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Russell and Baldwin No. 608 Together on the Welsh Highland

Main Picture - *608* and *Russell* at Beddgelert - 3rd November 2019
Top Right - *608*, accompanied by *Upnor Castle*, on test run at Pont Croesor - 1st November 2019
Lower Right - *Russell* heads north from Pont Croesor framed by the evening sky - 3rd November 2019.
All photographs are copyright F&WHR

Baldwin *608* is a close cousin of *590*. Both locomotives are from late in the build sequence - *590* (Baldwin 10 12 D 396 - works number 45172) was one of the last delivered against Order No. ('Indent No' in 'Baldwin language') D.R.T. 887 whereas *680* was one of the early deliveries under the following Order No. L.R. 10002 (10 12 D 414 - w/n 45190). As delivered, the locomotives carried War Department Light Railways running numbers *1040* and *1058* respectively - they were re-numbered in 1917 as the overall Baldwin-class number series was rearranged into a continuous sequence.

Reading the Baldwin specifications for this class of locomotives, there is little apparent difference between them as few, if any, additional modifications were introduced into the final batch of 100 locomotives. Thus, to all intents and purposes, apart from its colour, when we look at *608* we are seeing *590*, but as it was before its cab extension was installed and the lower edge of the re-railing bar below the front buffer beam was given its characteristic upward sweep at the outer ends.

608 was one of the locomotives sent to the North West Frontier of India and, after completing service there, it passed to the sugar industry, finally at the Ryam Sugar Mills.

It was repatriated to Statfold Barn and subsequently acquired by Graham Fairhurst, the founder of the West Lancs Railway. After restoration it was transferred to the F&WHR, arriving on October 11th. It was tested at Boston Lodge and over parts of the railway before participating in a photo-charter exercise, alongside *Russell*, on November 3rd.

Ah, the sweet nostalgia! *608* heads north through Aberglaslyn's short tunnels towards Bryn-y-felin and Beddgelert, reprising the role *590* would have played during the FR lease period 1934-6. Its colour, number and cab layout show this is not, after all, *590*. Photo by Phil Brown, 3rd November 2019.

More on Glanrafon from Nick Booker

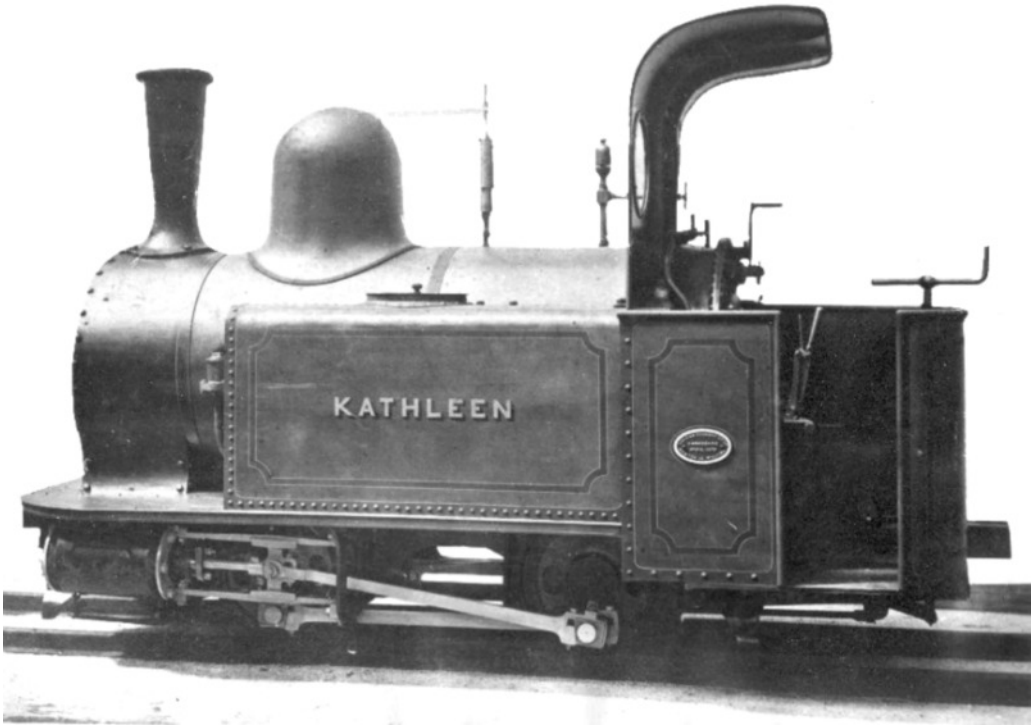
At a recent board meeting of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways Heritage company I submitted a paper proposing that an interpretive and conservation project should be established and endorsed by the FWHRHL to recognise the importance of the Glan yr Afon weigh bridge and quarry site.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a formal heritage project appraisal be submitted in 2020 that will involve:

- The erection of a gate in the existing boundary fence allowing sheep to enter following the erection of a new fence alongside the railway, thus ensuring that the view of the building and the incline from the railway, is maintained by the natural activity of the animals
- A survey of the building remains with the aim of conservation and ideally restoration of the roof etc

I understand that in a completely separate initiative, the Snowdonia National Park Authority is in discussions with local landowners on the re-routing of parts of the footpath in the area, which would bring any 'new' route(s) closer to the weigh bridge building and which thus be a further incentive for the project.

Accident on the Alexandra Quarry Tramway



Dick Lystor has been delving into an unfortunate accident in 1907

The *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* of February 15th 1907 gave an account of a serious accident on the Alexandra Quarry tramway, involving four employees returning from the quarry on the cab of a locomotive, when a tube burst, causing them to jump to safety before the driver had time to stop. Three escaped unharmed, but the fourth fell under the locomotive and was fatally injured. The exact location of the accident was not recorded.

The newspaper article, under the headline Quarry Railway Fatality, reads as follows:

> *On Monday morning, a fatal accident of a distressing character took place on the incline which connects the Alexandra Slate Quarry with Bryngwyn Station, on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway.*
>
> *Four young men employed at the quarry, but who were not working on Monday, returned from the quarry on a locomotive which usually plies on the incline. On the way a small tube in the engine burst, and at once threw the men into a state of excitement. Before the driver had time to stop the locomotive the other occupants jumped off indiscriminately, with the result that while three of them escaped uninjured the fourth fell under the engine and was run over. The engine also being derailed, some difficulty was experienced in extricating the one underneath, and when at last his release was effected, it was found that death had taken place. He had sustained terrible injuries to his chest and limbs.*
>
> *The deceased was Mr W. R. Williams, a young man about twenty-six years of age, residing with his parents at Rhostryfan. He was a brother of Mr R. H. Williams, of this office. Both his parents were confined to bed with illness when the news of their son's sad end reached them.*
>
> *Mr John Menzies, the managing director of the quarry, immediately sent his son, Dr F. Menzies, with a message of condolence to the distressed couple.*
>
> *At an inquest, held on Tuesday, before Mr J. Pentir Williams, coroner for North*

Carnarvonshire, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned, and a vote of sympathy was passed with the family in their great bereavement.

On Friday morning, August 2nd 1907, a formal enquiry, under Section 6 of the Boilers Explosions Act, 1882, instituted by the Board of Trade, was held at County Hall, Carnarvon, to look into the causes of the accident. The commissioners were A.P. Longstaffe, barrister-at-law, and J. Melrose, C.B., R.N., engineer. G.C. Vaux appeared for the Board of Trade, and J.T. Roberts represented the owners of the quarry, as well as A.W. Kay-Menzies (managing director), William Jones (fitter) and Richard P. Cunnah (engine driver).

In opening the enquiry, Mr. Vaux stated that the boiler formed part of an engine named Kathleen (Vulcan Foundry no. 805), belonging to the Alexandra Slate Quarry Co. The engine was used on a tramway leading from the quarry to the incline head. It was built in 1877 (Vulcan Foundry records state 1876) and in 1896 a new boiler was supplied. In 1902 a number of new tubes were inserted, replacing all those above the middle row, and were tested afterwards by hydraulic pressure to 140lbs. Six more tubes were supplied by the Vulcan Co. in 1905, but they did not appear to have been used, and no periodical examination seemed to have been made to the boiler, but fitter William Jones tested it in July or August 1905. In 1906 eight of the original tubes fitted in 1896 were plugged because they were thin, and it appeared that afterwards the driver reported to the fitter that some more tubes were getting thin, but they were neither plugged nor renewed.

On the day of the explosion, the locomotive was being used in shunting trucks. Cunnah, the engine driver, was in charge, and at about 10 a.m., he proceeded towards the incline head for the purpose of bringing up coal and stores. Four quarrymen, apparently against all the orders and regulations of the quarry, rode on the cab of the engine, which was running cab first. When leaving the quarry, the boiler pressure was 60lbs; and he did not think it got very much higher. As the engine was going down to the incline with steam off, there was a report, and steam and water blew out of the ashpit, scalding the driver and one of the quarrymen. Two other quarrymen jumped off, one escaping unhurt, but the other, William Williams aged 26, was knocked down by the locomotive, and lost his life. After the explosion. An examination proved that one of the tubes had collapsed at the smoke box end for about 11 inches in length, through which the contents of the boiler had escaped.

Evidence was then taken from the various parties concerned. J.T. Roberts, for the company, agreed to all the facts of the incident and Messrs Daggett and Freeman, for the Vulcan Foundry Co., as to the making and supplying of the boiler tubes. Mr. Kay-Menzies said that the engine fitter was responsible for the upkeep of all the machinery in the quarry, and that the local manager had charge of the working of the quarry as a whole. He was not aware that there was a periodical examination of the boilers, but was informed by the fitter that he had made inspections. The fitter and probably the driver from time to time casually reported to him that some of the tubes in this particular locomotive were leaking, but as they had been made right, he attached no importance to the matter, and never examined the boiler himself. After the explosion, the whole boiler was re-tubed. The machinery was annually inspected, but the locomotive Kathleen was not included in the record of the last inspection, but he became aware after the explosion that it had been inspected. He described the fitter and driver as men who gave every satisfaction. Both before and after the explosion, the Government Inspector of Mines had suggested the desirability of having the boilers inspected by a competent outsider instead of the quarry fitter, and since the explosion a local independent boilermaker had inspected and repaired them. Evidence was also given by Mr. Hugh Roberts, the local manager of the quarry; William Jones, fitter; Richard Cunnah, locomotive driver; and W. McGregor, a Board of Trade surveyor. The latter said that he had examined the tubes after the explosion and was of the opinion that it was caused by the tubes being thin and in use for such a number of years.

On Saturday the court reconvened. J.T. Roberts, on behalf of his clients, asked the commissioners to attach the blame, if any, to Hugh Roberts, as he had the management of the quarry in his hands entirely.

After a short deliberation, Mr. Longstaffe delivered judgement. In reply to the questions asked, he said that it was clear that the Vulcan Foundry Co was free from blame. The court also attached no blame to the driver Cunnah but complimented him upon his bravery in remaining upon the engine when he had been scalded. They also exonerated Hugh Roberts and William Jones from all blame, attaching it all to the Alexandra Slate Co., and Mr Kay-Menzies as managing director, who should have seen to the proper examination of the boiler. Each party would jointly pay a sum of £100 towards the cost of the enquiry.

Note:

A full report of the enquiry can be found in the August 9th 1907 edition of the North Wales Express. To read this, see Welsh Newspapers Online at

https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3571726/3571732/34/

Heritage Group Appoints President and Vice-President

The inaugural meeting (?) of the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group during a lunch stop at Plas-y-nant on one of the early survey walks. Michael Davies, later to be Member No. 4 is on the left, unhelpfully camera shy, and David Allan, later Member No. 2 faces the camera on the right. The other members of this august group were, to the left, Cedric Lodge, later Member No. 15 and the late John Keylock, to whom fell the honour of becoming Member No. 1 - Photo by Alan Donaldson - 1997.

I am very happy to announce that David Allan has been appointed President, and Michael Davies a Vice-President, of the WHRHG in recognition of their long and constructive contributions to the activities and success of the Heritage Group.

For very many years, David has been involved with Welsh Highland matters since his interest was sparked in the early 1980s. He later became a board member and then chairman of the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway, as it is now known, serving for some 15 years. During that time and subsequently, as a skilled photographer he assembled a magnificent collection of heritage and contemporary photographs and postcards of the railway.

Michael's interest in both the Festiniog and Welsh Highland railways dates from 1940 and he later became a long-standing volunteer from the earliest days of the Festiniog revival. He has been a contributor to and co-author of several books on both the FR and WHR.

In 1996, when it was obvious that the FR would be rebuilding the WHR, David became concerned that that any remains from NWNGR and WHR days should be photographed and recorded and so a 'track bed survey party' was formed which later metamorphosed into the WHRHG. David was volunteered as chairman and Michael who had by 1950 (!) already walked all of the WHR track bed, agreed to be treasurer with the late John Keylock as both secretary and membership secretary. Subsequently Cedric Lodge was invited to join the committee, representing the WHR Society.

The efforts of David, Michael and the others in that original walking group resulted in the entire WHR track bed being surveyed. All the culverts, bridges, buildings and so on were recorded on a 25" map, each with its own reference number thus setting the foundation for the various restoration and conservation projects that the Group has undertaken over more than 20 years.

Nick Booker

NWNGR/WHR 'TIPPING' WAGONS

Above left - beyond the slate wagon, two of the 'tipping' wagons sit at Dinas in a train of disused stock parked on the carriage shed access line - note that their opening doors are on opposite sides - J.F. Bolton October 1941 - WHR 77.

Above - disused stock at Dinas in 1935 - note wagon number 124 between an FR 3-ton slate wagon and an FR end-door large open goods wagon. - H.F. Wheeller (14/12) - Arch 3288

Left - the source of the 'tipping' myth? Wagon number 123 at Dinas in 1935, apparently de-railed. It is most unlikely that this was 'tipped' as the side door will be seen to be on the upper edge - H.F. Wheeller (14/14) - Arch 3291

Note that both wagons 123 and 124 had their doors on the east side, so unless one was turned between 1935 and 1941, the further wagon in the photo above left was neither of these.

Stuart Baker has been looking into the so-called 'tipping wagons' used by the NWNGR and the WHR.

A short time ago a friend asked if I was familiar with the NWNG/WHR "side tipping" wagons used for the transport of stone as described by J I C Boyd in his book *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire*; the copy I have and to which I referred being the 1988/9 edition in two volumes. All page numbers below refer to this edition.

At the time I was not familiar with these wagons so reference to the above book, and three photographs printed therein (prints of which are also in my collection), were utilised.

In Volume 1 (NWNG) on page 236 Boyd states –

"There were about half a dozen three-plank wooden-bodied side-tippers, and their bodies overhung the underframes from which they tipped on one side only. They were larger than the slate wagons and probably held 4 tons of stone, and were likely to be conversions from redundant slate wagons. Specimen Nos. 123 and 124."

Photographs of these wagons appear only in Volume 2 (WHR) between pages 70 and 71 and pages 86 and 87, all these being taken during the 1930s. Two of these pictures (credited to F. Bolton and H. F. Wheeller) are notated as being of side-tippers 123 and 124 whilst the third picture showing two of the same wagons (one being each way round) – Boyd ref "a mixed train of NWNG wagonry outside Dinas carriage shed" - is credited to F. Bolton.

Examination of scanned copies of the better quality prints in my collection (purchased at the WHHR bookshop) produced contradictory information to Boyd's assertion that they were side tipping wagons. Certainly the picture of wagon 123 between pages 86 and 87 seems to indicate that the wagon's body is tipped. However all is not what it appears to be as that photograph has the body tipped towards the closed side and examination of that and the other photographs indicate that the opening side is bottom hinged with a top catch, whereas a side tipping wagon would have been top hinged with a bottom catch. Again looking

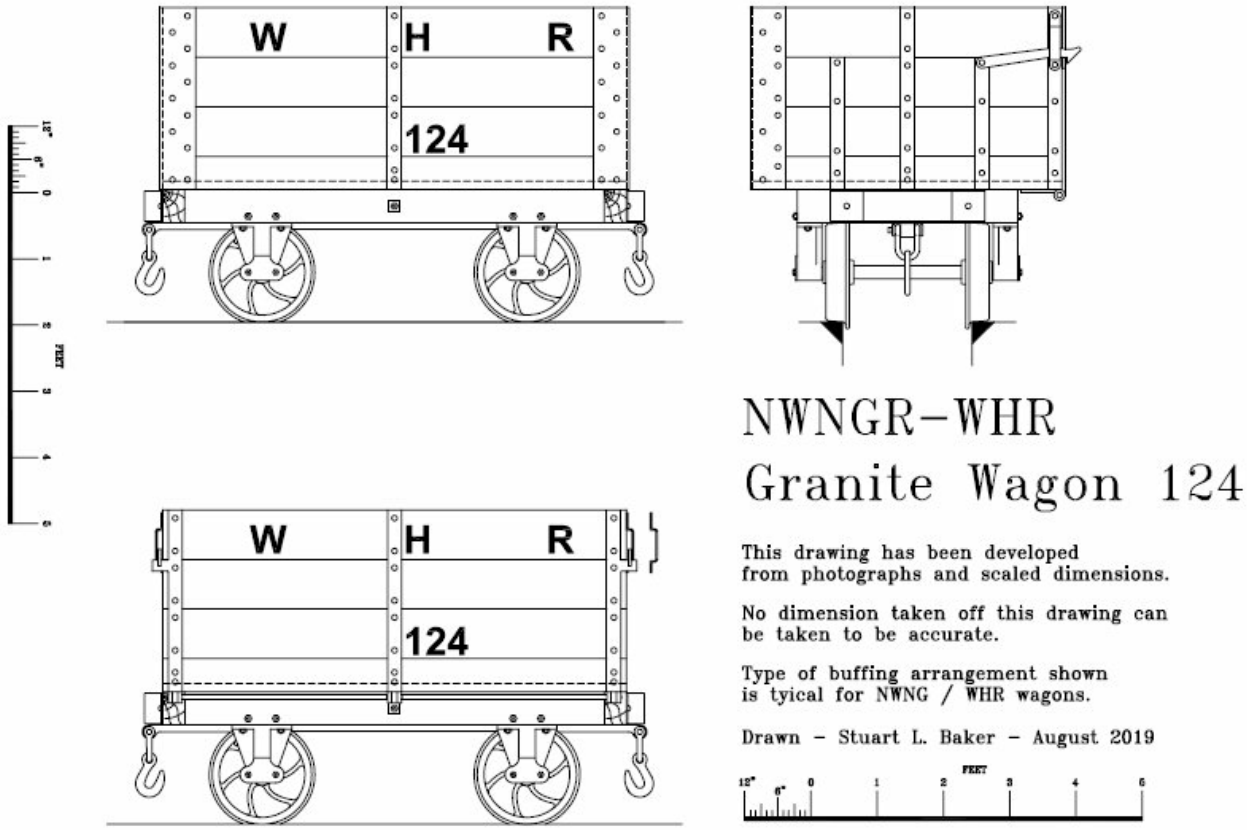
at the photograph of No. 123 in its "tipped" position, it appears that the buffing strip and under-frame is also tipped over at an angle, indicating that the whole wagon, rather than just the body, is canted over. Conclusion – Boyd was misled by the Wheeller photograph and these wagons are single sided bottom hinged open wagons, not side tippers. This also ties up with the limited transhipment provisions between narrow and standard gauges at both Dinas and Beddgelert Sidings.

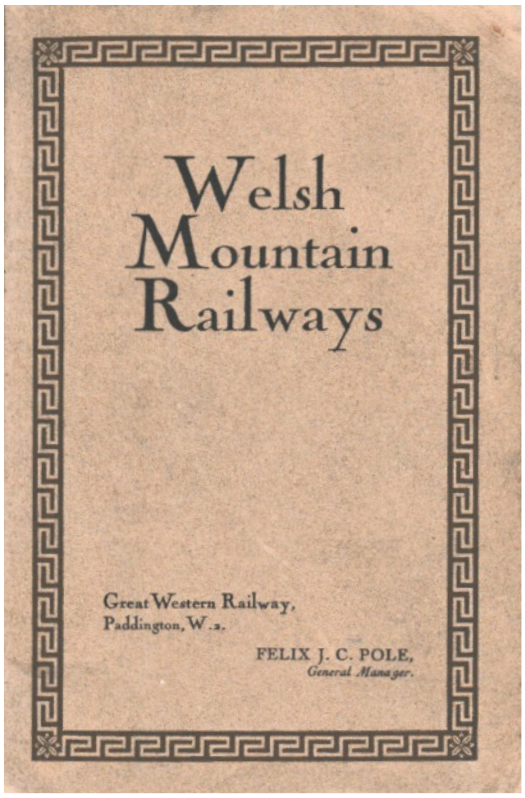
So how big would the wagon body be? From the internet the density of crushed granite was determined to be in the order of 103 lbs/cu.ft., crushed granite being a probable "stone" load. The three quarter end view of two of these stone wagons in a train of small WHR open wagons indicates that they are one plank higher than the small open wagons. In addition by reference to the photos the stone wagons were wider than the small open wagons, but narrower than the large opens, and scaling off one of the photos indicates that they would be in the order of 4ft-9ins wide. Reviewing the side planks in the photographs, and sketching out the side elevation of the wagon using Boyd's dimensions for the small open "merchandise" wagons, the top three planks appear to be about 10" and the bottom plank 6". Allowing for 1½" thick sides and floor planking, the resulting overall length for a stone wagon based on Boyd's 4 ton capacity and 103 lbs/cu.ft. for crushed granite would equate to 7'-0" – the length he states for the small open "merchandise" wagons.

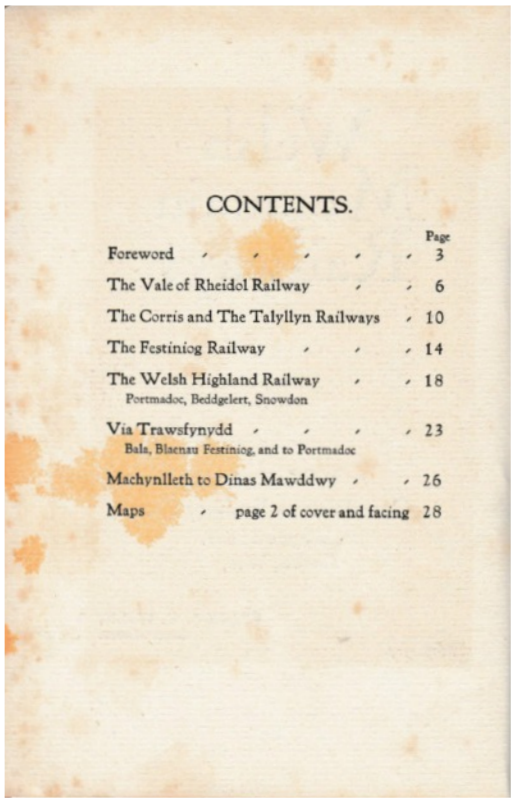
In addition, when enlarged the photograph of the two wagons in a line of other WHR wagons indicates they have the open wagon type axleboxes, not slate wagon pedestals.

My conclusion, therefore, is that if (as Boyd asserts) Nos 123 & 124 are conversions then these wagons would have been mounted on the under-frames of small open (merchandise) wagons rather than slate wagons, and this is the type of under-frame I have shown in my drawing.

Of course, if anyone has other photographs or better knowledge available for these vehicles, or they can demonstrate that these wagons were side tippers as Boyd states, then I am sure your Editor would be most happy to hear from you.







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Prompted by recent articles on the finding of old books, Kim Winter told me of his acquisition of a copy of the Great Western Railway 1924 Guidebook to Welsh Mountain Railways. The book is being passed to the FR Archives, but the passage covering the Welsh Highland Railway is reproduced here.

Where the coast of Cardigan Bay turns sharply west from the north, there lies the double estuary of the Glaslyn and Dwyryd - Traeth Bach is the latter and Traeth Mawr the former. As everybody knows, some two thousand acres were won from Traeth Mawr, a-century-and-a-quarter ago, by the enterprise of Mr. A.W. Madocks, who, commencing in the year 1800, made a great embankment across the estuary. Here, on the west, he built the town Tremadoc. Then, later, he built Portmadoc Embankment, which took three years to construct, and was then partly destroyed by a storm. Altogether, something like ten thousand acres were reclaimed from the sea's grip, and a good harbour was constructed. So today there lies this busy little town, Portmadoc, in its interesting port, dealing mainly in slate; a very central sort of place from which the railway will carry the tourist west into the Lleyn peninsula or south into Ardudwy, or north up to Snowdon and Carnarvon, or north-east up to Blaenau Festiniog, whence the traveller may go to Llandudno, or Bala direct. The chief feature of Portmadoc, the one that dominates the view from Criccieth, or from the other side, is the big hill Moel-y-Gest. Although only 800 feet high, from many directions it looks like a great mountain, say Hebog. From Portmadoc streets, climbs a mile-long road. There are walks along the top, and at the foot on the harbour side stands one of the sweetest of little seaside places, Borth-y-Gest. The great hill shelters this lovable spot; winds from the south warm it; its picturesqueness endears it to everyone who visits it. There are the most delightful sands and seas, with quite charming walks across the dunes and fields down to the black rocks of Criccieth. Prophets predict much growth for this happy place, and some have said that round at Morfa Buchan [*sic*] will someday be a town as large as Llandudno. Others there are who hope not - yet it is a highly attractive district as well as being so very convenient for getting to other places.

From Portmadoc there are many fine walks, for example, that to the lake from which the town gets its water supply; There is also good fishing, and excellent golf may be had on an eighteen-hole course at Borth-y-Gest. The chief charm of Portmadoc for visitors, however, lies in the fact that it acts as a gateway to the valley of the Dwyryd and the Glaslyn; to Festiniog on the one side and Beddgelert on the other; to the Manods and Moelwyns on the right, and to Hebog and Snowdon on the left.

The year 1923 saw the opening of the Welsh Highland narrow gauge line up the Glaslyn Valley to Snowdon. The little railway starts at the same station as the Festiniog line, some two or three minutes' walk from Portmadoc G.W.R. Station. While the journey through Nantmoor [*sic*] and Beddgelert to South Snowdon is not so exciting as that up the Festiniog line, it is remarkable enough, and it affords an easy opportunity of seeing the world-famed pass and bridge of Aberglaslyn. On the left the line passes Moel Ddu, Moel Hebog, over Beddgelert; Moel Lefain; and Y Garn to the left of Snowdon Station. On the right hand side of the line the Moelwyns lie between us and the vale of Festiniog; Yr Aran runs up steeply on the other side of Beddgelert; and then at Snowdon Station the summit of the highest Welsh mountain

seems close by, though to reach it means a walk of two miles or more.

The Welsh Highland Railway is an easy means of getting to Snowdon's top and back again. Of course one must remember that Snowdon's head is often clouded. It has been said that up at Snowdon Station there is, in a year, nine months winter and three months bad weather; but this is, to say the least, an exaggeration. In the up and the down journey the trains are so timed as to give a long halt at Beddgelert. Indeed one may reach there at 9.30 a.m. and leave for Portmadoc about 5 p.m., thus having no less than seven hours to spend in and around entrancing Beddgelert. None too long a period, for here three valleys meet - Nant Colwyn, the Gwynant Valley and the Pass of Pont Aberglaslyn. Each is a name to give a thrill to anyone who has been there. There is Craig Wen or Aran to be climbed, or Moel Hebog, with its view that Snowdon cannot surpass, for Hebog looks over Eifionydd – right over Criccieth, for instance - down to Cardigan Bay. There is no end to the delightful expeditions to be made from Beddgelert if the time be spared. If one is merely riding up to, or down from, South Snowdon station he will have only just time to get a glimpse of the village, of poor Gelert's grave.

Just past South Snowdon station on the farther side lies Llyn Cwellyn, where George Borrow met the Snowdon ranger and, as usual, asked endless questions. The guide told him that "people in general prefer ascending Snowdon from that trumpery place Beth Gelert; but those are fools - begging your honour's pardon." (But the man was prejudiced, he wanted people to ascend from his house.) Borrow, who went on in the direction now taken by the Welsh Highland railway, toward Beddgelert, writes, "After a little while I looked back. What a scene! The silver lake and the shadowy mountain over its southern side looking now, methought, very much like Gibraltar." He came to Rhyd-ddu, "the black gorge," where now is the Snowdon station, where he heard the voice of a preacher thundering at his people. Then, following the river or torrent, in three or four miles he came to Beddgelert. He tells the well-known legend of the faithful hound, which he finds singularly beautiful and affecting. Then he set off for Festiniog. "Truly," he says, "the valley of Gelert is a wondrous valley - rivalling for grandeur and beauty any vale either in the Alps or Pyrenees," and so he came to "Pont Aber Glas Lyn, or the bridge of the debouchment of the grey lake." He describes the stupendous range of rocks, the beautiful forest scenery, the wonderful conical hill.

To return, however, to the Welsh Highland Railway, it will readily be perceived how easy the ascent of Snowdon and other high mountains has been made by this little line and how passes and valleys that could until recently be visited only by the few are now quite accessible to tourists from any of the popular resorts from Pwlhelli [*sic*] to Barmouth. Much of the road that Borrow went over can be followed, and most of what he saw can be seen whilst enjoying all the comfort of a railway carriage and with the knowledge that dinner at the seaside hotel will not be missed by late arrival. With headquarters at Borth-y-Gest, or in Portmadoc, the holiday-maker may have long days on the sands, and, when he chooses, may readily, at very little expense, go into the heart of Snowdonia or the vale of Festiniog for a day full of pleasure and inspiration.

To talk, however, of Portmadoc, its business, the beauties of its position, and the marvellous highlands from which the rivers of its estuary come, and to say nothing of its culture would be grave omission. Eifion 'Wyn (Eliseus Williams) was born at Portmadoc in 1867. Mr. H. Idris Bell speaks thus of him: "In his work, and especially in Telynegion Maes a Mor (Lyrics of Field and Sea), the modern Welsh lyric is seen at its perfection. He stands in style between the old and the new schools, his lyrics are more carefully finished than those of Ceiriog and Talhaiarn . . . His Telynegion is one of the most popular books of poetry in the language and it deserves its popularity." Mr. A. P. Graves says, too, "His work is extremely popular." In Mr. Graves' book of translations, "Welsh Poetry, old and new," are given two lovely – specimens of Elysius Williams' work, whilst Mr. Idris Bell in "Poems from the Welsh" translates three. Eifion Wyn's lyrics should be read by the sea at Borth-y-Gest or in the mountains. Here is a single stanza from his "Ora Pro Nobis":

"The foam-flakes are whirling
Below on the strand,
As white as the Pages
I turn with my hand;
And the curlew afar
From his storm-troubled lair,
Laments with the cry
Of a soul in despair,
Out Father, forget not
Our mariners' state;
Their ships are so slender,
Thy seas are so great."

Footnote.

The WHR section of the Guide Book included two photographs. First, a view of the harbour at Portmadoc looking down towards the Britannia Bridge with Nant Gwynant, between Snowdon and Cnicht, visible in line with the bridge. The second is a photo of the road bridge over the Colwyn in Beddgelert, looking upstream.

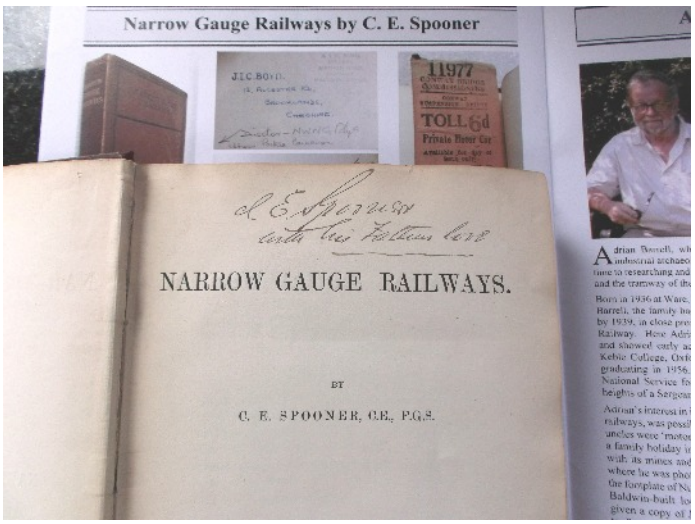
The quality of reproduction of these images mitigates against including them here - scanning block prints is notoriously difficult, but perhaps we might one day be able to rectify this omission.

A trawl through their website shows the Portmadoc Harbour photo to be by Frith. On their site it carries the reference number P93060 and when I first found this it was dated to c.1938 (in Frith's post-WW2 numbering system, references comprise a town indicator and a specific image number. Here, the town reference is P93 - Porthmadog - and the image number is 060). However, as the image appeared in this guide book we can see that this dating could not have been the case. Frith's have been advised of this discrepancy and their site has been duly updated. As the photo was taken in 1924, or, more probably, earlier than this it should have had a 5-digit reference number with the first two of these digits being 75 or lower. This original reference has apparently been 'lost'.

The Beddgelert image might also be by Frith, but it does not currently appear on their site. However, Frith are adding something like 1500 scanned images to their site each month and they still have a long way to go to present all of their historic images. Perhaps one day this image will appear and we can confirm this suspicion.

Letters to the Editor

I recently received two letters for publication, the first from Stuart Baker and the second from James Hewett (Co-Chairman of the Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway Society). I reproduce here both these letters, each addressing widely different subjects.



Dear Editor,

I was very interested to read Michael Chapman recounting a second hand book acquisition in Issue No. 83.

Many years ago there was an excellent railway bookshop selling mostly secondhand books on Harrow-on-the-Hill in Middlesex. The owner and his wife stocked some narrow gauge books but mostly concentrated on the standard gauge lines. As I lived locally I frequented the shop on a regular basis, purchasing a number of books over the years, and on one occasion noticed that they had a copy of Narrow Gauge Railways by Charles Easton Spooner.

A friend of mine had a rather tatty copy of this book which I had looked at many times and so I plucked up courage and purchased the copy they had on sale, if I recall correctly, for a sum of £20.00 - not an inconsiderable amount of money back in the early 1970s.

As can be seen from the enclosed photograph the frontispiece is inscribed by the author "C E Spooner with his fathers love" - presumably this copy being given by Charles Easton to his son Charles Edwin. It would be interesting to speculate if this book travelled with Charles Edwin during the time he was resident engineer on the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway and later during his career in Malaya.

As with many old books the spine had seen better days and so I had it professionally restored a few years ago, the cost of which was a multiple of the original purchase price, though very well worth it.

As with Michael I consider myself a temporary custodian of this book and trust that it will still be being read and enjoyed in another 150 years.

It would be very interesting to know how many other copies of this first definitive narrow gauge volume reside with members of the Welsh Highland and Festiniog Railway heritage groups.

Kind regards,

Stuart L. Baker

Mr Peter Liddell, Editor, Welsh Highland Heritage

Dear Sir,

Further to your comment in Issue No. 80, referring to "heritage-based experiences" – and Mr Booker's comment in his article that "the WHR needs a few more 'heritage themed scenes' or tableaux along the line". I would like to present some ideas – they are (relatively) inexpensive, will not create problems for ordinary services, and contain opportunities for volunteer and sponsorship input.

1. One of the glories (and of course eccentricities) of the WHR was its small halts, very few of which could ever have seen more than a handful of passengers. A small, inexpensive enhancement to the journey experience would be to re-erect the various lost station nameboards. These, from N to S, would comprise Bettws Garmon, Salem, Pitt's Head, Hafod Ruffydd, Hafod Garregog, Ynysferlas, Ynysfor and Portmadoc (New), both the original site south of the standard gauge and the later additional site to the north. Note that I am not suggesting that any train stops at any of these locations – most of the existing intermediate halts are very little used, let alone these – but the nameboards would give passengers something to look out for – most people being unclear as to the location of these halts. Yes, they were ephemeral – but such history is as important as the longer-lived artefacts.

In keeping with the search for authenticity, those in the old NWNGR section should probably have 3D lettering, while those south of Rhyd-Ddu should be painted – probably in the Art Deco WHR style with orange shadows.

Hafod Garregog's rail supports still survive for re-use – and lightweight rails would be ideal supports for all the WHR-section boards. Stretching a point a little (as, sadly, Croesor Junction is now lost), the point at which the new route deviates from the old coincides closely with the south end of the old Junction loop – so even this nameboard would be reasonably legitimate.

The hardest to place is the Portmadoc (New) north-platform area as so much has changed – but somewhere reasonably close to the original site, while still visible from RhE trains, would do. I believe that there is a facsimile of the original sign in the WHHR museum.

I imagine that it might be possible to get most of the boards sponsored, by people with a particular local interest.

The occasional (or one-off, when the boards are in place) special heritage service might be able to stop, briefly, at each original halt, to provide some of the atmosphere of a market day train in the 1920s.

2. On a related theme – travelling recently on the WHR, I noticed that the section south of Hafod-y-Llyn seems to be considered "the boring bit" – it's when the phones come out! This is a pity. I believe it is unfortunate that the only two "demonstration sidings" on the system have either been removed, as at Tryfan, or had their stock removed, as at Penrhyn: presumably, vandalism was the reason. But the smaller halts along the Traeth are pretty-well inaccessible – so one of these would seem to be ideal for a remembrance of the WHR's freight services, with a small siding, furnished with a slate or freight wagon or two (there must be some which are not feasible to repair for use). The siding would end at the main line, but not have a point (which omission would be invisible from the train). I would suggest that Ynysferlas or Ynysfor might be considered. Anything which adds interest on this part of the route will help.

3. The Welshpool and Llanfair run very popular mixed trains on special occasions. Included in the experience is shunting at each end of the line, as their wagons are not fitted: watching this process is very popular. Perhaps some future heritage train runs on the WHR could include something similar, with the added historical advantage of presenting a typical "pick-up goods". The WHHR has, or used to have, three NWHG/WHR replica wagons, which all have coach-type wheel-sets (and have already travelled up part of RhE).

4. Another enhancement to this southern section will be the (now much more likely) opening of the new Pen-y-Mount platform 3 as a regular request stop (none of the problems of the level crossing and the intermediate section are particularly hard to solve). The opportunity for the FR Company's passengers to see the museum at Gelert's Farm (and to access the Cambrian Line station) as an integral part of their experience would provide added value to the journey (and the Past, Present and Future Gala shows that revenue division can be equitably arranged). Also, WHHR passengers could be fed into the RhE system. It would be incumbent on WHHR to meet selected RhE trains – but that's only a few times each running day. And the experience of changing from a narrow-gauge main line onto a narrow gauge branch line would give passengers some idea of how it would have felt to change at Tryfan, if the branch had ever been re-opened to passengers under WHR auspices.

James Hewett

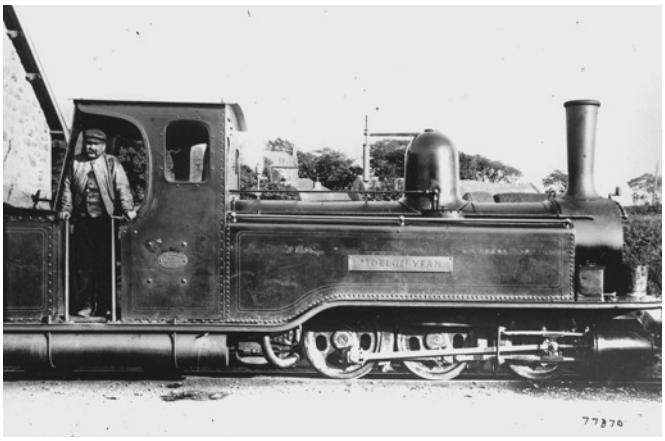
Continued from Page 12

We know that *Beddgelert* was withdrawn at, or by, the time *Russell* arrived on the NWNGR, thus we know that 5634 could have been no later than 1906, however, intuitively at least, this could well be another 1902/3 image.

A more detailed analysis of progressive changes to *Moel Tryfan* may well help to clarify these speculative dates - watch this space!

LPC 5643 - *Beddgelert* with, beyond, *Snowdon Ranger* at Dinas.

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis



Above left - LPC 5631
Above - LPC 5632
Below left - LPC 5633

Three photographs to consider this time. All are by the Locomotive Publishing Company and LPC have applied serial reference numbers - LPC 5631 to 5633. 5631 and 2 show *Moel Tryfan* at Snowdon and Dinas respectively whereas 5633 shows *Snowdon Ranger*, also at Dinas.

5631, which became 77871 in Real's photograph lists, offers a number of dating clues. One of the 1893 carriages, Ashbury 'Corridor' no. 10, can be seen in the train. A detailed examination of the locomotive shows it still carried its original Vulcan Foundry maker's plates, so we know it was yet to be re-boilered by Davies and Metcalfe. The station building had been extended northwards to cover the gap where the ground frame was located. Assembling these factors establishes a date range of 1896 (the earliest date we can suggest for the building extension) to 1903 (the date this locomotive received its new boiler).

5632 which, like 5631, was allocated a Real Photographs reference number (77870) but offers limited dating information, other than the more clear evidence that the locomotive still carried its original boiler as this time, besides the maker's plates, we can see that the whistle was still mounted on the top of the firebox. Apropos the visible maker's plate, it is perhaps significant that this carries the number '739' which, according to Vulcan's records, was the number supposedly allocated to *Snowdon Ranger*.

Careful examination of the plate in the maker's photo of *Snowdon Ranger* confirms the number 739 and also shows the 9 to have been 'high' compared to the other two digits. This same 'glitch' is visible in LPC 5632 - when that photo was taken we definitely see SR's plate.

Finally, LPC 5633 clearly shows *Snowdon Ranger* after it was fitted with its new boiler. Note the position of the whistle and the updated Davies and Metcalfe plates on the side of the cab. *Snowdon Ranger* was re-boilered in 1902, so barring any other information we can say no more than the date of this image must be after the 1902 boiler was fitted.

However, is it likely that a consecutive series of three image references indicates that the images themselves were consecutive? We do know this to be the case with other photographic companies, for example Frith (at least up to the end of WW2), Topical Press Agency, and, interestingly, elsewhere in the LPC catalogue.

If the three images are indeed contemporary, and it is an 'if', it follows that our dating window would be dramatically tightened - all three images, we would have to conclude, were taken after *Snowdon Ranger* was re-boilered but before the same exercise was carried out on *Moel Tryfan*. That is to say all would date, depending on precisely when the locomotives received new boilers, to an approximately twelve month period covering the latter part of 1902 and the early part of 1903.

There is a fourth photo of interest here, LPC 5643, which shows the Hunslet locomotive *Beddgelert* with, seen beyond, a tantalising glimpse of *Snowdon Ranger* looking very much as it was in 5633.

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