

# Inside Motion

March / April 2016

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



## England's Glory

**Roving ambassador** *Princess* represented the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland in the new booking hall at London's King's Cross Station in February.

Together with her train of four-wheeled carriages, the venerable loco was paying only her second visit to London since she left the George England Hatcham Ironworks in New Cross back in 1863.

Over the ten days of her visit, staff and volunteers chatted to thousands of passers-by and handed out timetables, leaflets and over 2,000 copies of the latest TLC Magazine.

At one point, 1,000 people stopped to admire *Princess* and have their photographs taken in the space of one hour.



The next F&WHR away fixture is at the launch of the steam tug *Daniel Adamson* at Liverpool's Albert Dock over the May Day bank holiday where *Lilla* will be in steam and giving rides.



This newsletter is distributed to those who request it by email and is also accessible from the main website at [www.festrail.co.uk](http://www.festrail.co.uk) along with previous issues. Diary and event information is also available online.

To be added to the email distribution list, please fill in the form at <http://tinyurl.com/pmjl6ue>

All contributions, details of group meetings etc to [insidemotion@ffwhr.com](mailto:insidemotion@ffwhr.com)



# As seen on TV

Iain Wilkinson



While *Princess* and her supporting cast were promoting the railway down in London, a different opportunity for F&WHR publicity was being seized back in North Wales.

The PR Department was approached in November last year by the BBC, who are working on the development of a new six part series on the history of railways using present day heritage railways as a means of telling the story. But it was not until mid-February that the crew arrived for three days' solid filming.

Three reconnaissance visits by the production team, plus an endless stream of phone calls and emails gradually honed the basic concept into a detailed shooting script. It really does take an awful lot of time and effort to do the job properly

The amount of preparatory work involved meant that the crew were incredibly well-researched and knew exactly which parts of our multi-faceted railway they wanted to focus on. Our role in the series was to be the representative of early mineral carrying railways, from horse-drawn days through to the introduction of the latest technology, steam. ►

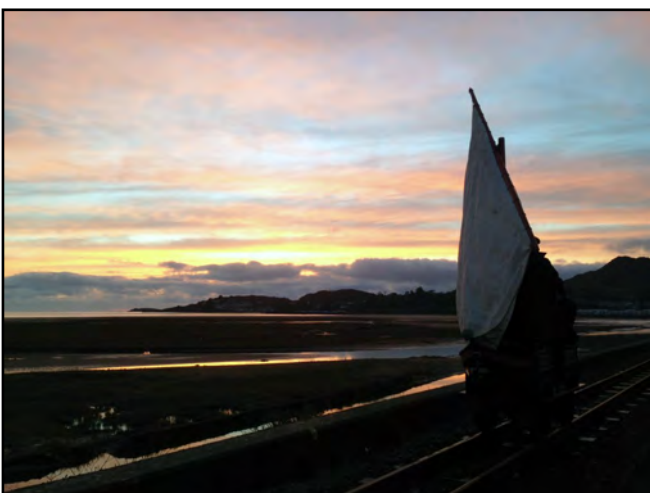




◀ The production team in this case was Lion TV, responsible for previous series like Victorian Farm, Edwardian Farm and Tales from the Green Valley with presenters Ruth Goodman, Alex Langlands and Peter Ginn. Both presenters and crew came with a huge amount of information on our railways and left with a much deeper knowledge of the history and many amusing stories to help bring it to life. You'll have to wait until August to see how many of these little anecdotes make it to the finished programme.

After the months of emails and planning, the crew finally spent three cold days with us over February half term week. During the three days, they filmed:

- Victorian track work, showing how the railway was built over challenging terrain and the amount of people it took (and takes) both to build and maintain such an ambitious railway.
- Traditional hot-riveting at Boston Lodge, showing a young team using traditional skills to maintain our unique fleet of slate waggons, along with a lot of shots of other engineering processes going on at the oldest railway works in the world.
- The gravity train in action as they transport their slate from quarry to the harbour'.
- The preparation of *Prince* for a day's work hauling empty slate trains back up to the slate quarries of Blaenau Ffestiniog.
- *Prince* and *Palmerston* in action hauling a slate train up the beautiful Vale of Ffestiniog.
- Spooner's Boat being used for sail-driven track inspection on the Cob (with a beautifully choreographed sunset in the background).
- A demonstration of traditional horse haulage of waggons at Glan y Pwll.
- Welsh Highland service trains in action between Porthmadog and Rhyd Ddu. ▶





◀ The team also visited Llechwedd and even went underground to sing songs and eat cawl in a caban. Although this was the last thing they filmed, it actually fits into the middle of the 'story' as they then got the slate that they carried on the gravity train.

Organising such a shoot is always a challenge, especially in the middle of a cold period and during the Infrastructure Department's winter programme. Luckily a fantastic team came together to make it all happen without a hitch. Much of the work on the days themselves were done by volunteers to enable staff to continue working on their day jobs but the execution of the shoot involved support from every single department on the railway. This was offered readily and really does show what can be achieved when we all pull together. Thank you to everyone that helped out in whatever way.

The series should be aired on Network BBC2 during August - a great time for us to raise awareness of the railways - and we will hopefully feature in most of Episode One (which usually gets the highest ratings). Whilst it is fantastic to be able to share our amazing history with a large audience, care was also taken to choose the locations on the railway with the best views, the not-so-subtle message also being 'come and visit us!' The weather was uncontrollable to some extent (we had some very cold gravity brakesmen!) but the scenery of both railways will still star in the resulting show on primetime BBC2.

These three days really did show us at our best, so we'll leave you with the unsolicited feedback we received from the crew after they left...

Dear Iain and Andrew,  
I wanted to take this opportunity to say a massive THANK YOU!! The team have had an amazing time, thank you for being so fantastic to work with. This episode is going to look fantastic! I will keep you updated with the filming of the series! Thank you once again.

All the best,  
Georgina Stewart  
Producer

Hi Andrew,  
Just a note to say thank you for guiding me to the locations on the railway last week, having looked back at the footage it looks really fantastic, thanks to your local knowledge of the line. Nice to meet you and thank you for your time and expertise.

All the best,  
Tom Pilbeam  
Shooting Assistant Producer

Dear Ffestiniog,  
I just wanted to say thank you so much for having us last week. I remember Snowdonia fondly from a childhood holiday but from this day forward when I think of Wales I will think of your railway.

Seeing how you guys work, briefly being a part of your gang and getting the chance to ride the slate train is an experience I will never forget. Once again thank you to one and all and thanks for looking after us and making it all happen. I look forward to seeing the railway again.

All the best,  
Peter Ginn





# Boston Lodge ramp complete



**The Boston Lodge** access road project has been completed with the tarmac and road markings in place.

The old access driveway was narrow and subsidence meant it was in urgent need of replacement. The old roadway survived remarkably well over the years, but storm damage a few years ago uprooted some large trees disturbing the stability of the embankment, road and drains in the area.

The new access ramp was constructed in four weeks and the level crossing into the works has been moved to the end of the halt platform, improving access for large vehicles. The old ramp remains in use as a part of the Wales Coast Footpath.





# James Spooner rides again

The F&WHR Company Board has given its approval for the building of a new Double Fairlie locomotive, the seventh to run on the railway and the fifth built entirely at its workshops at Boston Lodge.

*James Spooner* will carry the number 8, as did its predecessor, built by Avonside in 1872 and withdrawn in 1928. Some parts of the original survive to the present day, the wheels being under *Livingston Thompson* at the National Railway Museum in York.

The original loco is pictured below at the old Harbour Station in 1873, less than a year after delivery.

The new loco will take the place of *Earl of Merioneth* in the FR's frontline fleet of Double Fairlies alongside *Merddin Emrys* and *David Lloyd George*, built in 1879 and 1992 respectively at Boston Lodge.

*Earl of Merioneth* was built in 1979 and will hold a unique place in railway preservation history as the first new-build steam loco on any preserved line in the UK and the first to be withdrawn. The loco will be placed in dry storage on its original 1979 bogies so as not to

preclude restoration at a later date. Cab fittings and controls will be removed for use on the new *James Spooner*.

*Earl of Merioneth*, affectionately known as *The Square* due to its angular appearance, is approaching the end of its ten-year boiler certificate and needs a new boiler, boiler cradle, smokeboxes, chimneys and water tanks.

Only its power bogies, built in 1986, are serviceable and they are in need of heavy overhaul and new tyres. The decision was thus made that building a brand new loco was the best approach rather than patching up one that is effectively life-expired.

The new *James Spooner* will have a traditional appearance, yet will be clearly identifiable alongside *Merddin Emrys* and *David Lloyd George*. Features will include stovepipe chimneys and a removable cab roof centre section reminiscent of how *Merddin Emrys* looked in its original form. It is hoped that some original components and design details will be incorporated into the new loco.

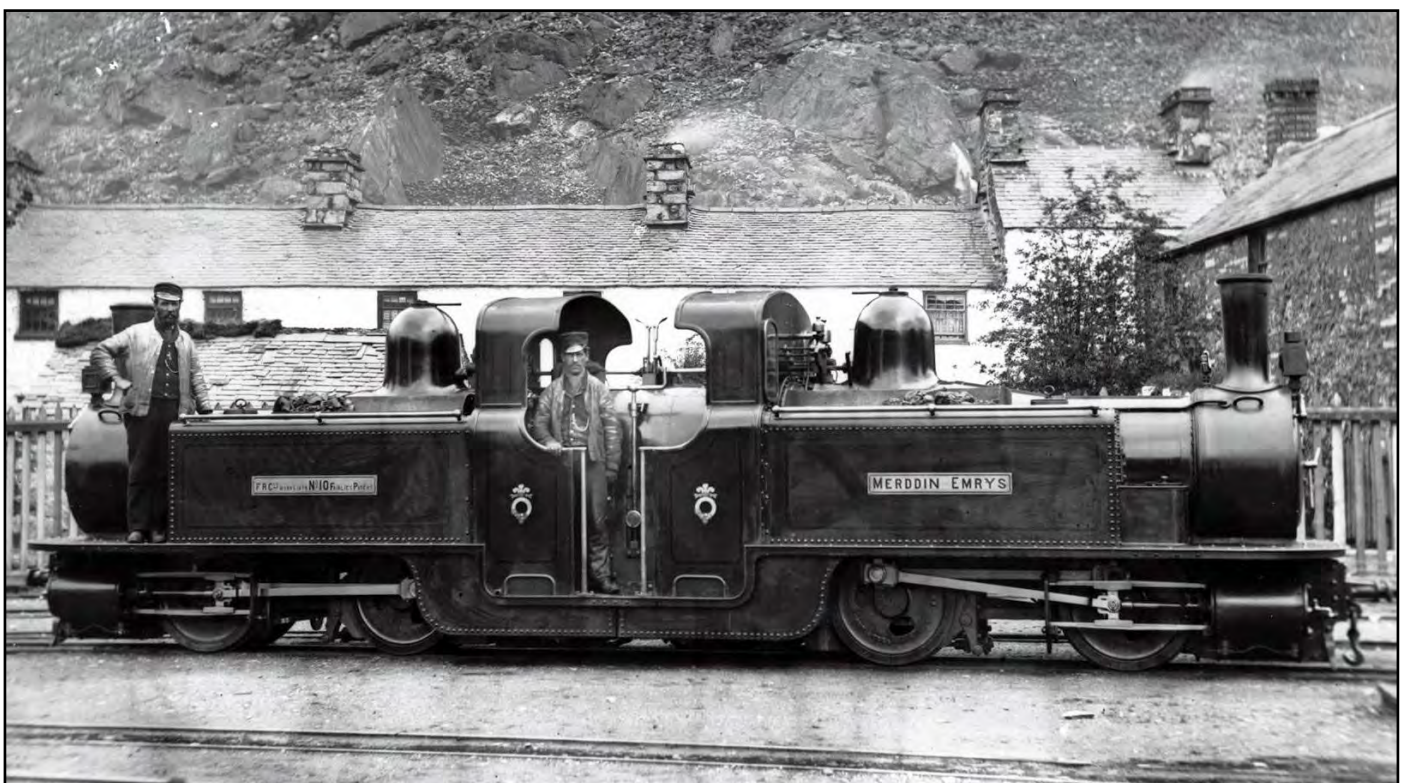
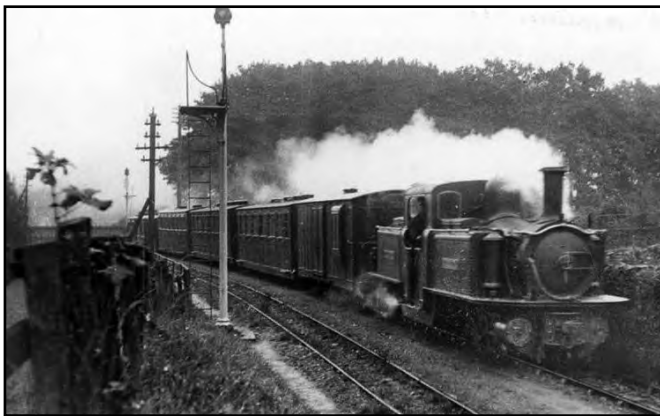




The first components for the new boiler have already been delivered. This will be the fourth new boiler built in the works and will be of hybrid welded / riveted construction, currently being designed at Boston Lodge. It is planned that the loco will enter traffic in 2020, in time for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Little Wonder* trials in 1870, when the world's first successful double engine hauled a train of 111 slate wagons, six carriages, 60 passengers and 12 goods wagons some 1,350 feet long.

F&WHR General Manager Paul Lewin commented: "Back in the early days of rebuilding the FR, when reopening to Blaenau Ffestiniog seemed an impossible dream, volunteers would have thought it inconceivable that 50 years later, legendary locos such as *Welsh Pony* and *James Spooner* would be in action on two wonderful railways, stretching 40 miles from Caernarfon to Blaenau Ffestiniog."

*Clockwise from top: James Spooner at Porthmadog in 1886; the remains of the loco in 1933; Merddin Emrys with removable cab centre section; James Spooner at Minffordd in 1913.*





# Welsh Pony takes shape

**Welsh Pony is on track** for a return to steam in time for its 150th birthday next year. The world's only surviving Large England loco's frames are nearing completion, its wheelsets have successfully passed non-destructive testing for cracks and boiler assembly is under way.

The new tender is also taking shape with the sides temporarily bolted together on the frame. The top is flared and trimmed with half round beading, giving an authentic appearance.

The bolts will be replaced with hot riveting at a later stage. The loco will also feature interchangeable chopper and traditional hook and chain couplers.

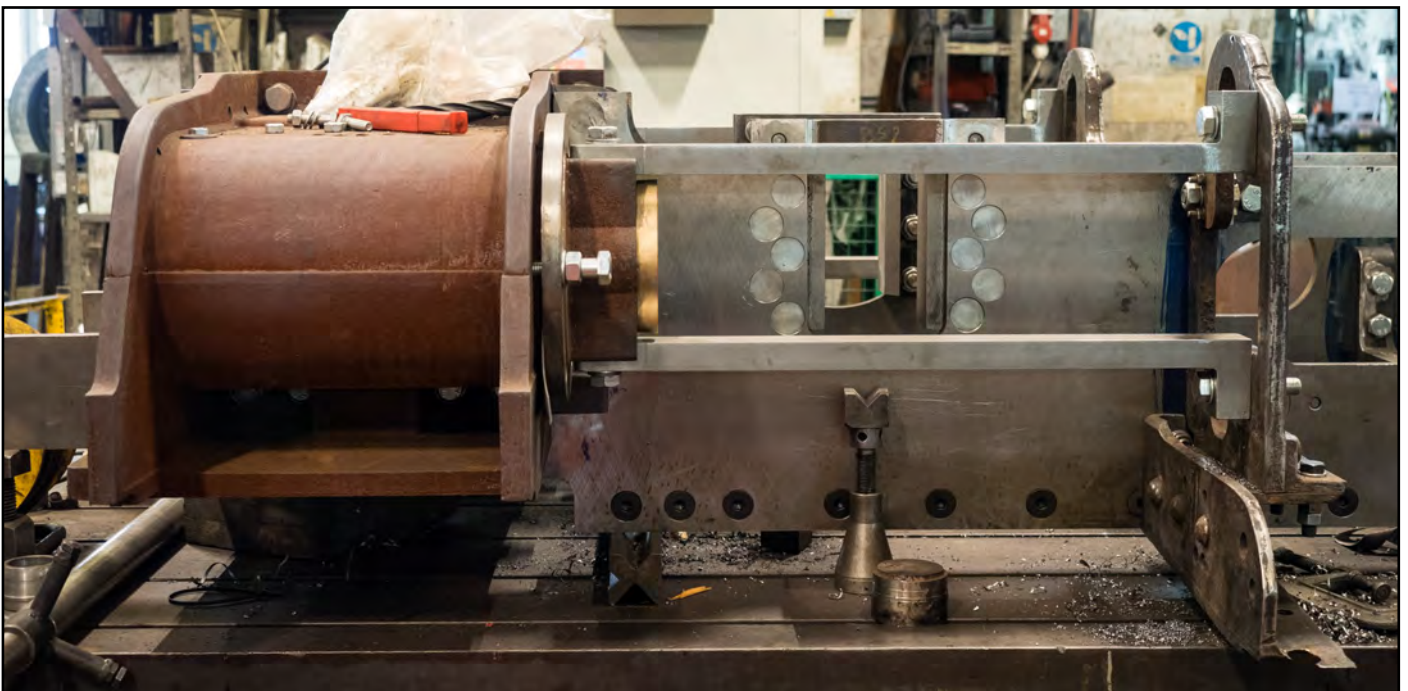


*Top: The boiler barrel is prepared for assembly*

*Below: Bob Yates with the partially assembled tender*

*Bottom: The frames on the table in the erecting shop*

*Left: new cast steel tender wheel on the lathe.*





# Friends of Tryfan Junction

**It is hoped** to open Tryfan Junction Station Building on many more days this year, but particularly on high days and holidays and also Superpower (September 9th to 11th) .

It's a lovely spot and it's a fantastic building to show people, as well as being at the start of the Slate Trail. Friends of Tryfan Junction is being set up to organise this.

Duties are very slight, involving mostly sitting in the sun (there has been sun there, honest), enjoying the peace and quiet, showing people round when trains arrive and imagining what it would have been like in its heyday!



Contact Mike Hadley, 01386 792877/07860 828876 [mike@mandhhadley.co.uk](mailto:mike@mandhhadley.co.uk)

Work is in progress across the whole railway to ensure that the Building Department has a complete set of keys to enable all locked buildings and rooms to be entered in the event of an emergency. Key Safes will be installed at several strategic locations across the railway to hold a complete set of keys for a defined area. Access to these key safes will be restricted to the Buildings Department and designated managers who perform Emergency Manager Duties. We have identified one or two areas that have been fitted with non-corporate locks or padlocks for which the numeric code is not known. In these circumstances the buildings department team will try to identify the owner and e mail them to request a duplicate key or the numeric code for placing in the relevant key safe. If they are not able to locate a key or numeric code they will change the lock for the most appropriate standard railway key for the location. If you think you may be a key holder to a location that does not have a standard lock on it, can you please advise the Building Dept. Manager or if you receive an email requesting a key of numeric code can you please respond. This exercise is only concerned with locked buildings and rooms within those buildings. We do not need to hold keys for cupboards, lockers, desk pedestals or other locked storage within a room. Thanks you for your co-operation. *Alex Spring*



*Peter & Leonie Asquith receiving the Certificate of Commendation at the National Railway Heritage Awards from Lord Faulkner of Worcester at a ceremony in London in recognition of their work on the FR Disc Signal Project as FRS Chairman Howard Wilson looks on.*



# Rest of the World Gang on tour *Bob Zeepvat*

**At the end of January**, following their regular working week in Wales, seven members of the Rest of the World Gang headed for north Devon, for a working weekend on the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. As L&BR members we had talked about going on this 'busman's (railwayman's?) holiday for some time, to see how 'The Last Narrow-Gauge Railway Adventure' was progressing, and to investigate the possibility for future working parties.

Arriving at Woody Bay on Thursday afternoon ahead of the rest, three of us were given a quick site tour by L&BR Manager Martyn Budd and were also introduced to our task for the weekend: relaying the station's down platform road.

The original track had already been lifted, the trackbed dug out, and a bed of ballast laid to the desired height, which had been lowered to accommodate the four 'heritage' coaches. Stacks of pre-drilled Jarrah sleepers with baseplates already attached also awaited our attention on the railway's well wagon, and their newly-acquired South African ballast wagon lurked in the loco shed with a load of ballast. It was all very organised and boded well for the following morning, apart from the fact that it had started raining.

Friday was rather damp. During the day the remaining ROWGs appeared, along with a number of L&B volunteers, local and otherwise, including a regular contingent from the Isle of Wight. Sleepers were laid out, rails put in place, fishplated and clipped – all in a day's work for ROWG – and by the end of the day the new road extended about half-way along the platform.

That evening we repaired to the 'Old Station House Inn' at Blackmoor Gate (originally Blackmoor Station), as some of our group wanted to check out the investment potential: the L&B are proposing to buy the Inn by means of a share issue. At least, that was their excuse for going there!

On Saturday, the sun shone. It also rained and hailed, and a bitter wind blew across the site from the Bristol Channel. Woody Bay, at the summit of the L&BR, is at an altitude of 975', much higher than Y Copa on the WHR (618'), and this was all too apparent to those trying to lay track there. By the end of the day the track had been laid and ballasted, only requiring some final packing and tweaking.

The SAR ballast wagon was put to good use, coupled to the L&BR's Joffre class Kerr, Stuart 0-6-0T, 'Axe', making several journeys to the other end of the line at Killington Lane to load ballast with the railway's



tracked excavator. To round the day off, we were invited by the L&B volunteers for a most enjoyable meal. On Sunday we completed the final tweaks to the track by lunchtime, after which we headed home.

On the whole it was a really enjoyable weekend. We were made to feel welcome, and our input was appreciated. The general atmosphere there can best be described as 'pioneering spirit', rather like the writer remembers from volunteering on the FR in the 1960s.

The L&BR certainly seems to be well organised, and to have some useful equipment, notably the excavator and its range of attachments, including ones for tamping and flailing, and hydraulic rail jacks. They also have some practices which were less appealing, notably ballast packing with ballast forks, which is rather like using bedsprings on a stick! ►





◀ L&BR volunteers are also well looked after, with regular tea breaks in a heated marquee next to the station building, and hot lunches (home-made soup and rolls) on Saturdays and Sundays, prepared by their catering manager, one of the three paid staff.

Accommodation is an issue, as there is no equivalent to the FR's hostels: we stayed in a range of B&Bs, hotels and a youth hostel, scattered between Barnstaple and Lynton, while one ROWGer had his VW camper in the rather bleak station car park.

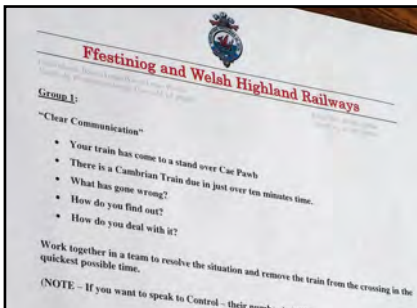
So, will we do it again? Most certainly. Now that the L&BR have submitted the planning application for their extension to Blackmoor Gate, there is the prospect of having over three miles of track to lay, something ROWG are no strangers to. As long as we're not all in our Zimmer frames by then!





# Exercise Welsh Highland *Nick Griffiths*

As part of the Guard and Footplate Crew Training Weekends, the F&WHR ran three special trains to Pont Croesor. The published reason was refresher training on the trailable points, but during the trip our crews were presented with three safety scenarios to test their response in an emergency situation. They had to work in teams to resolve the problems.



The first emergency was the train stopping suddenly over Cae Pawb crossing, the flat crossing over Network Rail's Cambrian Coast line. Our crews had to diagnose the problem – a vacuum brake leak – and fix it. They were also observed for their compliance with the requirement to wear hi-viz clothing.

The second emergency was a simulated fire on the train which required the passengers (the other teams) to be evacuated, and the train split to isolate the burning vehicle.

The final emergency was a staged collision between a car and the train at Pen y Mount crossing. The team had to make the train and car safe, deal with the

injured footplate crew and car driver, and find someone on the train to look after the steam engine.

We've learned a lot from the exercise, and have identified areas for development. The input from the Fire Service and the Police was invaluable, and will help immensely in developing our established emergency procedures. We're looking forward to working with the emergency services in the future.

I'd like to thank the Fire Service and Police for their support, guidance and feedback, and Network Rail Machynlleth Control Centre for their co-operation. Next time, I must think of a punchier title!

## Megabash *Howard Wilson*

The event on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> March was a stupendous success and enjoyed by 91 hard working volunteers. The format was different this time in that we had a works train on the Saturday which travelled the line allowing gangs to tackle a variety of tasks at each station and bring them up to a presentable standard that would be acceptable to our passengers. The revenue earning trains were to start at the same time so there was no time to lose!

A strong team went with the train and stopped briefly at Plas Halt to wash down the fence and to sweep and blow the leaves away, while at Tan y Bwlch a whole bunch of people with a load of cleaning equipment were dropped off to clean round the outside of the café and the old station building and also scrub the tops of the picnic tables. At Dduallt the majority of the timber from the two trees that blew down during the winter was loaded into the cavernous "B" wagons.

At Tanygrisiau the remains of the redundant telephone exchange room was removed from the goods shed and the platform shelter washed down, At Blaenau, the walls of the station building and toilets were washed and rubbish bins secured. Unwanted equipment was collected from each station for disposal.

The team was redeployed on the Sunday. The garden at the rear of Penrhyn Station had become a jungle and was blitzed and cleared. At Minffordd Station the shelter was washed and the length of metal fence and lamp-standards painted. Others worked on the long garden, carried out sign-writing, assisted the Drains Gang and helped the Electrical Gang with their record-breaking project to attach 90 light units to the ceiling of the new Waggon Tracks shed.

We were grateful to the people who enabled the Saturday evening train to happen and to the café staff at TyB for the very tasty hot meal. It all helps to ensure that we will come back again 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> October for Gigabash. That will complete the 30<sup>th</sup> years of the 'Bashes which means that we have worked on 60 occasions to refresh station buildings on the FR – very satisfactory, even if I say so myself...

**Eileen Clayton adds:** We did it! We installed 90 lights during the working party. We started on the Friday and concentrated all our efforts on the Waggontracks shed. The first job was familiarisation with the use of the two scissor lift platforms which we had hired in.

We installed one run of cable tray across the shed followed by a length of armoured cable which was installed by screwing conduit boxes to the purlins. ►







◀ The light brackets and lights were then fitted; by doing this we felt confident of our working methods before we started in earnest the day after.

On the Saturday we were off to a good start and by late afternoon 45th light was installed. By Sunday afternoon all 90 lights were installed, as was the control wiring at the distribution board and the light switches at both ends of the shed which were wired up through contactors.

It was with great satisfaction that we switched on all 90 lights at the end of a very busy weekend.

We also had some good news. The Ffestiniog Railway Society are awarding the Merddyn Emrys shield this year to the Electrical Working Party volunteers in recognition of all they have done around the railway to improve and maintain our electrical installations.

The presentations will be at the FR Soc. AGM on Saturday, 30 April, so we will have to down tools early, make ourselves presentable and attend the 99th Electrical Working Party, from Saturday April 30th to Monday May 2nd.

On this working party we intend to turn most of our attention to the workshops building. The plastering and painting of the downstairs ceilings will be complete, which will allow us to install the remaining lighting.

There is yet more conduit to fit, wires to pull through and make of, the list goes on.

We also will be reaching a big milestone on the June working party (11th & 12th) when it is the 100th of these events. We think we should have a bit of a celebration, how about a bottle of fizz? More about this in the next newsletter, but we hope for a good turnout.

If you want to join the working party, contact [eileen@eileenclayton.net](mailto:eileen@eileenclayton.net) or phone Eileen or Neil on 01766 770860





# Hike for Harri

**Rachel Turner**, partner of Dinas stalwart and WHR driver Bryn Jones, is planning to walk up Snowdon in June in a bid to raise 1,000 for Alder Hey Childrens' Hospital, where her son Harri underwent surgery to cure epilepsy.

Says Rachel: "Our youngest son Harri was diagnosed with a lesion on his brain which resulted in epilepsy. It proved to be drug resistant which means that Harri would never achieve seizure freedom. Each nocturnal seizure Harri experienced was dangerous as were his day time seizures.

"The team looking after Harri asked for us to explore the option for epilepsy brain surgery. Once all of the tests were completed, we were given the hard choice. To give Harri the best chance to lead a normal, seizure free life, we opted for the surgery.

"On the 25th of August 2015, the surgery took place. It was the longest day of our lives and after 8 hours of surgery, my beautiful boy was in recovery. We are so grateful for the world class care we received at Alder Hey as a family.

"As I am writing this Harri has not had a single seizure. We have started to live our lives again and Harri is enjoying normal activities that any 11 year old take for granted. We want to raise as much money for the Neurosurgical ward that gave my son his life back."



Top: Jac, Harri, Bryn and Rachel

Below: Bryn on 138



If you can help sponsor Rachel, go to Just Giving at:  
[www.justgiving.com/Rachel-Turner17](http://www.justgiving.com/Rachel-Turner17)

**GŴYL GERDDED TREFRIW WALKING FESTIVAL**  
2016  
Mai 20 - 22 May

Just 4 miles from Betws-y-Coed, in the Conwy valley Trefriw now hosts the region's premier walking and adventure festival and this year's is bigger and better. Over three days in May we have a fantastic variety of engaging walks, exciting high routes and inspiring outdoor activities to suit all tastes and abilities.

**2016 is the Visit Wales Year of Adventure so why not.....**  
Pull on your boots, and follow in the footsteps of ancient drovers, scramble up a white water gorge, discover landscape photography, conquer Tryfan, learn navigation and knots, forage for wild food, uncover medieval medicines, explore our industrial archaeology, get into geocaching, and join loads of lakeside, mountain and valley walks.

The walks are guided, with safety equipment provided where necessary. All walks are free, but donations are welcome.

Places are limited on each walk so please book in advance on our website below where you can find lots more information and our full terms and conditions.

[www.trefriwwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.trefriwwalkingfestival.co.uk)



The next stage of the Boston Lodge redevelopment has started with land clearance and levelling at the foot of the cliff to make space for a storage facility to be built in the future.



# Looking for new blood

**Our station adopters** at Blaenau do a great job but they are being held back by illness and age constraints. So they are putting out a plea to those of you who live close by hoping that you might be able to give them some support. They meet every Sunday for the main working party but clear rubbish daily. If you would like to help Sally, Reg and co, please contact Clare Britton. [Cbritton@ffwhr.com](mailto:Cbritton@ffwhr.com).



## Rheilffyrdd Ffestiniog ac Eryri Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways **Safety Bulletin 4** February 2016



# Licensed— but for what?



cnn.com

We all know what  
Bond is licensed to  
do—but what about  
**you?**

**A recent incident involving a poorly secured load on a PWay pick up truck has identified a training issue. If you drive a Company vehicle you must:**

- Ensure you have had your licence details verified for insurance purposes—check with your department manager
- Ensure you have the necessary vehicle categories on your licence
- Be trained, approved, and listed as competent by your department manager
- Check lights, tyre pressures, screenwash, oil, etc.
- Ensure that you comply with the legal requirements for that type of vehicle— speed limits, loads, trailers, etc.
- Know where you're going — think about route/directions, height restrictions, rest breaks, fuel, tolls, emergency contacts, etc.
- Complete the vehicle log book for your journey

**Lastly, don't forget—if you incur any penalties, we need to know!**



## Coming down the track...

- 16 April The Snowdonian 80 mile round trip
- 30 April-2 May FRS Members' Weekend
- 30 April Launch of new FR train
- May 6-8, Meeting at Ffrisby, France
- May 6-8 Liverpool, launch of *Darvel/Adamsan*
- 20 - 22 May WHR Gwern y Cledrau/Rail Ale
- 23 July - 23 Aug Summer of Fun
- 28 July, 4, 11, 18, 25 Aug FR Jazz Trains
- 12-13 August, Shrewsbury Flower Show
- 18-21 August, Southport Flower Show
- 21 Aug Classic Car & Family Day at Dinas
- 9-11 Sept WHR Super Power
- 18 Sept Ras y Cob
- 24 Sept Trailfest
- 7-9 Oct FR Victorian Weekend.
- 27, 28, 29 Oct FR Halloween trains
- 27 Oct WHR Halloween Train
- 10, 11, 17, 18, 22, 23 Dec WHR Santa trains
- 10, 11, 17, 18, 22 Dec FR Santa Trains

Snow in the distance seen from Harbour Station on March 5th