

Inside Motion

October 2017

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



This 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 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

A letter of thanks...

Following an incident in Harbour Station Shop on Monday September 18th, this letter was received:

Dear Sirs,

I would like to express my thanks to the staff of the FR Shop at Harbour station who assisted in any way on Monday 18th September last, in helping and assisting my wife Audrey when she collapsed whilst browsing the books section in the shop that afternoon.

In particular, Steve Morris, the shop manager. Also Krisie, Sarah and Vicki who did everything possible to mitigate Audrey's discomfort, once she had regained consciousness.

Whilst we were advised by Porthmadog hospital to visit Ysbyty Gwynedd to be checked over, this was eventually declined as this condition has occurred before and no advantage would have been gained, although now recovered fully, she is having this recurring condition examined by her GP.

Many thanks again to all concerned.

Nick Welch

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Funeral of John Powell

The FR family made its presence felt in grand style to say goodbye to John, including several members who had made significant journeys. This was greatly appreciated by his cousin Stephen, who had travelled from Lincolnshire. Stephen has resolved to bring his family and John's other cousins to visit the TLC during 2018.

Thanks are due to Martin, Sam, Mel and the other staff of Spooner's for providing an excellent buffet and to all who came to Bangor and to Spooner's.

The retiring collection raised £475 for the Welsh Air Ambulance which will be enhanced by Gift Aid, thanks to the special envelopes organised by Norman Bond, an initiative that John would have heartily approved of.

John's ashes were carried to Tan y Bwlch, using the hearse van, on the Saturday of the Vintage Weekend. In accordance with his wishes they were placed in the Memorial garden by the water tower after the arrival of the FRHG special train, before the pre-AGM supper.

Thank you all,

Adrian & Graham

Platform Benches

Keith Holland is going undertake refurbishing some of our more long standing platform benches and could do with help in getting the bits brought back to Dinas.

The designated day is Monday, 6th November; so if you can help Keith on that day please contact him on -

Finance Department

k1_steamhammer@hotmail.com

The Finance Department is looking to strengthen the finance team with the appointment of a new full-time Finance Manager from early 2018. Colin Burt has held this post since 2003, and will be moving to a part-time role supporting both the Finance Department and other projects within the railway.

The post is at Senior Management level and interfaces with the General Manager, the Finance Director, and other Department Heads and staff. The post is based at Harbour Station, Porthmadog.

Closing date for applications will be the 15th November, - for further information please e-mail Colin at cburt@ffwhr.com.

Colin Burt

Young Volunteers' Training Week

Three significant projects were agreed early in the planning for Young Volunteers' Training Week (YVTW). Others appeared, as if by magic, quite late in the day, one just a few days before the event!

Part 3 of our ongoing assault upon the façade of the Erecting Shop, replacing the doors on 4 Road, had been given added imperative by the generous sponsorship of materials for new, wooden, doors and a replacement for the adjacent window, by a very long-serving volunteer, so we were determined to show that he had made a useful investment. The doors and window frame were built by Dave Gunn and volunteers in the Carriage Works to their usual high standard and were delivered complete with primer, undercoat and most of the first gloss coat already applied. The mechanical staff, who gave help with making and modifying hinges at short notice, are now looking forward to an even cosier winter without the draughts from the missing window panes! The façade of the Works has taken another step forward and it seems the only disgruntled parties may be the swallows who flew in and out where glass should have been!

Early in 2016 the cast iron gutter across the front of the Erecting Shop was 'retired'; a couple of sections had collapsed and others were so cobwebby as to leak almost as much water as they carried! James Hamlin and Anth Brierley recovered everything worth saving and installed a 'temporary' plastic gutter to serve until money could be found to buy enough new material. This was sponsored by the FR Heritage Group, in order that YVTW2017 could reinstate the cast iron gutter after recovering the nearly new plastic for use elsewhere. This project was notable for setting a new record, reducing the 'temporary' period for an FR installation from the norm of 15 years to a mere 15 months!

Alex Spring commissioned YVTW to renew the rotten sleepers forming a ballast retaining shoulder between the main line and the drive to Boston Lodge Cottages. Originally planned as a straightforward pick & shovel job that would give young people experience of working adjacent to the line under traffic this project developed into something rather more complex after the railway received an unexpected donation of substantial, granite, kerb stones which, set into a concrete bed, would provide a more durable and visually attractive ballast wall. A deeper trench was required, so pick & shovel were augmented with a mini-digger, which had the benefit of being able to lift and carry some of the heavier stones, rather than risking young backs.

A second project, commissioned by Ian Hartill, was to install a visually unobtrusive, rail-built,



barrier up the outer side of the new access ramp. The design was simple; uprights comprising pre-cut and pre-drilled lengths of rail set into pre-installed plastic pipe sockets and then lengths of bullhead rail as the horizontal element. All well and good when you say it quickly but the reality was a very instructive exercise in handling and adapting used rails that were far from the right shape for the intended location. Some of the Young Volunteers on this project had been expected to work with the P.Way gang, replacing more base plates alongside the engine shed, a project that had to be deferred, but the team were still judged to have completed their P.Way training module after learning how to manipulate and fit rails using a Jim Crow and other tools. Painted black, the barrier perfectly fulfils the specification.



Clearing the S&T workshop and the remaining S&T materials from the Blacksmiths' Shop to the new stores at Minfordd yard was a project that wasn't so much training as helpful; S&T got all their 'bits' in one place and Boston Lodge got their buildings back.

On the Tuesday of our set up week I was taking a quiet panad in the Den when Tony Williams spread his arms wide to indicate the work stained state of the walls and declared, "Your lot did a wonderful job but, look at this, it's awful, I can't let my lads live in this for another year!" He had a glint in his eye but I wish I had been able to record the look of surprise and then the smile on his face when I replied, without a moment's hesitation, "OK, fresh paint on walls and ceiling but we won't do any of the gloss paint this time." There was time to do the corridor as well, and the team were rewarded by thanks from several members of the staff.



Inside the Works a couple of senior young volunteers learned a great deal about the anatomy of Blanche while helping to fettle parts of her motion and then reinstall the boiler in the frames. The training elements of this project were greatly enhanced by the very positive and supportive approach of the two fitters who oversaw the project for the Works.

Unfortunately, some of our 2017 projects did not make it over the finishing line.

We had planned to install three board crossings, one at the top of the Tollgate steps and the others beside Plas Smart. This plan foundered upon the inability of DIY rated tools to cope with the challenges presented by sleepers. The youngsters learned a great deal about planning, measuring and marking out and, I suppose, about finding the right tools for a job. It was not until the P.Way gang, unavoidably employed elsewhere at the start of the week, turned up with their heavy duty equipment, that real progress was made. The team did get the crossing over the main line beside Plas Smart installed, so they understood the whole process.



Removal of the life-expired wooden structure around the old emergency fire-pump was the work of minutes, it really was rotten. Works' staff had already removed the machinery so the next stage was to make the area safe, including installation of a new, heavy duty manhole cover over the well that formerly served the steam engine which drove the Works' machinery. The large opening had been capped with a very Dukeian construction of chequerplate, weldmesh and slate slabs that had to be treated carefully. The manhole cover was installed but making the area safe by installing railings was where things became delayed as communication with the French engineering students deputed to help with fabrication became a bit strained. The same issues meant that installing a new barrier out of the Top Yard on to the Controlled Roadway did not proceed as far as planned.



As well as the support we always receive from Boston Lodge we were very grateful to the members of the P.Way gang who joined us to support several projects this year. Of course, they may have been attracted by our excellent catering! We are grateful also to the staff from Harbour station who shared the catering roster this year.

The 'after-work', social, activities of YVTW almost followed their usual pattern; Monday's ride to Beddgelert was diverted to Tanybwllch but Taliesin and Palmerston slipped to a stand above Gysgfa in damp conditions. Beach night was achieved this year, though the weather was catchy through the week it never prevented planned activities.

As usual we stored the youngsters in Penrhyn hostel and Gelliwig in Porthmadog, in the care of our stalwart House Parents. Sadly, a very small group of the young people at Gelliwig managed to make life quite difficult, in a way we have not suffered before, particularly on the final Friday evening which was very disappointing at the end of what had been an otherwise enjoyable and productive week.



2018 Volunteer Liaison Meeting

That time of year is coming round again! This event is aimed at present and past volunteers.

Venue:

Grappenhall Community Centre,
Bellhouse Lane,
Grappenhall,
WARRINGTON,
Cheshire,
WA4 2SG.

Cost: NIL. The FR Society Board funds the cost of the event, including refreshments and lunch.

If you would like to attend the 2018 meeting please use the attached booking form. 75 places are available to volunteers and only completed and returned registration forms will be counted towards the allocation of places. If there is greater demand for places than those available, a reserves list will be established. FR Society Directors and attending Company Officers have their own allocation. Registration will close on Monday 22nd January 2018. We regret that it will not be possible to attend unless you have registered.

If you have any items for the Agenda or questions for FR Company Officers, please forward them to me (secretary@ffestiniograilway.org.uk or by letter via Harbour Station) by Monday 8th January 2018.

Travel Instructions

By car: From Lymm Interchange (M6 Junction 20 / M56 Junction 9) take the A50 towards Warrington. After 1½ miles, pass over the Bridgewater Canal and take the 1st left signposted Grappenhall Village and Community Centre. Large car park adjacent to the venue.

By train: Warrington Bank Quay (WBQ), Central (WAC) then taxi.

Accommodation

If you wish to travel and stay over (before or after) the Warrington South Premier Inn is quite near and inexpensive. For something a bit more cosy the Hallmark Hotel Warrington,

Knutsford Old Road, WA4 2LD has also been recommended.

John E Fenner

Secretary – Ffestiniog Railway Society

In Brief...

Bashing!

We now have confirmed dates for Megabash and Gigabash 2018. These will take place on March 24th/25th and October 13th/14th 2018 respectively.

For more information please contact Howard Wilson—howard@quarrylane.net

Waggon Tracks Shed Working Parties

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

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 or 07812 922172.



Area Group Meetings

November 7th	EAG-FR	AGM + 37 Years Down The Tube/ FR 1960's to date - Alex Spring
November 11th	HANSAG	Structures and Bridges on the WHR - Graham Cole
November 12th	BAG	Ian Rudd - American Railroads, Large and not so Large
December 5th	EAG-FR	The History of the Bedford and Cambridge Railway. Stephen Owen
December 9th	HANSAG	Christmas social and entertainment
2018		
January 2nd	EAG-FR	The Ravensglass & Eskdale Railway - Peter van Zeller
January 13th	HANSAG	A modern model railway - Ted Stephens
February 1st	BAG	Gordon Young from the Bristol Civic Society, 'Through ticket to New York'
February 6th	EAG-FR	1978-40 Years Ago/ From Potters Bar to Poplar Dock - Allan Sibley
February 10th	HANSAG	Baltic Trams - David Lusby
March 6th	EAG-FR	The FR from Old Photographs - Portmadoc Harbour & Station - Adrian Gray
March 10th	HANSAG	Group AGM
March 15th	BAG	Keith Strickland, 'In Search of Steam - Reflections on 40 years of World Travel'
April 3rd	EAG-FR	Members' Evening
April 19th	BAG	Alex Spring, FR Infrastructure Manager 'Infrastructure - London Underground and the FR' plus the Group AGM

Coming down the track...

- December 9th/10th, 16th/17th and 22nd/23rd: Santa Trains



David Lloyd George arriving at Tanygrisiau