

Inside Motion

July 2015

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

Happy Anniversary



On August 3rd 1955, *Prince* hauled carriage 23 and Van 12 just a mile across the Cob embankment from Porthmadog Harbour Station - the first steam hauled passenger service on the reopened Ffestiniog Railway. Two days later, the loco entered regular passenger operation and was the mainstay of the service until Double Fairlie *Taliesin* - subsequently renamed *Livingston Thompson* and now in the NRM at York - returned to traffic in September the following year.

This year, the 60th anniversary of the event was marked when the 152 year old loco re-enacted its historic run with the help of Single Fairlie *Taliesin* on a ten carriage train. The pair were in charge of the 1010 and 1335 services on Monday and Tuesday, with *Linda* deputising for *Taliesin* on the 5th.

The event appeared on the ITV Wales Six O Clock news that evening, with driver Roger Van Praet and fireman Matthew Ellis (*right*) in a starring role. In the main picture, Allan Garraway is seen driving *Prince*.



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 progress



Work continues apace on the new Minffordd workshop with the concrete floor now complete



New Infrastructure Manager joins

We're delighted to welcome Alex Spring, who joins us at the beginning of November as Infrastructure Manager. Alex joins us after taking early retirement after 37 years at London Underground having worked principally in the field of permanent way, but latterly with responsibility for assuring the maintenance regimes of track, signals and fleet as the Assurance Manager in the Chief Operating Officer's organisation.

Alex is no newcomer to the F&WHR, having first visited the railway in 1968 and commenced as a volunteer in 1974 as a 'Bramble', he was a member of the temporary staff in the 1978 season and a volunteer fireman until 1986, when family and work commitments took precedence.

He will join in a phased takeover from Dafydd Thomas, who will oversee the 2015-2016 Winter Maintenance Programme and will complete the handover to Alex on March 1st 2016. Alex will initially concentrate on the safety documentation procedures in close cooperation with Nick Griffiths.

Paul Lewin comments: "I am very grateful for the excellent job Dafydd Thomas has done as interim Infrastructure Manager over the last few years and am looking forward to continuing to work with him in his capacity as Chairman of the Welsh Highland Society and in his volunteer role with the Black Hand Gang, together with major projects such as the redevelopment of Caernarfon Station."

Alex Spring adds: "I am very much looking forward to the challenge of looking after 40 miles of the finest heritage railway in the world. It will be great to reacquaint myself with the railway that played such an important part in my life some 30 years ago once I have finished unpacking everything in my new home in Tremadog!"



New Safety Manager

Nick Griffiths has joined the permanent staff as Safety & Development Manager having just retired from a career in teaching design and technology. He will be based in the Minffordd Infrastructure Office, reporting to the General Manager.

He is tasked with the oversight and coordination of the Safety Management System for the company and will be visiting every location on the 40 mile railway over the coming months, although Boston Lodge will be seeing quite a lot of him in the immediate future!

Nick is far from being a newcomer as he has been involved with the railway as a volunteer since 2002 as footplate crew and is also a member of the volunteer driver assessment team.



Barrie Clark

We are saddened to announce the death of WHR stalwart Barrie Clark on Monday 13th July.

Barrie died in hospital following admission with chest problems which turned to pneumonia; he had suffered a stroke eighteen months ago and did not fully recover from it.

Barrie was a supporter of the rebuilding the WHR before a single rail was laid; when track laying started he would travel from his home in Oxfordshire to do his bit over a weekend.

Barrie was also a supporter of the restoration of Garratt pioneer locomotive K1; travelling to working parties at Tyseley to begin with and then to Boston Lodge.

After retiring as a bank manager, he and his wife Sylvia moved to live at Waunfawr.

Barrie was a member of the North Wales Gang aka the Black Hand Gang and was invariably the first volunteer to put his name down for a weekend's track laying. He would often put his extensive set of tools at the disposal of the gang to often supplement the lack of suitable ones available. His trusty 4 x 4 was also an invaluable help to the gang on numerous occasions when a bit of pulling power was required; often being used to drag rails to where they were wanted. His trailer was also often pressed into service to carry materials or equipment to a mountainside location alongside the trackbed.

When a new batch of rail arrived at Waunfawr from South Africa and it was found that the fish plate bolt holes had been cut under size, Barrie along with Cedric Lodge volunteered, without hesitation to work their way through the 200 rails, re-drilling the two holes at each end to the correct dimension (that's 800 holes!)

Barrie was always cheerful and made many new volunteers feel at home on their first visit; his raft of many amusing stories on all sorts of subjects entertained us over many a tea and lunch break in the mess coach. He was also a prolific supplier of biscuits, everyone hoping that the packet that Barrie would produce from his bag would be the legendary caramel and chocolate ones from a well-known manufacturer, he rarely disappointed.

Physical obstacles didn't deter Barrie, he once broke two bones in his leg when he accidentally tripped over a sleeper that had carelessly been left in the way; once the leg was healed back he came to work on the track. Later he had to have a hip replacement but that didn't put him off and back he came once more until we finished the job.

When we had finished the job, that is joined up the track at Harbour station so that there was a continuous line of railway from Caernarfon to Porthmadog (and of course beyond to Blaenau Ffestiniog) he hung up his boots and said that's it I've done my bit.

Following his 'retirement' from the track gang Barrie continued to support the railway, especially through the North Wales Group; even after moving from Waunfawr to Cheshire he would travel over for the Wednesday evening social events.

He will be sadly missed as both a friend and a true supporter of the railway; our thoughts and sympathies go Sylvia and family.

The funeral was a quiet, family only event with no flowers as Barrie requested, donations to the WHR.

Dafydd Thomas

A Winter's Tale *Dafydd Thomas*

We may well be basking in summer sunshine with the maximum train services in full force but our thoughts in the Infrastructure Department are on the winter months.

We are planning another ambitious programme of work on both railways and as over the last two winters it will only really work with your help.

We need the volunteer gangs to come in to assist and supplement the full time staff.

You helped us to achieve the goal both at Harbour station in 2013/14 and Minffordd as well as other locations in 2014/15.

So if you're not involved with any gang on the railway why don't you consider joining one of the existing ones or forming your own.

This winter's programme will include:

Permanent Way

Ffestiniog Railway:

- Relaying track from Penrhyn Crossing to Highgate Crossing
- Relaying track from Minffordd to Lloc Meurig.
- Installing new turnout for the Old Loco Shed at Boston Lodge.
- Refurbishment of the Boston Lodge Crossing.

Welsh Highland Railway:

- Realignment of track at Cae Bryn Siriol.
- Improvement of rail joints from Tro Ffridd to Glanrafon.
- Servicing bridges.

Signals and Telecommunications

Ffestiniog Railway:

- Installation of new wig wag heads at Glan y Pwll.
- Refurbishment of signalling infrastructure at Minffordd (Lottie's) Crossing.
- Refurbishment of point rodding at Boston Lodge Old Loco Shed.
- Installing a new telephone cable from Boston Lodge to Minffordd.

Welsh Highland Railway:

- Lever frames at Beddgelert and Hafod y Llyn.

Use of PTFE as lubricant on turnouts on both railways.

Lineside Management

Ffestiniog Railway:

- Tree felling in and around Minffordd Yard
- Tree clearance around Rhiw Plas Bridge.

Welsh Highland Railway:

- Tree and vegetation clearance at both ends of Goat Tunnel.
- Tree clearance in Nantmor Cutting.
- Tree clearance Meillionen to Ty'n y Coed.

Also tree felling at numerous other locations on both railways.

Buildings and Estates

Ffestiniog Railway:

- Tan y Grisiau – refurbishment of station buildings; there is already a gang working on this but they would appreciate any additional help.
- Boston Lodge – numerous maintenance jobs.
- Fitting out new workshop and storage shed at Minffordd.

Welsh Highland Railway:

- Caernarfon station's temporary building needs a new roof to see it through another season until we get the new station building built.
- Dinas station public toilet needs some TLC to keep it going until we get a new permanent one built.
- Dinas Locomotive Department's workshop windows need a coat of paint.
- Beddgelert station toilets need some work to keep them going for another season.
- Pont Croesor – the platform shelter's windows need a coat of paint.

We need your help with all these jobs either as individuals or gangs.

In particular we need teams to help at weekends with major track relaying projects on the Ffestiniog Railway. These start on 2nd November and continue through to 12th February 2016.

So come along and help improve your railway.

Why not form your own gang, so that you and friends can have fun together even if you usually work for another department during the operating season?

For further details contact Dafydd Thomas – dthomas@ffwhr.com – 07919 414877.

Kids' Training Week

The 24th Kids' Week (now Kids' training Week) got under way on Saturday 1st August with a train to Tan y Bwlch for a meal and initial briefing. 35 young people aged between 14 and 18, together with a similar number of adult supervisors, started work on their various projects at Boston Lodge on Sunday 2nd August.

Palmerston & Hugh Napier were prepared for boiler examinations, *Moelygest* and a Simplex were repainted, as was the front of 12 road in the carriage works and the Work's foreman's office. Remaking the roadway between the Den and the Works' Offices, to eliminate the persistent puddle began with the excavation of a large hole that revealed more interesting archaeology – all suitably recorded of course. Drains were also laid behind the Machine Shop. Old wooden sheds were demolished, as was the memorial by the sea shore. This latter was in the way of the new carriage sheds and will be rebuilt in a better location.

JGF was the order of the day and a full report will appear in the next edition of Inside Motion.

Adrian Gray



First aid courses 2016

The Company will be running First Aid at Work Courses in November. If you are a member of staff or an active volunteer and would like to have this qualification, please speak with your line manager who will arrange for you to take the course. If the company who you work for would like you to take this qualification, we can put you through the course for a reasonable charge. If you already have the certificate but need to resit, we will be contacting you soon.

The dates are as follows:

Resit 1:

Saturday 31st October/Sunday 1st November

Resit 2:

Monday 2nd November/Friday 6th November

New Course:

Tuesday 3rd November to Friday 6th November

For more info, or to book yourself onto a course, contact Clare Britton on 01766 516023 or cbritton@fwhr.com

Safety matters *Dafydd Thomas*

A reminder to all staff and volunteers that the Company does have a Working at Heights Policy – SM POL 007, which you can view on Sharepoint. This should be adhered to for your own protection. Locomotive crews are especially reminded not to climb on top of locomotives where there is no provision for doing so; the top of the bunker on a Garratt locomotive is strictly out of bounds. Loco crews should also read the RAIB report into a runaway locomotive on the Great Central Railway, which can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/raibgcr>

Spoooner's *Martin Batcock*

Unfortunately, the recently advertised Spoooner's Manager's vacancy has not attracted any suitable candidates to fill the position. It has therefore been decided that, given the lateness in the season and the likelihood of the kitchen being closed for a period during the forthcoming winter for a rebuild, that the post will not be filled at the present time. The situation will be reviewed in early 2016.

In the meantime, Joel Alonso will continue as Acting Spoooner's Manager. Spoooner's is an extremely busy outlet by any standards and since Joel has only been with us three months, please be patient and understanding. He will continue to be supported by Leann Thomas, supervisor and has been joined by Lolo Morris as a part-time supervisor two days a week. Guy Hill remains in charge of the bar and Sam Cox continues as Head Chef.

Your continued support is appreciated, as is your forbearance, given the loss of key personnel mid-season.

FR Super Saloon 117 nears completion

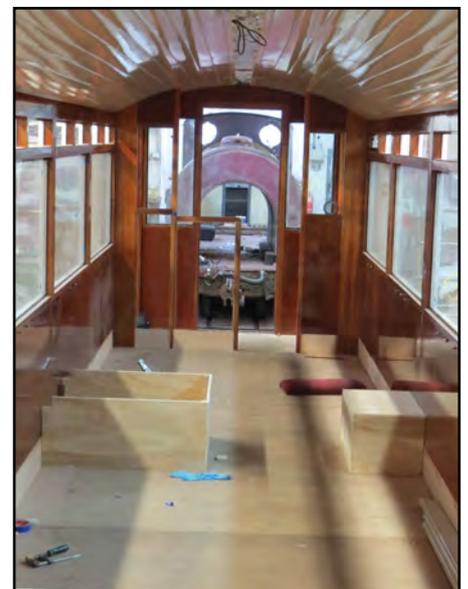


While Pullman observation car 150 is wowing the crowds at the Shrewsbury Flower Show, super saloon 117 is nearing completion in the carriage works at Boston Lodge.

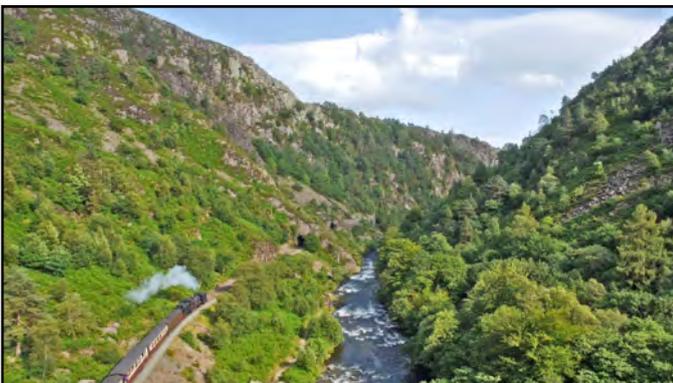
The new third class saloon will join 150, new service car 125 and another new third class saloon, 119, at the heart of the revamped FR 'B' Set at the beginning of the 2016 season.

The new set will match - and even exceed - the levels of comfort enjoyed by Welsh Highland passengers in the newer carriages built for that line and are built to the largest possible dimensions permitted by the FR's more restrictive loading gauge.

The rebuild of Large England *Welsh Pony* is also progressing well, with its cylinders being machined prior to reassembly. NG15 134's axle boxes are also receiving attention.



Droning on



We've now had three visits from our friends at Vertical Horizons Media, a professional aerial photography company using sophisticated drone technology, to give us a new perspective on the 40 mile railway. While most of the footage will find its way into future video productions, here's a selection of still images that give some idea of the stunning imagery we now have at our disposal.

Some of the video sequences have found their way into the latest update of the railways' three minute promo video, which can be seen here <http://tinyurl.com/fwhrtrail>. You can also see Linda at Dduallt as never before by clicking here <http://tinyurl.com/fwhrlindadduallt>

- Carriage 150 and *Lilla* will be at the Shrewsbury Flower Show between August 14-15
- *Hugh Napier* is to visit Bristol Temple Meads Station on the Bank Holiday weekend between August 29th and 31st.
- *Blanche* will be guest of honour at the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway gala in North Devon from September 25-27.
- July 25 - August 29 Free footplate rides on Saturdays at Porthmadog Harbour Station
- July 25-August 31 Summer of Fun
- August Wed & Thurs Fish & Chip trains
- August Thursdays evening Jazz trains to Tan y Bwlch
- September 11-13 Welsh Highland Superpower Gala features the most intensive timetable yet
- September 20 Ras y Cob
- September 26 Trailffest Half Marathon
- October 9-11 FR Vintage Weekend
- October 29 - 31 FR Halloween trains
- October 29 WHR Halloween train
- First week of November - photocharters with guest Quarry Hunslet *Winifred*
- December 12, 13, 19, 20 WHR Santa trains
- December 12, 13, 19, 20 FR Victorian Santa trains



Lilla and Pullman observation car 150 pulled in the crowds at the Shrewsbury Flower Show this month