

Inside Motion

News and information for staff, volunteers and supporters of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways

Apprentices get down to work



This year's intake of Network Rail apprentices is working on the track renewal at Minffordd on the FR.

Five groups of apprentices are each spending a week replacing life-expired rail between the station and Lottie's Crossing, supervised by F&WHR PWay staff.

While the plain line bullhead track is too worn to be of further use, the original bottom-end crossover turnouts have years of useful life left in them on a railway with less heavy traffic and have found a new home on the Launceston Steam Railway in Cornwall. (*inset right*)

The re-railing is part of the major Winter Works Programme, which has also seen re-railing at Dragon Curve on the FR; new points installed at the Caernarfon end of Pont Croesor and the installation of a stagger to remove the notorious 'Snowdon Street Kink', allowing the temporary speed restriction to be removed.



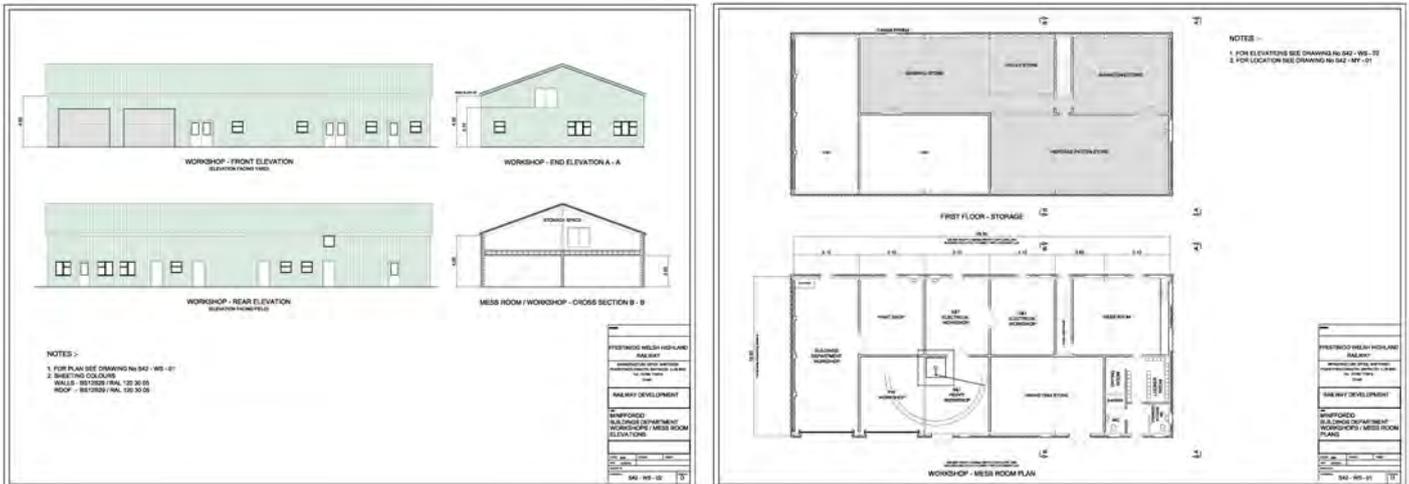
This monthly newsletter is distributed to those who request it by email and is also accessible from the main website at www.festrail.co.uk along with previous issues. Diary and event information is available on the online site. Feel free to print this document in order that people without web access can read it. Contributions, details of group meetings etc to athomas@ffwhr.com

Minffordd workshop gets green light

Plans to build a new workshop and store in Minffordd Yard have been given the go-ahead following a £235,000 donation from The Ffestiniog Railway Society.

The design is now finalised and there will be space to store patterns, marketing materials and Permanent Way components, together with an S&T workshop.

Work is due to start in early 2015 and the shell of the new building should be complete in late summer, when there will be an appeal for a big volunteer effort to complete the fitting out of the interior.



Carriage 150 nears completion

New Ffestiniog Pullman observation carriage 150 is rapidly taking shape at Boston Lodge Works.

Car 150 - numbered to mark the 150th anniversary of FR passenger services - joins super saloon 119 as one of the first of a new generation of FR carriages aimed at providing an enhanced passenger experience with standards of quality and accommodation equal to or even exceeding the comfort levels offered by the modern Welsh Highland stock.

150 will be a Pullman observation car, inspired by the WHR's *Glaslyn* concept, but with a striking new design including stylish new seating, again designed and built by Boston Lodge craftsmen.

A key part of the design brief for the seats was to maximise visibility.

To complete the luxury ambience, the interior roof will be lined with birds-eye maple and sapele to provide a light and airy look.

The new flagship carriage is due for completion in the spring and will spend the first months of its service as a roving ambassador for the railway on a UK-wide tour promoting 150 years of passenger services on the Ffestiniog Railway.



Kids' Training Week 2015 takes shape

We never really stop thinking ahead from one year into the next and, even before KTW 2014 was packed away, Adrian's Little List was already growing! Meetings at the end of January have put some flesh onto those bones.

Flagship project for 2015 will be dismantling *Palmerston* so the boiler inspector can get full access to the outside of the boiler to carry out the ten-year examination that falls due in July. Kids' contribution will save the Works' money and free up staff for other important work.



We hope to make a contribution to the redevelopment project by dismantling the Memorial cairn (that Kids helped construct several years ago!) and the stone walling adjacent that both lie in the way of realigned access to the proposed new carriage sheds.

The paint shop section of 12 Road will receive the same clean up and repaint as was given to 11 Road in 2014 and that vital KTW component, signwriting, will take place in 11 road. We already know that we have to finish painting in Dylan's office and there can be little doubt that there will be more to do elsewhere; KTW without painting would be unthinkable!



A couple of building projects are planned, of which creating a dry, clean, walkway from offices to Den is an absolute essential. Anybody with access to a significant pile of granite setts they would like to donate is invited to contact Adrian Gray (see below), otherwise it will have to be bland concrete.

The second possible project, repairs to the rear wall of the Machine Shop and installation of a drain, awaits a detailed survey and proposal for the work that may have to be submitted for Listed Building approval.

Following a review of the house we used for the Kids in 2014 we have decided not to stuff it quite so full in 2015, to the relief, we hope, of both house parents and Kids.

We might be able to place some Kids elsewhere but, to be able to do so we must recruit additional house parents – so here is the first appeal for volunteers! If you feel you could help, please contact Tricia Doyle (see below).

The other appeal for volunteers is for adults to help during the day at Boston Lodge, as always. Please contact Adrian, Tricia or Jo. Assistance with the costs of Kids Training Week projects is always welcome; the FR Society maintain a fund and donations to that may also benefit from Gift Aid.

It's the same story every year but, as always, the rewards are in the happy faces of the Kids during the week and then later, when we see them return as volunteers elsewhere along the railways.

Adrian Gray

Adrian Gray – 07774 825157 agray@ffwhr.com

Tricia Doyle – 01766 516035 tdoyle@ffwhr.com

Jo Vincent – 01766 516073 jvincent@ffwhr.com

Prince heads for York



Prince and three historic four-wheeled carriages will be travelling to the National Railway Museum in York offering rides to those attending the museum's half term Paddington Bear event this month. Pictured are two young Paddington fans with sister loco *Princess* at Paddington Station in London two years ago.



'Standard 3' bunker completed

The latest in Boston Lodge's series of larger projects, the construction of the bunker for a standard gauge Standard Class 3 tank loco, is complete. Staff from the Severn Valley Railway will travel to Wales in the next few weeks to paint and line out the bunker before delivery to Bridgnorth..



The 82045 Steam Locomotive Trust is in the process of building the next member of the extinct Riddles BR 3MT 262 82000 tank class. Unlike many of the current new build projects, which are aiming to recreate larger main-line types, the new loco is intended specifically for heritage line use.

New turnout for Pont Croesor

The Rest of the World Gang working week began on Saturday 17th. Our principal task was to replace the Down (Caernarfon) end point at Pont Croesor.

The old ex-SAR point was removed, partly with the aid of a small 360 and the ballast dug out to below sleeper level. Later the same day, the new point was delivered, roughly positioned and bolted together. Because the new point is about a metre longer than the old one, we spent the next couple of days adjusting the extant trackwork either side of it, in order to achieve the correct geometry.

We also introduced a half-rail stagger in the high rail of the first two panels of the Up loop, to eliminate a troublesome joint. Once this was done, a couple of days was spent replacing the previously mechanically dug out ballast the old-fashioned way, jacking and loosely shovel-packing where necessary, before jacking and kango-packing the ballast firm to hold the rearranged track in place.

The snow covered mountains that provide the backdrop to the Traeth, were a delight to behold from our work site.

On the Wednesday, we took a day out from our labours at Pont Croesor, to realign the section of track between Y Cyt and Cae Pawb, where a rather bad kink had developed.

This was relieved by inserting a half rail stagger, although a considerable amount of extra ballast is now required to lift the rather undulating high rail and to form a more substantial ballast shoulder, once the track at Minffordd is restored and staff can liberate the ballast hoppers and the KMX tamper from the yard.



Trackside Drains Team round-up

Ian Andrew

In October we took a works train up to Plas Halt to replace contaminated ballast clogging a drain there and install a gully across the footpath crossing. Sadly we were unable to complete this as our possession time was reduced due to a partial steam loco failure.

November saw us play a part in Gigabash weekend, finally completing replacement of old concrete pipes with new plastic pipe all the way from Quarry Lane Crossing down to Cemetery Cutting.

Gareth Davies introduced three colleagues to the railway - they enjoyed an impromptu works train ride and have been back again since! This site has been a favourite for Megabash/Gigabash Weekends because of its close proximity to Minffordd Yard and other activities - now we shall have to find another nearby site.

The ballast replacement at Plas Halt was completed in December. Then the works train continued on to Two Trees (just below Moelwyn Tunnel) where a new drain was cut through terrible ground comprising mixed peat and large boulders!

Advantage was made of the contractors assisting with the winter track relaying works at Dragon Curve to excavate a trench on the hillside there for a new drain. Between Christmas and New Year an inspection chamber was constructed over the end of this by new recruit Caron Stuart-Cole.

Similarly, In January we used some of the Network Rail apprentices to dig a deep trench under the track for a new cross pipe close to the end of the Long Siding at Minffordd.

In between time maintenance work has continued clearing blocked drains at Cutting Gwlyb, Coed y Bleiddiau and Spooner's Hollow.

Future working party dates are as follows: 14th/15th February, 14th/15th March (Megabash), 3rd - 6th April (Easter), 9th/10th May, 20th/21st June (Deviation Anniversary weekend) and 11th/12th July.

Many thanks to our regular team members and new recruits mentioned above. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

**Contact the working party organiser,
Rodney Thorp, on 07712 651293 or
rodthedrain@googlemail.com**



Proper safety Management is something to be expected of a professional railway like ours. Our customers expect our railway to be a perfectly safe experience with trains run and maintained by competent people. Good safety doesn't just happen. We all have to work at it.

Over the coming months, we will be looking at how safety is managed on our railway and what you can do to help that process. When we think of safety we might think of more obvious things like reporting accidents and things that might cause accidents. We want to be sure that *all* accidents are reported. We also want to be made aware of 'close calls' as a near miss today could be an accident tomorrow. Only if these things are known about can they be effectively managed.

Did you know that every management meeting and board meeting starts with safety as the first agenda item? A list of actions needed to improve safety is managed by Peter Gray in close cooperation with all the managers. If you feel that you would like to raise a safety issue you can do so with any manager or directly with Pete (pgray@ffwhr.com).

Improvements in safety are sometimes instant but can sometimes take a little longer. Take for example our carriage steps. Ten years ago we noticed from accident reports that the carriage steps and limited handrails on older vehicles were sometimes awkward to use and the cause of accidents. Although in the short term we were able to make them more grippy and put yellow edges on them we knew that a far better solution was to change the design completely. A new design with easy-to-use hand rails, big inset steps and illumination has evolved. This has been included in all new carriages for many years now and is one of the reasons our steel bodied vehicles are being completely rebodied. This work has included new underframes as it was simply not possible to modify the old Isle of Man ones.

Paul Lewin

HRA Inter-Rail pass

We are pleased to announce that the 2015 Heritage Rail Association InterRail Pass scheme is going ahead. The scheme is open to directors, managers, paid staff and current volunteers working on a railway which participates in the Inter-Rail Pass scheme. For £25 you receive a 2 person Pass allowing you and another person to travel at free or reduced rates on railways participating in the scheme subject to travel restrictions set by each railway. The passes generally cannot be used on Santa specials, some gala days and other special occasions. A list of participating railways and the restrictions is provided with the pass.

The 2015/2016 pass will be valid from 1st March 2015 to 29th February 2016.

If you would like to purchase a 2015/2016 pass please send a **cheque** for £25 per pass, made payable to 'Heritage Railway Association', together with a **stamped addressed envelope**, to Joanna Vincent, Ffestiniog Railway, Harbour Station, Porthmadog, Gwynedd, LL49 9NF.

If you are not able to pay by cheque please contact me to arrange an alternative method of payment. In order to receive your pass by the start date please ensure your cheque reaches me by Monday 16th February.

Joanna Vincent, Commercial Department

Spooner's refreshments

All users of Spooner's Café are reminded that the staff rate of 20p for hot drinks is restricted to on-duty staff and volunteers only. Off-duty staff, volunteers and retirees are eligible for a 5% discount.

Claire Podmore, Deputy Manager



New webcams on the way



The next webcam to come online is located at Minffordd Station, looking down the line towards Weigh House Crossing. The camera is currently under test—the image above showing Network Rail apprentices at work this month. The camera is expected to go live before the end of February, to be followed by one at Harbour Station.

Winter finally arrived towards the end of January, as illustrated by this shot of a rather chilly Rhyd Ddu.



One of the more unusual workings to be seen on the railway was this heavy freight train carrying loco ash from Boston Lodge to Dinas for disposal on January 16th with Caernarfon Castle in charge.

