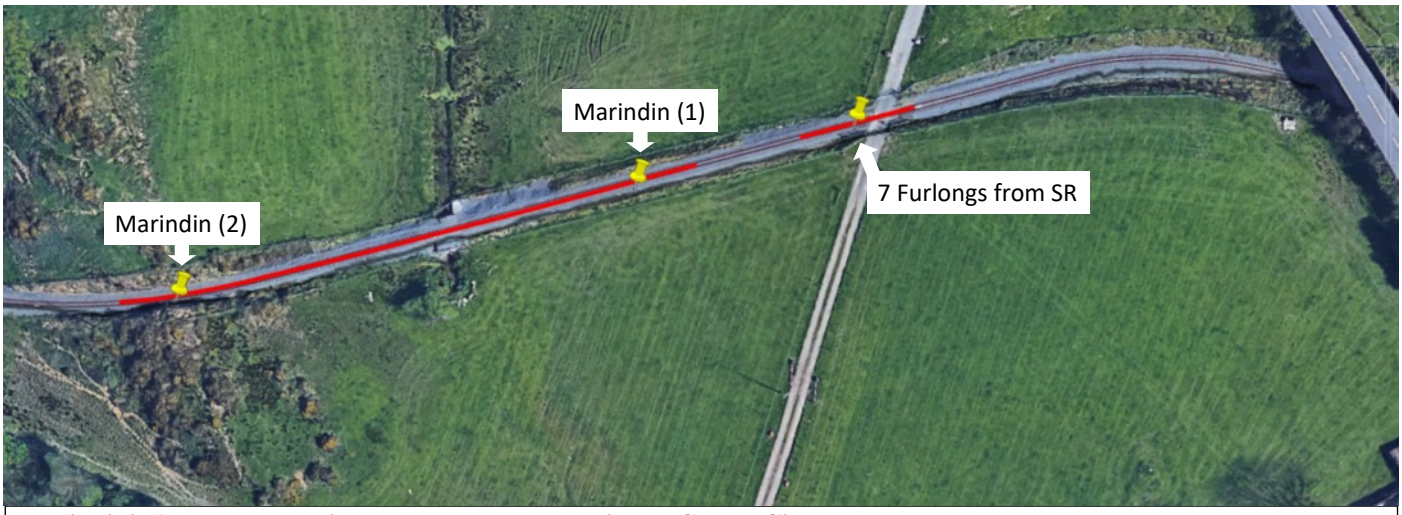
We need to consider just why No. 7 line was stopped at a temporary terminus only 1,540 ± 11 yards short of its final, although admittedly still temporary, initial objective. There is a possible clue in Marindin's 1878 report on the Snowdon Ranger extension:

> The works are very light, there are no Cuttings or Embankments of any importance, only one masonry over bridge [OB71?], and only one under bridge crossing a stream of 5 ft span [UB77?], with masonry abutments and timber girders of ample strength. There are 5 culverts and 1 sheep creep, all constructed with slab-covers, and not exceeding 2ft 6in in width.

Although his under bridge count is difficult to correlate with today's railway, there is only one over bridge in the area – OB71. Thus, according to Marindin the extension from Quellyn to Snowdon Ranger passed under this road bridge.

However, some previous analysts have questioned Marindin's information on the basis of his statement in his 1877 Inspection Letter that:

> On No 7 Line there are 6 over bridges, all of masonry except one which has cast-iron girders & brick arches; and 9 under bridges (including culverts and cattle creeps), 3 of which are of 48 ft span with Wrot [sic] Iron longitudinal and cross girders ; and the remainder of small span with masonry arches and slab-covers.



Marindin's 'measurements' marked on the ground in the Castell Cidwm area.

Marindin (1) - his measurement of 4 miles 25 chains when taken from the actual divergence of Line No. 7 from Line No. 6
Marindin (2) - that same measurement taken from the location of the Tryfan Junction signal box.
The difference here indicates the range within which the Line 7 'zero-point' might actually have been located.

7 furlongs from SR - the point 7 furlongs from the station building at Snowdon Ranger. Again there is perhaps uncertainty as to precisely where Snowdon Ranger was presumed to be.

Extensions of the red line either side of points (1) and (2) indicate likely 'rounding' errors due to quoted measurements being limited to the nearest whole chain. Similarly the +/- 11 yard tolerance is shown either side of the measured Snowdon Ranger point. There is a gap of just 20 yards between the two extremes of the two measurement sets, demonstrating that, between his 1877 and 1878 reports, Marindin 'accurately' noted the actual distance between Tryfan Junction and Snowdon Ranger.

This appears, at least so far as over bridges are concerned, to be a factual description of Railway No. 7 as defined, for example, in the Notice of Application for an Act to enable the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways, published in the London Gazette of November 28, 1871, pp 5350-2, and elsewhere:

> A Railway (No. 7) commencing in the said parish of Llanwnda by a junction with the proposed Railway No. 6, in a field called Waengarth, on a farm called Tyddyn Gwydd, belonging, or reputed to belong, to George William Duff Assheten [sic] Smith, Esquire, in the occupation of Robert Griffith, and terminating in the parish of Beddgelert aforesaid, in a field called Cae Mawr, on Ffridd Isaf farm, and belonging, or reputed to belong, to William Griffith, Esquire, in the occupation of Edward Owen…….

Tyddyn Gwydd we know today, in railway terms at least, as 'Tryfan Junction' and Cae Mawr at Ffridd Isaf is the location of the Rhyd-ddu / Snowdon / South Snowdon railway station. We know that, under this definition, the complete Railway (No. 7) did have 6 over bridges. Using today's notations, these were:

OB24	Ch.	3300	Gwredog Isaf access - Ugly Bridge
OB42	Ch.	5564	A4085 at Waunfawr
OB53	Ch.	7179	A4085 at Betws Garmon
OB54	Ch.	7305	Bryn Cloch - now camp site access
OB62	Ch.	8932	Farm Access - Nant Mill
OB71	Ch.	10012	A4085 at Castell Cidwm

Thus, when Marindin reported:

> No. 7 line is 4m 25c in length, commencing from Moel Tryfan junction and has three stations Waenfawr, Bettws-y-garmon, and Quellyn, the terminus.

we know, as presumably he knew, he was describing only a part of No. 7 line, whereon initially Quellyn and later Snowdon Ranger were but temporary termini. The complete line would not have been 4m 25c in length and whether some or all of the planned over bridges lay within his stated 4m 25c would have been a function of precisely where, on No. 7 line, that specific length of track lay.

When he reported, the following year, that the extension from Quellyn to Snowdon Ranger had only one masonry over bridge he appears to state, quite clearly, that the last of the 6 bridges listed above lay beyond the temporary Quellyn terminus.

Which brings us back to the question as to why a short-lived temporary terminus was required at all? If we accept Marindin's measurements from both his 1877 and 1878 Reports, some factor, it seems, temporarily constrained work on No. 7 line. Little appears documented but perhaps the obvious, and logical, suggestion would be that the new road over bridge had not been completed by the summer of 1877, forcing the establishment of a temporary terminus until the work was completed.

The Railway, it seems, was driven by the need for revenue and judged that opening to Quellyn was preferable to waiting until the bridge was finished, allowing completion of the run through to Snowdon Ranger. After all, access to the path from Snowdon Ranger to Snowdon's summit lay less than 1 mile from Quellyn, a short and unquestionably a comparatively easy addition to a planned walk to the peak, especially if the trackbed to Snowdon Ranger had been prepared ahead of planned tracklaying!

Staffing the Dinas – South Snowdon Section of the WHR
(from 1st June 1922 – 31st May 1923)

Dick Lystor has been looking at staffing detail at the full opening of the WHR.

With the centenary celebrations of the revival of passenger services on the Welsh Highland Railway from Dinas to South Snowdon occurring earlier this year, this article deals with the staff who ran this section until the through route to Portmadoc was opened on June 1st 1923.

Luckily, we have a surprising amount of documentation in the XD97 collection at Gwynedd Archives, which allows a fairly accurate description of these employees, but any errors or omissions are solely down to me.

At the end of May 1923, the NWNGR had retained twenty employees, and all bar two, Tom Morris and William Ll. Jones, became eighteen-strong initial workforce for the new WHR. A list of these eighteen, together with their occupations, is given in the table below. (Ref XD97/22488).

Occupation	Name	Main Workplace
Traffic Superintendent	Daniel Owen Jones	Dinas
Booking Clerk	Maggie Jones	Dinas
Snowdon (Agent)	Myfanwy Williams	South Snowdon
Foreman	Thomas R. Thomas	Dinas
Loaders	Caradoc Jones	Dinas
	Thomas Ore	Dinas
	Robert J. Roberts	Dinas
	John Owen Williams	Dinas
	William G. Jones	Dinas
Bryngwyn (Agent etc)	David Lloyd Hughes	Bryngwyn
Drivers	Willie Hugh Williams	
	John Williams	
Fitter	Albert Edward Bailey	Dinas
Ganger	Jeffrey Limerick	
Platelayer	Samuel Williams	
Carpenter	David Daniels	Dinas
Blacksmith	Robert Williams	Dinas
Striker	W. Llewellyn Thomas	Dinas

Through the lists compiled by John Keylock, on-line censuses and the XD97 documents, it is possible to give some personal details of the various individuals employed during this period, including those who joined or left after July 1st 1922. Dates of birth and birthplaces vary depending on which census is consulted, so these are not guaranteed to be 100% accurate! It must also be remembered that job descriptions of many of the employees were very flexible, with changes being made to suit the railway's operations.

Daniel Owen Jones, b.1873 in Liverpool to Welsh parents Samuel and Margaret Jones. By 1881 he was living with them at Bontnewydd and was at school. The 1891 census shows him aged 17 and working as a farm servant, possibly at Llanllyfni, but by 1901 he was employed by the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways at Dinas, as a slate loader. He was living at Libanus Terrace, Bontnewydd with wife Elizabeth and one year old daughter Margaret. Daniel worked his way up the scale at Dinas, becoming a guard, then clerk, Chief Agent George W. North's assistant, taking over as Traffic Superintendent after North's departure, and finally becoming station master in 1911, living in the stationmaster's house by 1911. He was the last WHR employee, going off sick a the end of 1943 and dying one month later.

Margaret (Maggie) Jones was Daniel's daughter, b. 1900 in Bontnewydd, and joined the NWNGR in 1916 as a clerk, becoming Booking Clerk in June 1922. She stayed with the WHR until October of that year when John W. Jones replaced her. He was born at Rhostryfan in 1906 and remained with the WHR until 1924.

Myfanwy Williams, b. 1900 in Beddgelert (Rhyd ddu) to parents William & Mary. She worked as Station Master/Agent for the NWNGR at South Snowdon from 1918, being retained by the WHR until November 3rd 1923.

Thomas R. Thomas, b. 1867 in Llanllyfni. He and his family may have lived at Bay View Terrace, Llanwnda. He started with the NWNGR in 1892, becoming Foreman on the slate wharf, a position he held for many years with the WHR.

Caradoc Jones, b. 1877 in Llandwrog. He started with the NWNGR in 1907. On the WHR, he was employed on the slate wharf as loader, slate packer, Caller Off and Goods Porter. For a short while in September and October 1922 he was pointsman at Salem Quarry.

Thomas Ore, b. 1873 in Llanwnda. Lived with wife and family at Glanrhyd, Llanwnda. Started with the NWNGR in 1893. On the WHR he was employed on the slate wharf first as a loader/porter, caller off by October, and back to loader by January 1923.

Robert J. Roberts, b. 1868 in Bontnewydd ex slate quarryman, with NWNGR since 1915. Lived with wife and daughter at Libanus Terrace, Bontnewydd. On the WHR, his employment was the same as Thomas Ore.

John Owen Williams, b. 1856 in Llaniestyn. Lived with wife and family at Penybryn, Llanwnda. Platelayer with NWNGR, slate loader/porter with WHR.

William G. Jones, b. 1903 in Llanwnda. Started with NWNGR in 1917. On WHR started on the slate wharf as loader, became fireman in July 1922.

David (Dafydd) Lloyd Hughes, b. 1875 in Llanwnda. He began work with the NWNGR in 1904, previously being employed as a stonemason's labourer. By 1911 he was living with his wife and children in Church Cottages, overlooking Dinas station. He worked on the Bryngwyn branch and continued to do so in various capacities including Guard from June 1922. By October he had become Leading Porter at Dinas, and from January 1923 Guard over the entire system. Midway through July 1922, Passenger Guard duties on the main line were in the care of Ellis Jones, transferred from the FR. He remained until April 1923, when Ellis Lewis, again from the FR, took his place.

Willie Hugh Williams, b. 1863 in Llanbeblig. A lifelong bachelor, serving as fireman and driver with the NWNGR since at least 1881, and WHR driver from June 1922.

John Williams, b. 1863 in Llanwnda/Bontnewydd. Lived with wife and family in Llanwnda and left the WHR in October 1922.

Albert Edward Bailey, b. 1873 in Birmingham. Lived with wife Ellen in Llanbeblig parish. Began with NWNGR c1915. Left WHR sometime after July 1923.

Jeffrey Limerick, b. 1870 in Llanwnda. Lived with wife and large family in Dinas Cottages. Began with NWNGR c1888 as platelayer and continued as ganger with WHR until his death sometime after July 1923.

Samuel Williams, b. 1866 in Llaniestyn. Lived with wife Grace and daughters in Llanwnda. With NWNGR by 1911 as labourer, platelayer with WHR by June 1922.

David Daniels, b. 1867? No other information other than he was carpenter on the WHR from July 1922.

Robert Williams, b. c1871. Blacksmith with WHR, but no other information.

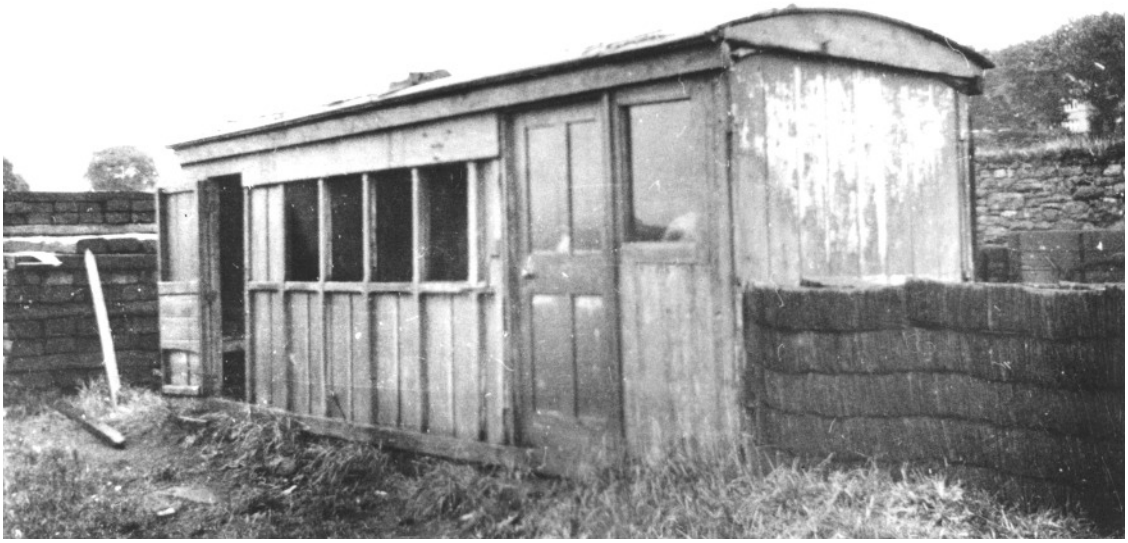
William Llewellyn Thomas, b. 1867 in Llanwnda, son of Thomas R. Thomas (qv). With NWNGR from November 1919 as blacksmith's striker. Same position with WHR from June 1st, became fireman in August.

As the first year of operations got under way, further employees joined the staff, especially in the permanent way department as things got ready for the extension through to Portmadoc. New staff which took the place of the initial workforce have already received mention so the table below gives details only of the additional new appointments. Unfortunately, I do not have access to the 1921 Census, so some information is lacking. I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who does have access, so that further details could be added.

Occupation	Name	Born	Details
Driver	Hugh Roberts	1892 Llanwnda	Nephew of Willie Hugh Williams. Stoker NWNGR from 1911. Rejoined WHR as driver in October 1922, taking over from John Williams.
Platelayer	R. Jones	1894	Platelayer from November 1922.
	John Bailey Williams	1893 Llanwnda ?	Platelayer from November 1922.
	Henry Ore	1895 Llanwnda	Son of Thomas Ore. Platelayer with WHR from November 1922.
Loader/Porters	George Edwards	1897	Started on NWNGR 1920. Goods Porter and Loader with WHR from July 1922.
	Edward Owen	?	Caller Off then Goods Porter from October 1922. Left by January 1923.
Striker	H. E. Jones	1906	Blacksmith striker in October 1922, Cleaner in June 1923
Painters	R. Roberts	?	Temporary, from July 1922 to end of year.
	W. Pritchard	?	Temporary, from July 1922 to end of year.

References:- XD97/19488; 22720; 22488; 22726; 22727.

The Dinas 'Shed'
A Photo Analysis 'Special'



An improvised 'shed' photographed at Dinas Junction by Roger Kidner in August, 1934 - Arch 3573

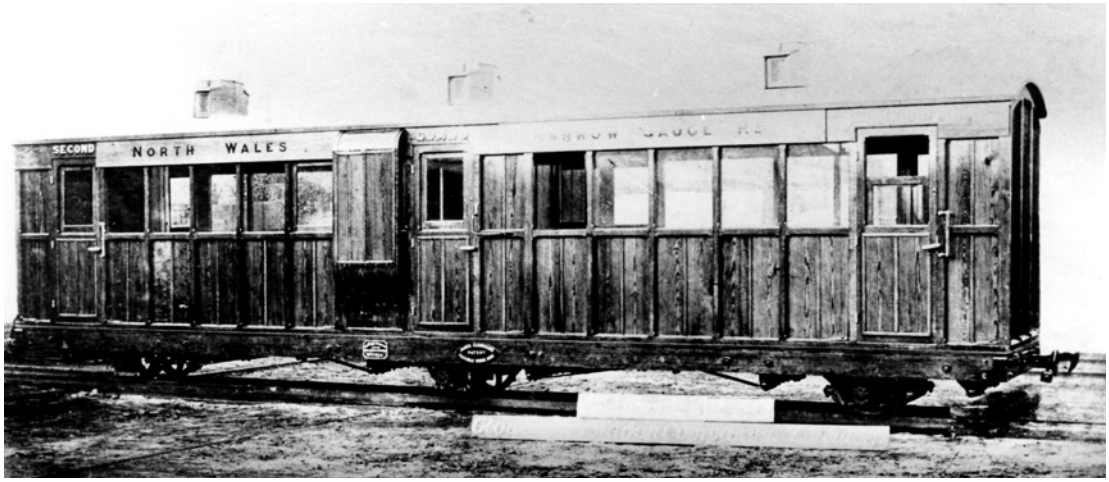
When Roger Kidner visited the Welsh Highland in 1934 he took a series of photographs, one of which recorded a particularly distinctive 'shed', clearly assembled using surviving elements of at least two railway carriages. Just one of his images shows this shed so he left us with a view of only one side of the structure and some, but insufficient, evidence to determine the shed's location within the Dinas Junction complex.

These notes will look more closely into the shed's location and will consider the structural elements that made up the building.

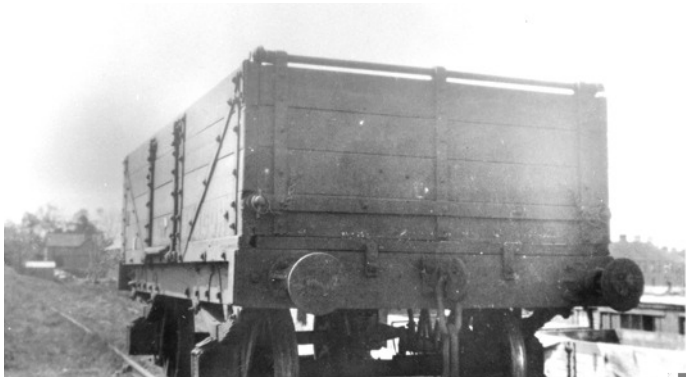
First, what might we learn from the shed's structure? That it was made up from elements of two different carriages should be evident, but which carriages?

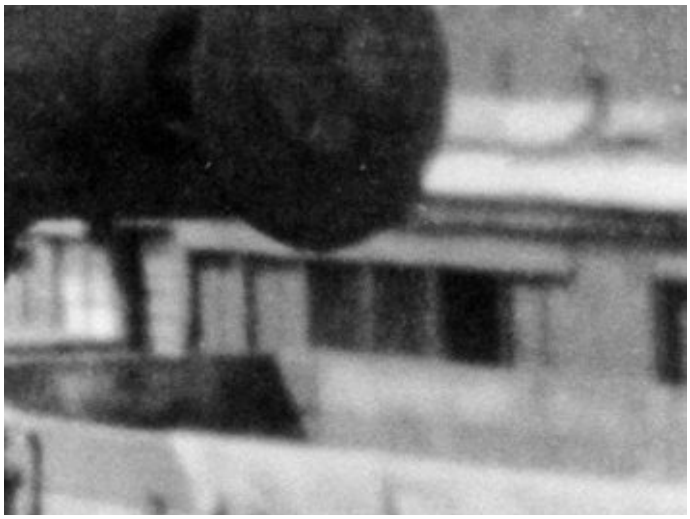
Were we limited to just the Kidner photograph, we would, no doubt, immediately identify the left-hand portion as being from one of the 6-wheel Gloucester carriages, acquired by the NWNGR at the end of 1877, carriages that employed the Cleminson flexible axle principle. However, of the three such carriages, which do we see here?

Working from just this one photograph, it is easy to conclude that, given the significant disruption of the original structure immediately to the left of the 'new' door, we are seeing what had been the second-class end of one of the two Brake/Composite carriages supplied by Gloucester Carriage and Wagon Co, the disruption being explained by the original presence of the Guard's duckets immediately adjacent to the nearest of the visible windows. The first of what had originally been glazed windows, adjacent to the door at the far end, had, apparently, been boarded some time after the manufacturer had photographed the carriages ahead of delivery. However, we have to accept that the 'butchery' at this end of the original Gloucester structure might have had nothing to do with the presence of Guard's duckets or even of the existence of a Guard's compartment at all and therefore that the donor carriage might conceivably have been the one and only all third Gloucester carriage.



However, a detailed trawl through the Archive has indicated the presence of another photo that 'just' shows the same shed from the opposite side. This photograph was taken by Geoffrey Hughes in the 1930s and was actually included in a Photo Analysis piece on tipping wagons in *WHH* 79 (June 2018). That photograph (Arch 3932) is reproduced here, along with an enlargement of the bottom right-hand corner of the original.





This time we see, from the right, evidence of an access door followed by six window panels, three of which had been 'boarded-up' with no indication in that length of any disruption to the fascia board above these windows. This might indicate the third-class end of one of the Brake/Composite carriages with the implication that the duckets, were this a brake vehicle, had originally been to the left of the central access door as seen from this side of the vehicle.

However, the disruption to the fascia board, as on the other side as seen in the Kidner photo, is apparently more extensive than the original partial recess seen above the doors, suggesting that more extensive trimming had been undertaken. This area marks the transition to the remains of the other carriage involved. Unfortunately, perhaps, given the consequent lack of any positive evidence as to the original presence of a centre door, this could just as easily be interpreted as showing half, approximately, of the all-third passenger only vehicle.

There appears to have been more substantial butchery on the 'Kidner-side' of the shed, perhaps to allow the introduction of the obviously non-railway door seen in his photograph. No such door, or indeed any door, is visible in the Hughes photograph showing the opposite side of the 'shed'.

Which is the more likely option? Analysis summarised in *WHH* 93 indicates that the two Gloucester Brake Composites were replaced by the two new Pickering Brake Composites acquired by the NWNGR in 1907. We do not know when the 'shed' photographed in 1934 was assembled, but whether either of the Gloucester bodies lasted long enough after their withdrawal appears problematic. Without any central cut outs for access, it could be argued that the all-third Gloucester was physically superior and, of the three, this carriage is likely to have demonstrated the greater longevity. My own view is that the photographic evidence, if anything, leads towards the all-third as the donor, but this conclusion is far from definite.

What of the other part of the shed? The Hughes photo tells us little, but the Kidner photo shows that the end of this carriage was made up from 8 wide planks oriented vertically. This is notably different from the larger number of narrow planks used on the later Ashbury carriages, the Corridors and the Summers, which, in any event, were still operating when Kidner made his 1934 visit. Clearly the donor carriage was smaller in cross-section than the Gloucesters and, demonstrably, had been withdrawn from service and 'scrapped'.

The one NWNGR carriage design that met these constraints was the Ashbury Brake Composite, two of which were acquired ahead of that Railway's opening in 1877. Having argued that the Pickerings replaced the Gloucester Brakes, it follows that the Ashburys continued in service for some time after the acquisition of the Pickerings. We know that one of the two Ashbury Brakes had been reduced to a flat bogie bolster by 1923. Whether this was the same Ashbury-derived bolster seen in the demolition trains almost 20 years later cannot positively be argued. However, it seems that by early 1923, the railway had acquired a 'spare' Ashbury Brake body. Kidner's photo indicates that the section of the body used to complete the 'shed' was taken from the non-guard end of the vehicle.

There is tantalising evidence, perhaps tenuous, that one of the Ashbury brakes possibly survived until 1936, evidence found in a report produced ahead of the 1936 season, identifying the carriage works required ahead of that season. The report, dated May 1936, opens with:

Brakes No 8 and 9:

No 8 has - 1 First, 3 Thirds and a luggage compartment.

No 9 has - 1 First, 2 Thirds and a luggage compartment.

The description of "No 9" accurately describes a Pickering whereas the description of "No 8" does not. However, if a carriage matching this configuration, i.e. an Ashbury Brake Composite, were seen with No. 9, why would it have been referred to as "No. 8"?

Within the same memorandum we find reference to a 7-compartment carriage No. 21 **and** we find separate reference to all of the Railway's Ashbury Corridors (2 carriages) and Summers (3 carriages). The memo also includes the Observation Coach – un-numbered. This

appears to indicate that, for some reason, carriage 21, one of the F.R. Ashburys was seen alongside Welsh Highland stock – at Dinas? If this carriage over-wintered at Dinas, it is not inconceivable that one of the Pickerings similarly over-wintered at Boston Lodge. Whoever made this inspection – the report carries no signature – perhaps expected to find two brake composites and, when he did, deduced from the '9' visible on the one that the other, therefore, was No 8?

It might be argued that the entry against No. 8 simply shows a typing error. However, if the two carriages were identical, why would the author have made two separate entries? The author covered 2 Summers in one statement elsewhere in this report.



An ex-Ashbury bogie bolster photographed by Ken Nunn at Waenfawr in 1923 - Arch 3136(2) (cropped and enlarged)

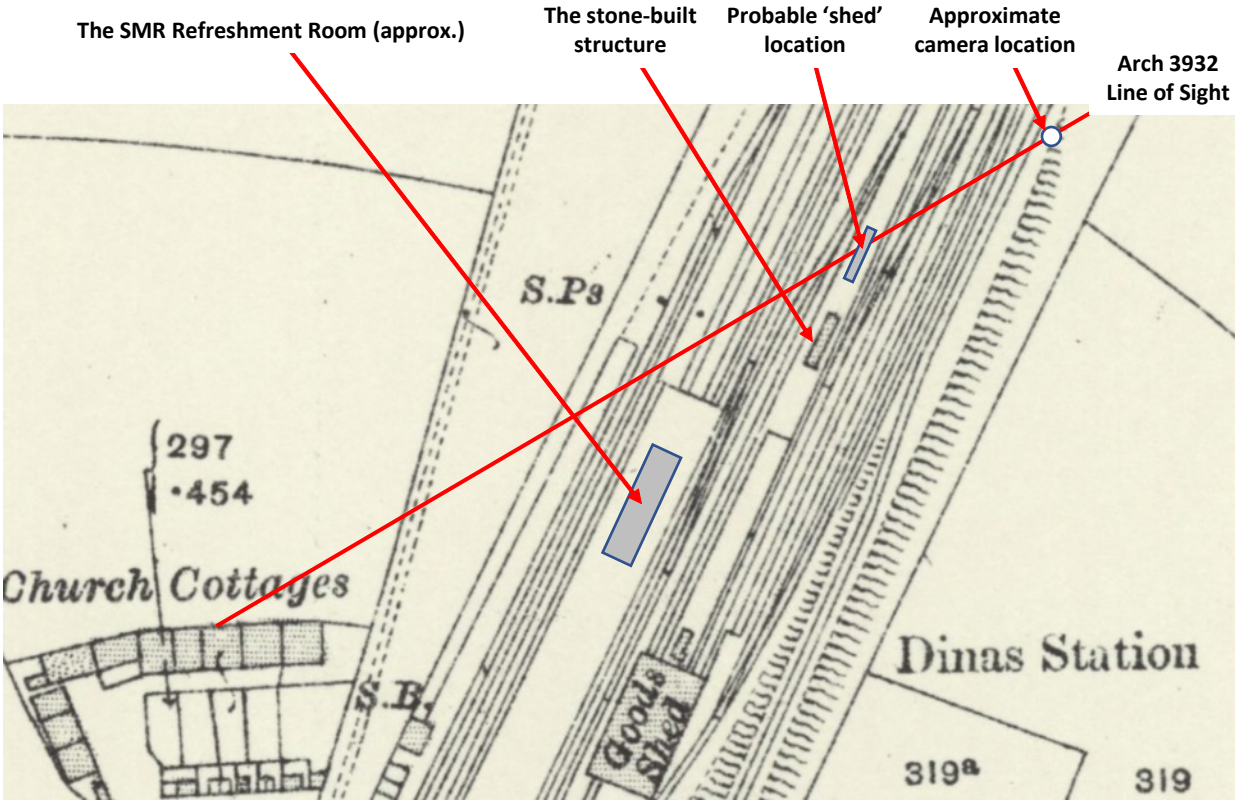
If, and it is a big if, this statement in this memorandum proves to be correct, we would immediately know that the Ashbury remains seen in the Kidner photograph must have been separated from the bogie bolster seen in Ken Nunn's 1923 photographs.

Consider now the location of the 'shed'. Turning to the Hughes photograph, the appearance of the shed in this image is, I suspect, coincidental to his main objective of photographing a standard-gauge end-tipping wagon on the elevated S.G. line to the east of the Dinas complex. Nevertheless, it does offer us a view, albeit limited, of the other side of the shed to that seen in the Kidner photograph. However, directly beyond the 'shed' we see in this photograph the rear of Church Cottages, the row of dwellings which, allowing for a curve in their layout, runs nominally at right angles to the original line of the Nantlle Railway, behind the Dinas Standard Gauge signal box. Assessing the angle by which the line of sight in the image dissects Church Cottages gives a strong clue as to the probable location of the shed. Should triangulation be required, note that the Dinas Station Master's house is visible to the left of the coal wagon.

Maps from the 1914-1919 period, and a number of photographs from both the NWNGR and WHR periods, show an oblong stone-built structure on the platform that lay to the north of the goods shed between the narrow-gauge and standard-gauge rails. The line of sight to Church Cottages suggests that the 'shed' lay to the north of this structure on that same platform.

There is clearly much still to learn regarding the 'shed': why was it built?; when was it built?; precisely what was it built from? The map below perhaps begins to answer some of these questions but it can only be a start.

As of now, we have little information but we know that 'new' documents and photographs do, occasionally, turn up. In this case, who knows what we might yet learn?



Letters to the Editor

Now what do you think?

Dear Editor/Members

As some of you may know, a good number of years ago after moving from South to North Wales – to Rhyd Ddu over looking the line – I became Treasurer and then Chairman of the WHRS. That story in itself has a few twists and turns, but is not for repeating here at present!

But why do I mention, as seemingly recent, events from 26 years ago?

Well, my attendance at the recent Heritage Group AGM, after a number of years of missing the event, lead to me to ask a simple, but nevertheless difficult to answer question - 'Where do we finish including material relating to the railway'?

Whilst *WHH* 96 contained two very good photos of *Russell* and a resume of the Centenary event, to my mind there is a very large area between that event (and those planned for next year) and the closure of the railway way back in the late 1930's/early 1940's. Those years between may have seen little visible activity (mostly it took place behind the scenes) and almost no photo records, but if we are to follow our "Recording Yesterday for Tomorrow" motto then surely more of the recent past efforts should be discussed and noted before those who were involved are no longer with us. Oral archives are one way that can be really interesting in their own right and a great way to touch on many an event during an interview. A record of the efforts leading up to the commencement of the rebuilding of the current line in the late 1990's may well be held within the Ffestiniog Company, but I am certain members and friends may well have memories, and even paperwork, that would add to the whole story of how we got to today's railway.

As an illustration, I have in my possession some of the instructions I received as the Track Gang Supervisor which give the precise coordinates for the alignment of rail that we should layout as the head of steel progressed, so what else have folk got tucked away and is it relevant to the aims of the group?

I believe my thought can be best summed up by "discuss please?"

Dave Kent.



Above - Dave Kent at Waunfawr in July 2001, engaged in building the foot bridge.

In response to Dave's letter, I took a quick look at my photograph archive summary. At present, there are 5,007 entries in the archive, with a number for various reasons duplicated. Of these, 1,122 are marked NWNGR, PBSSR or WHR (Operating) whereas 2,301 are marked either WHR (Closed), WHR (rebuild) or WHR (New). In short, we have a substantial photographic record covering the interregnum between the 'old' and the 'new'. Hopefully the same is so, or is achievable as is suggested above by Dave, as regards other categories of record.

Ed.

Dear Sir,

For some years I have been concerned by the fact that our Group do not provide a Proxy Voting Form together with the Notice of Annual General Meeting. Those members who, for one reason or another, are unable to attend in person and make up the vast majority of our membership, are therefore denied a vote on any proposals that may be put forward for consideration at such meetings.

It is interesting to note that the Ffestiniog Heritage Group do provide such forms for their membership.

Yours faithfully,

Dick Lystor (Member No. 3)

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