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The Heritage Group has undertaken, and will in future undertake, a range of activities to support the preservation and restoration of Welsh Highland Railway artefacts, records and infrastructure. The photos here are brief indication of the range of these activities - clockwise from top left: Bettws Garmon station building, Tryfan Junction station building (before), Beddgelert Water Tower, Tryfan Junction station building (after) and the Cambrian Crossing Box replica now at Pen-y-Mount. Photos by Barry Gray (1964), anon (1998), C. Lodge (2016), L. Esposito (2014), M. Hadley (2015)

At the latest meeting of the Ffestiniog Railway/Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Company board, where I'm a director, we discussed a number of issues relevant to the Heritage of both the Ffestiniog Railway and the Welsh Highland Railway. I think it's fair to say that both railways are now far more aware of the value and importance of their heritage assets than they were, say, 10 years ago. Viewing history through the prism of the present does not necessarily enable one to understand the issues facing the decision makers in past times. It would be fair to say that some of things done to locomotives, rolling stock, buildings and archives in the past would now no longer be tolerated so we must avoid being judgemental on what may have gone on before.

Nick Booker has provided this review of the issues facing the Heritage Group - he reports on progress and on future longer-term plans, both probable and possible.

I believe that the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group has played an important role in raising the profile of heritage in the running of the modern Welsh Highland Railway in the same way that the Festiniog Railway Heritage Group has done for the Ffestiniog Railway

George Orwell said, "The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history." If one substituted 'heritage' for 'history' then one can see where we might be now if some had not been sufficiently farsighted to take action not to go down this route.

In terms of our own projects, I can report that Bettws Garmon is now in the Ffestiniog Railway/Welsh Highland Railway Company's project appraisal system following some hard work by Mike Hadley in completing the evaluation form and preparing the risk assessment document. Interestingly, prompted by the evaluation and review of the historic buildings and modes of operation of the two railways by DHD Structures, a project initiated by Dr Prideaux, the Ffestiniog Railway Trust's chairman, we are adopting an innovative approach to conserving the Bettws Garmon remains. The latest thinking is to provide turf 'coping' on top of walls. Soft capping as it's called, acts like a 'thermal blanket' on a wall top, preventing damage from frost; it sheds water in different directions each time it rains and where the soft cap is well

established the longer grass stems often act like an overhang, directing water away from the face of the wall. Significantly because soft capping offers protection to exposed stonework, it does no harm to historic fabric and can be easily removed in the future if necessary, thus it is a good way of protecting ruins from environmental damage. So, we will be following in the pioneering footsteps of such organisations as Historic England. Should in the future someone come up with a new use for Betws Garmon, there will be some assets to utilise! The Group will be commissioning a contractor for this work and the work on the line side face of the building will need to take place when trains are not running i.e. in the Autumn and Winter later this year.

The Cambrian Crossing/Pen y Mount renewal project will be accelerated in August when the new timber, guttering, etc is delivered to site by Mike Hadley and your chairman. Once again, we will be employing a contractor to complete the project. Our thanks go to members of the Welsh Highland Railway Society Midlands Group for undertaking all the timber preparation and painting work.

recent past to have foundered on the problem 'too many cooks...' and 'moving goal posts', this objective may well be resurrected in some form, perhaps even with a new Heritage Lottery Fund project. Meanwhile the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group can do its bit with the continuing improvements for example at Tryfan Junction. We owe our thanks to the Welsh Highland Railway Society and the Black Hand gang for fencing work and levelling. The further physical works here revolve around the 'dummy siding with slate wagons' and we are now nearly in a position to initiate this mini project which will include some new interpretation boards. Finally at Tryfan junction, I must thank 'Woody', aka John Wood, our new station master, who by giving up some of his weekends, is enabling occasional visitors and intending passengers access to the inside of the station building.

For the future while there is heritage to conserve and protect and existing projects such as Tryfan Junction and the Water Tower to look after, what do we do next? The old Waenfawr building remains were swept away. If a new building was proposed here, would we, could we support such a project?







In 1997, even though 60 years had passed since closure of the WHR, the Waenfawr station building was still largely recognisable. In 1999 the remains were carefully disassembled, catalogued and stored ahead of possible rebuilding. Unfortunately, all this work proved nugatory as the stones and bricks subsequently 'disappeared'. Might a 'traditional' NWNGR building one day appear at today's Waunfawr? Photos by David Allan - John Keylock and WHHG collections Arch 1004, 1341 and 1353 respectively.

Returning to external projects that the Group supports, the digitisation of heritage photographs project has undergone a review and a new approach to data storage is being adopted. More to the point of heritage and history and indeed factual accuracy, I have volunteered the services of our Journal editor as an expert consultant, so we will have a 'foot in the camp'.

The Ffestiniog Railway is putting the storage of its own archives on a sounder footing but this will only address the immediate problem of 'safe and secure storage'. Longer term the Company is waking up to the fact that there is a need for an archive that provides not only storage but proper access and facilities for research. The issue of 'where' is one thing but crucially there is the issue of how it is to be financed. Archives tend not to be 'sexy' and thus perhaps do not always attract the interest that locomotives, rolling stock and buildings do. However, we should 'watch this space'.

There is little more to say on the Glanrafon Weigh House as this, by the very nature of its location, has to be a company led project. However, our experience with Betws Garmon on, for example, 'soft coping' may be able to feed into any work that takes place at Glanrafon.

The issue of heritage interpretation along the line is still a live one and while the concept of a 'linear museum' appears in the

There is some money in the bank and others would no doubt support it but would we be able to resource it with volunteers? Does the railway have a use for a replica building at Waunfawr?

I mentioned the archives problem earlier in this article but that is something we cannot resolve on our own. We have sufficient going on to keep your Committee busy for the next 18 months or so including perhaps a book on the Croesor Tramway but longer term the future looks a bit hazy. Visitor attractions need to reinvent and refresh themselves and while the Welsh Highland is a railway it is nevertheless 'an entertainment', a 'diversion', something 'amusing', a 'ride' and an attraction. Giving tourists, passengers, visitors (however defined) a 'good time' and a reason to come back or tell their friends to come requires regular refreshing of the 'offer'. Providing something in addition to the ride is one way to do this through better information and interpretation on why the railway is there and how it used to and does operate now would be one project to which we could contribute. The 'linear museum' may yet appear.

Note; the spelling of Welsh place names can be a minefield. For example the name of the village today known as *Betws Garmon* was throughout the life of the NWNGR/WHR spelt *Bettws Garmon*. When referring to original features we try wherever possible to use the correct spelling for the period - Ed.

The North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways: As Pictorial an History as Possible. By John Keylock (Part 9)

We ended the last part of our narrative (*WHH*72) with a hint of optimism – the second 1887 half-yearly meeting of Directors and Shareholders had unanimously passed a resolution to pursue a direct link from Dinas to Carnarvon, at the expense of the proposed line to bypass the Bryngwyn Incline, it must be said. We continue John's account entering the new year of 1888.

1888

75.0 In March 1888, the thirty-first half-yearly ordinary meeting was again held at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, with Russell in the chair. He was able to report increases in all traffics even though sales of first- and second-class tickets had declined. This trend was apparent on almost all similar railways in the UK - with a corresponding increase in third class usage. The permanent way continued to be improved and income had increased by about 34% since 1881.

A payment of 1% in respect of arrears due on 'B' debenture stock (of which Russell was probably the largest holder) was approved and Russell was re-elected as a director.

At the half-yearly meeting in September a resolution was passed to reduce the number of Directors from 7 to 4. In consequence of this, C.W. Chute did not stand for re-election. However, in March 1889 John Lloyd of Carnarvon died so Chute replaced him.

1889

76.0 The Railway was doing modestly well but the introduction of the Regulation of Railways Act (1889) was nevertheless regarded as an unnecessary burden on a modest and simply operated concern. The requirements in the Act involved the installation of block working, interlocking of signals and points, fitting continuous braking to coaching stock and printing fares on tickets. Perhaps needless to say, avoidance to comply became a priority. In his initial response to the Board of Trade, Livesey argued that the adoption of all these new regulations would render the working of the line most difficult and therefore he asked for special consideration.

77.0 On the 18th November Charles Easton Spooner died and, along with family members, he is buried in Beddgelert Churchyard. With his involvement in so many local schemes he may well be regarded as Snowdonia's Railway King. Even a week after his death a notice appeared in the *London Gazette* to the effect that during the 1890 session a Bill would be put before Parliament to make the Beddgelert and Rhyd Ddu railway. Despite its name it would have commenced at a junction with the Croesor Tramway in the parish Llanfrothen - today's Croesor Junction.

Earlier in the decade Spooner & Co. had surveyed a route for the Portmadoc, Croesor and Beddgelert Railway and in a letter to Mr George Imlach of Liverpool, who was enquiring as to the value of NWNG stock (presumably money stock as opposed to rolling stock), he wrote:

"I have always felt in regard to that line (which you no doubt must be aware is in anything but a favourable position) that it should have been continued on via Beddgelert in conjunction with existing lines to make it a useful and paying concern, and was apparent that steps should have been early sought to this effect, but which ultimately was not done!"

78.0 By June 1889 the Moel Tryfan Rolling Stock Co had fulfilled its obligation to supply rolling stock, paid for by instalments, to a small railway over a number of years. It therefore ceased to trade but was not dissolved until April 1894

1890

79.0 In 1890 a Bill requesting an extension of time for completing the line from Dinas to Carnarvon - as originally authorized in 1885 by the NWNGR (Extensions etc) Act - was given Royal Assent. The same bill also sought to re-arrange the issuing of debenture stock.

80.0 In August Robert Livesey moved away from North Wales having been appointed secretary and locomotive superintendent of the Finn Valley Railway in Ireland. At least he escaped the harassment and frustration associated with dealing with the B.o.T. which may well have been the stimulus for his departure. In his time with them he had achieved much for the NWNGR and once established may well be regarded as having been 'the face of the railway'. He will best be remembered as the inventor of a special tie bar which helped prevent gauge spreading particularly on curves. Sadly, his father died in December leaving his mother, two sisters and two grandsons (both railway clerks) living at the parental home in Prestatyn. The Finn Valley Railway was absorbed into the County Donegal Railway from which Livesey retired about 1906/07 aged 52. He died in October 1923.

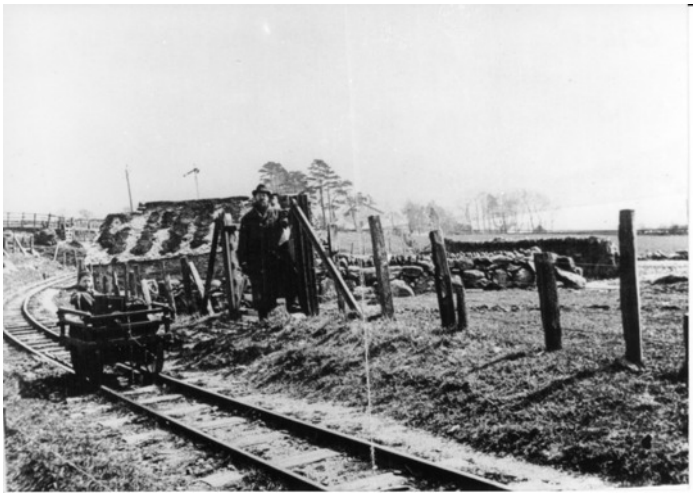
81.0 In September the engineering superintendent and secretarial void was filled by Samuel Tanner from the Manchester and Milford Railway. Born in Clonmel, Co Tipperary, in 1855, it is not known when he came across

the Irish Sea, but by 1871, aged 17, he was a clerk at Oswestry where his father was based as an inspector on the Cambrian Railways. In 1879 he married Annie Isabella Moody from Pembroke; by 1881 they were living in Aberystwyth and Samuel was described as a railway manger working for the erstwhile Manchester and Milford Railway. It would seem most likely that Russell became acquainted with Tanner while both were involved with said railway. He was 35 on joining the NWNGR and presumably more experienced than a young Livesey thrown in at the deep end 13 years earlier. Initially the family lodged at y Cefn, Llanwnda, before moving into Fern Villa. Their children attended Rhostryfan school.

Moving forward briefly Samuel Tanner is recorded in 1901 as living in Bootle, Liverpool; and employed as a ship's bookkeeper. He died in 1903 aged a mere 48 years.

of Mr John Wickens and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves. At four pm tea was provided in a field kindly lent by Mr J.H. Roberts, and ample justice was done by all to the things provided. The return journey was commenced at seven pm when a special train was kindly placed at the disposal of the party by Mr Tanner the manager of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway in order to catch the mail train for Bangor at Dinas Junction. The weather was delightful and a most enjoyable day was spent. The General opinion was that it would be very difficult to find a better place than Rhyd-ddu for a Sunday School trip. The arrangements for the day were first-rate and reflected the utmost credit upon Mr Robert Berk, who has been for many years the faithful, energetic and kindly superintendent of the above school.





(Above left) The Tanner family group in an outdoor pose (in their garden at Llanwnda?) (Arch 3861).

(Above right) Samuel Tanner poses one of his sons (presumably) in a wooden NWNGR slate wagon just north of Snowdon Ranger - on the curve below Llwyn On (the privilege of status?). However, the Snowdon Ranger signal appears to be 'off'! Unless this was very early in his tenure at the NWNGR, the station was more likely to have been known as 'Quellyn Lake' (Arch 3862).

1891

82.0 The railway became popular in facilitating Sunday School outings and one was recorded in the *North Wales Chronicle* in July - reproduced here in full:-

BANGOR ENGLISH SUNDAY SCHOOL - The place selected for the annual excursion of the above school this year was Rhyd-ddu. Teachers, scholars and friends, numbering over one hundred, left Bangor station at 9.15 am, and soon found themselves in the midst of the charming scenery for which the Carnarvonshire mountains are so justly famed.

On arriving at the appointed place, a number of adults courageously set out to scale the frowning heights of Snowdon, while others availed themselves of the opportunity of viewing the delightful neighbourhood of Beddgelert. The smaller children were taken out for a number of boating excursions on Llyn y Gadair under the care

83.0 In August, James Weeks Szlumper (1834 – 1926) was appointed engineer to work alongside Tanner thus spreading the load that Livesey had carried before. J.W. Szlumper was the son of Albert Szlumper - a naturalised Pole - who married Eliza Weeks in 1832. Born in 1834 he was the first of four children by this marriage. Following Eliza's death in 1849 Albert married her sister and they produced four more children all with the second Christian name of Weeks. The last two children were born in Haverfordwest, the family having by then moved to Wales.

James was initially articled to a London-based engineering company before being appointed (in 1857-58) as assistant to the then engineer of the Manchester and Milford Railway (M&MR**).** From 1863 to 1867 he was 'engineer-in-charge' and in 1864 became a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers. In 1867 he married Mary Culliford at Lampeter by which time Szlumper was living in Aberystwyth, presumably to be closer to the M&MR with which he maintained an involvement until it was leased by the GWR in 1906. Between 1868 and 1874 they had four children. It was in 1880 that Russell became Receiver of

the M&MR and it would seem most likely that he was instrumental in bringing both Tanner and Szlumper to the North Wales Narrow Gauge.

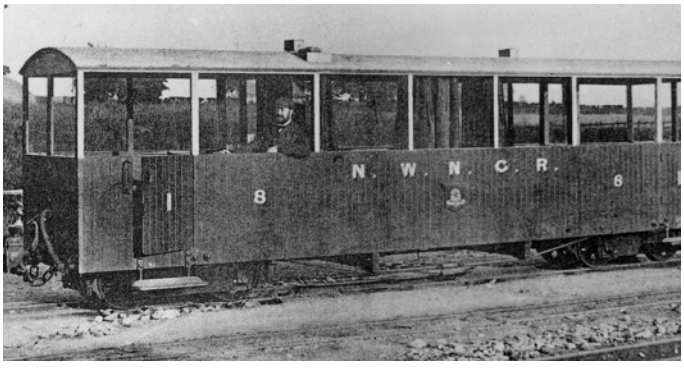
Szlumper was involved in many railways in South Wales, was the County Surveyor for Cardiganshire and was knighted in 1894. In 1898 he was involved with Russell in a failed promotion of the Vale of Rheidol Light Railway. He became a director of the VoR following a later successful promotion. By this time he was living in Surrey and was twice Mayor of Richmond ~ lastly in 1904-05. As well as having been High Sheriff of Cardiganshire he was a J.P. and a well-known figure in Parliamentary committee rooms when railway bills were in progress. It would be surprising if Szlumper did not know that other great railway builder Sir Edward Watkin (see later).

He died aged 92 in October 1926 at his Surrey home - he outlived the NWNGR but will emerge again at a later date.

84.0 1891 saw delivery of a "Workmans Car" and the tourist/observation carriage - with its glazed central section - from the Metropolitan Carriage & Wagon Co.

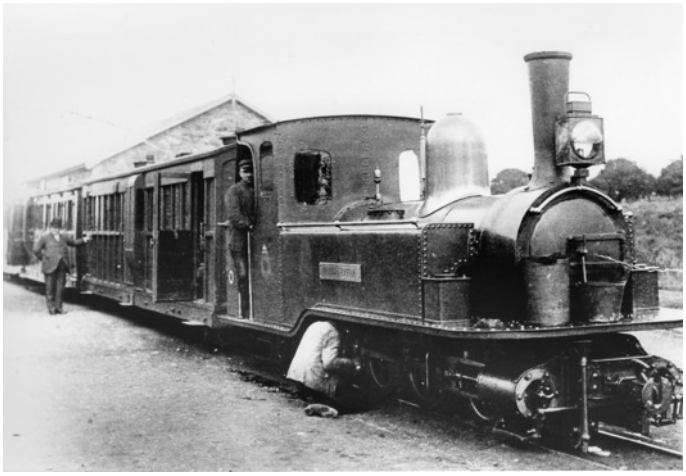


Both of the 1891 carriages can be seen here (shortly after their acquisition) sandwiched between original NWNGR carriages in a train recently arrived at Rhyd Ddu, as the station was then known (the 'Observation Car' is the nearer of the two with the 'Workmans' beyond) (FR Archives)



No. 8, later to be known as the 'Gladstone Car', photographed at Dinas very shortly after its arrival from Metropolitan. Samuel Tanner lends both scale and gravity to the image (WHR 2a)

In February Russell, spurred on - and perhaps incensed - by the demands of the Regulation of Railways Act successfully applied to Chancery to spend up to £1400 from money raised in 1890 and 1891 from the issue of new 'A' Debenture Stock. The 'shopping list' read as follows: '£370 for block telegraph, £110 for a shed in which to repair carriages, £300 to provide continuous brakes for locomotives and carriages, £500 for additional rolling stock and £120 for incidental expenses and extras relating to all or any of the aforesaid items of expenditure'. By the year end 28 more slate wagons had been purchased making a total of 118.



A nice photograph showing Moel Tryfan being prepared for a passenger departure from Dinas. The photo was taken before the installation of continuous braking - note the lack of air pipes and the air reservoirs so clearly to be seen in later images (Arch 3488)

Work installing the block telegraph between Dinas and Rhyd Ddu was set about with some urgency; even involving Sunday working. The *North Wales Chronicle* in July pointed out to a complainant that the police could not interfere with a view to preventing Sunday labour:

> *'getting up telegraph poles was very repulsive to the feelings of the inhabitants of the quiet districts through which the railway runs'.*

1892

85.0 In January the Portmadoc, Beddgelert & Rhyd Ddu Railway Bill came before Parliament.

At the directors' meeting it was reported that block telegraph had been erected on the main line from Dinas to Rhyd Ddu and that continuous brakes were being fitted to engines and carriages.

By the end of June the tourist/observation carriage had been reclassified as a 'Tourist Car First Class' in the process of which it would seem likely that the interior longitudinal seating was upholstered - perhaps in anticipation of Prime Minister Gladstone's visit in September.

The purpose of the visit was to stay with Sir Edward Watkin at Hafod-y-Llan in Nant Gwynant for the inauguration of the Watkin Path to Snowdon's summit. Gladstone and his wife travelled by the LNWR from Hawarden to Dinas Junction where Mr. Tanner 'supervisor' of the NWNGR had provided a saloon

carriage for their conveyance to Rhyd Ddu. Between five and six hundred inhabitants had gathered round the station and there were deputations from the Liberal Societies of Waenfawr and Bontnewydd. Mrs Gladstone was presented with a floral bouquet and Mr Bevan Ellis was presented to Gladstone by David Lloyd George, the local MP. Mr Ellis read a message of welcome and greetings on behalf of the Liberal Societies and while awaiting the arrival of the train from Rhyd Ddu the crowd sang 'Land of My Fathers' and 'There will be Many Comrades' - a well-known Welsh hymn. Gladstone requested that the crowd sing 'Men of Harlech' in Welsh. Their rendition met with his nodded approval.



Moel Tryfan with a two-coach train (Ashbury Brake Composite No. 1 or No. 2 and the 'Tourist Car') awaiting the arrival of Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone at Dinas. Note the then recent addition of continuous brakes as compared to the previous photo of this locomotive (Arch 3622)

At last the train set off and at Tryfan Junction about twenty people had gathered to give a loud cheer as the PM and his party passed. At Waenfawr there was a large gathering of school children and quarrymen to welcome the Honourable gentleman. The train arrived at Rhyd Ddu at 4.00 p.m. to be greeted by another crowd of between four

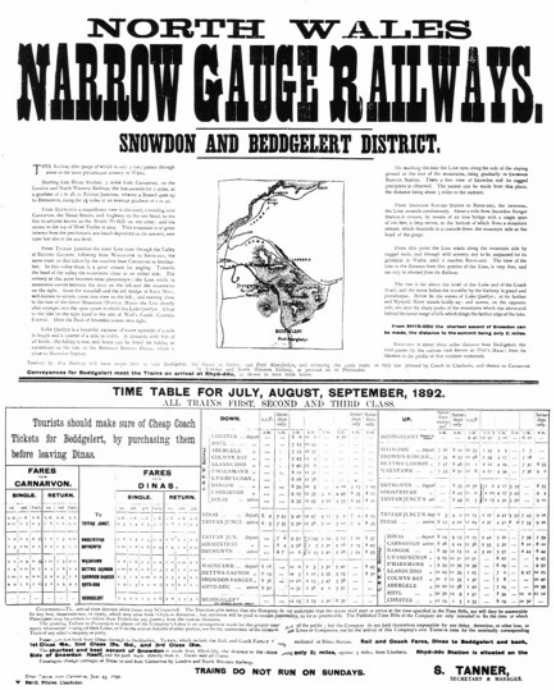


Gladstone addressing the assembled crowd on the occasion of the opening of the Watkin Path to the summit of Snowdon.

and five hundred people many of whom had come from Beddgelert and Nantlle. Bare-headed, the 83-year-old PM pushed through the crowds to Sir Edward Watkin's waiting carriage. A rain storm attended their drive to Hafod-y-Llan. The following day the PM officially opened the Watkin Path.

To commemorate the visit Sir Edward subsequently presented Gladstone with an illustrated album incorporating the photograph of Moel Tryfan and its train at Dinas. What became known as 'The Gladstone Car' is the second carriage and continuous braking would appear to have been fitted.

86.0 At this stage it is perhaps appropriate to consider the operation of passenger trains between Dinas and Bryngwyn. A copy of the July to September 1892 Timetable is reproduced here [*but see Editor's note following this article for a more detailed discussion of this information*].



NORTH WALES

NARROW GAUGE RAILWAYS.

SNOWDON AND BEDDGELERT DISTRICT.

TIME TABLE FOR JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1892.

ALL TRAINS FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD CLASS.

Tourists should make sure of Cheap Coach Tickets for Beddgelert, by purchasing them before leaving Dinas.

TRAINS DO NOT RUN ON SUNDAYS.

S. TANNER,

The July-September 1892 timetable shows three classes of travel but the fares structure indicates 'Parliamentary' in lieu of 3rd .

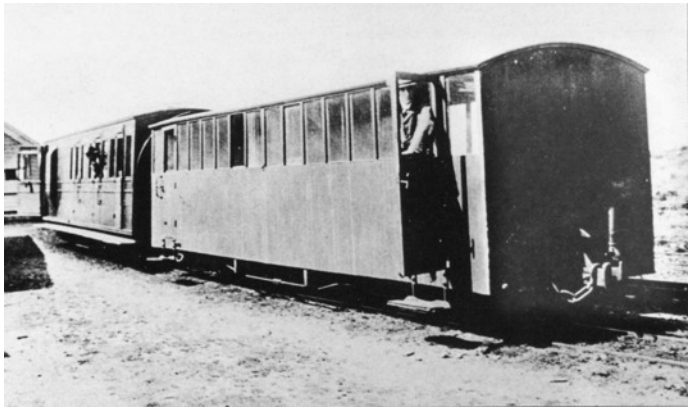
The timetable shows that the Saturdays only 7.45 am and 7.00 pm departures served Bryngwyn solely and took approximately 30 minutes for the journey. Interestingly, the Timetable appears to indicate that the 7.00 pm did not actually return to Dinas [*see notes*]. Most return journeys from Bryngwyn connected with the service from Rhyd Ddu, which involved a 10 to 12-minute delay at Tryfan Junction where the Bryngwyn train, which was scheduled to arrive at Tryfan Junction first, waited for the Rhyd-Ddu train to arrive to be coupled to the rear before proceeding to Dinas. The exception was the 5.35 pm from Bryngwyn which ran to Dinas without a connection from Rhyd-Ddu.

Trains from Dinas to Bryngwyn only spent a couple of minutes at Tryfan Junction suggesting that on departure from Dinas the train consisted of two locomotives with one or two carriages for the Bryngwyn working. With only such a short time allowed the best suggestion would seem to be that the Bryngwyn train was attached in its

entirety to the rear of the mainline service and had simply to be detached at Tryfan Junction.

In total the timetable shows 7 arrivals at Bryngwyn - 3 on weekdays increasing to 7 on Saturdays - but only 6 departures! Did the locomotive that took the 7.00 pm to Bryngwyn return to Dinas with goods traffic, leaving its carriage or carriages to be added to the 8.25 pm train when it departed Bryngwyn for Dinas at 8.55?

Photographs showing passenger traffic at Bryngwyn are rare and that reproduced here shows a 2-coach train but with no clue as to the locomotive involved. The loco was presumably busy with incline traffic or was taking water when the photo was taken.



Photographs of Bryngwyn in operation are rare and photographs showing passenger operations there are extremely rare. Here we see, in a 1916 view, a two-carriage train - the 'Workmans' and one of the Pickerings - set back into the siding at the incline-end of the station building (Arch 3501)

1893

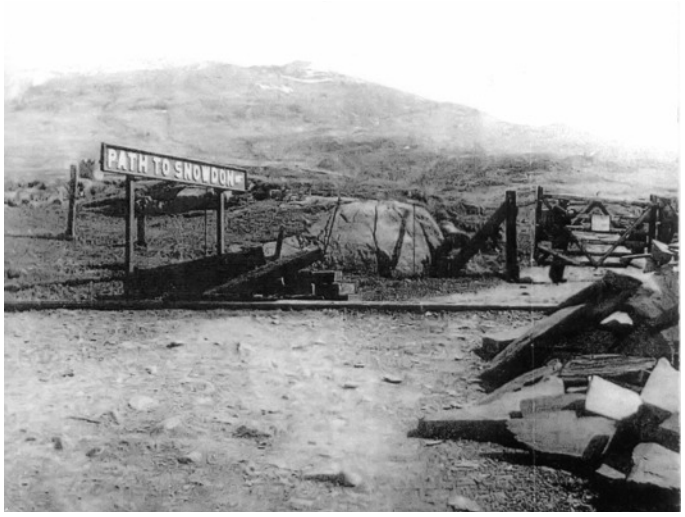
87.0 1893 is often regarded as the year of the Railway's big publicity drive. Passenger figures had been increasing - and extra stock had been ordered to accommodate tourists and excursionists - so it was no doubt a case of 'when an organisation is doing well it pays to advertise'. In January the station name at Rhyd Ddu was changed to 'Snowdon', the better to indicate the destination, to English-speaking visitors, as the starting point for the shortest ascent of Snowdon. Furthermore it must be remembered that the threat of competition from the Snowdon Mountain Railway was looming on the other side of the mountain. At the same time, 'Snowdon Ranger' was renamed 'Quellyn Lake'.

Even though only one of the railways from the initial 'grand scheme' was actually built - the NWNGR's Moel Tryfan Undertaking - the NWNG was invariably (and properly) suffixed 'Railways' in publicity material

In February Russell swore another affidavit to authorise the spending of £800 from revenue on rail and fishplates. Six and half miles had already been re-laid, but there remained two and half miles to be done; this represented the oldest part of the line opened in 1877. Furthermore "the present number of passenger carriages is insufficient for the traffic" in summer and autumn - let alone for quarrymen who were taking up an increased number of season tickets. Additionally "station accommodation at the termini is inadequate and defective". Consequently expenditure of £50 was approved for an additional waiting room at Dinas and £150 for "waiting and refreshment rooms at Snowdon station for the benefit of travellers going up and coming down from Snowdon Mountain". However, it was proposed to defer agreed spending of £150 on the erection of warehouses at three of the stations. Most significantly £550 was approved for "the purchase of two large carriages capable of carrying from 30 to 34 passengers each and to order one long frame upon which to place three small carriages which are at present very ill-suited for the line and are not safe" (by virtue of their not being able to be fitted with continuous brakes).

A further affidavit, to which the judge agreed in March, modified the above request for £150 to £200 because "it had been ascertained that by the erection of a station-master's house at Snowdon station with a refreshment room added will be a greater advantage and improvement than the construction of waiting and refreshment rooms". The greatest advantage to the operating railway would be that the station-master would live at the station - and always be available - instead of at present away from the railway - albeit in the village.

It would seem reasonable to suppose that the provision of these two buildings - and an additional waiting room at Dinas - was put in hand almost immediately. Perhaps also at this time the large sign proclaiming 'Path to Snowdon' was erected. This would tie in with the Railway's preparations for competition with the Snowdon Mountain Railway.



The start of the Rhyd Ddu Path to Snowdon Summit. The path crossed the NWNGR just to the north of 'Snowdon' Station - J. Keylock collection (Arch 4816)

The *London Gazette* for 30 December 1892, first mooted in June, notified that 'pursuant of the Railway & Canal Traffic Act 1888 altered rates and charges for the conveyance of merchandise traffic from stations on the NWNGR will come into effect on 12th January 1893' !

88.0 As previously mentioned (*WHH*69, p. 10, para. 62), when the railway opened to Rhyd Ddu in 1881 there

was no loop to facilitate the conventional running round of the locomotive to gain the opposite end of its train in readiness for the return journey . By 1893 a loop had been installed but it is assumed that for approximately the first ten years other means of 'running round' had been adopted. A map current in 1893 shows a single line beyond the station with a siding trailing in from the goods shed. One may speculate that the locomotive detached from its carriages and took refuge in this siding. The carriages would then gravitate - or be rope hauled by the locomotive - to beyond the siding point after which the point would be changed allowing the locomotive to access the other end of its train.

89.0 By early 1893 Russell, then aged 51, was still unmarried; perhaps he had been concentrating his efforts on establishing his diverse business interests to consider matrimony. That was shortly to change for it is said that he met his future wife during a voyage from South Africa. She was Eleanor Catherine Broome aged 37 the daughter of the late Rev Frederick Broome, formerly rector of Kenley in Shropshire, and Catherine Elizabeth Broome (nee Napier) The wedding took place in April at Widcombe parish church in Bath and was conducted by the Rev C. H. Chomondley, rector of Beaconsfield from 1885 until his death in 1895. Russell thus continued the tradition of being married by a cleric from his mother's side of the family. Where the couple lived initially is suggested by Russell writing to the Register of Companies in November from 10, Astwood Road, Cromwell, London SW.



Eleanor Russell with daughter Margaret (born 1894) by the summer house at 'Longdene', Russell's house at Haslemere, Surrey.
Photo taken ca. 1911- courtesy Evelyn Pangman (Arch 3946)

90.0 In September the *Manchester* (as it then was) *Guardian* reported that Sir Edward Watkin Bart MP has purchased the Fridd Isaf estate of some 500 acres extending from land surrounding Snowdon Station almost to the summit of the mountain. Thus, in addition to his Hafod y Llan estate he became the owner of most of the land on the Beddgelert side of Snowdon.

At the 42nd half yearly general meeting of the Moel Tryfan Undertaking held in Liverpool in October Russell told the poorly attended meeting that both income and expenditure were up on the corresponding half year in 1892 giving a net revenue increase of £25-19s-7½d. Even at this comparatively early stage Russell suggested that in the future passenger traffic would be more valuable than mineral traffic even though the line was originally built with the latter in mind. Much of the current expenditure was on continuing rail replacement, a task it was hoped would be completed two to three years hence. A shareholder asked if there was any prospect of continuing the line to Beddgelert. Russell, the Chairman, said that 'some people were moving in the matter' and he had forwarded them figures to help them establish a cost. £12,000 would probably cover the cost. Another shareholder asked if Sir Edward Watkin had any involvement with said project in the light of his recent land purchase to which Russell responded that he felt it unlikely as it was not a big enough scheme and that there was no prospect of money to be made!

At the half yearly meeting covering the second half of the year (1893) Russell was able to report a further increase in passenger traffic but traffic and general expenses had increased due mainly to money being spent on advertising "the beautiful scenery which was traversed by their railway". With regard to tourist traffic arrangements had been made with the LNWR.

In 1893 only 415 2nd class tickets were sold so it was decided to discontinue their being offered in 1894. Interestingly, as early as 1867, Huddart[1] had suggested their discontinuance on the FR.

Even though the Moel Tryfan Rolling Stock Co. had served its purpose and ceased to trade in 1889 Russell - for the second time during the intervening years - was still trying to convince the Registrar of Companies of the fact! As already noted the company's winding up was eventually verified in the *London Gazette* for April 1894.

To be Continued.

[1] George Augustus Huddart (b.1822) was the son of Sir Joseph Huddart and grandson of Captain Joseph Huddart. He was an FR Co. director for most of the period 1847 to 1876 and was Chairman in 1855. Thus in 1867 his input would have been as an FR director.

More on the N.W.N.G.R. Summer 1892 Timetable

TIME TABLE FOR JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1892.

ALL TRAINS FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD CLASS.

Tourists should make sure of Cheap Coach Tickets for Beddgelert, by purchasing them before leaving Dinas.

FARES FROM CARNARVON.

To	SINGLE. 1st.	2nd.	Party	RETURN. 1st.	2nd.	Party
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
TRYFAN JUNCT.	0 11	0 7	0 5	1 6	1 0	0 10
RHOSTRYFAN	1 0	0 9	0 5½	1 8	1 3	0 11
BRYNGWYN	1 3	0 10	0 7	2 0	1 5	1 2
WAENFAWR	1 1	0 9	0 5½	1 10	1 3	0 11
BETTWS GARMON	1 4	0 11	0 7	2 2	1 6	1 2
SNOWDON RANGER	1 10	1 4	0 10	3 0	2 3	1 8
RHYD-DDU	2 2	1 8	1 0½	3 6	2 9	2 1
BEDDGELERT	2 5	2 0	1 9	4 0	3 3	3 0

FARES FROM DINAS.

To	SINGLE. 1st.	2nd.	3rd.	Party	RETURN. 1st.	2nd.	3rd.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
TRYFAN JUNCT.	0 5	0 4	0 3	0 2	0 8	0 6	0 5
RHOSTRYFAN	0 6	0 5	0 3½	0 3	0 8½	0 7	0 6
BRYNGWYN	0 10	0 8	0 6	0 4½	1 4	1 0	0 10
WAENFAWR	0 8	0 6	0 4	0 4	1 0	0 10	0 8
BETTWS GARMON	0 10	0 8	0 6	0 5	1 4	1 1	0 10
SNOWDON RANGER	1 3	1 0	0 10	0 7½	2 3	1 9	1 6
RHYD-DDU	1 7½	1 3	1 0	0 9½	2 9	2 2	1 9
BEDDGELERT	2 5	2 0	1 9	1 6½	4 0	3 5	3 0

L. & N. W. Railway.

DOWN.	1,2,P.	Saturdays only.					Saturdays only	Saturdays only.
	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
CHESTER .... depart	....	....	6 0	10 0	....	2 20	....	....
RHYL .... ,,	....	....	7 13	10 43	....	....	....	....
ABERGELE ,,	....	....	7 23	10 51	....	....	....	....
COLWYN BAY ,,	....	....	7 43	11 4	....	....	....	....
LLANDUDNO ,,	....	....	7 40	11 0	....	....	....	....
P'MAENMAWR ,,	....	....	8 12	11 31	....	....	....	....
L'FAIRFECHAN ,,	....	....	8 18	11 38	....	....	....	....
BANGOR .... ,,	....	....	8 54	12 5	....	4 10	5 15	7 25
CARNARVON ,,	....	....	9 25	12 35	3 0	4 45	6 45	8 11
DINAS .... arrive	....	....	9 35	12 45	3 10	4 55	6 55	8 21
DINAS .... depart	6 0	7 45	9 40	12 47	3 12	5 0	7 0	8 25
TRYFAN JUNCT. arrive	6 9	7 55	9 50	12 56	3 21	5 10	7 9	8 35
TRYFAN JUN. depart	....	7 d	9 52	1259	3 24	5 12	7 10	8 37
RHOSTRYFAN ,,	....	8 4	9 58	1 5	3 30	5 18	7 15	8 43
BRYNGWYN .... arrive	....	8 17	10 6	1 15	3 40	5 28	7 24	8 53
WAENFAWR .... depart	6 18	....	10 0	1 5	3 30	5 20	....	8 45
BETTWS GARMON ,,	6 23	....	10 5	1 10	3 35	5 25	....	8 50
SNOWDON RANGER ,,	6 36	....	10 18	1 23	3 47	5 38	....	....
RHYD-DDU .... arrive	6 50	....	10 31	1 36	4 0	5 51	....	....
BEDDGELERT (BY COACH) ARRIVE ABOUT	....	....	11 15	2 15	4 30	6 30	....	....

UP.	Saturdays excepted.	Saturdays only.	1,2,P.					Saturdays only.
	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
BEDDGELERT (Depart by Coach)	....	....	9 40	12 50	3 10	....	6 10	....
RHYD-DDU .... depart	7 20	8 20	10 35	1 45	4 5	....	7 5	....
SNOWD'N RANGER ,,	7 34	8 33	10 48	1 59	4 17	....	7 18	....
BETTWS GARMON ,,	7 47	8 46	11 1	2 12	4 29	....	7 31	8 55
WAENFAWR .... ,,	7 53	8 51	11 6	2 17	4 34	....	7 36	9 0
BRYNGWYN .... depart	....	8 35	10 50	2 0	4 17	5 35	....	8 55
RHOSTRYFAN ,,	....	8 43	11 0	2 10	4 27	5 45	....	9 4
TRYFAN JUNCT'N arr	....	8 49	11 5	2 15	4 32	5 50	....	9 10
TRYFAN JUNCT'N dep	8 3	9 0	11 15	2 27	4 42	5 52	7 45	9 10
DINAS .... arrive	8 13	9 10	11 24	2 37	4 51	6 0	7 55	9 20
DINAS .... depart	8 14	9 13	11 25	2 42	5 20	....	7 59	7 59
CARNARVON arrive	8 26	9 24	11 38	2 55	5 32	....	8 10	8 10
BANGOR .... ,,	8 59	10 15	12 4	3 22	5 57	....	6 44	8 44
L'FAIRFECHAN ,,	9 25	10 51	12 51	....	6 22	....	....	9 45
P'MAENMAWR ,,	9 33	10 59	12 59	....	6 29	....	....	9 52
LLANDUDNO ,,	10 24	11 35	1 25	....	7 0	....	9 47	10 25
COLWYN BAY ,,	10 7	11 35	1 30	....	7 8	....	....	10 40
ABERGELE ,,	10 20	11 58	1 42	....	7 24	....	....	10 59
RHYL .... ,,	10 30	12 9	1 51	....	7 34	....	10 0	11 10
CHESTER .... ,,	11 24	1 5	2 35	....	8 19	....	10 50	....

L. & N. W. Railway.

CONDITIONS—The arrival time denotes when trains may be expected. The Directors give notice that the Company do not undertake that the trains shall start or arrive at the time specified in the Time Bills, nor will they be answerable for any loss, inconvenience, or injury, which may arise from delays or detention; but attention will be paid to ensure punctuality, as far as practicable. The Published Time Bills of the Company are only intended to fix the time at which Passengers may be certain to obtain their Tickets for any journey from the various Stations.

The granting Tickets to Passengers to places off the Company's Lines is an arrangement made for the greater convenience of the public; but the Company do not hold themselves responsible for any delay, detention, or other loss, or injury whatsoever arising off their Lines, or from the acts or defaults of other parties, nor for the correctness of the times of the Lines or Companies, nor for the arrival of this Company's own Trains in time for the nominally corresponding Train of any other Company or party.

Passengers can book from Dinas through to Beddgelert. Tickets, which include the Rail, and Coach Fares only, are purchased at Dinas Station. **Rail and Coach Fares, Dinas to Beddgelert and back, 1st Class 4s., 2nd Class 3s. 6d., and 3rd Class 3s.**

The **shortest and best ascent of Snowdon** is made from Rhyd-ddu, the distance to the summit being **only 2¼ miles,** against 5 miles, from Llanberis. **Rhyd-ddu Station is situated on the Side of Snowdon itself,** and the path leads directly from it. *Guides meet all Trains.*

Passengers change carriages at Dinas to and from Carnarvon by London and North Western Railway.

TRAINS DO NOT RUN ON SUNDAYS.

Dinas Station, near Carnarvon, June 25, 1892.

S. TANNER, SECRETARY & MANAGER.

W. Smith, Printer, Llandudno.

August 1892 — Secretary: S. Tanner

DOWN	Gov.		SO				SO	SO
Dinas	6.00	7.45	9.40	12.47	3.12	5.00	7.00	8.25
Tryfan Junction	6.09	7.55	9.50	12.56	3.21	5.10	7.09	8.35
Rhostryfan	–	8.04	9.58	1.05x	3.30	5.18	7.15	8.43
Bryngwyn	–	8.14	10.06	1.15x	3.40	5.28	7.24	8.53
Waenfawr	6.18		10.00	1.05	3.30	5.20		8.45
Bettws Garmon	6.23		10.05	1.10	3.35	5.25		8.50
Snowdon Ranger	6.36		10.18	1.23	3.47	5.38		–
Rhyd-Ddu*	6.50		10.31	1.36	4.00	5.55		–
Beddgelert (coach)	–		11.15	2.15	4.30	6.30		–

UP	SE	SO	Gov.					SO
Beddgelert (coach)	–		9.40	12.50	3.10		6.10	–
Rhyd-Ddu (train)	7.20	8.20	10.35	1.45	4.05		7.05	–
Snowdon Ranger	7.34	8.33	10.48	1.59	4.17		7.18	–
Bettws Garmon	7.47	8.46	11.01	2.12	4.29		7.31	8.55
Waenfawr	7.53	8.51	11.06	2.17	4.34		7.36	9.00
Bryngwyn		8.35	10.50	2.00x	4.17	5.35		8.55
Rhostryfan		8.43	11.00	2.10x	4.27	5.45		9.04
Tryfan Junction	8.03	9.00	11.15	2.27	4.42	5.52	7.45	9.11
Dinas	8.13	9.10	11.24	2.37	4.51	6.00	7.55	9.20

Gov = Parliamentary SO Saturdays only SE Saturdays excepted x = Saturdays only *'2½ miles from the summit of Snowdon'

John Keylock left us a considerable file containing a draft of what he hoped would be, and we hope will be, a History of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways. Your Editor must emphasis that this really is no more than a draft and in many areas we are left to try to read his mind to determine quite how he expected individual parts of his narrative finally to emerge.

His notes on the 1892 timetable are a good case in point. Whilst his file contained a draft text and a reference to this timetable as an illustration, the file does not contain a copy of the timetable he was apparently studying. However, we do have a copy of what appears to have been that timetable and at the moment we can only surmise that this was indeed so. Unfortunately the quality of reproduction of this timetable is not as we would wish and steps are in hand to acquire a better quality image ahead of generating the book John intended. I have reproduced the complete published timetable in the text of this serialisation knowing that the detail will not be fully discernable. Even when I reproduce just the table (above) there are still problems caused at least in part by the quality of the original.

J.I.C. Boyd published a transcript of this timetable in his *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* - in his 1972 single volume edition of this work this can be found on page 234 and in Volume 1 of his 1988 expanded version of this work this is to be found on page 245. I have taken the liberty of reproducing this latter here to aid clarification of the original details.

Straight away we can see issues. In both publications, Boyd appears to have transposed the 'Saturdays only' annotation from the 7.45 am departure from Dinas to the 9.40 am departure column. Having done this in the 1972 work it is perhaps unsurprising to find the same 'error' in the later volume. Mentally correcting for that, we see his figures indicate that the 7.45 arrived at Bryngwyn at 8.14, a journey time of 29 minutes.

The Timetable specifically stated "all trains first, second and third class". Boyd heads his 6.00 am departure 'Gov.' (= Parliamentary) whereas the actual timetable carries the heading '1, 2, P .' The same is true for the column describing the 10.35 am departure from Rhyd-Ddu (Boyd used this spelling in the 1988 volume but the earlier work shows 'Rhydd-ddu').

However, Boyd does not explain how the 7.00 pm SO departure from Dinas, which arrived at Bryngwyn at 7.24, returned. The timetable featured a Saturdays only service from Dinas to Bettws Garmon with a connection to Bryngwyn. This service arrived at Bryngwyn at 8.53 pm. Thus passenger trains were scheduled to arrive at Bryngwyn at 7.24 AND 8.53, but there was no passenger departure from Bryngwyn between 5.35 and 8.55 pm (empty stock movement back to Dinas ahead of the 8.25 departure?)

Jottings

Prompted by the coincidence of his article with Dave Lystor's notes in *WHH* 75, Dave Rogerson has sent me the following additional notes which he simply described as "Jottings". I have considered various ways of utlising these additional notes but finally your Editor decided simply to reproduce them 'as received'.

The juxtaposition of my article about Platelayers and Dick Lystor's about the restructuring of the WHR workforce in 1923 threw up a few thoughts which were aided by his helpful inclusion of ages and length of service. These will be of great help when I continue my census searches.

In the meantime here are a few, more generalised thoughts. The first is that there had been quite a few additions to the staff compared to the 1922 pay list published in Boyd - not surprising given the launch of an extended railway. The second is that it was taking some time for the relaid track to settle – most of the additional staff were platelayers.

Turning to the specific people involved three themes emerge. These are: ladies, relatives and personal relations.

On the 1922 pay list (Dick Lystor has kindly sent me a copy of the original), the second and third entries are M.O. Jones, Booking Clerk and M. Williams, Snowdon. I had noticed on the original that their pay rates were noticeably lower than the majority of the workers and wondered if it was because they were female. This was confirmed by Dick's identification of Myfanwy Williams as the Snowdon Station Master whose services were dispensed with in 1923.

Miss Williams was born and brought up in Rhyd Ddu. She was born in 1901, her mother kept the Post office whilst her dad worked on the slate. She was the fifth of eight children and had obviously inherited her mother's business sense and, at 17 years of age, found a way to earn 5/- (25p) a day for what must have been quite a quiet life. Slightly more highly paid was M. O. Jones at 6/10d (34p) per day in the office at Dinas. I am certain that this lady was Daniel Owen Jones's daughter Margaret. Margaret was born in 1900 and had a younger sister Laura. Both were living at home in 1911 and there is a record in that year's census of the number of children of each marriage. Daniel and his wife had just these two children according to the record.

This brings into question Dick's statement that Margaret's successor John William Jones may have been Daniel's son. There remain the possibilities that John was either the son of an earlier marriage or a very young booking clerk but both are doubtful. Other relatives do however emerge from the 1923 list. William Limerick, boy porter, was Jeb the Ganger's son. Henry Ore was Thomas the loader's son. Another insider was the son of Thomas Richard Thomas, foreman. This was William Ll. Thomas, who had been promoted from Blacksmith's striker to fireman between the demise of the NWNGR and the formation of WHR. Finally, on the 1923 list, Hugh Roberts had returned. He was the nephew of Willie Hugh Williams and the grandson of Hugh Williams and is recorded in the 1911 census as a fireman - probably taking over his uncle's role when Hugh retired and Willie Hugh was promoted to driver.

But do I detect a rift amongst the workers? There are remarkable similarities between the lives of Thomas Ore and Jeb Limerick. Both were born in 1870, both had Irish fathers married to local women and both worked for the company for a number of years; both married women born in Llanwnda and both had sons who worked for the company. In 1891, Thomas was working on the track gang whilst Jeb was a loader employed in Dinas Yard. According to the 1901 and 1911 censuses both were platelayers. By 1922 Jeb had been promoted to Ganger and Thomas (now confirmed by Dick Lystor as the father not the son) was in the yard. In 1923, with all the track work being undertaken, Thomas was still loading. Jeb died in 1923 and Richard reports that Thomas was promoted to Ganger later that year. There must be a reason, which we will never know, behind this slightly surprising sequence.

Footnote on Church Cottages.

This row of cottages between the railway and the church first appear in the 1881 census. In 1881, 1891 and 1911 they are called Church Cottages which is the name I have adopted. However in 1901 and again in later years, including the present, they are called Dinas Cottages. I hope this has not led to too much confusion amongst those who know the area today.

From the Editor

It is almost exactly 20 years since our Group was founded. The first Issue of this Journal (at 4 pages a tentative first step perhaps) was circulated in November 1997.

It seems appropriate, therefore, that Issue 77 of *WHH*, which will carry the cover date December 2017 but which will, hopefully, be distributed in November, should take a retrospective look at our first 20 years of history.

In anticipation of this, if any members have particular memories or reminiscences that they would like to share, please let me know and I will be only too happy to include such inputs in the next Journal. If we cast our minds back to where we were in 1997 I am sure we can agree that a great deal has happened over the intervening 20 years, not all to the lasting benefit of 'Heritage' it has to be said.

John May

In *WHH* 75, on page 7, we noted that Capt. John May was Superintendent Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways from September 1923 to May 1924.

In the interest of accuracy, we should record that May's appointment was announced in the *Cambrian News* and the *Railway Gazette* issues of 5th October 1923 and that his predecessor as 'Superintendent', Septimus Tyrwhitt (General Manager FR and WHR) did not leave until the end of September. May's role as just 'Superintendent' was a downgrading relative to Tyrwhitt's. The earliest surviving document signed by May in this capacity is dated 1st October 1923.

E.H.R. Nicholls was appointed Managing Director of the Festiniog and General Manager of the Welsh Highland in May 1924, but John May continued in his post as Superintendent until Nicholls was instructed to dispense with his services from the end of August 1924. In that month May applied for the post of Secretary and Manager of the Ashover Railway. The last known memo signed by May at Portmadoc is dated 25th September 1924 (a month later than that mentioned in May's "c.v." in *WHH* 44, p. 10) and he did take up his post at the Ashover in October .

Thus our brief note in Issue 75 should have read "Superintendent Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways from October 1923 to September 1924".

Continued from Page 12

> *codes were issued as of 1903. A list of these codes and the areas they apply to can be found on the area identifier pages [on the referenced website - Ed]. This original system, using the one or two letter area code and one to four numbers (e.g. AA1 - AA9999) soon ran out and by the 1930's a change was needed.*
>
> *AAA1 - YYY999: 1930's – 1960's*
>
> *It was decided an extra serial letter was to be introduced prefixing the original area code. This could only be used with two letter area codes, as prefixing a one letter area code would duplicate a two-letter code, so the single letter area codes became obsolete. Serial letters were first introduced around 1932 as necessary.*
>
> *In order for the size of the plates to remain the same, a maximum of only three numbers (e.g. AAA234, GRF823) was used with this system. This serial letter ran in rotation with the numbers, so in the example ADE998, the "DE" is the area code (in this instance, Pembrokeshire County Council), and the A--998 runs in sequence. The next number in the Pembrokeshire series would be ADE999, followed by BDE1 (note that no zeroes prefix the number 1).*

If this history is correct, it follows that the number plate we see on the car in figure 2 cannot have been photographed before 1932. Incidentally, the 'LY' area code was allocated to 'Greater London' until 1974 when the allocation was changed to 'London - North West'. Co-incidentally this is the same area we are led to by the registration of the Vauxhall Cadet seen at the entrance to Madoc Street in Wheeller's photos (ALD 305).

If I couple the indication that the photo cannot have been taken earlier than 1932 with the fact we are seeing FR coal wagons and a WHR train guard at Beddgelert then, whilst we cannot absolutely rule out earlier dates, probability suggests 1934 or later for the date, given the growth in all traffic following the full reinstatement of services over the 'Cambrian Crossing' on the establishment of the FR Lease in that year.

Now consider figure 1. It is dangerous to assume that photographs credited to a single individual necessarily were taken on the same date – quite possibly the photographer made more than one visit to the railway. We know that 'Plummer' made at least two visits as his photographs showing *Prince* at Beddgelert WERE taken, as Boyd suggests, in 1925 (assuming, of course, that there was only one 'Plummer'!). Close examination of figure 1 will show that *Russell* was fitted with its 1935/6 smoke-box door. The sand 'drum' is also indicative of later practice. The train guard, David Lloyd-Hughes, appears identically attired here as in figure 3. There are details in figure 3 which indicate concurrence with figure 2 – note, for example, the odd angle of the buffer at the end of the nearest wagon.

As neither figure 1 nor figure 2 could have been taken in 1928, we can also therefore conclude with reasonable probability that the same is true in the case of figure 3. Secondly, we can deduce a high probability that all three were taken in 1935 at the earliest.

It is clearly apparent in figure 2 that the flue from the office stove was missing when the photo was taken. This of itself should have flagged up question marks regarding Boyd's dating of this image as our chronologies indicate that the office at Beddgelert was not closed until the end of 1928.

There are other previous judgements or suggestions that will have to be revisited in light of the revised dating of these images. For example, in *WHH* 66, in the article *Staffing Beddgelert*, we published a part of figure 3 as a '1928 photo' and, based on that date, speculated that the 'station master' might have been W.S. Jones, who seemed otherwise successfully to have avoided the camera. However, a 1935 date for this image would almost certainly point to the 'station master' being John Marks – close examination of the gentleman in the picture would appear to confirm this.

Finally, we are now faced with determining exactly when the stove and the flue were removed from the Beddgelert station building, but I suspect that that will be quite another story to be told on another day!

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis

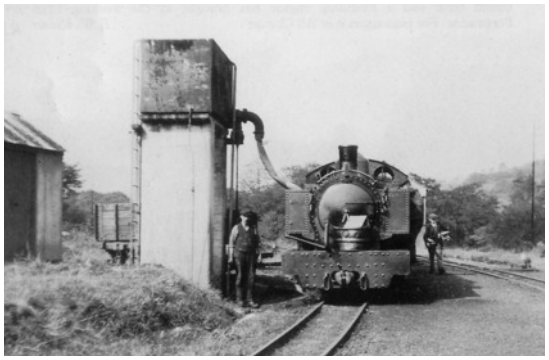






Figure 1 (above left) - *Russell* at the Beddgelert Water Tower (Arch 4894)

Figure 2 (above) - F.R. Coal wagons and an Austin saloon car stand by the station building at Beddgelert (Arch 3569)

Figure 3 (left) - The Beddgelert station master and WHR train guard at the Beddgelert coal siding points (Arch 3112)

All photographs credited to R.J., or R.R.J., Plummer and dated to 1928 by J.I.C. Boyd.

When James Boyd prepared his two-volume update of *Narrow Gauge Rails in South Caernarvonshire*, he included four photographs by R. Plummer in his new dedicated *Welsh Highland Railway* volume (Volume 2). These photographs did not appear in his original single-volume work. These photos were all taken at Beddgelert and, of the four, he dated one to 1925 and three to 1928. It is this latter three that will be the subject of this column.

The first (Fig. 1) is the 7th photograph between pages 22 and 23 and shows a head-on view of *Russell* at the water tower. Boyd's caption to this photograph reads:

"Interregnum at Beddgelert in 1928: Russell takes water. The absence of any interested by-standers is unusual."

The photo is credited to "R.J. Plummer".

The second (Fig. 2) is the 17th photo between pages 70 and 71 and it is captioned as follows:

"Three coal-loaded F.R. wagons and an Austin saloon car parked around Beddgelert station building sometime in 1928."

This time the credit was to "R.R.J. Plummer".

The final photo of the three (Fig. 3) is the 8th photo between pages 102 and 103, captioned as follows:

"The Beddgelert station master padlocks the coal siding points, watched by the guard in 1928: note the latter's Bell Punch ticket apparatus".

Again, the accredited photographer is "R.R.J. Plummer".

Boyd 'positively' dated these photos to 1928. These photos appear only to have been published in *Boyd Vol 2* and *WHH*. However, there are significant clues in the images which strongly suggest that this date is wrong.

Let us start this review with Fig. 2. The significant feature in this image, to photo dating at least, is the motor car. The F.R. Wagons possibly offer secondary dating guidance.

Boyd refers to the car as an "Austin saloon" which undoubtedly it was, but which model? Without even determining the precise model, there is much about the car that 'screams' 1930's and not 1920's. However, this is not the place for a treatise on car recognition, so aside from identifying the vehicle as an Austin 16/6, let us concentrate here on its number plate – ALY 106.

According to http://www.cvpg.co.uk/REG.pdf, the early history of car registrations was as follows:

> *The UK car registration system traces back to 1903. The Motor Car act which came into force on January 1st, 1904 required all vehicles in the United Kingdom to be registered and carry number plates. Originally County and Borough Councils were to issue the number plates - a system which was to last until 1974 - when the Department of Transport took over the task with its specially equipped Vehicle Registration Offices (VROs).*
>
> *A1 - YY9999: 1903 – 1930's*
>
> *Each council was issued with one or more letter codes for registering vehicles. Originally both one and two letter*

Continued on Page 11

Editor:	Peter Liddell	E-mail	peter.liddell@welshhighlandheritage.co.uk
Secretary:	Cedric Lodge	E-mail	cedric.lodge@welshhighlandheritage.co.uk
Membership Secretary:	Derek Lystor	E-mail	dick.lystor@welshhighlandheritage.co.uk