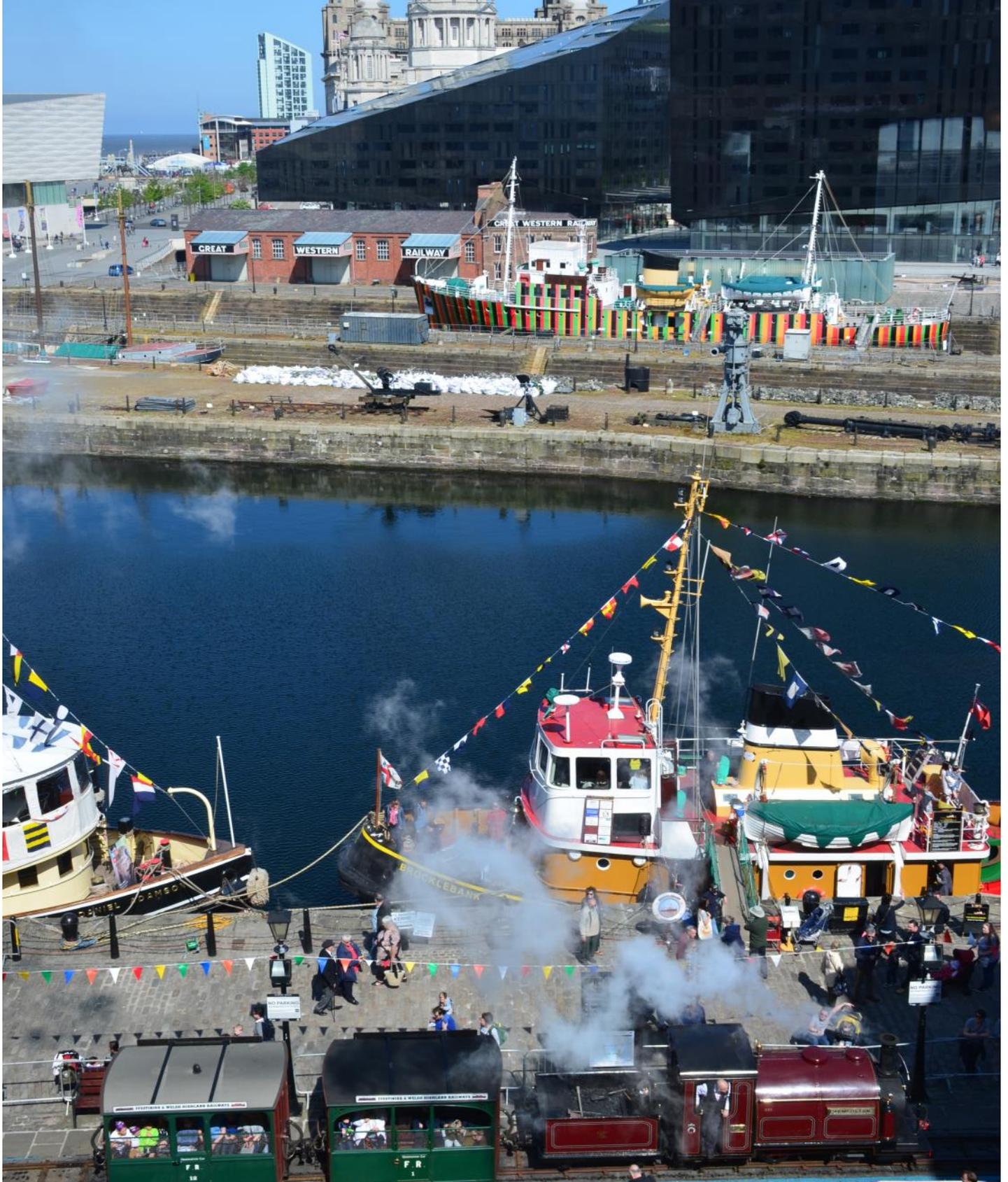


# Inside Motion

May 2017

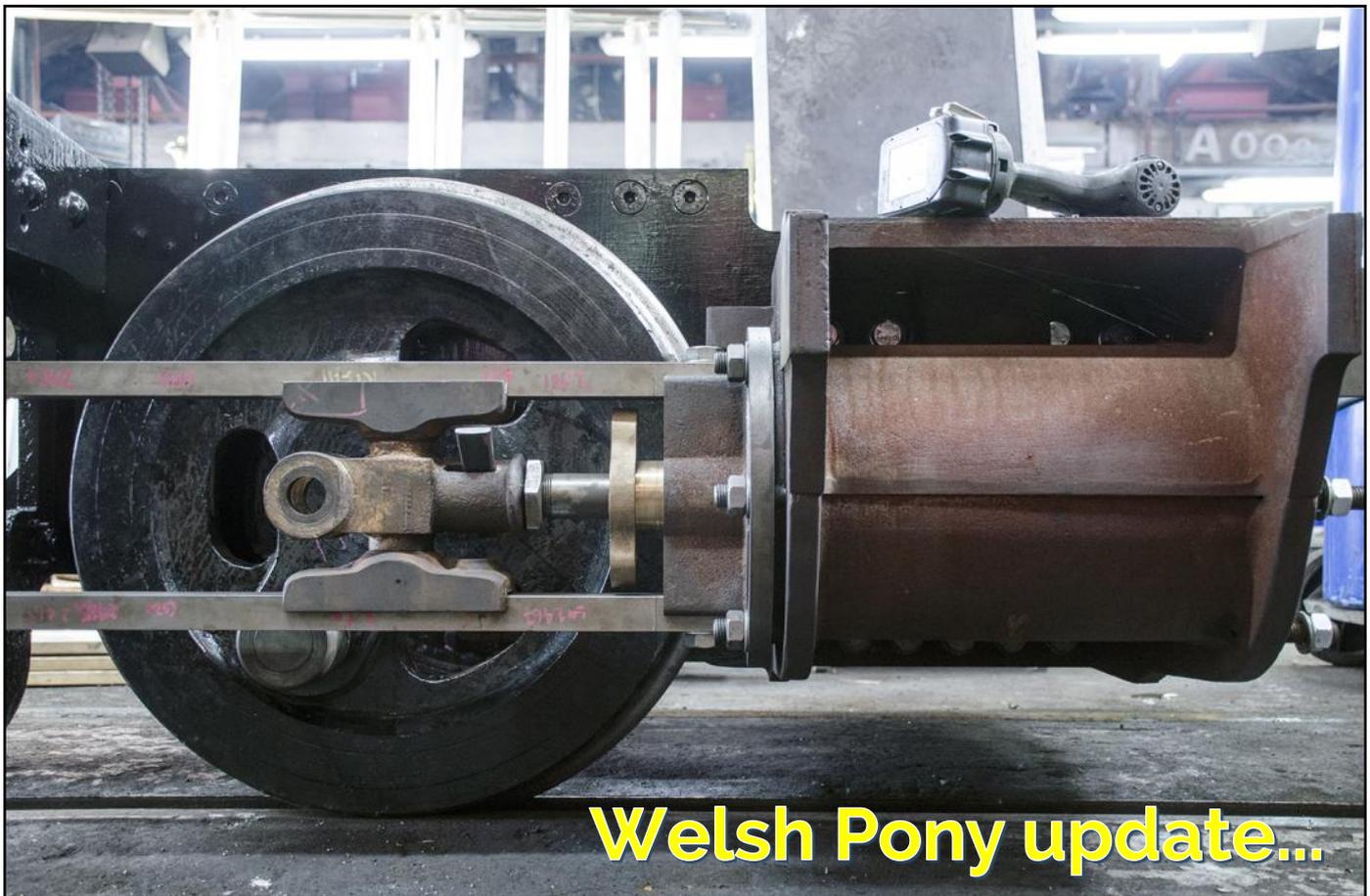
News and information for staff, volunteers and supporters of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways



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)



## Welsh Pony update...

The new boiler for *Welsh Pony* has now passed a hydraulic test. This was a proud moment as what is the third boiler built at Boston Lodge reached an important milestone – although it is, of course, the fourth boiler that *Welsh Pony* will have carried.

By the time you read this the first fire may have been lit in the new boiler, prior to its installation in the frames. This is all happening very soon after *Quirks and Curiosities II* weekend, when the new chassis was seen on the original wheels for the first time. A lot more has been done too that isn't so obvious. Many smaller components have been overhauled or renewed and we also have to mention the construction of an entirely new tender to the original design, complete with vacuum brakes just like the one to which *Welsh Pony* was coupled for many years under the Old Company.

The Society AGM weekend gave members a chance to see the old and new parts of the locomotive side by side whilst this was still possible. The 1890 frames and 1912 boiler are to be taken to Minffordd for safe storage and the new parts will soon be obscured from view as the engine is erected. It's interesting to note that history is repeating itself as, back in 1889, the new frames for *Welsh Pony* were being built whilst the original machine was still in traffic. Those frames are, of course, the worn-out relics we are now replacing. The replacement operation has been quite revealing, and vividly reminds us how much of the story of this engine has come to light as result of the restoration work. A good example of these discoveries is the finding of an enormous steel strap tied round the back end of the main frames next to the firebox. This no doubt dates

from a time when money for a proper overhaul was simply unavailable, and Boston Lodge fitters had to address the problem of a sagging rear end, and springs working their way out of place in the frames, by lateral thinking ('Think – Maybe we can Bodge this job!' as a sign in the Erecting Shop at Boston Lodge once read...). They would have known that this was very much a sticking-plaster job and it would be interesting to know how bad things had become before the application of this strap – and, indeed, if it achieved the desired result.

The state of the axle-boxes, and the grooves worn in the frames where the backs of the wheels were cutting into them, also tell a story of a very tired engine. We had hoped to save the old axle-boxes, and they sat next to the boring machine for a very long time whilst our machinists considered how best to deal with them. In the end it was apparent that any amount of work wasn't really going to give a satisfactory result. The spring pockets were cracked, the wear to every face was considerable and even the wear plates fitted at the locomotive's most recent overhaul were heavily worn. This wear was so great that the wheels could press against the frames, hence the grooves.

Along with evidence of many other low-cost repairs these findings provide us with a graphic indication of the fight that must have been waged to keep things going as the Railway struggled through the 1930s, and just how much *Welsh Pony*, and doubtless the rest of the locomotive fleet, was used to the very limit of its service life.

The dome cover also told a story of how skills were in short supply. With no capacity to repair the old or to shape a new cover the look of engine was made all the poorer by a lashed-up cover. This ill-fitting, lopsided cover lasted until the engine was dismantled, but only just. When we came to consider doing something with it it fell apart...

There have been questions of course about the extent of the wear on the old frames. Side by side comparison speaks a thousand words. Where the frames pass through the cylinder and steam chest assembly, below the smokebox, acidic conditions created by damp ash lying for decades have eaten the frame away completely, leaving them seriously weakened. What remains has signs of heavy de-lamination and the area just behind the cylinders is similarly affected. This is very serious in a component that transmits pulling forces. Having said this, retaining these frames as an historical artefact will provide a fascinating resource for those wanting to see for themselves what happens when a locomotive is used to the very end of its usefulness, something that is not easily seen or researched from a complete locomotive.

It's fair to say that *Welsh Pony* has become a bigger project than we had imagined when we started, although this is nearly always the case with steam engine overhauls. However, we are making solid progress and producing a high-quality result. We've raised more than £150,000 so far, and are close to having spent that amount too. Encouragingly, we have achieved a lot for this money – a brand new boiler, new frames and cylinders, and a complete overhaul of the valve gear and motion, with the current exception of the coupling and connecting rods. A number of boiler fittings have also been repaired, and the saddle tank and cab have been conserved. Plus, of course, a new tender has been built with new wheel sets, also made at Boston Lodge.

It's an interesting reflection that, in the early days of preservation, locomotives brought back into service generally had a fair amount of life left in their major components and any attention needed was typically to wearing parts. These days we find quite the opposite and owning groups are having to face up to the challenge of replacing material at the very heart of their machines. For example, the oldest-surviving Black Five, No.5025, is getting new cylinders and large sections of its frames replaced, and *Flying Scotsman* is another example, where large amounts of material have been replaced during its latest, protracted and very expensive, overhaul. Severn Valley Railway flagship *Hagley Hall* needs a new cylinder block at an estimated cost of £60,000, and No.60532 *Blue Peter* is to be fitted with a new middle cylinder. Thank goodness we are dealing with narrow-gauge machines where our money goes much further!

Of course the parts replaced on *Welsh Pony* are very similar to those replaced on *Prince* over the years – it's just that *Prince* has had these parts replaced piecemeal over a long period, whereas the Large England is getting many new parts at the same time and – very importantly – the old parts are being kept

for study rather than scrapped. A look at the post-1954 history of *Prince*'s frame makes for interesting reading. With a stream of repairs and modifications throughout the preservation era which have changed them considerably. One wonders whether wholesale renewal might have been the better option. Time alone will tell, as we make the comparison with *Welsh Pony* in years to come, although both locomotives will doubtless have a gentler existence than *Prince* endured from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Turning to what comes next, work will have to continue at a slower pace as we can only spend funds as they come in. We will be marrying the frames to the boiler



and fitting the valve gear. On the mechanical side we will turn our attention to the rods, and our fabricators will look at building a new smokebox, and lagging the boiler.

We are frequently asked about the livery that the restored locomotive will wear, and I can confirm that it will be erected and tested in unlined deep plum livery (the same colour as the lower panels on the original bogie carriages). When the initial tests have proved satisfactory it will be repainted into a launch livery of Garraway-era green and black, with red lining. This is because the overhaul of the locomotive is dedicated to what Allan called 'unfinished business' and is a project to which he made the initial donation, and founded the Welsh Pony Fund, a year or so before he passed away.

After the launch there will doubtless be a demand to see the fabled 1930s blue livery. However, for the moment *Welsh Pony* still remains unfinished business. Do please help as we strive to change that and bring back to life a locomotive that should remain available for the enjoyment of both enthusiasts and the general public for many generations to come.

*Paul Lewin*

# Joinery Students at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor Skill Up for Ffestiniog Railway

**The Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways** have a long history, with the Ffestiniog line dating back to the early 1830s. A number of heritage buildings survive along the line and these are now being carefully restored to ensure that they will continue to form part of the local scene for many years to come. The restoration of historic buildings requires specialist joinery, made using the same skills as the original craftsmen. In these days of 'one size fits all' woodwork together with the widespread use of plastics, these skills are very hard to find.

It is extremely fortunate, therefore, that a partnership has been forged between the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways and Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor's joinery department at their Camda centre in Dolgellau. The railway provides good quality traditional materials, which the students then use to create bespoke joinery of the very highest standards. Sometimes drawings are supplied by the railway, but when replicas of existing pieces are required, the students come to site to measure up and undertake the whole process from start to finish.

Currently in the workshops at Dolgellau are some very large doors for the 1872 Goods Shed at Minffordd, which is undergoing a major restoration. These are being made from top quality softwood which will be pressure treated before final assembly by Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor students on site at Minffordd. Also in the College workshops is a replica porch for the Old Locomotive Supervisors Office at the railway's historic Boston Lodge Works.



The College has been very much involved in the restoration of the Old Locomotive Supervisor's Office, which is one of the oldest buildings on site. Students have helped with repairs to the roof structure and chimney as well as replacement joinery. Recently they have built a superb replica of the 19th century window to the front of the building which will replace a window fitted in the 1960's. The porch is a complex and intricate structure that is being built to a superb standard. The wood being used is Utile, which is the same timber as the railway

uses to build its carriages. The result looks more like a piece of furniture than a porch and is something of a work of art. The railway is hoping to fit these items and complete the external restoration of this building during the course of the summer.

**James Hamlin** of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways said:

*We are very pleased to have been working closely with the woodwork students at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor for a number of years now. Their contribution to our historic buildings programme has been huge and we are extremely grateful for their help. Over the years they have supplied us with a wide variety of joinery products and the standard of their work has always been superb. The designs are copies of the originals, which were built to last. This, combined with the best materials and fine workmanship should ensure that anybody visiting the railway will be able to see their work in use and looking good for many years to come.*

**Michael Taylor**, Programme Area Manager in Construction and Engineering at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor said:

*Working with the Ffestiniog Railway has been a win-win situation for all concerned and we would like to thank the staff at the Railway for their very positive collaboration with us. The joinery students get an opportunity to work with wood of the highest quality and also gain valuable work experience producing finished products of conservation grade by following complex design plans where pinpoint accuracy is key.*

*The students also get the satisfaction of seeing their work showcased in the real-life environment of the Ffestiniog Railway, where it is seen and appreciated by hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.*

Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor offers a range of qualifications, including degrees, in a wide number of subjects.

For more information about courses at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, please call the college's Learner Services team on 01341 422 827. Email: [enquiries.dolgellau@gllm.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries.dolgellau@gllm.ac.uk)



# Rest of the World Gang—May working week

## Simon Banbury reports...

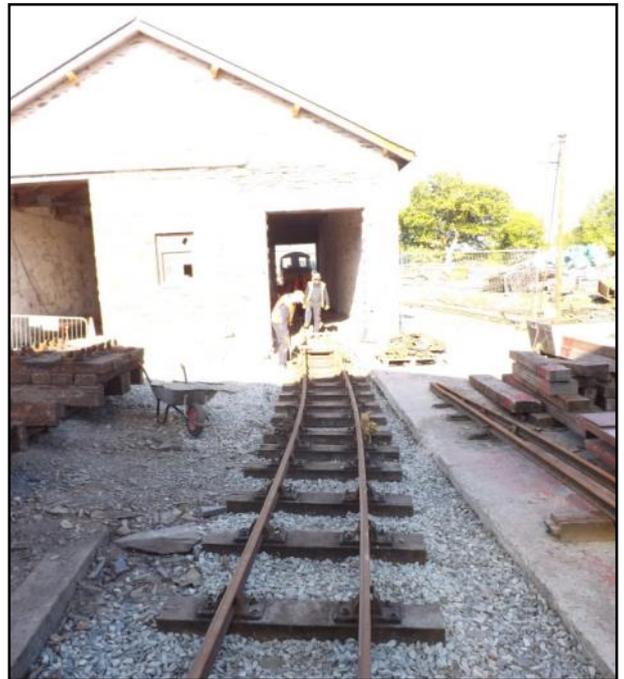
I've just got back from a week in Minffordd. We were only a small group this time so we were given jobs suitable for the team size. Firstly relaying the tamper siding in Minffordd depot.

Then relaying the track through the restored goods shed. The sleepers in the half nearest the new shed were totally rotten so were replaced and the original 'S' shaped chairs reused. They were screwed to the new sleepers rather than nailed as before. Track then realigned and tamped. We then raised the recently laid section of track between this building and the new wagon shed. This needed raising by up to 6" and realigning to get a better curve into the shed.

We were then sent to TanyBwlch to tamp some voids under the sleepers at the North end of the station where the sleepers were moving with the heat.

Finally to the cutting at the South end of the station where shims were needed to level the track over some of the uneven joints.

The final picture is from the side door of my camper van. I parked in the Minffordd field as usual and was sharing it with a couple of caravans. When I came back there was a steam engine, on a low loader, next to me. It was leaving for Statfold in the morning so the driver was sleeping in the cab. The weather there was fantastic. Not too hot to work, but sunny with a cool



# Carriage Works Update

**In the carriage works at present** there are a number vehicles which are not really revenue earning and so if we wish to refurbish or build them we have to do it with volunteer labour.

At present in the works we have Ashbury 21, Van 99 (what was the electrical van) and Bug Boxes 2 and 5. We also have the Hearse Van which has come for maintenance work from the '64 Co.

All are being worked on at various times depending upon what volunteers and what skills are available.

Recently, we were lucky to have the services of Sarah Jarman (right) who is a skilled painter/signwriter. She spent a few days working on the 1st class Bug Box no 2, including regilding the (real) gold lines. Last weekend we had the regular monthly volunteer weekend and progressed Ashbury 21, 99 Van brake parts and lots of other little jobs.

This week Carol has been painting lots of things, Phil has been making TYB gates, John has been working on Ashbury 21 door locks and Chris has been working on 99 Van. Next week Steve is at Boston Lodge to do



## Statfold Barn trip

Rheilffordd Eryri – Grŵp Gogledd Cymru / W H R - North Wales Group

### NEWS FLASH!

One day trip in June.

As we cannot get a reasonable ticket price from Arriva Trains Wales for group travel to the locations we want and also the fact that the Penhelig Arms have still not sent us a menu or price list, therefore we have decided to forego the planned trip on 3rd June.

However, we are offering an alternative a week later, Saturday 10th June to the Statfold Barn Railway near Tamworth. As many of you know the Statfold Barn Railway is only open on about four days a year and we had a very enjoyable visit here some years back. The railway is not open to the public and we have to make a request for an invitation, in advance with full payment of a donation as well as everybody's name.

The trip is as follows:

- Outward travel from North Wales, the starting point will depend on numbers coming but could be Porthmadog or Penygroes, then picking up at Dinas, Caernarfon, Bangor and along the North Wales coast/A55. There will be a short break midway and then arrival at the railway at about 11:30.
- Depart the railway at about 15:00 and travel to the Tame Otter, Hopwas, Tamworth for a meal and refreshments.
- Depart for North Wales at about 17:00, arrival back at Penygroes at about 21:00.

The total cost is £30 for North Wales Group members, £32 for non-members; this includes the donation (it's not an entry fee) to Statfold Barn Railway and the coach. We will place a block booking for a meal at the Tame Otter, Hopwas, Tamworth and everyone to pay for their meal at the pub.

Also, please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to come on this trip so that we have an indication of numbers, as a low number may cause the cost to go up.

Elwyn – email – [elwynjos@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:elwynjos@hotmail.co.uk) Telephone – 07840 910460 / 01286 830856.

Dafydd – email – [tycroes@btinternet.com](mailto:tycroes@btinternet.com) Telephone – 07800 846103 / 01248 681019.

# Young Volunteers' Training Week 2017

**We are pleased to report** that places for Young Volunteers are filling up rapidly, including a rather larger than usual number of first time participants, which is encouraging. There are still a few places available; please contact Tricia [tdoyle@ffwhr.com](mailto:tdoyle@ffwhr.com) or Jo [jvincent@ffwhr.com](mailto:jvincent@ffwhr.com) if you are interested. We would welcome some girls as the balance of the sexes is very uneven at the moment and experience tells us that mixed groups achieve the best results and often have the most fun!



We would also be very interested to hear from potential new adult helpers, in order to expand and refresh the ranks of the team who support the Young Volunteers while they are gaining experience. This is one of the most satisfying ways of volunteering to help the Railway and one is, in effect, getting double value for one's efforts in the form of enthusing young people and sowing the seeds of the 'FR Bug'. We are a very sociable team and will be happy to welcome you; practical skills are not essential, though they do help. Please contact either Tricia or Jo to register or Adrian [agray@ffwhr.com](mailto:agray@ffwhr.com) to ask any questions.

The list of projects has been refined after a recent visit to the Lodge. Our 'headline' this year will be to install new, wooden, doors to 4-road of the Erecting Shop and a new, traditional appearance, window frame adjacent. These have been made for us by the Carriage Works, following very generous sponsorship from a regular and long-standing volunteer, to whom we offer our sincere thanks. A second team will also be working along the front of the Erecting Shop, installing replacement cast-iron guttering, sponsored by the FR Heritage Group. The original gutter succumbed to *anno domini* just over a year ago and a plastic, gutter was installed as a temporary measure. This will not be wasted as we hope to transfer it to the front of the Blacksmith's shop, to arrest the effects of dripping water while that building awaits its turn for restoration. If we can muster a third team and access platform we will also replace broken cast-iron gutter on the Brass Foundry.

Further up the site we have agreed to help finish the new access ramp by installing a rail-built barrier along the outer edge – it will be much less intrusive than a modern Armco barrier. A second team will undertake a project commissioned by Alex Spring, replacing the rotten sleepers used as a ballast shoulder between the main line and the lane to Nos.3 & 4 Boston Lodge. The initial plan, to reinstall sleepers, has been superseded by the generous gift of more than enough granite kerb stones which will enable us to achieve a much better result.

There will be painting! The doors and window frame for the Erecting Shop will need to be dealt with and several windows and the fascia boards of the Den are looking tired. There are some other projects involving carpentry, remaking the box around the emergency fire pump and installing heritage doors instead of the sliding door (which no longer slides!) into the top machine shop. An offer to install the windows and door in Plas Smart, consequent upon comments at the Society AGM, has been overtaken by an offer by another party to complete the whole Plas Smart project, which will be a more satisfactory outcome.

The social side of YVTW (get used to it, Kids are passé!) seems likely to follow traditional lines and we can but hope that Beach Night can go ahead this year.

Please, come and join us; YVTW2017 runs from Saturday 29th July until Friday 4th August. I can do no more than restate the immense satisfaction that I and all my colleagues feel when we see young people with whom we have shared time and experience enjoying their work on the Railway.

# New board appointment

**We are delighted** to announce that David Keay has recently been appointed to the company board.

David is an independent engineering and operational advisor for railways and tramways worldwide.

He has recently retired from the Railway Inspectorate as Deputy Chief Inspector where he spent 20 years overseeing the regulation of Britain's railways and tramways from concept to operation.

David is an experienced railway and tramway engineer, having over 40 years of experience in design, development, commissioning, research, operations and safety in the industry. He has worked on railway systems in North America, the Far East and the UK.



He says:

*"It is a great honour to have been asked to join the board of what is undoubtedly the finest tourist railway in the UK.*

*I have been visiting the railway since the 1960's and it has always held a special place in my heart. I look forward to working with a really knowledgeable team to help with ongoing engineering development and sustainability."*

# Welcome Helen Williams!

**We'd like to take this opportunity** to welcome Helen Williams to the company. Helen has recently been appointed Marketing Manager, and arrives in North Wales with a wealth of experience in her field..

Clearly Helen is on a steep learning curve as far as the workings of the F&WHR are concerned, and part of that learning process involves visiting all locations on the railway and talking to staff and volunteers about their roles and responsibilities.

Please take the time to make her welcome!

Helen can be contacted on 07919 414871 or email [hwilliams@ffwhr.com](mailto:hwilliams@ffwhr.com).



# In Brief...

## Operating Department Vacancy

The Operating Department has a vacancy for a guard/trainee guard from 15th July until 1st September. Please contact Seán Britton by email or post if you are interested.

## In memory of Paul Harris, 1935-2017

A celebration of Paul's life will be held on Sunday 25th June at 12 noon, at Lovatt House, Wharncliffe Road, Loughborough LE11 1SL.

A formal funeral service will be arranged at some time in the future as Paul donated his body to medical science.

Family and friends are warmly welcomed. To assist with planning, it would be greatly appreciated if you could let us know if you would like to attend.

Laura Harris  
laura@locoshed.co.uk  
07855725713

## Waggon Tracks Shed Working Parties

Waggon Tracks Shed Working Party dates to the end of the year are:

**8th & 9th of July**

**26th-28th of August (Bank Holiday)**

**23rd & 24th of September**

**25th & 26th of November**

**28th-31st of December**

The team are always looking for more volunteer assistance. If you're interested, please contact Will High on [williamchigh@gmail.com](mailto:williamchigh@gmail.com) or 07812 922172.



# From the archives...

Loco roster from May 1982—Some familiar names here!...

## Festiniog Railway Company Locomotive Roster for May 25 1982

Duty Time	Train Time	Locomotive	Driver	Firemen	Notes
Book on 07.30	09.30	<u>Linda</u>	K.C.	A. SELL K. SELL	12 cars export to miffordd Loop Shunt leading 4 cars on to 10.10 train at 10.10. Then form 11.41 train ex miffordd.
Book on 08.00		Uppor Castle	J.H.	P.M.	To miffordd Loop
Book on 08.00	09.55	<u>Blanche</u>	ADY	G. Jones	To Tan-y-Grisiau Only.
—		Uppor Castle	J.H.	P.M.	CREW CHANGE BLN 11.40 Ex miffordd Loop to Tan-y-Gulch. Return ex Tan-y-Gulch. 15.05.
Book on 08.00	10.10	<u>E of M</u>	E.M.D.	S M <sup>c</sup> Mahone.	First through train with V.I.P. Welsh speaking crew Rear 8 cars only ex forthwading 4 extra cars shunted on at miffordd. Non-Stop - Central to Park on return. To carry in 10.40. 10.40. 10.40. "BIRCHALL" - down Fire man available to staff duty by 12.00. CREW CHANGE BLN 12.00. Post 12.00.
—		EX MINFORDD Loop	<u>Linda</u>	K.C.	A. Sell K. Sell
Crew to be Available for loco roster by 10.30 CREW CHANGE BLN 11.40	12.25	<u>Blanche</u>	P.J.D.	R. Hanlon M. Prodsham	CREW CHANGE BLN 12.00. Then back off First Public Train, and Metal holders. Footplate pass N° 88 ISSUED AT TAN-Y-GULCH A.S. REES - SVR.
Book on 10.30	13.21	<u>M.E.</u>	P.R.G.	C. Richardson	Locomotive to forthwading 12.15. V.I.P.'S ONLY Return with Uppor Castle Ex Tan-y-Gulch. 15.05
Crew to be available for loco roster by 11.30	14.05	<u>Prince</u>	C.R.G.	N Dant	Locomotive to forthwading 13.30 metal holders on site. BL WATER ON TO TAN-Y-GULCH CREW CHANGE BLN 16.25.
Crew to be available for loco roster by 13.00 CREW CHANGE BLN 13.50	15.00	<u>Linda</u>	W.F.S.	S. Rogers P. Hilton	Public Train.
Crew to be available for loco roster by 13.00	15.55	<u>E of M</u>	A.B.	P. Martin	Locomotive to forthwading 15.15 Public Train FIREMEN CHANGE 13.00 CREW CHANGE BLN 16.25. Post 13.00.
Crew to be available for loco roster by 15.30 CREW CHANGE BLN 16.25	16.47	<u>Prince</u>	J.E.C.	J. Hopkins A. Carr	Non-Stop to Central? Non-Stop to forthwading 11 Public Train.

# Coming down the track...

- June 10th : The "Snowdonian Limited"
- August 11th & 12th : Palmerston at Shrewsbury Flower Show
- August 20th : Classic Car Show & Family Day
- August 24th : Rock 'n' Roll @ Tan y Bwlch
- September 15th—17th : Welsh Highland Railway Super Power
- September 21st—24th : Prince in steam at the Severn Valley Railway



87 approaches Pont Cae'r Gors after a long climb from Beddgetert