

Inside Motion

February 2015

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

New season gets under way



Saturday February 21st saw the start of the 2015 season of regular service trains on the FR, with the WHR taking centre stage a week later with the ever-popular Porthmadog—Beddgelert shuttles.

The winter track replacement programme at Minffordd, undertaken by staff, volunteers and five teams of Network Rail apprentices had been completed on target and the new track tamped ready for passenger trains a couple of days before the resumption of regular public services.

On the WHR, a new point at Pont Croesor has been commissioned and a number of track faults corrected, notably between Snowdon Street and the Network Rail crossing at Cae Pawb.

The main picture shows *Taliesin* and *Linda* passing a misty Tanygrisiau with the first up train of the new season. Lower right, two and four-legged passengers await departure at Harbour Station.



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@fwhr.com

Megabash 2015 *Howard Wilson*

Yes it's Megabash time again, so we are hoping that as many of you as possible can be with us as we know you can do an excellent job and besides, there's lots to be done.

You will recall that Terabash last year (really a higher profile Megabash), was focussed on raising the standard of presentation of Harbour Station itself following the rebuilding of the platforms so that all was ready for the grand reopening. The improvements were so well received by everyone, including the staff, that Eileen has come up with another list of jobs that will lift the standards even higher.

So, the majority of us will be based at Porthmadog, but there are a few painting jobs that need finishing off elsewhere as the rain brought a halt to the work last time. But there will also be the usual work in the garden at Minffordd, along with signwriting, electrical work and drains. We will be very pleased to see you all again. And of course, there will also be the special train to Tan y Bwlch so we can enjoy the three course meal in the café on the Saturday evening.

For Terabash last year, we also put out an appeal for anyone who could do a few extra days, either during the week before the event, or a few days straight after. We would like to know if anyone

could do a few days extra again, or even just a few hours! We do realise that we shouldn't squeeze you all too much when it comes to asking for extra help, but sometimes it is amazing what people will do when asked.

Having said that, it would be very useful if we could also have a small group of individuals who could come together over the weekend of Saturday 28th February and 1st March, or even the Friday before or the Monday straight after. There's a bit of painting that really ought to be completed at Blaenau and in TyB café, and we don't want people to be working too far apart over the Mega weekend.

So in summary, can you please let me know:-

Are you coming to Megabash?

Can you do any extra days before or after Mega weekend?

Can you help out 28th Feb & 1st March and adjacent days?

The sort of work you would like to do eg. gardening or painting etc?

Are you booking to have the three course meal at TyB café on the Saturday evening?

Please write to howard@quarrylane.net and let me know what you can do.



The Diamond Jubilee Appeal stands at £657,761. *The Snowdonian* runs on April 18th with all profits going to the Diamond Jubilee Appeal. This year features a triple headed 10 carriage train on the WHR section. Third class seats are still available at www.phase5.org

Winter works programme *Alun Tomlinson*

I'm sure you will have seen the mass of pictures on social media sites and of course in Inside Motion, so I think that most of you will by now be well aware of what has gone on over the winter months on the Ffestiniog Railway.

We kicked off the programme at Draggon Curve where we started by taking up the track from the Blaenau Ffestiniog end through the curve into the following straight. The old ballast was then dug out and placed into piles to the side of the track.

All this was done mechanically using various machines including a mini digger on rubber tracks and a tracked dumper which was capable of traversing along the newly developed DZ wagons adapted by Boston Lodge. Terram sheets were then placed on the track bed; fresh ballast was put in and graded before new sleepers, rail and track components were put in place.

We then brought up more ballast using both types of ballast hopper, the South African which drops stone on the end of the sleepers and the Romanian which is capable of dropping in the two foot as well as the sides. We then tamped the track using the KMX tamper, before allowing traffic to successfully run over it during the Christmas period.

Tamping

We have revisited the site since Christmas to run the tamper over it again and to drop more ballast on the track. The ballast plough or regulator as some prefer to call it was then used to tidy the dropped ballast and provide tidy shoulders. We have successfully run a service over this section during the February half term.

We will again inspect it before full service resumes and we will hope fully be able to remove the temporary speed restriction. We haven't set in stone the winter programme for 15/16, but we will probably carry on in this area next year through the Spiral.

The second phase of our winter programme involved putting in two new turnouts at Minffordd and a new catch point near the crossing into the hostel. This project also involved mechanical diggers, but this time because of the location bigger wheeled dumpers were used to carry material to and from the location to speed up the process.

There was no need to use the adapted DZ wagons here because access was easier, but it now means that we as a team have developed more than one method of track renewal that suits different sites and locations on the railway.

Right: Completed track at Minffordd



The Minffordd project was also the 2015 Network Rail student's project on the railway, this lasted for five weeks and the student numbers ranging from eight to eighteen. Apart from the delivery of the turnouts they more or less saw the project through from start to finish. Service trains have also run over this section during the February half term. We will probably have to run the tamper over it again and pour some ballast on the track before we remove the temporary speed restriction to allow normal line speed to be reintroduced during the new season.

Thankfully the Network Rail students and staff went away happy; I am confident of their return in 2016. Again I will mention that the 2015/16 winter programme initial plan is for the NR students to carry on from Lottie's Crossing down towards Boston Lodge replacing the old rail and sleepers for new.

I have given you a short description of what we have achieved this winter, a lot of people thought the project was over ambitious and a lot of people seemed to use a word that is very alien to me, namely FAIL. The people that know me well will tell you my vocabulary is descriptive, to the point and what they will also tell you is there are two words missing from my dictionary, they are CAN'T and FAILURE.

One of the questions I keep getting asked is why Dragon Curve? Well my answer to that is why not? We had to start somewhere and this location was always being mentioned as needing attention.

Minffordd was a no brainer. The turnouts were more or less life expired and over a hundred years old. As one of my staff members kept telling me when I questioned him about building up the point blades "c'mon Tom not even you can expect me to weld fresh air" fair comment!

Why such a big relay??? We had the staff, we had the skills and we had the materials and I had confidence.

To finish off I would like to say a few things; watching both projects going on we have shown that more than one department can come together and work as one team to successfully finish a large project. I would like to thank everybody involved and apologies in advance to anyone I have left out: The Dee and Mersey Group, the White Rose Group, Black Hand Gang and The Rest of The World Gang, The Hansag, Paul Bradshaw, Pete Roughley and Dave Firth who have been helping us from the beginning with Network Rail. Also to Andy Carey who came to help us at the eleventh hour, Dave Meek, his second in command as well as Rodney Thorp and not forgetting the loco crews. I mustn't forget W H Jones Plant Services who adapted to our needs without fuss or question.



Many thanks to Howard Wilson and the Ffestiniog Railway Society for their help and generous contribution of £57K towards the project; without their help this project would not have come to fruition.

And the parting shot. Next year we will undertake similar projects as mentioned earlier. Anyone interested in taking part please come forward and help. Loco Crews, Ops Department, Commercial Department you are all welcome and if you know of anyone interested in volunteering young or old please push them in our direction.

Welsh Pony cylinders delivered

The new cylinder and steam chest castings for the rebuild of Large England *Welsh Pony* have been delivered to Boston Lodge..

With the saddle tank and cab repaired and painted; the motion stripped and the new frames available, most of the key components needed for the loco's return to steam in time for its 150th birthday in 2017 are now ready. The new boiler design shown in the last issue of Inside Motion remains to be signed off and construction started.

The saddle tank and cylinder castings will be on public display at Carrog station during the Llangollen Railway's *Steel, Steam and Stars* gala between March 6th and 15th.



FRS book auction Jain Fraser

The Festiniog Railway Society Book Auction is back and open for business. There are a few changes to the format from previous years.

1. It now has its own dedicated website: www.frsbookauction.co.uk
2. There is now both an auction and a sales page for you to browse.

The auction page will be limited to around 50 books per session and will concentrate on F&WHR and related books as well as other railway books less commonly seen on other auction sites.

The Sales page will feature a larger number of books at a bargain price available for immediate purchase. This page will be frequently added to and will always be open for business.

Of course all this depends on donations so if you wish to donate books, selected magazines or ephemera please contact me in the first instance. ifraser@ffwhr.com

Pont Croesor damage

Earlier this month, a car travelling towards Prenteg lost control whilst crossing the road bridge at Pont Croesor at night and spun backwards off the road onto the railway. The vehicle struck and demolished a wooden fence and the two substantial location cabinets containing the electronics controlling the level crossing and the trailable point indicator lights. Luckily, no one was injured.

The cabinets and electronics were judged beyond repair and it is expected that the cost of replacement will be between £35,000 and £40,000. It will be some weeks before the crossing can return to normal operation as several vital components are out of stock. Until then, the crossing will be operated manually, with the fireman flagging trains across the road. The passing loop has been locked out of use pending reinstatement of the trailable point indicator white lights.



Time Team

One of the oldest railway workshops in the world has begun giving up some of its archaeological secrets.

Boston Lodge Works lies at the eastern end of the Cob Embankment at Porthmadog and is the main workshop of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway.

The works produced its first loco – Double Fairlie *Merddin Emrys* – in 1879. *Merddin* is still in regular use today. The works also produces, restores and maintains locomotives and carriages for the F&WHR and other railways. A major revamp of the historic works will take place over the next few years to cope with an increasing workload and before such work begins in earnest a team of archaeologists and volunteer diggers have carried out a preliminary investigation of the site.

David Hopewell, of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT), said: "We've carried out a quick excavation to assess what is at the Top Yard, on the oldest part of the Boston Lodge site.

"We have studied old photographs and compared them to the current site and believed this was the best place to start. A large area of hard standing, which had been used for storage, has been cleared and the top covering hand trowelled away.

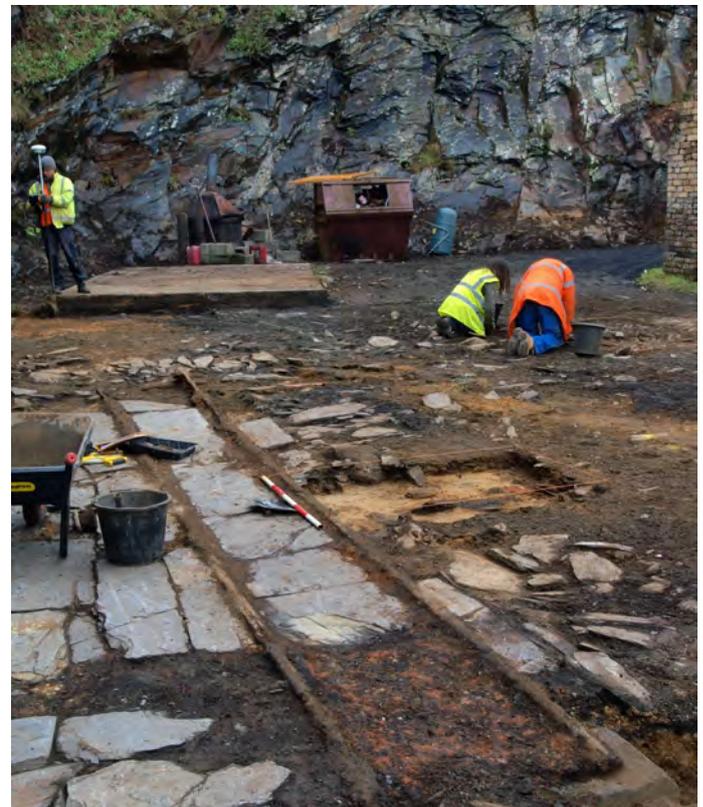
"We have discovered clear evidence of a wagon store including lengths of the earliest rails used by the railway. It was originally thought we would find two tracks but so far we've only found one. We have also found the original slab floor."

GAT officials were assisted by veteran Ffestiniog Railway volunteers including John Alexander who has spent nearly 60 years researching the history of the historic works.

"We found some things we thought what we might find and others that we didn't know were there. We found the earliest type of rail used, T Section, which was probably originally part of the main line. We thought we might find it lying on stone sleepers and we've also unearthed wooden sleepers which is most interesting,"

Dafydd Gwyn, chairman of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Heritage Company, added that all the material found during the excavation will be catalogued and archived and the findings published..

"This was a wonderful opportunity to do some practical industrial archaeology and adding considerably to our knowledge of a workshop and railway that was in its day a marvel of engineering and was the inspiration for the building of narrow gauge railways around the world," he said.



FR Deviation Project - 50 years on

Paul Bradshaw

You may not have noticed, but this year marks 50 years since a small group of men and women gathered on a bleak hillside next to Dduallt Station. There in January 1965 the cutting of the first sod of the Deviation Project took place.

Over the following 13 years volunteers, male and female, built cuttings, embankments, culverts, bridges and, with professional help, a tunnel. In June 2015 we intend to mark the 1965 event. On Saturday 20th June there will be a special train and a celebratory meal at Tan y Bwlch for Deviationists.

So if you are one of the many who helped to construct the Deviation we hope you can join us. If you would like to know more about the event but have not yet been in touch to let us know please contact me without delay.

You can do so by emailing event@frdeviation50.org.uk If you do not have email, you can write to me at Plas y Graig, Penrhyndeudraeth LL48 6LS



Carriage Cleaning *Hazel Prent*

The focus for the winter months is on deep cleaning the interiors of our passenger vehicles and vans. These carry thousands of people during the season, and keeping them looking good is an ongoing project.

We have been steadily working our way through the fleet of close to 60 carriages, cleaning the nooks and crannies, washing soot from ceilings, lifting out seat cushions, scrubbing floors and any other jobs that are required.

I would like to thank the volunteers who have joined in this winter, help for a day, an afternoon or even just an hour makes a worthwhile difference to the appearance of a carriage and therefore to the impression our visitors take away.

If you would like to help with the Deep Clean, or with the everyday clean of the trains in service, email hprent@fwhr.com



New trustee appointed

The Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways Trust is delighted to announce that Mark Smith has been appointed a trustee for the five years to 31 December 2019. Mark is currently Vice Chairman of the Heritage Railway Association and a director of the West Somerset Railway plc. He succeeds Robert Riddick who is retiring for health reasons.

Mark is a well known character in the world of railway preservation having very successfully managed the West Somerset Railway in the role of General Manager and MD for more than two decades followed by a period as chairman. He has also made an enormous contribution to the heritage railway movement in the UK through his work with the Heritage Railway Association where he is currently vice chairman. He also finds time to work with young people through the Prince's trust and has a certain fondness for the Welsh Narrow Gauge railways where he first volunteered as a youngster.



Rest of the World Gang report *Phil Nock*

The first four days of the February ROWG working week saw us lifting a pronounced dip in the track, over three panels, (that's about 60 metres), between Snowdon Ranger Halt and the open crossing.

The formation parallels the footpath between the railway and the old station building and with the formation being higher than the path, there had been a problem with the ballast falling away, hence the dip. We jacked and kango-packed the track and installed a timber ballast wall to hold the ballast back where it is needed, rather than it spewing onto the path.

On Tuesday a ballast train deposited a hopper of additional ballast to fill up the cribs and create a ballast shoulder. Thankfully they also brought Daffodil, the ballast plough; a few passes with her saved us a lot of shovelling.

On returning from the Snowdon Ranger trip, the ballast train then deposited half a hopper of ballast between Cae Pawb and Pont-y-Cyt, on Tuesday afternoon and the following day we had the pleasure of kango-packing this ballast to lift the track, where the lack of a ballast shoulder on the high-rail had caused the track to lose its alignment.

We moved on to Minffordd on Thursday to help shovel-pack and align part of the Mineral Line.

Three of the team were loaned to James Hamlin of the historic buildings department for a few days, whence they performed a number of tasks, including investigating the drainage, (or rather the lack of it), in wagon -turntables at Boston Lodge and removing the old floor from Plas Smart, which comprised a lot of rotten timber and some 1960's strictly non-heritage concrete, the latter task aided and abetted by Messrs. The Tuesday Gang South, albeit on Wednesday!



Boston Lodge Development *Ian Hartill*

Following the announcement of the Company's intention to upgrade and expand facilities at Boston Lodge, progress on the ground has begun with clearance of vegetation and removal of the ash pile.

The majority of the vegetation has been cut down along the seaward side of the site so that the design of the new embankment/retaining wall can progress. Following slippage towards the road of sections of the side wall and bank beside the Boston Lodge access ramp, the Lineside Team have cleared all the scrub and brambles alongside the ramp and in the 'Dell' so that survey work can be carried out. The Structures Team are now looking at possible design options to improve site access for road vehicles, a difficult task given the restricted confines of the railway line on one side and the main road on the other, and the need to have a design sympathetic to the surroundings.

As part of the upgrading of facilities the existing septic tank will be replaced by a much larger unit to take account of the numbers of people now working on the site. The current septic tank is generally in a poor condition, as is the existing outside inspection pit, which is often flooded to a considerable depth with very dirty water making it unusable. This pit is an early addition by the present company, probably built during the 1950s. Does anyone have any information which could confirm this? Of even greater benefit would be any photographs of the pit being built - we would be really grateful if you could send any photos or relevant information to me at the address/email below. We would also like to improve the outside pit - at the moment the preferred option is create a short section of raised track where the smaller engines can empty their ash pans.

As well as improving the facilities we need to preserve heritage features that might otherwise be overlooked or neglected. The sand dryer is an iconic piece of the Boston Lodge landscape and as such we would like to preserve and reinstate it once works in the yard have been completed. Is there a small group of people out there who would like to take on the removal and restoration of this iconic structure? If there is anyone interested in picking this up please get in touch at ihartill@ffwhr.com or at Harbour Station, Porthmadog LL49 9NF



Minffordd New Buildings *Ian Hartill*

Since the last edition of IM there is much to report on the new Infrastructure Department workshop building. Progress has been rapid after major funding was approved by the Ffestiniog Society.

As a formality, the building plans have been submitted to the local planning authority, and the project has also been registered with the Health & Safety Executive to comply with CDM Regulations. A joint meeting has been held between the civil engineering contractor Whitehouse Construction, which has generously offered to build the foundations for us on a 'materials only' cost basis, and the preferred supplier for the building shell, J. Lloyd & Sons of Corwen. In this meeting, final construction details and the major milestone dates were discussed. The outcome is that the building is now on order and Whitehouse Construction will be arriving at Minffordd before Easter to start work on the foundations.

Once Megabash weekend is over, there will be a major push to clear the remaining items from what will become the construction site. A barrier fence will then be erected around the work site - again a regulatory requirement. Once the fence is up the area becomes a 'construction site' and is then off limits to anyone not directly involved with the project, unless they have been through the site induction process.

Please respect these arrangements and obey any signs displayed. If there are any questions please get in touch by emailing ihartill@ffwhr.com The order for the building has been placed with J.Lloyd's, who have indicated the following timetable of key dates:

Production of Drawings and Calculations	End of April 2015
Delivery of Steelwork to Site	End of May 2015
Erection of Steelwork	Mid June 2015
Delivery and Assembly of Sheeting	Mid July 2015
Delivery and Installation/finish doors and windows	End July 2015

Brell Ewart's company, Whitehouse Construction will start work on the foundations at Easter. The current ballast pile will be cleared beforehand and spread along the operating railway. Old track materials will be moved to another place in the yard.

Waggon Tracks shed

During the last months considerable progress has also been made with the Waggon Tracks shed. Tenders for the building have been reviewed, and further discussions with potential suppliers have taken place with input from Brell Ewart, who is offering advice on the construction of this building as well as the workshop building.

On the ground, further work is underway to clear the site for the building. The Marketing Department containers will be moved, and the dismantling of the old yard crane is underway. The stock of old paint has been sorted through and greatly rationalised. Much of it will be rehomed in the newly refurbished paint store.

Catering and on-train services *Martin Batcock*

With immediate effect, John Ditchburn will transfer from being Spooner's Manager to On Train Services Manager and will now take full responsibility for the provision of on train catering. John can be found in the stores office on internal telephone number 6027. Claire Podmore will assume the role of acting Spooner's Manager pending the appointment of a new manager.

A vacancy has therefore arisen for someone to join the Spooner's management team. Please see separate advertisement for details.

Oliver Bennett will take responsibility for the catering stores at Porthmadog. He will be responsible for the ordering of stationery and will maintain the First Aid boxes. Any queries regarding stores should be addressed to Oliver on internal telephone number 6027. He will continue to work two-three days a week on the buffet cars.

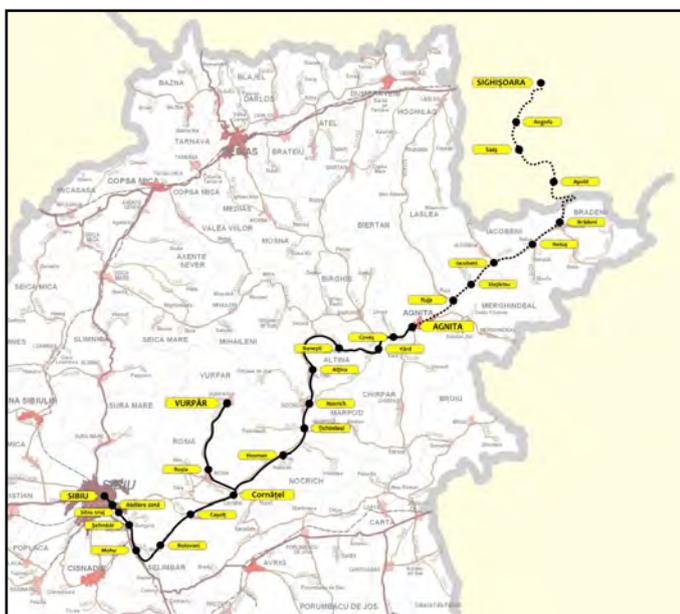
Martin Batcock will now be found in the catering office situated along the admin corridor above Spooner's. Internal telephone number 6031.

The Romanians are coming *Alasdair Stewart*

A group of four Romanians are coming to volunteer on the F&WHR during the March PWay 'working week'.

Their 'home' line is the Sibiu Agnita railway, the remaining portion of a longer line that ran between Sighișoara, via Agnita to Sibiu. It was built to a gauge of 760mm.

The surviving Sibiu - Agnita railway is actually only half of the original railway. The Sighișoara - Sibiu Local Railways Company (SCFL) as it was initially called, began construction from Sighișoara, then in Hungary, in 1895, had reached the 48km to Agnita by the end of 1898. The line got to Sibiu, 62km further, in 1910. This gave the line a total length, including its 13km branch from Cornățel to Vurpăr, of 123km, making it the longest narrow gauge railway in present day Romania.

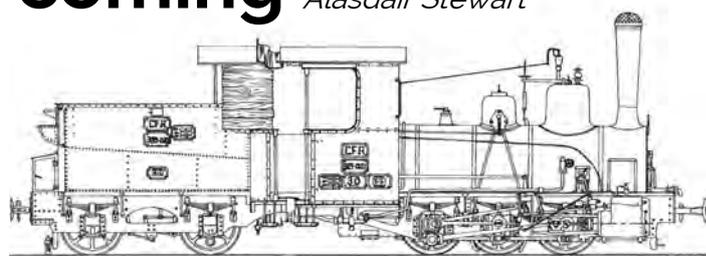


Hungarian state railways, MÁV, took over operation of the line in September 1908, although ownership remained with the SCFL.

Plans were made in 1912 to extend the railway from south of Agnita towards an extensive military base near Cincu and then over the Olt river to meet the standard gauge railway at Voila but the outbreak of the First World War put an end to this scheme.

In December 1918, after the war, Transylvania became part of Romania. Operation of the SSR was transferred from MÁV to the Romanian Railways - CFR in 1919. It remained under the private ownership of SCFL until 1948, when it was purchased by the Romanian Ministry of Public Works.

The Sighișoara - Agnita section was closed and dismantled in 1965, because of steep gradients and tight curves, which made it difficult and expensive to operate. It was replaced by a new road between



Sighișoara and Agnita that uses the former railway alignment in many places. Isolated former station buildings and occasional structures remain in situ. The line was also lifted from the streets of Agnita where it had previously run as a roadside tram, with a conveniently located central station and a new terminus built 3 km outside the town, towards Sibiu. The remaining Agnita - Sibiu railway, including the Vurpăr branch, was modernised to the standards of the day, with an emphasis on freight handling,

The branch line from Cornățel to Vurpăr ceased operation in 1997 and the main line from Agnita to Sibiu continued until September 1st 2001, when it was closed without notice or ceremony due to lack of funds for engine maintenance.

Since closure the line has been listed as being an 'historic monument' meaning that the track and surviving assets could not be disposed of by the administrators. In 2008 a group of local enthusiasts acting under the leadership of Mihai Blotor-formed an association with a view to supporting the reopening of the line in the long term and preserving and maintaining whatever they can with limited resources the immediate term. They have negotiated the purchase of two of the four remaining carriages that have survived and are making great progress restoring the first of these to a condition suitable for use again.

In 2010, following a 'steam event' in Agnita to celebrate the line's centenary, a group of invited British enthusiasts decided that the venture was worthy of support and in a meeting in Birmingham later that year formed a UK Supporter's group (SARUK). This has the aim of raising awareness of the project, raising funds and helping with advice, expertise and practical assistance on the ground. The group is an interesting cross section of enthusiasts, combining the many elements of British railway restoration. Membership costs just £15 a year with all money going to support the project. An irregular newsletter - *The Agnita Express* - is distributed to members with up-to-date news. To join SARUK just send a cheque for £15 to membership secretary Frank Cooper, Maple Lodge, Chapel Lane, Sibsey, Boston, PE22 0SN.



In 2012 a television commercial was partly filmed on the railway on the first couple of km of track outside of Cornatel station. Weeds and shrubs were cleared and missing fishplate nuts and bolts were replaced to enable a mock-up of a generic early period steam engine to be pushed along, apparently at the head of a train of vintage carriages.

Since that time local volunteers have continued to try and keep that section of line clear of vegetation and to extend clearance efforts in the direction of Hosman. In May 2014 a group of volunteers worked to clear the track and in September a visit from British supporters (SARUK) saw further efforts to tackle weed growth and assess the condition of the track.

A four wheeled, Trabant engine powered motor 'drasine' has been operated all the way to Hosman on more than one occasion. This vehicle also hauls two lightly built trolleys on which passengers can also be carried. At the end of the journey, the trolleys have to be lifted clear of the track and the motor drasine turned. A bottle jack is carried for this purpose and a jacking point under the centre of the vehicle with a bearing makes the operation quite straightforward. In addition to the motor drasine a 'cyclo-drasine' is also available which is powered by two people pedalling. A bench seat on the front allows two or three passengers to sit facing the direction of travel.

Sibiu – Agnita Railway Working Party May 2015

Planning is currently underway for a gala event to be held on the Sibiu Agnita Railway in September 2015. To be organised by the 'Friends of the Mocănița, this will be similar to the event held in 2010 to commemorate the centenary of the opening of the railway. 'Mocănița' is translated as either 'coffee pot' or 'little shepherdess' and is a generic affectionate nickname given to a narrow gauge railway in much the same way as 'tren bach' in Wales. It is planned that a steam locomotive and carriage will run between the station at Cornățel and Hosman, approximately 7km towards Agnita.

In order to allow this to take place, a certain amount of work will be required to improve the current condition of the track. Trees and shrubs growing through the

track will need to be cut down and weed killer applied to undergrowth. The short rail will need to be replaced with one the right length – this will mean finding a replacement of the right section from elsewhere on the line and transporting it to the required location and probably cutting it to length and drilling holes for fishplate nuts and bolts.

No traffic has been carried since 2001. Consequently, it will need to be thoroughly checked and missing or rotten sleepers replaced to a suitable minimum standard. Missing track screws will require replacing and loose dog spikes will need to be hammered home.

Turnouts will need to be checked and probably repaired before September. At Cornățel station a run round loop exists but at Hosman there is only a siding available. Just outside the station at Hosman is a level crossing where the local authority have laid tarmac over the rails and filled in the grooves of the flange ways which will need to be removed.

Come and join the fun!

During the last week in May, a working party is being planned to start attending to the most urgently needed tasks listed above. As well as tackling as much as we can it is hoped that we will be able to demonstrate the use of basic tools and fundamental techniques to our Romanian colleagues

This year we have the chance to take a vehicle from the UK to carry much needed tools and equipment – allowing us to plan to achieve more than would otherwise be the case.

Basic but comfortable accommodation is available close to the railway near Cornățel. As well as working on the railway, there will be opportunity to discover some of the local culture and cuisine as our visit will coincide with a traditional Transylvanian brunch on Saturday 30th.

More info from astewart@fwhr.com



End of the line for bullhead?



Following the replacement of bullhead rail with S30 flat-bottomed rail on the FR below Minffordd, the only remaining lengths of bullhead rail remaining on the 40 mile railway's main line is at Penrhyn. This rail is very nearly life-expired and plans are being drawn up for its replacement, possibly as early as part of the 2015-2016 Winter Maintenance Programme.

Third webcam goes live

Following the successful introduction of webcams at Tan y Bwlch and Minffordd, a third camera is now in operation at Harbour Station. Sited at the end of Spooner's the camera offers an uninterrupted view along the Cob to Boston Lodge. FR trains can be viewed for up to five minutes between Harbour Station and the old engine shed at Boston Lodge.



Recruitment Open Day *Jo Vincent*

Our first recruitment open day took place on Tuesday 24th February in Spooner's Bar. The intention was to recruit as many of the seasonal staff we require as possible whilst enhancing our reputation as an employer in the local area.

Around 80 people attended on the day. 51 people submitted their application on the spot. Another 18 have sent in applications since. As many have applied for more than one position we have received a total of 100 applications for 20 jobs which makes the day a great success.

Thank you to all who attended. My particular thanks go to the managers and staff of the Company who were on hand to chat to potential applicants and explain more about the positions available. All the managers taking part have been pleased with the response received and are confident of filling the vacancies shortly.

However there is still time to get your application in if you would like to work for us this season. We are looking in particular for Bar staff for Spooner's and for Catering Assistants for Tan y Bwlch Café. If you would like more information and an application form please contact me. Email jvincent@ffwhr.com or telephone 01766 516073.

Job vacancies

Catering Department

Breakfast Chef Spooner's Grill, Café & Bar

Permanent Vacancy

Rate of pay: Dependant on Experience

Hours: Average of 20 hours per week, any 5 days out of 7 as rostered.

Hours of work 7.30am/8.00am until 11.30am/12.00 noon.

The Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways are two heritage railway in North Wales. Spooner's Grill, Cafe & Bar is at the centre of our operations and delivers a high level of service from breakfast through to evening meals. We are also an award winning real ale bar.

We are looking for a Breakfast Chef to join our team. You need excellent standards of hygiene management and good communication and organisational skills. You must have experience of working as a chef in a professional kitchen and be able to provide good quality food within budget and food margins. Experience of leading a small team would be an advantage. If you would like to be a part of one of North Wales top tourist attractions we look forward to receiving your application.

Core Skills:

Able to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing

Able to motivate and lead by example

Pro-active in problem solving

Able to work on own initiative

Experience of working in a professional kitchen

Qualification in Food Hygiene

The ability to speak Welsh is desirable but not essential

Knowledge of locations on the Railways and their use by visitors is desirable

Please contact Jo Vincent for an application form for the above position. We will also accept application by CV with a covering letter. Tel: 01766 516073 or email jvincent@ffwhr.com.

Permanent Way Team vacancies

Following the departure of two members of the PW team at the end of 2014, we are looking to recruit two people to help with the vital task of maintaining 40 miles of railway.

Formal job advertisements will appear in the next issue of Inside Motion, but any early expressions of interest would be welcome.

Contact PW Manager Alun Tomlinson atomlinson@ffwhr.com

Catering Department

Spooner's Management Team Spooner's Grill, Café & Bar

Permanent Vacancy

Hours: Up to 40 hours per week, any 5 days out of 7 as rostered

Rate of pay: Dependant on Experience (range £17,000—£20,000)

The Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways are two heritage railway in North Wales. Spooner's Grill, Cafe & Bar is at the centre of our operations and delivers a high level of service from breakfast through to evening meals. We are also an award winning real ale bar.

We are looking for a motivated individual to join the management team of Spooner's Grill, Café & Bar. This will be a hands-on role, we are looking for someone prepared to lead by example. The successful applicant will work with other members of the management team to run the day to day operations of this busy catering outlet, maximising profit and improving customer service standards. Candidates should have proven experience of working in a catering/ hospitality environment. You must have excellent communication and leadership skills. An understanding of budgeting would be an advantage. If you would like to be a part of one of North Wales top tourist attractions we look forward to receiving your application.

Core Skills:

Experience (ideally minimum 5 years) of working in the food/catering industry

Educated to at least GCSE level to a good standard

Qualification in Food Hygiene

Qualification in Alcohol Retail

Proven business ability

Proven leadership and interpersonal skills

Excellent communication skills, both written and oral

Ability to speak Welsh an advantage

Knowledge of the Railways and their passengers; and the local economic market an advantage

Please contact Jo Vincent for an application form for the above position. We will also accept application by CV with a covering letter. Tel: 01766 516073 or email jvincent@ffwhr.com

Closing date for applications Friday 13th March 2015

Are you interested in writing for Railway Herald?

Do you know your Fairlie from your Hunslet? Your metre-gauge from your narrow gauge? If so, then *Railway Herald* would like to hear from you. We are looking for a correspondent to help in developing and enhancing the narrow gauge coverage in the magazine each month. *Railway Herald* is seeking to provide more in-depth coverage of the railways between 1' 11½" gauge and 3' gauge railways each month. The position involves working from home, establishing and forming a good working relationship with the various narrow gauge railways across the United Kingdom, mainly through verbal and email communication, then undertaking research and writing up the various stories. A good level of English, and the capability to follow our style guide is required, along with the ability to create a positive and good impression, and work within specified timescales. A small commitment, in terms of time, each month is required, creating content to meet 12 deadlines a year, but this can be flexible to some degree. Previous experience in journalism, while an advantage, is not required. If you are interested to know more, then please contact the Editor, either via editor@railwayherald.com or by telephone (01904 500175). We are also keen to encourage photographic contributions depicting operations, especially newsworthy events, from photographers and the railways.

Website changes



We are currently in the process of translating a large part of our company website into Welsh. This work will start with the prominent pages, i.e. Fares and Timetables, but will progress to other pages in due course.

The website currently uses a tailor-made script built around Google Translate to offer text in a selection of languages, but it was felt that the Welsh translation deserved bespoke pages.

Pages available in Welsh will carry links in the header section of the English versions. This work is ongoing, and it is hoped that during the next few months a large percentage of the static pages will be available in Welsh.

Lady in waiting

Blanche was pictured outside Boston Lodge on March 3rd being warmed up as its return to service gets ever nearer.

