WELSH HIGHLAND HERITAGE

£3.00

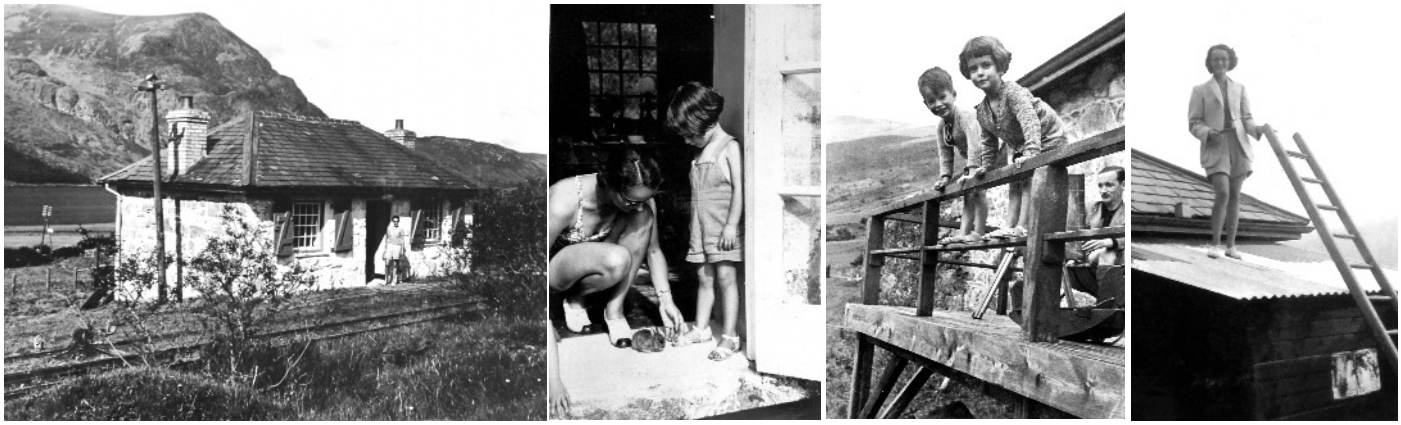
Issue No. 92

September 2021

ISSN 1462-1371

Web : www.welshhighlandheritage.co.uk

Carefree Days at Snowdon Ranger.



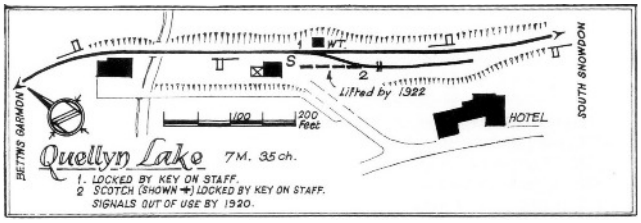
Left - Adelaide Swann at the entrance to the station building. Left Centre - Adelaide, Bridgid and a small visitor at the balcony door to the rear of the building. Right Centre - Bridgid and Julian, with a family friend, enjoy the view from the rear balcony. Right - Adelaide on the lean-to roof at the north end of the building.

Opportunities to listen to reminiscences of holidays in North Wales in the 1930s diminish with the passing of the years but very recently I met Bridgid Dunn, whose parents once owned the Snowdon Ranger (Quellyn Lake) station building.

Earlier this year, in a letter to Richard Watson, the membership secretary of the WHR Society, Bridgid, described how her:

"…holidays were spent at Cwellyn. My parents acquired Cwellyn Lake Station (sic - to the railway this was Quellyn Lake Station)…when they spotted it crumbling away in 1930s. It was close to the Youth Hostel. They repaired it and it was our holiday home until they sold it in the 1970s. It was bought eventually and made into a self-catering holiday cottage. I was very touched a few years ago to see that it is now Grade 2 listed….There were a few trains still running and a driver became a friend of theirs. My father was repairing the cottage roof and had to get his ladder out of way if a train came through. I have several photos. I loved my holidays there with Snowdon up behind us. We could see the little trains puffing to the top (in fine weather)! It never had mains water or power. We used oil for cooking and light and a coal fire. The toilet was in the shed attached at the side with an Elsan. I was sad when the modern bungalow was built nearby as it spoils the view of the 'Elephant' mountain across the lake in the evenings…. I have many photos, most of them in an album created by my parents. If you know of anyone visiting this area, I would be delighted to show them and they could copy any of interest."

With the benefit of the good communications between the Society and the Group, I was able to contact Bridgid and arranged a visit to the village in West Sussex where she now lives.



Bridgid's parents, Geoffrey and Adelaide Swann, spotted the disused Snowdon Ranger station building on a visit to Snowdonia in 1933 and managed to arrange to rent it for £10 a year, about £725 in today's money. Geoffrey was a solicitor and a partner in Sproston, Slaney and Swann of Newcastle-under-Lyme. As described later, Geoffrey had a keen legal eye for a property bargain. Bridgid and her twin brother Julian were born in 1936 and the family photographs that accompany this article were taken in 1939, just before the outbreak of the Second World War. The spelling of her name reflects her mother's Irish origins. On leaving school, Bridgid was articled to her father's practice but moved to London when she qualified in 1960. She married in 1961 living in Chelsea and later Storrington and Amberley in Sussex. Julian became a patent lawyer and now lives in Ottawa.

Bridgid describes the 'cottage' as fairly basic with just two rooms, one that had been the ticket office. Anyone who has been in the station building at Tryfan Junction will be familiar with the layout. There was a bed and a bunk bed arrangement, a marble top table, cooking as mentioned previously was by a paraffin fired stove with oil lamps for lighting and a coal fire in the fireplace in the waiting room area. A local builder created the arrangement, shown in the photographs, of French windows in the back wall that opened onto a wooden balcony overlooking the lake.

At holiday time and on arrival at Snowdon Ranger from Staffordshire in the family car, a Singer 9 carrying two adults and the two children and a lot of provisions, a key task was dig holes for the disposal of the rubbish and the daily Elsan results! Bridgid remembers a lot of tinned food being eaten, there being no refrigerator. Water was acquired from a spring just by the stone-built water tower. All water had to be boiled for drinking or cooking.

The family cats used to go on holiday as well. Bridgid has a good story of being a asleep on the mattress on the floor late one evening, only to be woken up by the cat chasing a bat around and jumping over her head. One cat got lost on a trip around Swallow Falls at Betws-y-coed but later turned up unscathed. Sheep and rain are of course ubiquitous in Snowdonia. One year, Julian got his wool socks wet and a lamb that had lost its mother took to following him around, wrapping itself around his ankles, attracted by the smell of wet wool. A baby rabbit also invited itself into the cottage as one can see in the photograph. Bridgid remembers the occasional train and a locomotive with a tall chimney, possibly the Baldwin, collecting rolling stock. The family used to walk up to Glan yr Afon Bridge but never over as it was regarded as unsafe. Close to Snowdon Ranger was the farm with a water mill. Once the track was taken up in 1941 there were lots of walks and strolls along the track bed and down to Llyn Cwellyn with the very occasional bathe, the water being extremely cold and uninviting. Despite petrol rationing in the war, trips were made to Wales perhaps twice a year.

The family continued to use Snowdon Ranger in the years that followed even inviting the occasional guest if they were prepared to 'rough it'. In 1939 the Youth Hostel Association acquired the nearby 'Snowdon Ranger' Hotel, so when a 'top notch' London lawyer came to stay one year, he was sent off to the hostel, to stumble down the path clutching his potty. A nocturnal visit to the Elsan in the corrugated iron 'lean to' risked tripping over sleeping sheep or placing one's foot in something worse or even a stubbed toe.

In 1948, Geoffrey Swann decided to stop paying the £10 annual rent, as he was not certain that the person he was paying it to, Aubrey Thomas the liquidator, was entitled to collect it. Seventeen years later, in August 1965, he offered to buy the property for £350, with the proviso that if his offer to buy was refused, he would claim possessory title. This would seem to have happened as Bridgid smilingly told me that the family had 'acquired' rather than bought Snowdon Ranger.

By the 1970s Bridgid's parents had retired to West Sussex so the combination of the long journeys to North Wales, threats of the Welsh Nationalist movement and the fact that Julian was living and working in Canada, led the family to take the decision to sell Snowdon Ranger. Thus ended, some 40 years of family ownership. The building has now been substantially modernised by the new owners who let it out as holiday cottage with all 'mod cons'. Unfortunately, there is a 'no pets' rule so bat chasing cats should be left at home. The building was Grade 2 listed by Cadw in 1999 as a:

Former railway station. Roughly coursed rubblestone; hipped slate roof with internal yellow brick stack to right slope. Track side has recessed 16-pane fixed light windows with slate cills to left and right of central 4-panel door.

Surprisingly, the planning authorities allowed a modern bungalow to be built immediately in front of the station building, thus obscuring the hitherto uninterrupted views of Quellyn Lake.

On retirement from legal practice, Bridgid became a guide at nearby Goodwood House and, as her friend Christine told me when I visited, knew more about it than the owner, Lord March. In 2012, she and Bridgid rode on the 'new' Welsh Highland and were able to visit the old holiday home.



Arch 3646 - Nick Booker - May 1964.

Finally, when I showed Bridgid and Christine, the photograph I took in 1964 on an early WHR Society visit, they both concluded that the lady looking at the camera was Adelaide, Bridgid's mother, so a neat end to my visit.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Bridgid and her friend Christine for giving me their time.

Photographs:

All family photographs are from the Dunn family album.

Others as per the credit in the caption

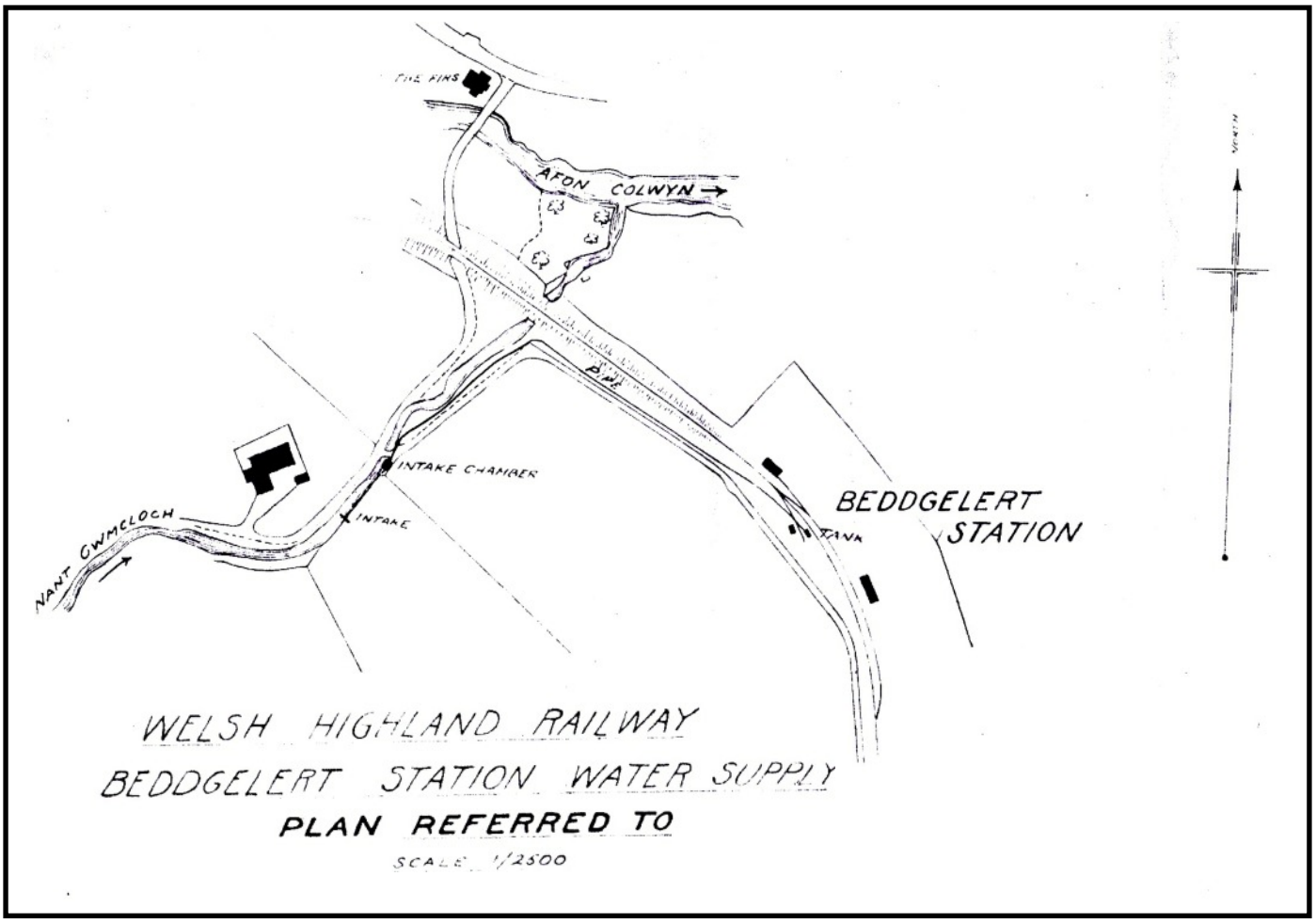
The Snowdon Ranger /Quellyn Lake track plan is from Boyd's *Narrow Gauge Railways in South Caernarvonshire* – Volume 1 – drawing by J M Lloyd

Thanks to Richard Watson for passing on Bridgid's letter to Peter Liddell

I consulted Peter Johnson's book *Rebuilding the Welsh Highland Railway* (Pen & Sword 2018) to confirm the dates on the acquisition of the station building.

Nick Booker

Beddgelert Water



Following on from the article on Hydraulic Rams in *WHH* 90, from which the above working plan has been reproduced (and cleaned up), Richard Maund has resurrected the following comprehensive analysis of the issues and wrangles surrounding the provision of adequate water supplies to Beddgelert Station and, as an aside, to the Goat Hotel. As he notes, an abridged version of this article appeared in *WHH* 47 - in light of the notes in *WHH* 90, reproduction of his work in full seems appropriate here.

The significant player in this saga is the Cwm Cloch Estate which sits astride the Cwm Cloch river, of which the Estate's owners hold the riparian rights; the railway crosses this stream three times on the northward exit from Beddgelert. At the time the WHR was built, the estate was owned by Edward Yates Walsh, steel founder, of Eccles, and James William Haworth, engineer, of Rhyl. The latter died on 11 February 1926 and his interest then passed to Alexander Sharples, ASAA, described both as tax inspector and incorporated accountant (presumably "moonlighting" when not tax inspecting!), of Chorlton cum Hardy; he moved to Corstorphine in 1934 and to Benton (Newcastle) in 1937 [amplifies *WHH* 18/8]. At the outset, Mr Walsh was the prime correspondent but latterly Mr Sharples took up the cudgels. The Estate was sold in summer 1944 to W Twiston-Davies of Somerset, who moved to Beddgelert.

At the end of January 1927, Stephens reached an agreement with the absentee landowners to resolve outstanding issues but, before money could change hands and the paperwork be signed, the line was taken into receivership on 4 March and the payments were stopped. And so began 20 years of correspondence from the Cwm Cloch owners pleading, cajoling, threatening to cut off water supply, even threatening to eject railway for wrongful occupancy of land to which it had no title.... At *WHH* 14/8, 16/6 and 17/8 have been reproduced a very few of the blizzard of letters that passed, the issues still unresolved when Mr Twiston-Davies wrote to the liquidator on 3 December 1947 (*WHH* 25/8).

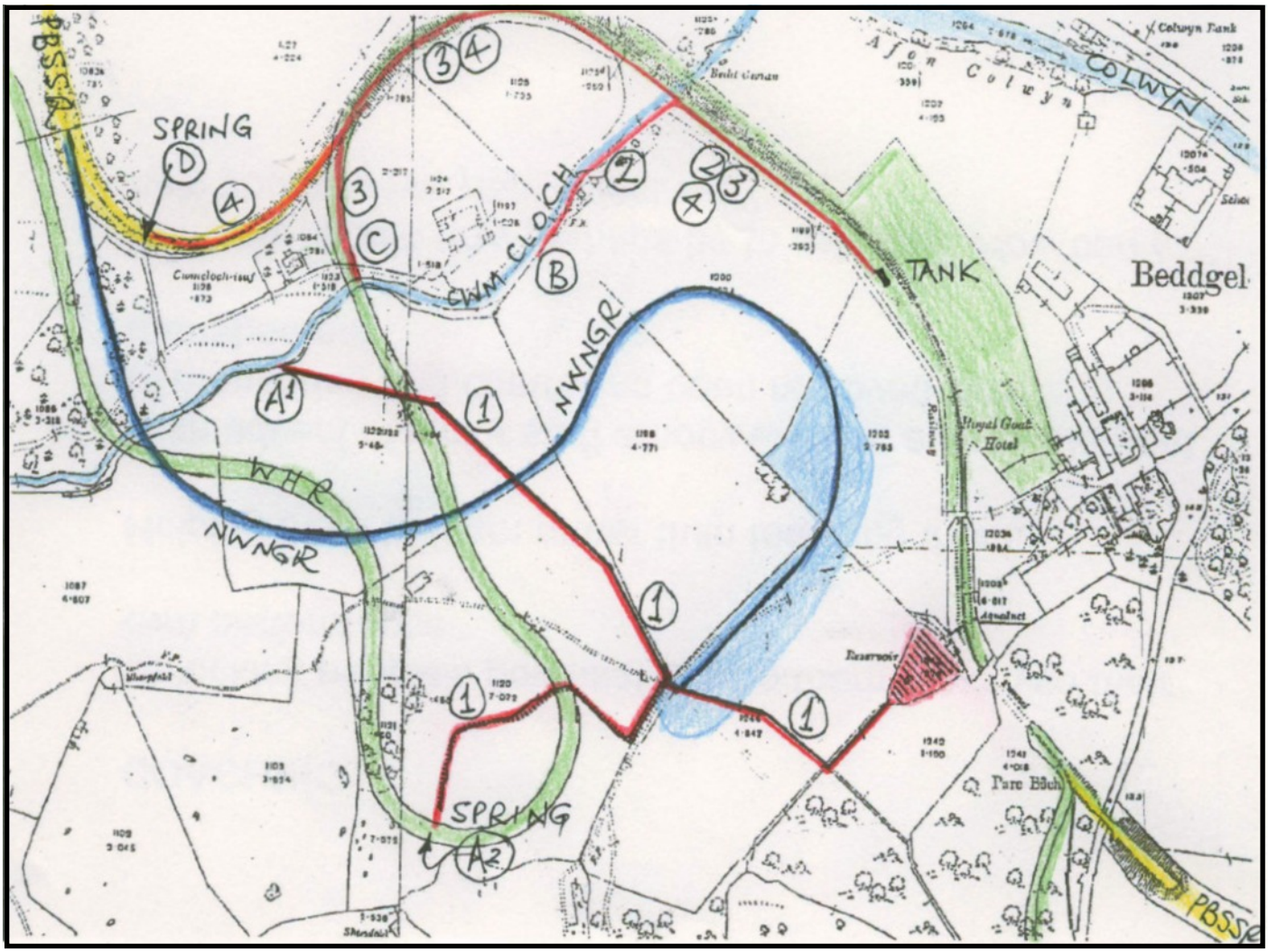
There were three elements to the on-going dispute:

(i) land issues;

(ii) water supply for Goat Hotel;

(iii) water supply for railway.

These were set out in the letter from E Y Walsh reproduced in *WHH* 14/8 [note: (i) is represented by his 1st and 3rd points; (ii) and (iii) are both in his 2nd point]. All the elements got bound up together, although it is only



Nomenclature:

A1 - Hotel inlet from Afon Cwm Cloch (Pipe 1)

A2 - Hotel source from spring on WHR (Pipe 1)

B - First WHR inlet from Afon Cwm Cloch (Pipe 2)

C - Second WHR inlet from Afon Cwm Cloch (Pipe 3)

D - Spring Source for WHR (Pipe 4)

PBSSR Alignment

NWNGR Beddgelert Extension - Alignment and Station Area

WHR Alignment and Station Area

Water Courses.

the railway's water supply – which the landowners sought to use as a lever to resolve the others – which concerns us here.

The land issue need not detain us long (although the archive makes tedious reading). The owners had agreed to sell land for Beddgelert station and the line, but were left with "islands" of (allegedly) useless land inside the WHR's looping course for which Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons, the contractors (responsible for obtaining and paying for wayleaves, etc. under the contract), would not meet the landowners' price of £600; the counter offer of £125 was not taken up. Although McAlpine paid for the main area of land taken, a further sum was allegedly outstanding from them, while the necessary Conveyance for the whole (drafted by Evan R Davies' firm) was never signed, despite – again allegedly – Davies' firm endeavouring to dissuade McAlpine from paying before signature of the land transfer. McAlpine declined to pay anything further because by then they held the Final Certificate issued on 15 August 1924 by Sir Douglas Fox & Partners (the engineers), signifying completion of WHR contract. If McAlpine did walk away with £125, it was small beer against the £10,000 they lost on the contract, but it caused untold grief to the other parties! Another issue was access to parts of Cwm Cloch land by the WHR looping around to gain height (the item in *WHH* 16/6 has a bearing on this aspect).

The Goat Hotel water supply pre-dated the WHR – for its PB&SSR origins see *WHH* 29/4 – and ran by ditches from the Cwm Cloch as shown on the attached sketch plan (source A1, course 1). McAlpine were supposed to have laid down an 8" pipe along the route, but only did so where the railway crossed. The landowners claimed they were losing the £20 a year fee from the Goat in consequence of

no supply but as Inspector G Lewis Griffith of the FR & WHR "Way and Works Department" reported to Stephens on 22 March 1926 – on the strength of information obtained from a Goat hotel employee – the landowner had allegedly "sent a man to block up the water", as mentioned at *WHH* 16/6. In a further report dated 6 April 1926 (reproduced in *WHH* 16/7), Lewis confirmed the supply was functioning – at least so far as the portion under the railway was concerned. After much buck-passing the issue seemed to drop from the correspondence. The "supplementary feed" (source A2) – mentioned in the plan at *WHH* 29/5 – was actually from a spring on WHR land which came to notice again in 1928 when the WHR were looking for an alternative source: they considered this but (sensibly) decided against using it lest they be accused of filching the Goat's supply. It needs to be emphasised that neither of the Goat's sources had any bearing on the supply to the station.

And so to the railway's water supply.

The original supply to the station tank (*WHH* 29/1) was quite definitely *not* from the mains supply (as had been speculated at *WHH* 7/5 and 8/7) but was taken from the river as shown on the sketch plan as B, between Phase 4 under bridges 164 and 166, was piped (course 2) on Cwm Cloch land until it hit the railway curtilage and then along the track to the water tank. The WHR had been paying annually, in advance, for water rights (even though that agreement, too, had never been signed) and endeavoured to pay for period from 1 July 1927. But Walsh and Haworth refused to accept the money without the land issue also being resolved – and they wanted the pipe work off their land sharpish! To this Stephens responded by (as he described it) "...making temporary arrangements for a water supply between stations, from one of the streams over which the line crosses...". On 27 June he wrote to D G Jones (the County Clerk) that he had "... made temporary arrangements to take water near Beddgelert without troubling Messrs Walsh & Haworth. Therefore if the water is cut off there is no necessity for traffic on the line to cease (as Messrs Walsh & Haworth appear to think).", which Jones duly relayed to Walsh. It's not immediately clear whether these "temporary" arrangements involved watering locos at a bridge and whether they involved greater use of the supply at Nantmor.

The WHR anyway set about obtaining another source for the Beddgelert tank and it appears that this came into use at 3pm on 11 August (the very day the Nantmor supply was suddenly cut off – see below). On 28 September Inspector Griffith confirmed that they were still taking water – by pipeline – for the railway from further up the Cwm Cloch – but now from within the railway's boundary, erroneously believing this circumvented the riparian rights of the Estate. This must have been from beneath a bridge – presumably Phase 4 UB 164, middle Cwm Cloch river bridge (source C, course 3) – and Griffith later confirmed that the original source's pipe work had been removed from the Estate land.

A year later, on 8 October 1928, Daniel O Jones – the WHR's factotum [sorry – "Agent"!] at Dinas – reported to Stephens that they were still using the source in the Cwm Cloch – but that he had just found the spring on WHR land which was serving the Goat Hotel. As mentioned above, he had left that be and instead bored a hole on the abandoned PB&SSR right of way. This Stephens duly reported on 9 November to D G Jones: "...we have now taken the pipes from the Cwm Cloch River and had them carried to a stream *[he means spring]* in the cutting of the abandoned line of the old Portmadoc, Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway nearby." (source D, course 4).

Eventually, in summer 1929, Walsh found out about the *previous* source, alleging – correctly – that in 1927 Stephens had merely *moved* the water out-take further up the Cwm Cloch which was thus still infringing their riparian rights. However, Stephens was able to demonstrate their current water supply source was the spring in the PB&SSR cutting, not the river, stating it had taken effect some time previously (presumably the previous October). This remained the source of the Beddgelert station tank's water until the line closed.

Incidentally, after the railway closed, the landowners added a new "complaint": that their tenants' sheep were dying after falling into the abandoned cuttings for the lack of maintenance of the fences – as in the letter of 20 September 1941 (it was not the first such!) reproduced in *WHH* 17/8.

As an aside, in the midst of the 1927 ruckus with Walsh & co. at Beddgelert, the water supply at Nantmor (a source omitted from the list of tanks in *WHH* 7/4) suddenly became an issue. Stephens described this as "...a temporary water supply... left in by the contractors." On 11 August, the adjacent tenant farmer, Owen C Owen, had "suddenly" cut off the Nantmor supply. Fortuitously, that very afternoon the WHR had got their second source at Beddgelert functioning. The matter at Nantmor was resolved (although the file does not disclose how) – but with a comment from Stephens to D G Jones: "As far as I can see there appears to have been a certain amount of lack of tact on both sides *[this may be implied criticism of Robert Evans who was involved in resolving the issue – but of course it might equally be of some other WHR/FR employee who had caused the original flare-up]*. I have put my side right, but I am afraid I cannot do much with Mr O C Owen as I have no influence with him. Unofficially for your private information, we do not want his water very much now."

Gwynedd Archives papers XC2/33/9, /54, /55, /56 and /57 have been consulted. These are more extensive than the National Library of Wales papers of T. D. Jones, London (Solicitors), under reference /2 and title: Welsh Highland Railway, which also touch on this on-going dispute.

Richard Maund

Paul Sandby's Paintings





Chris Padley writes:

Traeth Mawr in the Road to Caernarvon from Festiniog

By

Paul Sandby,

Accepting that the painting's title is literally correct and refers to Ffestiniog rather than Blaenau Ffestiniog, a 'natural' route through Maentwrog, Rhyd and Garreg to what was then the eastern shore of the Glaslyn Estuary is perhaps suggested. If the viewpoint from which this image was made lay somewhere along this route we might deduce, allowing for artistic exaggeration, that we are looking towards Moel Ddu past Garreghylldrem with Prenteg on the far shore below the right-hand branches of the prominent tree.

Copyright - courtesy of Sotheby's

Pont-Aber-Glasllin

By

Paul Sandby,

In comparison with the first image, the subject matter here is more immediately recognisable. This is hardly surprising as the building of The Cob would have had little impact this far upstream. It is interesting to compare the nature of the track to the bottom left with the road that approaches Pont Aberglaslyn from the south today!

That Sandby painted this view seems to indicate, if proof were needed, just which route *The Road to Caernarvon from Festiniog* followed. Taking the obvious route onward from the location of the upper image it seems inevitable that he would have come across this view.

Copyright - courtesy of Sotheby's

The work of William Maddocks in building the Cob and draining the Traeth Mawr are well known. Without those great works there would have been no land for the Croesor tramway and later Welsh Highland Railway to run nor a port of Portmadoc (Porthmadog) for them to run to. These changes took place long before photography and there are very few paintings or drawings of the area from the pre-Cob era.

It was therefore pleasing to read a press release from the National Museum of Wales this April that it has just completed the purchase of a series of water colours painted by Paul Sandby, during a tour of North Wales with his patron Sir William Watkins Wynn. This tour is believed to be the first journey of its kind undertaken by a professional artist.

In 1776, Paul Sandby published a series of etchings of aquatints of views taken on this trip, but the original water colour paintings which formed the basis for these remained unknown for over 200 years until they were discovered in the 1990s in the library of the Earls of Home. Two years ago, the Home estate decided to sell them. The National Museum was able to buy them with the help of grants from the Arts Fund and others. The two paintings illustrated here are titled *Traeth Mawr in the Road to Caernarvon from Festiniog*, and *Pont-Aber-Glasllin*. The former is a view taken from the southeast shore of the Traeth and I feel gives a wonderful idea of how it would have appeared before any reclamation had taken place, especially looking out towards the sea. The latter offers a view past and beyond the bridge, looking upstream towards Beddgelert.

The National Museum of Wales intends to hold a series of displays of the paintings in North Wales as soon as the Covid situation allows. Good images of these and six others of the 21 can be viewed online, together with more of their history on the Art Fund website at:

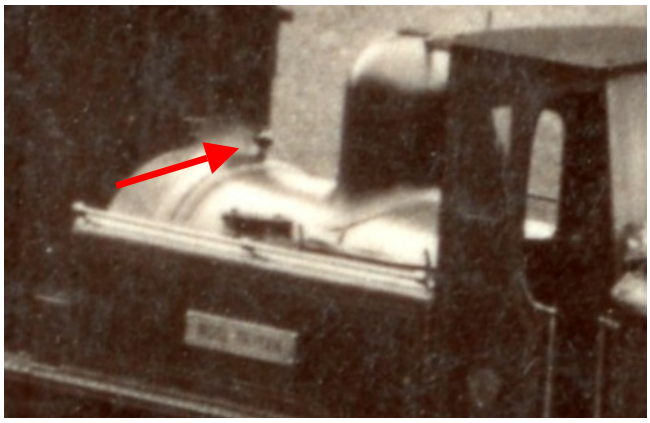
https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/13968/21-views-of-north-wales

Or, for those troubled by keyboard stress injuries:

https://tinyurl.com/yzd4h9kh

NWNGR Fairlies (Part 3)

I ended my notes last time (*WHH* 91) looking at photograph Arch 3320, commenting on the various dating clues, and dating lessons, that could be drawn from the image showing *Moel Tryfan* with a long train at Plas-y-nant heading for Dinas. Before continuing, I will highlight one particular feature - the displacement-type steam-pipe lubricator fitted at the base of the chimney, noting that it was still there when the cab plates were refitted to the locomotive.



A detailed enlargement taken from Arch 3320 (Valentine's 24343.JV)

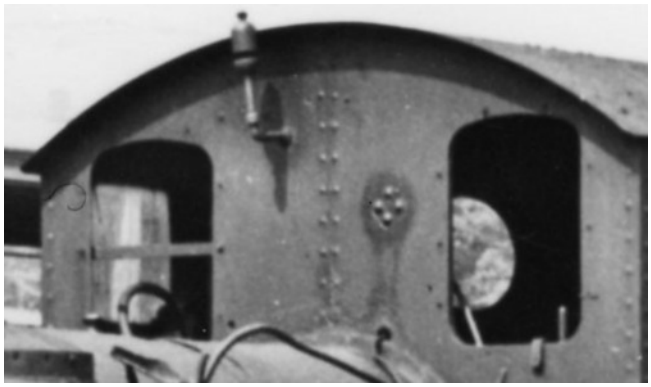
We know that at some stage this type of lubricator was replaced with a sight-glass unit - this change was peculiar to *Moel Tryfan* as *Snowdon Ranger* appears throughout to have carried a lubricator visually similar to *MT*'s later sight-glass unit. Over the period before *Moel Tryfan* received this change, were it visible the early lubricator on *MT* was another differentiator between the two locomotives.



A detail from WHR66, a Francis Bedford image published under the Catherall and Pritchard reference C & P 2754 - see Photo Analysis on page 12 for more detailed discussion.

The 'sight-glass' in that type of lubricator was mounted inside the cab front-sheet along with the control to regulate the flow of oil. This installation was held in place by a distinct group of bolts visible, if the viewing angles allow, from outside the locomotive. It follows that if one cannot see the installation to the rear of the chimney the type of lubricator can still be determined if the left-hand side of the cab front is visible.

J. Valentine records indicate, with reasonable confidence, a date of 1896 for Arch 3320. In WHR66 we have a photograph broadly contemporary with the Valentine image. Examination



The distinctive group of four bolts mounting the lubricator sight-glass (detail from WHR 8) J.E. Simpson - 1935

of the image suggests that the displacement lubricator had been replaced by the later sight-glass version, confirming that WHR66 was taken after Arch 3320. In our best judgement, WHR66 dates to no earlier than the early part of 1897. The lubricator evidence would appear to confirm an 1897 date for WHR66 and point to the actual lubricator change having been made over the winter of 1896/7.

Due to the different orientation of the locomotive in both images, coupled with their quality, direct comparisons are difficult. However, note that this image shows that the locomotive was still fitted with its original-pattern of smoke box door. Through its life, *Moel Tryfan* was fitted with three distinctly different patterns of smoke box door and these will be described in more detail later as we attempt to identify the times, if not the actual dates, that these changes were made.



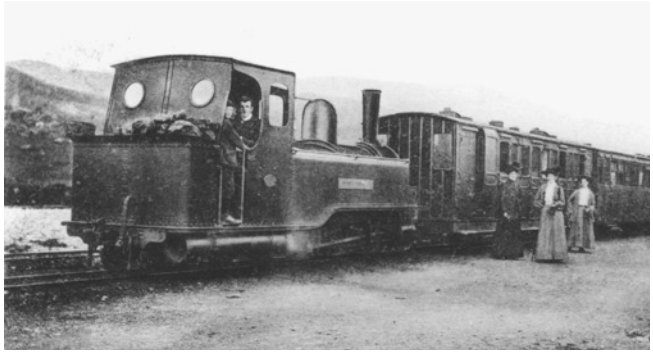
Moel Tryfan at Snowdon Station - WHHG27 (Arch 296)

In the next photograph (WHHG27) we see the locomotive fitted with the later type of lubricator, telling us that this photograph was taken after the Plas-y-nant image.

It would seem, therefore, that this photograph of *Moel Tryfan* was probably taken no earlier than 1897. In Part 2 of these notes, we suggested that the likely date for another *Moel Tryfan* photo, Arch 3710, was late-1894 and in that photograph we see both the original steam-pipe lubricator but also a large patch over the lower smoke-box and a 'temporary' extension to the height of the chimney. In the image shown here we see not just the new type of lubricator but also

evidence that both the chimney and smoke-box were new. This might suggest that the change of lubricator possibly accompanied the change of smoke-box and chimney.

However, comparing WHHG27 and Arch 3320 with the earlier Arch 3710, we see that both show evidence of an overall repaint of the locomotive with the lining now a somewhat greater distance in from the tank and cab edges. As Arch 3320 shows the earlier type of lubricator, perhaps the lubricator change was not after all coincident with the repaint but occurred later. If true, this suggests an even later opening to the time window for WHHG27.



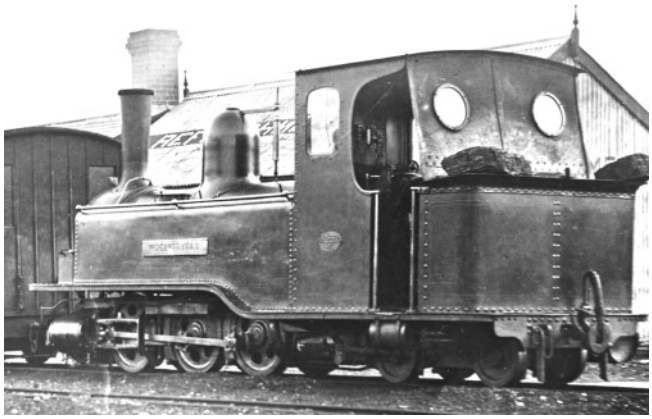
Moel Tryfan at Snowdon Station - Arch 3228 (Published as a tinted *Stylochrom* postcard by The Pictorial Stationery Co. of London - in their *Peacock* series - and printed "at the works in Berlin").

Arch 3228 is an image of, regrettably, iffy quality with evidence of retouching around the dome and the boiler top. However, the locomotive's identity is clear and it does appear to have been fitted with the later type of steam-pipe lubricator. The maker's plate indicates that this is the pre-reboilering period but it is not possible to determine the lining style applied to the locomotive. The second carriage in the train is Ashbury Corridor No. 10 after its conversion into a 1st/3rd composite, suggesting a date for the photograph in the second half of the 1890s.

However, that the image appeared as a *Peacock* Postcard is potentially significant. The Pictorial Stationery Company was not set up until 1897 and their *Peacock* brand and the tinted *Stylochrom* cards did not appear until the early years of the 20th century - probably ca. 1903 in particular for *Stylochrom*. If the photograph does show the locomotive before reboilering, recognising that the post card publishers had to get their image from somewhere, it seems not unreasonable that this image date could be as late as 1902 and is perhaps unlikely to date to any earlier than 1900 or 1901.

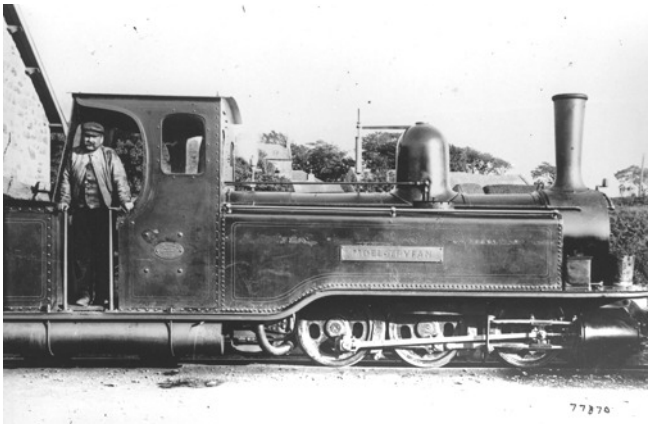
The next photograph, WHR 33, is one of an interesting set of three, of which more later. I show here an enlargement of that part of the original that showed the locomotive, clearly *Moel Tryfan*. The makers plates had been fitted and we can see the later type of lubricator installation behind the chimney. Additionally, if we look just inside the left-hand edge of the cab cut-out, we can see the sight-glass and lubricator control held in place by the four bolts noted earlier.

The maker's plate shows us that the locomotive had not yet been given its new boiler by Metcalfe, giving us a photograph date earlier than 1903. As with WHR 66, we can determine an earliest date noting that the station building had been extended and that Ashbury Corridor no 10 had been converted



Moel Tryfan at Snowdon Station - LPC 5631 (later REAL 77871) - WHR 33

to a composite carriage. I will return to actual date after looking at the next two images - WHR 21 and Arch 4828.



Moel Tryfan at Dinas Junction - LPC 5632 (later REAL 77870) - WHR 21

As to detailed configuration there are obvious parallels between WHR 33 and 21 - the locomotive carries original Vulcan maker's plates, it is fitted with the sight-glass lubricator (both the installation behind the chimney and the cab sheet mounting bolts can be seen in this view) and, although it is not so obvious in WHR 33, the lining applied to the locomotive is the same in both photographs.

However, this photograph offers us the first opportunity to take a close look at the maker's plate after it was re-applied to the locomotive.



An enlarged detail from WHR 33.

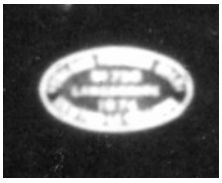
The plate is fully legible and, between references to "Vulcan Foundry Co. Ltd", "Lancashire" and "Newton le Willows" reads:

"No 739" and "1874"

The digit '9' has clearly been cast rather higher than the '7' and the '3'. The builders' number (the Vulcan Foundry Rotation Number) is registered to *Snowdon Ranger* in the

Vulcan Foundry production records. *Moel Tryfan* was recorded as No. 738.

In Part 1 of these notes (*WHH* 87) I showed a maker's photograph of Snowdon Ranger from which the following enlargement had been made:



Unfortunately, the original does not allow as legible an image as seen above on *Moel Tryfan*, but it is sufficiently legible to show the final digit of '739' raised relative to the other two.

It would seem that when the Railway decided to reinstall the plates after several years of operation without them they were inadvertently attached to the wrong locomotives!

Despite my belief that I had corrected an error in my original notes, I now realise that in *WHH* 87 I incorrectly stated that the date on No 739's plate was 1876. It was, of course, as shown on the previous page, 1874. According to Vulcan's records, so far as they were concerned, the locomotives were delivered in 1875.



Snowdon Ranger, newly re-boilered, at Dinas Junction - LPC 5633 (later Real 77872) - Arch 3765

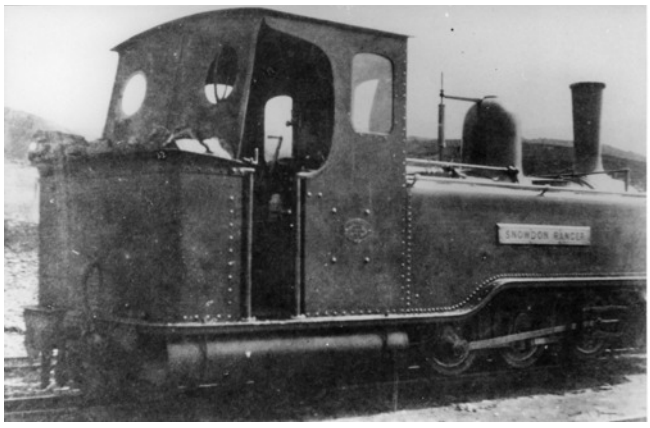
The third in my set of three, this photograph was recorded by the Locomotive Publishing Company as LPC 5633 and 'follows on' from my previous two, LPC 5631 and 5632.

In this image we see that the locomotive had returned from Davies and Metcalfe, most obviously the whistle has moved to a point high on the front cab sheet. We also see that the control rod to the original dome-mounted steam valve is no longer a feature of the locomotive.

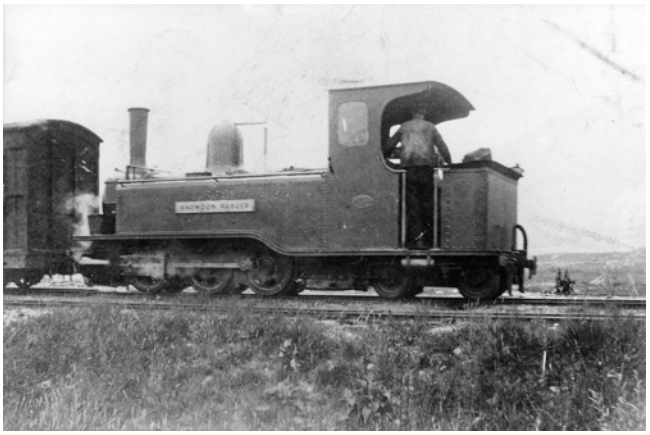
When finding three such consecutive reference numbers for photographs showing two different locomotives it is tempting to conclude that the images were broadly contemporary. However, the two *Moel Tryfan* photos show the locomotive before it was re-boilered at Davies and Metcalf whereas the photograph of *Snowdon Ranger* was taken after the rebuild.

This may sound unlikely, but as *Snowdon Ranger* was re-boilered one year before *Moel Tryfan*, this concurrence would be entirely feasible if all three photographs were taken in 1902, that is to say during the period after *Snowdon Ranger* was re-boilered but before *Moel Tryfan* underwent the similar process.

There might be little real justification for this, but currently I date all three of these photographs to 1902.



Snowdon Ranger with maker's plates fitted (the plate shows that the boiler was still original) and high-level sand box installation - Arch 3306



Snowdon Ranger, again with maker's plates, original boiler and high-level sand box installation, but this time without the rear cab sheet - Arch 3829

I will end this episode with two final pictures of *Snowdon Ranger*. Of the 23 images I have covered in the first three parts of this series, only eight, including this last pair, show *Snowdon Ranger*.

In most visible respects the locomotives in the two images look broadly identical. However, one apparent difference is discernible. It appears that the lining in the second image is somewhat further in from the edge of the surfaces than we see in the first. It will be hard to see that here, but the lining in Arch 3306 is just about discernible and the location of the lining relative to prominent bolt and rivet heads does appear to change between the two.

If this is correct and is not simply an optical illusion it would seem to follow that Arch 3829 was taken after 3306 as the lining detail in 3306 appears consistent with earlier images. When, or indeed whether, the locomotive was repainted in this period remains to be determined. Other than that, the best we might conclude is that both photographs are from the period 1896 to 1901.

In Part 2 of these notes (*WHH* 91, p 5), when describing the 'double-header' photograph WHR 98, I referred to analysis by Chris Jones that I suggested indicates the locomotive behind *Beddgelert* to be *Moel Tryfan*. In fact, his analysis, and subsequent discussions and verifications, indicate that this was, in fact, *Snowdon Ranger*. Hopefully this brief note will serve to set the record straight.

Continued from Page 12

work of others into his own catalogue. Notable amongst these 'others' was Francis Bedford. At the Luminous-Lint site (https://tinyurl.com/4udbtvud) we read:

With the success Frith found publishing and printing his own work, he took a risk and increased the scale of his operations to include the works of other contemporary photographers. These photographers were hired by Frith to make views of sites in England and abroad as part of what he termed the 'Universal Series'……. Frith also bought the negative stocks of established photographers such as Roger Fenton and Francis Bedford.

At the Monovisions website (https://tinyurl.com/4js4ty4j) we read:

To realise his ambition Francis Frith had to employ other photographers to take photographs to his specifications or to sell him photographs originally taken for other purposes. Francis Bedford, a highly regarded contemporary photographer, deposited two thousand of his negatives with the Francis Frith Company. Bedford was the only photographer to retain his name on the prints made for him by Frith and Company, with the exception of Roger Fenton who occasionally had work printed and published by Frith.

Frith have advised me that their L66230 is marked '2045' (in their later numbering system, L66 is a geographical identifier, in this case Llanberis, and the final 3 digits are simply a number applied serially to their images) . The NGA Location Index identifies 2045 as Bedford's Small Cabinet photograph *S.M.T. from below Chapel Station*, apparently confirming that Frith L66230 was, indeed, originally a Bedford photograph.

Let us now consider what these images tell us, or suggest to us, as the likely date of WHR 66. First the building extension. We see in WHR 66 that the building had been extended, but when was this work carried out? Frith photograph 37773 can, from its reference number, be reliably dated to 1896. We do not know when in 1896 so we have to look for additional clues. Examination of the image as shown on the Frith website (https://tinyurl.com/4xezzy62) suggests a misty day but with trees in full leaf and washing airing in the gap between the station building and the station master's cottage. There is no sign of any building work in that area. It would seem, therefore, that work did not start before early- to mid-1896.

We have in our collection copies of a Carl Norman postcard no. 7106. This is a very similar view to that seen in Frith 37773 and has been published in, for example, Wild Swan's *British Railway Journal*, Issue 37. The image appears to show a plume of steam just below the Snowdon summit and also that building extension work had commenced but was apparently at a very early stage.

The Snowdon Mountain Tramroad opened on Easter Monday (April 6th) 1896 but immediately closed after the locomotive leading the first train back down the mountain disengaged from the rack, derailed and was destroyed. This problem was resolved through the installation of safety rails either side of the rack. As these, like the rack, could only sensibly be installed progressively from the lower terminus, the railway reopened first as far as the Waterfall and then Hebron Station by late September 1896. It is to Hebron that the description *Chapel Station* applies - the station name derives from a chapel that stood nearby.

It was not until April 1897 that operations were extended as far as Clogwyn, finally reaching the summit by June 1897. If an image really does show a plume of steam at the summit of Snowdon it follows that its date would either be pre-Easter (April) 1896 or over the months running up to June 1897. On this basis, accepting the steam interpretation, C.N. & Co. 7106 seems unlikely to have been taken much earlier than April 1897 which in turn suggests that work on extending the South Snowdon station building did not start until about that time.

The Snowdon Mountain Tramroad photographs included above both show the modified Abt rack with the safety guards fitted either side. Comparing Frith L66230 and C & P 2735, in particular the position of the shadows, suggests that both were taken at almost the same time. The 'clean' nature of the ballast indicates operation early in the post-accident life of the railway. Judging by the small volume of steam being emitted by the locomotive it would seem that both show a descending train approaching the camera. Unfortunately, we cannot see the train beyond the locomotive so we cannot say whether this was a passenger or a works train.

A study of the Bedford Location Index appears to indicate, if the reference numbers were applied to the images in sequence, a photographic tour around North Wales that visited Criccieth, Llanberis, Beddgelert, Carnarvon, Bangor, Beaumaris and Llangollen. The main photograph above is catalogued at the end of the Beddgelert section, suggesting a trip 'up the hill' at the end of the photographer's visit to that location. As the following location was Carnarvon, this would not seem unsurprising. That the main photograph carries the C & P reference 2754 appears logical, especially as the suggested schedule is determined by placing ALL of the images in numerical order of reference.

From this we deduce that the Snowdon Station (Rhyd-ddu) photograph was probably taken at least a few days after the S.M.T. images.

As C & P 2754 shows that the station building extension was well and truly complete, it further follows that this was taken some time later than C.N. & Co. 7106 (the plume of steam photo). Should the plume of steam prove illusory, 7106 is still seen to have been taken later than Frith 37773 which we have dated to mid-1896 at the earliest.

Taking all these factors into consideration, it seems probable that the most likely date for WHR 66 (C & P 2754) would be the Spring or early Summer of 1897.

Reminder:

The 23rd Annual General Meeting of the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group will be held on **Saturday 11 Sept. 2021**, in the **Foden Suite at Statfold Barn Railway**, Ashby Rd., Tamworth, B79 0BU, commencing at 14.15 sharp.

On the day of the AGM, Statfold Barn Railway will be running their 'Road Rail & Ale' event, entrance to which requires payment of a gate fee **but WHR Heritage Group Members will be allowed to enter without charge on production of a valid Membership Card. Trains of various gauges will be running, and hospitality facilities will be available.**

Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis











Main Photo - C&P 2754 - *Beddgelert, Snowdon Station, NWNG* (WHR 66)

Above (Top) - Detail from Frith 37773 (1896)

Above - Detail from C.N. & Co, 7106

Far Left - C&P 2735 - *S.M.T. from below Chapel Station* (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru – The National Library of Wales)

Left - Detail from Frith L66230, their photo captioned *Llanberis, Snowdon Mountain Railway From Below Chapel Station*.

The locomotive in the main view (of Snowdon Station) above is discussed elsewhere in this Issue, but I felt it might be of interest to summarise the dating logic behind this image without excessively padding the Fairlies article.

Noting that the station carried the name Snowdon and that the station building had been extended northwards to meet the Station Master's cottage indicate an earliest possible date for the photograph. We also note that the photograph was taken after the loop line was installed. Similarly, the locomotive had not yet been re-boilered by Metcalf so we have a definite, if for our purposes still excessively wide, date window (1896/7 to 1903).

The photograph is usually credited to Francis Bedford but we have to remember that the titular head of the Bedford company had died in 1894 and had ceased active participation in the company a couple of years before that. The photo reference at the bottom of the image is C&P 2754. Catherall and Pritchard Ltd, were long-time publishers of Francis Bedford photographs and, as can be seen here, applied their own reference numbers to the images. This can be confusing as Bedford's own numbers and the references quoted in archive listings do vary. For example, if reference is made to the Francis Bedford Archive Collection at the National Gallery for Art (https://tinyurl.com/58jhjazk), following the link towards the bottom of the first page will lead to their Location Index wherein their holdings are listed.

If we look for the Snowdon Station photograph as an example, we find, under the location Beddgelert, the image entered twice, indicating that Bedford apparently applied numbers from within a range of size-based number sequences. As an 8x5 image it carries the number 1239 and as a Small Cabinet it is numbered 2064. However, as our print shows, it also carried the C&P number 2754.

I know it is dangerous to believe without question that publishers' number sequences necessarily bear any chronological significance but we do know that in some cases, e.g. the original numbering of the Francis Frith Collection, this was indeed the case. When investigating the date of WHR 66 we noted the close numerical coincidence between this one image and a series of Bedford photographs of the Snowdon Mountain Tramroad with very similar reference numbers.

To add a further confusion at this stage, various Francis Frith biographies note that he incorporated, in various ways, the

Continued on Page 11

Editor:	Peter Liddell	e-mail	peter.liddell@welshhighlandheritage.co.uk
Chairman:	Nick Booker	e-Mail	nick.booker@welshhighlandheritage.co.uk
		Address	Brook House, 4 Lawrence Gardens, KENILWORTH, CV8 2GH
Secretary:	Cedric Lodge	e-mail	cedric.lodge@welshhighlandheritage.co.uk
Membership Secretary:	Derek Lystor	e-mail	dick.lystor@welshhighlandheritage.co.uk