

Summer 1992



No 137

# FESTINIOG RAILWAY MAGAZINE



THE JOURNAL OF THE FESTINIOG RAILWAY SOCIETY

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# FESTINIOG RAILWAY MAGAZINE

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Front cover: *Linda passes Three Gates with an Up train during Easter Week, 1992.*

(Richard Kirk)

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## Editorial

At the AGM it was revealed that there has been a 45% increase in volunteering at Boston Lodge in the last 12 months, an increase that was reflected throughout the Railway. Our own survey of the railway, carried out the same weekend, found non-traffic volunteers throughout the length of the line except for Blaenau. At Harbour Station, painters; at Boston Lodge, the *Blanche* (Ricket Rescue PLC they call themselves), *Palmerston* and carriage restoration teams; in Minffordd Yard, folk bridging the gap between the Maenofferen sheds; at Minffordd Station, gardeners; at Penrhyn, station building restorers; at Tan-y-bwlch — well, we don't know what was happening at Tan-y-bwlch because it was lunch time, but there was someone there; at Tanygrisiau, the signal box team. That's not to mention the PW gang, which we didn't catch up with but we know it was about, having heard its train go through during breakfast. (Had there been any volunteer activity at Blaenau we might not have been water bombed from the footbridge by local juveniles!)

The remarkable thing about all this volunteer effort was that it was all volunteer supervised. Any employees who may have been about were certainly keeping a low profile. This is quite right, too. After all, if volunteers can be trusted with trains and passengers, why shouldn't they be trusted with the infrastructure? It hardly seems possible that it is less than two years since we were bemoaning, in *Magazine* 130, the weekend closure of Boston Lodge for want of paid supervision.

## Accommodating Bods Cyclically

The work in progress at Penrhyn, referred to earlier, was the finishing touches required before the completion of the

restoration was signalled by the official opening. Penrhyn really looks first-class and must be the structural showpiece of the Railway.

But, of course, its prime function is accommodating volunteers. In this respect as in all others, volunteers need organising, a task which, for Penrhyn, has been undertaken for some 20 years by one of our unsung heroines, Mrs Amy Hore. It was very fitting that she should have been invited to cut the ribbon and launch the restored building. Those who used the hostel 20 years ago, sometimes participating in marathon Monopoly sessions, will find it fitting that Mary Roberts was also one of the guests.

The day before the Penrhyn launch saw the first sod being cut for the new Minffordd Hostel. This time the prime participants in a joint operation were Geoff Hall, as the oldest volunteer, and Richard Orme, the youngest.

The event was purely ceremonial but by the time this *Magazine* is published there should be a substantial hole in the ground. To get the job off the ground, in a manner of speaking, in style, the Society is to fund the employment of ex-Royal Marine Sergeant D. Lewis, formerly of the

Deviation and still known as Bunny, to supervise construction of the ground works. (Lest anyone should think that our support for Bunny's employment should contradict what was said earlier, it will see good progress being made quickly, which is important, and he does send his children to work for Parks & Gardens.) Welcome back, Bunny.

Now, the Deviationists were quite adept at providing hostel accommodation; it would be rather fine if some of them could find the time to work with their old boss in the construction of the mother-and-father of all hostels. After all, Deviationist offspring must be growing up now, giving parents time for extra-curricular, jolly good fun again.

The Society has already allocated £50,000 towards the cost of the hostel but even if it attracts grant aid, which seems likely, more is still required. With this in mind, some hostel users have organised a sponsored cycle ride, Derby to Porthmadog. Further details, and a sponsorship form, will be found in the middle of this *Magazine*. Please use the form and help those who are prepared to help themselves.

## The General Manager's Page



### Progress so far

As in many other years we teeter on the brink, not knowing whether 1992 is good or bad until it is too late to do anything about it. So far the spring has been disappointing, unlike last year when it was good. The fact that last year as a whole was below expectation doesn't signal the opposite for this year. The problem is that, when uncertainty fills the view-finder, sitting on your hands is a disgustingly tempting course of non-action. Of course, it is clearly understood that the weather is to blame and the wry part is the large element of truth in that statement. Spring sunshine after winter cool sends people to the beach; pouring

rain keeps them indoors. Indifferent weather peoples the trains and we haven't had any of that. We are often told the real reason for a lack of patronage is below-par publicity distribution. This is an unjust yet real whipping-boy. What we have done this year excels previous years but the way to out-perform our competitors is to achieve a better display in the area than they. Strange, though, how in a volunteer organisation like ours folk will complain about the absence of leaflets at a location, but it doesn't occur to them that the injection of a supply would be doubly effective. Perhaps the FR looks too professional and folk imagine that behind the scenes there lurks an army of people



management's job is to promote an appreciation of what our objectives are or team security, a vital function, will remain low. The reaction to an objective of £100k operating profit each year from some quarters has been: "I don't come to the Railway just to earn money," and this is true for most of us. However, if everyone understands that such an operating profit can be got by restoring the lost 30,000 journeys (and achieving 330,000 journeys again), then we can put our minds to inventive and enjoyable ways of doing this, using our own personal vision. Once the level is achieved, we have the pleasure of spending our earnings. The delight of the Ffestiniog is that what we earn goes back into the business. It isn't trousered by City gents and associated shareholders.

shipping out leaflets by the ten-thousand —well, there isn't. If you want us to carry more passengers, anything further you can do to distribute leaflets and hanging cards will help to boost numbers. We already have a band of stalwarts helping the distribution effort elsewhere, but North Wales, in particular, needs constant supply. Publicity vanishes like fuel into a furnace.

### **More about objectives**

When someone tapped you on the shoulder and said, "We're building a railway back to Blaenau Ffestiniog," apart from the small problem of knowing about where Blaenau Ffestiniog was, and questions of sanity surrounding such an improbable activity, the objective was clear enough; clear enough to encourage a personal vision in anyone impassioned by such a statement. Since that objective was realised another with such strength has been elusive. However, we have managed to maintain and build a volunteering base in other ways. A business has grown from our efforts and the totals we make are nudging towards £2m. Such a business must be managed well or we risk what we have achieved. To co-ordinate our effort today we need to work as a team. Part of

### **We're on Video**

Peter Jarvis has always had the theory that Him on High has a particularly soft spot for small railways. We hadn't any up-to-date videos of the FR and were bemoaning the fact. There will shortly be two: one from the wise and experienced railway video maker, Graham Whistler, aimed at the enthusiast; the other from a full television crew, made for the tourist. Two weeks were booked in May and astonishingly (thus proving the Jarvis theory) the weather was utterly magnificent on precisely the days required. This timing was sublime; both crews came back day after day with glowing tales of the magnificent video they had shot. Parts of the show will take some repeating. *Upnor*, 63 and 10, complete with film crew on balcony, ran up the line just in front of *Merddin* and an ECS train, in brilliant morning sunshine. A white-knuckle job this but oh, the pictures! Mind you, the operating instructions, "All parties will reach a clear understanding before any train movements take place...etc", ran to two pages or more; it was safe and worthwhile. Videorama should be available in July: the Whistler, an hour of pure nostalgic cranking for about £19.99, the other, a

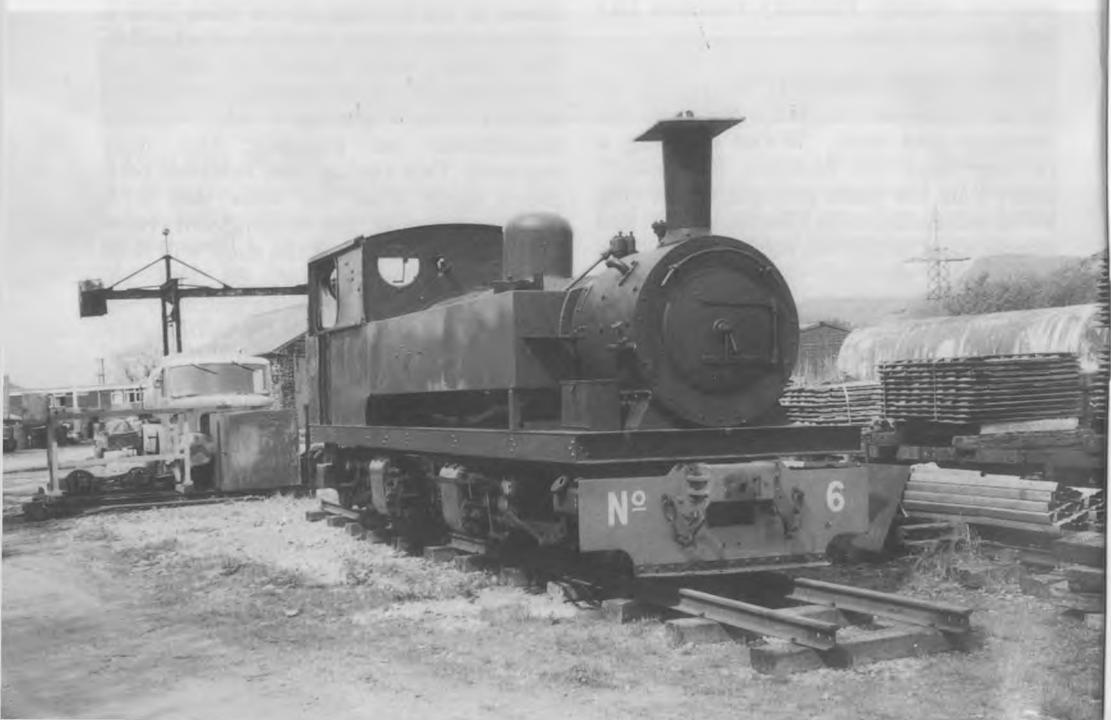
Willie Rushton oblique commentary job for the tourists, at about £10.99. Watch for the Johnson 'crits'.

### Ten Years on

Not much changes, but how different everything is! Leafing through *FRM* No 97 on the Tenth Anniversary of Getting Back to Blaenau, one sees how the bookies make their living. How many of the certain bets have actually come home? Has Blaenau station 'been made interesting'? A bit, perhaps? Network SouthEast would still be proud of the footbridge but the canopy and buildings are nice. Have the 'other stations' had a purge? Tanygrisiau has been purged, by scorched earth policy. Dduallt indicates that something is happening; slightly Harlech Castle in style but definitely promising. Tan-y-bwlch is beginning to come round. One has to travel to Penrhyn to bask in any glory and then Minffordd and Porthmadog are distinctly respectable. "Moelwyn Tunnel is not yet properly finished", no change to this statement. Modern buffet and observation cars are

with us but 'Signals and Telegraphs' still struggle against the odds; Tanygrisiau loop is a promise now to be fulfilled. Heavier traffic remains elusive however and that must be a chief concern. We have been friendly to our old rolling stock; in fact, when you view the pictures of ten years ago, our rolling stock has been dazzlingly transformed. The steady re-emergence of veteran four-wheelers is a welcome fillip, with No.7 (the flying bench) now liberated and available as a rolling Victorian joke, to be enjoyed with care; yet the old bogie cars are far from being secure. The 'switchgear' has yet to be installed for the Museum policy dynamo, although the faint 'hum' is getting louder. The possibility of reopening the Dinas branch has inched a little closer. Locomotive progress represents solid achievement. Green as a colour has fallen from grace; three double-engines is a distinct possibility, *Taliesin*, *Palmerston*, *Sgt Murphy* and *Monarch* are glorious surprises. But for the Ffestiniog to be 'really interesting' we need to answer the chief concern of more traffic.

*Monarch in Minffordd Yard early in May. The loco was subsequently dismantled. (Peter Johnson)*





## Health & Safety

A major injury to the person necessitates the filling-in of an accident form, as we hope, is well-known to everyone working on the railway. At the other extreme, there are lots of cuts, bruises, burns and so on of a minor nature, of which very little notice has been taken beyond a visit to the nearest first-aid box. There has been a minor incident form available but it has generally been ignored. Consequently, there has been no record of what has happened, so that remedial action could result, and it is a sad fact that the same type of injury has been occurring time and again. This situation has been bothering the H&S Committee and so now something has emerged.

The minor incident form has been revised and a supply made available in each first-aid box. In future, whenever recourse is made to a box, one of these forms must be completed and then handed to the victim's supervisor. He will pass it on, so that it may be considered by his Head of Department and the Local Department Committee, in order that remedies can be applied to prevent, or at very least to minimise, the possibility of a recurrence.

## Volunteering

Fred Howes is suffering a gentle decline, which we suppose happens to all of us when we approach our twilight years. However, I'm referring to his volunteer input, which is still slowly dwindling away, unlike all the other departments, which have reversed the trend.

PWay/CEng depend heavily on the area groups to provide their workforce, whereas other departments rely more on individual bookings. Some of the groups are suffering from ageing membership, financial constraints and other distractions, and so are unable to provide their previous levels of manpower. To address this problem, Fred would like to

introduce some volunteer projects, to be led by functional organisers, as has been successfully done elsewhere. However, it is important that these projects do not detract from the existing maintenance capability of the department. The very high standards established by Fred and his team can only survive in the long-term with substantial volunteer input, so priority must always go to routine maintenance.

The following are examples of volunteer projects suited to a group or groups of people led by a project leader, who would be self-motivated and largely independent of the department's supervisory resource in achieving targets/specifications.

- (1) Departmental rolling stock maintenance, based on Glan-y-pwll and primarily responsible to Andy Putnam — to include both routine maintenance, repairs, and rebuilding/building, to match the department's programmed requirements.
- (2) Trackside gates, stiles, etc. General repairs, painting and maintenance. Renewals where necessary (home-built?). Could include inspection, planning, etc.
- (3) Lineside signs, eg: 'Danger — Limited Clearance', 'Whistle', 'Shut Gates' and so on. Maintenance and renewals to agreed policy on styles, materials, etc (at present, mileposts not included).
- (4) Track Geometry Survey. To measure all curves and produce new diagrams of radii, cant, etc. for eventual entry to computer for maintenance records.
- (5) Trap Points. Programme to eliminate worst 'hazards' of run-through Porthmadog, Tan-y-bwlch Down, and MinfTordd Yard exit being priority.
- (6) Track Maintenance. Could be broken down into projects to a degree — eg: fishplate greasing, keying, points maintenance at Porthmadog, Boston Lodge, Minffordd and Glanypwll yards. Depot Building (MinfTordd). 'Self-help' projects: e.g.: maintenance of PW



*Firsts. Prince returns to Porthmadog with the first shuttle, on 23rd May, above, and the kitchen on No 114 during its first service trip. (Graham Bond/Ian Yates)*



buildings, construction of lean-to shed (with pit?) on side of Goods Shed.

This list is not definitive or exhaustive. Interested? Then please contact D.F. Howes for further information.

## Traffic & Operating

The mild winter and the extension of service from Rhiw Goch to Tan-y-bwlch combined to give a good start to the season, with push-pull services in February very well loaded. The March weekend service to Blaenau reverted to steam for the first time for a number of years and the opportunity was taken to extend the Spring Fever local promotion to include these services. That too was very successful.

School Venture Weeks (late March, early April) were busy but once again there were only three of them, and we mourn the days when they stretched for six or seven weeks into May. Easter Week was also busy, but the early May Bank Holiday this year was very quiet and a lot of ground was lost in the first half of the month. Traffic to mid-May was therefore 3% up on last year and it must be said that this was entirely the result of the improved Spring Fever.

As these notes were penned, we were preparing for Spring Bank Holiday Week and particularly the Minffordd shuttle service, working through our annual ritual of wondering where the staff and locomotives were going to come from. By the time this is read it will be too late for Spring Bank Holiday, but volunteers will still be welcome for High Summer.

**Travel** Bookings for overseas holidays remain at 20% up on 1991 and we are of course well pleased with this response. There have been some problems which were not of our making, such as the German rail strike in early May, which forced us to reroute the Grand Arctic Tour group at an additional cost to us of £1400, whilst the retiming of the overnight Hook of Holland to Harwich boat requires a train from Cologne some three hours earlier than previously. This has made it impossible to get from Salzburg to the

Hook in a day and the Eastern European Capitals group must therefore have an overnight stop in Würzburg.

Planning for 1993 is now in hand, with more new and revised destinations. A copy of our new brochure will be included with the next *Magazine*.

**Sales** The souvenir part of Sales had an encouraging start to the season, with takings well up on 1991 (souvenirs +20%, models +25%). Before the season began, we did a complete change-round in Port shop to increase floor space, and we hope turnover. So far, we have found that with the new layout we have increased book, video and model sales. The extended Spring Fever helped us, as the reduced fares brought in local residents, who were buying gifts for their children.

To keep the season successful, we still need your help to have Tan-y-bwlch and Blaenau outlets open. The whole family could work Tan-y-bwlch, a job for everyone in a delightful setting.

Sales overall had a very good Easter, and at the time of writing we are looking forward to a busy Spring Bank Holiday and Summer. Please come and join us — as you know, every extra pound helps! Please contact Gill Shephard at Harbour Station.

**Catering** January to April has been a very busy 'quiet' season, with receipts up by 34.7%, due largely to Spring Fever being brought forward to March, when perhaps a lower spend on fares made passengers spend more on teas, sweets, etc.

An excellent Easter saw not only the introduction into service of the new Buffet Car 114, but also on Easter Saturday a wedding party in the café at lunchtime, and in the evening a staff/volunteer Disco Party, held in aid of the Boston Lodge Tool Fund, both an outstanding success. The latter swelled not only the Tool Fund but the bar takings! Thankfully, we had a very good team of volunteers on hand to help on the buffet cars, in the café and at TYB. They have all been sent a personal thank-you letter for an excellent team job. How about you joining the team? We've

plenty of spaces on the rosters, and would be pleased to maintain the above percentage, which equals several thousand pounds. To tempt you, 114 is the buffet car to end all buffet cars. Being simply laid out, easy to operate and clean, it's a clear favourite with the crews.

The coming peak season will see the cafe open until 9.00pm and the bar open until 11.00pm, offering an upgraded menu, beers, wines and spirits. It's all very upbeat, but we need your help and support, so if you're eating out or drinking out, remember we're open, and if you think you might volunteer, DO!

## Workshops

With the operating season well under way, the main focus in the Erecting Shop has been the new double Fairlie *David Lloyd George*. With the boiler lagged, clad and painted, and the tanks and aprons finally fitted, the superstructure took shape for real. Tank 'riveting' had been 90% completed with volunteer effort, and the complex and laborious task of final

plumbing was in full swing. It is expected that, following the trend set by *Merddin Emrys* in the 1960s, it will run initially in semi-open form, but cab parts such as spectacle plates and frames are substantially complete. As with *Merddin* in 1987, the engine will appear initially in unlined gloss black. The overhaul of *Earl of Merioneth's* power bogies, which will at first appear under the new locomotive, was proceeding well, the first one being completed by mid-May. These have undergone modifications to spring blocks and pillars as carried out on *Merddin*, as well as remetalling of axle boxes, rebushing of valve gear and replacement of one broken spring. The rear-end fabrications of the bogie frames have been trimmed to obtain clearance under the new superstructures.

The modifications to *Merddin Emrys's* power bogies, reported in the last *Magazine*, have all proved highly successful. So far no problems have been encountered with axleboxes and a further bonus of the installation of mechanical lubrication has been considerably less onerous pre-

*A smokebox of "David Lloyd George, showing the superheater headers on 2nd May. (Peter Johnson)*



paration by drivers. This engine has been doing the brunt of the passenger mileage so far this season, receiving only routine attention to the rod ends in early May. Its only failure was a broken exhaust steam pipe, which failed during shunting at Porthmadog at the end of a turn. This was repaired and the loco was in traffic again on the following day. A new type of grease is being used to reduce friction in this area.

Also as we reported previously, the ejector exhaust silencing arrangements on *Mountaineer* have been adopted and greatly reduce the intolerable noise that this engine has been making of late. Unfortunately, a cracked firebox tube-plate saw the engine unavailable for traffic at Easter. The crack, a small one between two lower tubes, was welded and both adjacent tubes replaced. Magnetic particle inspection revealed some further cracking in the ends of the superheater flues, and they were duly welded. Some further work, including ferruling, was required in mid-May.

*Linda* has been operating satisfactorily since completion of its winter maintenance, which involved some re-white-metalling of rod ends. It failed on 15th April with a broken valve spindle gland which was replaced, the loco being available for a later turn that day. *Prince* has, as usual, seen limited use, but was to be seen piloting *Linda* at Easter, in the absence of the *Alco*.

On 12th April *Conway Castle's* deadman's device started an intermittent fault which has the unnerving symptom of shutting the engine down and making a full brake application with no warning! The problem was traced to a component failure within the system and rectified.

On the carriage front, routine mechanical maintenance has proceeded well to programme, buffet car 103 receiving its new wheelsets and Nos 116, 101 and 26 all having wheels reprofiled. No.23 required attention to a mysteriously bent drawbar — the inevitable product of a heavy shunt. The push-pull set suffered for much of the early part of the season from a succession

of brake problems. Initially, poor braking was reported, but, when tested, stopping distances were in line with the other sets. Further reports and further investigation revealed the problem to be air leaking past the vacuum cylinder rolling rings on partial (or normal) applications. Larger rolling rings were installed, but these had a tendency to 'grab' the walls of the cylinder, causing the brakes to bind on. This situation resulted in *Linda* stalling at Llechwedd Coed on Easter Sunday with severely dragging brakes, causing a major interruption in service. The problem was eventually solved by exhaustive measurement and matching of components, many of which were found to have been exceeding the manufacturer's tolerances.

The new buffet car 114 entered traffic on Easter Saturday after much burning of midnight oil in the preceeding week. Designed to satisfy the more stringent requirements of a modern catering environment, it has been enthusiastically received by the catering staff, despite requiring some fine tuning of the new storage system. It features refrigeration, not seen on board FR trains for some years, and also incorporates the new skirting heater covers, designed at Boston Lodge to replace the inadequate commercial alternatives, fitted to the other vehicles, which will be replaced later on. No.119 re-entered traffic on 2nd May after major body and interior overhaul, achieving a similar environment to that of the push-pull set, but minus heating.

No 12 visited the workshops in May for the fitting of replacement batteries and removal of the former kitchen installation from the van, now rendered redundant by the appearance of 114 and new legislation. Dry rot was discovered in the guard's ducket, behind the kitchen counter, which necessitated radical excavation of rotten timber. The opportunity to repair and re-cover some areas of the floor was also taken. Bowsider 19 needed some repairs to beading and paintwork in April after a dustbin, which had been left foul of the running line, struck the side of the train. 'Bug-box'



*The refurbished saloon of No 119 on 2nd May, its first day in traffic, above, and the only part of the toilet compartment photographable without a fish-eye lens. (Peter Johnson)*



FFESTINIOG RAILWAY  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THIS TOILET

1. IF TOILET SEAT WILL NOT LIFT  
DO NOT FORCE IT-WAIT-FLUSHING  
CYCLE IS NOT YET COMPLETE.
2. NO HAND TOWELS, SANITARY  
TOWELS OR OTHER SUCH ITEMS  
MUST BE PLACED IN TOILET  
THIS WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE  
FAILURE OF THE APPARATUS.
3. TO FLUSH: CLOSE LID AND PRESS  
GREEN BUTTON BEHIND BOWL.

FAILURE TO OBSERVE THE ABOVE  
INSTRUCTIONS WILL RESULT IN THE  
MALFUNCTION OF THIS AMENITY.

No 6 nears completion, requiring only droplights, painting and upholstery, and should prove a charming addition to the fleet after so many years' absence. Finally, the former breakdown van 99 — the last remaining covered van of its type — is complete, requiring only mechanical inspection before being released for Parks & Gardens duties. Whilst its metamorphosis from the decrepit condition which it had reached has been protracted, the joint efforts of CCVS/Shape Training in Middlesbrough, and staff — both voluntary and permanent — at Boston Lodge, have produced a magnificent end result, which may we hope stimulate renewed interest in this rewarding area of work.

## Civil Engineering

The past Winter has not been too unkind with much fair weather allowing completion of the Thermit Welding programme in the Tan-y-bwlch to Dduallt section, thus eliminating 24ft rails on this stretch. However, many more still exist on the Cob, below Minffordd Station, through Penrhyn, Bryn Mawr and in patches from Llechwedd Coed to Whistling Curve, as well as through Dduallt Station, and it is planned to continue the welding programme for the next few years. The above does not include the remaining double-head rails, also in 24ft lengths, but it is hoped that an advantageous offer of rail will materialise to allow their replacement next Winter.

Progress with stone blowing is still showing good results, although we need a few years' experience to assess how well the track top lasts after treatment. For those who do not know what stone blowing is, it is simply a means of injecting measured quantities of chippings under the sleepers, to correct errors in the rail levels and fill voids below the sleepers, by means of tubes driven into the ballast, down which chippings are poured, to be blown into the voids by air from a small compressor. It is easier to understand if you come and assist the PWay gang, learn how to do it, get your own gang together to work with you, and then you can have a 'maintenance contract'! (This is not a joke) — we have discussed it with the PWay gang and with some volunteers, and it is practical to achieve, given five or six dedicated people, who can come regularly enough to get a return on the time taken learning how to do the job. In fact, it is essential that we move this way, with more volunteers becoming involved directly with the front line maintenance of the track, so that the word 'easily' which crept erroneously into the article 'The Dream — 10 Years On' in the last *Magazine*, will become a reality!

Major works planned for the Summer include the completion of the Cei Mawr culvert project, the laying of the engine

escape tracks at the back of Glan-y-mor Carriage Shed, involving the removal of a considerable volume of rock to grade the formation, and concreting the floor of and erecting end doors to Glan-y-pwll 'New' Shed, to provide accommodation for NorEng Wagon Works, where readers will be able to enjoy the rarefied air of Blaenau Ffestiniog, whilst practising, or learning skills to maintain our 50-odd (some very odd!) wagons in use by the Outdoor Engineering Departments. All this is, of course, in addition to the ever continuing maintenance of the track and its associated structures, fencing, drains, and the plant and equipment used to do it. Rather a lot, isn't it? There must be something everyone could do to help the job along, so we'll look forward to hearing from you.

Our several existing volunteer projects are proceeding well. These include the London Area Group's drains, Upper Thames Group's Dduallt buildings, Hereford postmen's fencing gang and the Railway Performance Society's milepost and gradient post projects. The East Midland's structure numbering project seems to have stalled, but there are a number of areas of our operation suitable for putting out to contract, for example:-

- Department's Rolling Stock (already mentioned);
- Stone Blowing (already mentioned);
- Maintenance of Track-mounted Rail/Flange Lubricators;
- Lineside Clearance (of jungle);
- Hallade Surveying (measurement of track alignment);
- Updating and Maintenance of PW records of Track Structure, Relaying and Maintenance;
- Updating and Maintenance of Structure Records;
- Research into Loading and Stresses in Track Components and Structures.

These are all functions which could be undertaken by regular and dedicated groups, led by a project leader responsible to Fred Howes and his Section Foremen. Work on the track is healthy outdoor exercise and, despite its not being in the

public eye and the subject for champagne celebrations, it is a fascinating part of railway operation, and can be very rewarding — so 'Let's be 'aving you!'

The go-ahead to completion has been given for the restoration of the Tanygrisiau Loop, with its attendant signalling and signalbox, but only as a volunteer project, which it is hoped to have completed for the 1994 High Summer season.

## Signalling, Telecom- munications & Electrical

The week commencing 29th February saw volunteers from the Dee & Mersey, London Area and Gloucester Groups combine forces to rebuild the pole route between Tan-y-bwlch and Dduallt, which last received major attention, apart from poles suffering from anno domini in 1968, prior to the reopening to Dduallt that year.

More redundant mobile trailers have been received to ease the shortage of covered storage space, which will be just that bit shorter when the ageing Terrapins at Minffordd are finally removed. Soon after its arrival in the Top Yard at Boston Lodge, the recently acquired Portakabin office unit was connected to the mains power supply and the telephone system and fitted out as offices for the ST&E and BP&G (see next report) Departments. After Ken Hancock and Martin Duncan moved into their new quarters, the owners of the hired Portakabin appeared and removed their unit, thus giving the Top Yard a more spacious appearance.

With the re-allocation of offices and stores at Harbour Station, room became available for improvements to the telephone exchange battery which, because of the cramped location of the exchange room, was always of small capacity, but we have now been able to install a recently obtained 150AHP battery, plus charging unit, which should service the Harbour exchange and pulse clocks for some years. That also applies to all our other exchanges which, during the past

year, have had large-capacity batteries and charging units installed, except for Minffordd where, because of the need to retain the original FR station appearance, there is no space for a suitable cupboard for large battery cells; a pity really, as there is a chance that more large-capacity batteries may become available, plus, of course, their chargers.

Improvements to our telephone exchanges continue with the installation of ringing and tone generators to Boston Lodge and Minffordd exchanges. This leaves the exchanges at Tan-y-bwlch and Tanygrisiau still using the original vibrating relays which, in the event of generator failure, can be reverted to at the other exchanges. After nearly 25 years' service, the 1+3 carrier unit working between Boston Lodge and Tanygrisiau was decommissioned, having been superseded by a 12 channel unit, which works from Boston Lodge to Tan-y-bwlch to Glan-y-pwll. The 1+3 carrier was made in the early 1960s for the Australian market but our units were sent to this country for testing purposes, following which they became available for disposal, giving Dan Wilson the opportunity to obtain them for the FR. Soon after arrival, they were put into use between Boston Lodge and Tan-y-bwlch, but during the early 1980s the latter unit was moved to Tanygrisiau, to cater for the extension of the telephone system when the railway opened to Blaenau.

Our appeal in GIM 10/91 and *FRM* 135 for an engraving machine was read by a member of Gloucester Group, who just happened to have the very thing, which will be put to good use by this department, as well as by the carriage builders, who have also expressed an interest in it. We do not know your full name, Peter, but thank you — we are most grateful for this donation. Now that we have an engraving machine, we find we need some spare cutters, 2" stencils and material for use with it. In fact, if anyone has anything not needed that can be used with an engraving machine, please bring it along — we shall gladly take it off your hand! :

A brief spot of rail bonding for track circuiting was carried out on Gwyndy Bank, in connection with PWay rail changing during the early part of March.

During the course of this year the Department has a Volunteer Working Week and Weekends: week 3rd-10th July; weekends 24/25th July, 4/5th September, 25/26th September, 2/3rd October and 27/28th November. You are most welcome to come along on any or all of these dates and join in the activity, but please let ST&E supervisors know. There is a variety of work on offer at other than these dates for any volunteers who would like to assist. Please contact the Supervisors at Boston Lodge, either by writing or by telephoning (0766) 512850.

## Buildings, Parks & Gardens

So much has happened in these past few months!

First, as indicated in the last *Magazine* but not commented upon, Eileen Clayton has taken on much greater responsibilities than her original gardening and

'detattifying' activities, as the new heading indicates. She is being ably assisted by the return to FR employment of Bunny Lewis (one time Ganger to the Deviationists) as a temporary supervisor. He, like David Davies, will be concerned with organising work for both volunteers and the Community Industry lads, and his presence has already enabled great progress to be made on the Glan-y-mor Carriage Shed. For some months this shed has only had the attention of only one person on part time basis and, as it is 220ft long and around 30ft wide and the concrete for the floor until recently has been mixed in one medium-sized cement mixer, no wonder progress has been slow — Mick Osman cannot be blamed for thinking he was committed to a life sentence!

At the end of March, the Tan-y-bwlch Café project was completed. This project, carried out by local Community Industry workers, had made a big difference to the appearance of the café area. The work of building stone walls, erecting a fence,

*Tan-y-bwlch on 3rd May, with the crowd awaiting the start of the Penrhyn Hostel re-launch party.*  
(Peter Johnson)





*Penrhyn, during the re-launch ceremony on 3rd May. (Peter Johnson)*

paving round the café and creating a garden had been organised by David Davies, our other temporary member of staff and is of a first-rate standard, the CI lads on both projects having shown considerable keenness.

March P&G working party had a large turnout and much was achieved, including lengthening the Port platform by about 200 ft, building new noticeboards for Harbour Station, redecorating several rooms and the exterior paintwork on the car park side, together with the usual gardening and building maintenance at several stations. We also erected quite a lot more shelving at Porthmadog, this time brand new, kindly donated by the manufacturers.

Easter saw us frantically carrying out all the last-minute jobs before the Penrhyn opening, including a total external repaint. We did manage to finish it and the opening itself, on May Day Sunday, was a delightful occasion in glorious sunshine for about 180 volunteers, staff, Penrhyn neighbours and other invited guests. Fittingly, we had a vintage

train, hauled by *Prince* and, after declaring Penrhyn open, we went on to Tan-y-bwlch, where a delicious buffet was waiting for us.

Over the May Day Holidays, we had sufficient volunteers to offer support to Colin Sudlow on the roofing job between the Maenofferen Sheds and, as a result, considerable progress was made and the end is well nigh in sight.

The P&G trailer is now resplendent in maroon livery, with its new departmental title written large on the sides, Welsh on the near and English on the off.

What of the future? We firmly believe that a new, larger hostel is needed if the volunteer input is to continue at a significant level and so we shall be helping the Society with this project, for which full planning permission has now been received, and a first sod ceremony was held immediately following the Society AGM, with Geoff Hall as a current oldest volunteer using the Deviation 'golden' spade and Richard Orme, the youngest volunteer with his own miniature painted version. We are also



*Richard Orme cuts the first sod for the new Minffordd Hostel on 2nd May. To his right the Deviation 'first sod' spade was held by Geoff Hall, to his left are the legs of John Routly and Fuzz Jordan.  
(Peter Johnson)*

deeply involved with the clearing up of Minffordd Yard. Another project which is hopefully going to make significant progress is the renovation of the old station building at Tan-y-bwlch. In order to further all three of these projects, we intend to hold working parties on 4/5th July and over the Bank Holiday weekend 29/30/31st August. If possible, there will be a get-together for volunteers involved, on the Saturday evening.

Another project, which will take place throughout the first week in August — the 1st to the 8th — is the production of a traditional style metal fence at the bottom end of Porthmadog. The fence will then be erected over the October P&G weekend. We intend to do this mainly with youngsters, but a few young-at-heart crinklies will be allowed to help!

We also have innumerable gardening, painting and general maintenance jobs, which can be done at any time, so if you would like to spend a few days working on the FR, we can find work. If you do intend

to come whether there is a working party or not, please let us know by writing to Gwyndy, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd, phone (0766) 770860, or alternatively (0766) 512340 and ask for Sharon.

## **Personnel**

Rob Turnbull resigned from the post of Volunteer Resource Manager at the end of May to start up on his own in the catering line. We wish him well. As already stated, Bunny Lewis liaſ rejoined the staff for a fixed term contract with the Building & Services Department (better known as BP&G). Lisa Norrington joined the T&C Department in February as Commercial Secretary, to stand in for Clare Britton who is on maternity leave, and has since become Lisa Bowden.

Baby boom! Belated congratulations go to Andrew and Lyn Lance on the birth of their son in December. Also, in February to Rachel and Robert Owen a boy, to Sean and Clare Britton a daughter (born on the same day was a son to ex-employee

Richard Nowell), to Jacqui and Andrew Marshall a son (born on the same day as a daughter to ex-employee Chris Lewis) and, just scraping into this issue before publication date is a son to Peter and Samantha Hughes. We wish all these couples many happy hours of nappy changing and all that goes with it!

These notes altogether surely suggest

that the FR is a dynamic organisation, with many projects on the go and plenty more in the pipeline! Do come and help!  
**Contributors: Martin Batcock, Eileen Clayton, Alan Heywood, Fred Howes, Arthur Lambert, Seamus Rogers, Gill Shephard, Alan Skellern, Rob Turnbull.**

## Membership Matters

### Staff Catering at Harbour Station

The present system of staff subsidies is rather complex, with all hot and some cold drinks free, some main meals and basic items reduced but the majority not. The reductions only apply to staff on duty — at other times it's full price. Crews aren't sure where to go to be served quickly — the back door, the entrance to the café or to the head of the queue? If it's busy, who has priority — paying customers or staff on duty? We have a problem in the café, where up to 20% of drinks served are staff drinks. We have therefore introduced some changes which we hope will improve facilities for both staff and customers.

1. The former Crosville/Guards Room is now a Mess Room for train crews. A free hot drinks dispenser and soft drinks fountain have been installed. Free drinks will therefore be available anytime, even when the caft is closed. Free drinks will not now be available in the café.
2. Booking Office staff will have their own drinks facilities, although they are welcome to use the Mess Room.
3. All purchases of food and drinks from the café will be at 33% staff discount (except alcohol). The discount will apply to off-duty staff as well. During the summer the café will be extending its opening hours, so staff who haven't been able to use it may now benefit. We shall sell beer to off-duty staff at a reduced rate and evening meals will be available.
4. New health regulations have been introduced, so nobody except café staff are allowed behind the counter or in the kitchen. Reminders: Please use the Mess Room if you are wearing boots and/or overalls. Uniformed staff may use the café, when there's room. Train crews needing cooked food are invited to 'phone their order in from Minffordd.

Buffet car and all other locations' arrangements remain the same.

Martin Batcock, Catering Manager

### Do You Want to be a Bobby?

The volunteer Tanygrisiau loop and signalling scheme is now forging ahead (following a review of the Company's needs) and will provide a mechanical signalling system using the Dduallt frame operating specially designed semaphore signals. When operative, the value to the Company would be maximised if the signal box could be manned at peak times by volunteers.

The Project organisers would like to try and form a corps of volunteer signalmen (or should one say signalpersons — no discrimination intended!) who could be trained to run the box and also to keep an eye on it and perhaps provide non-technical maintenance out of season. We are looking two years ahead but would like to know if the idea appeals. Anyone who may be interested in principle and thinks they might be available for one four day spell in High Season from 1994 is invited to contact Derek Winter at 46 High Street, Repton, Derby DE6 6GF, phone (0283) 703108 so that interest may be assessed.

Derek J. Winter

### Wants List BP&G

After our appeal in the spring issue of the *Magazine*, we've been promised a router and, possibly at a reduced price, the roofing material for the new generator building at Boston Lodge. However, if anyone else has a source of roofing materials we'd still be interested to hear from them. We've also been given 40 lengths of brand new Dexion angle by Dexion themselves.

We still would be grateful for a bed settee for use in one of the hostels.

Velvet Curtains We got several offers of velvet curtains for the new conference room but

each for only one pair and we need two matching pairs in moss green or plum red for windows 48" wide x 53" high. We don't mind if these are secondhand (in good condition), but we'd accept new ones, the material or the money for same!

**Tobacco Tins** We need old tobacco tins to use as boxes for nails and screws.

**Plants for Plant Sale** The profits from our plant sale at Gala 1990 were about £300 — it was the easiest money we'd ever raised. We intend to have another one at Gala '93. So we are appealing for potted up plants — perennials, shrubs, trees, house plants, or trays of annuals, or young vegetable plants. Those of you with gardens, please start taking cuttings now so that they will be ready for next spring. We can supply plant pots if you contact us.

For all of above contact Eileen or Neil Clayton Gwyndy, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6RY. Phone (0766) 770860.

### **Tokens**

We are still collecting Shell and BP tokens and Texaco stamps. Sara Shrives is collecting any other petrol coupons, Blue Chip and Co-op stamps, plus out-of-date Green Shield stamps, coins etc in aid of the new Minffordd Hostel. We operate a 'swap' system, so send your stamps and tokens to either of us. Sara's address is: 16 Elsing Close, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE5 4SW.

### **Penrhyn Notelets**

The notelets with the black and white line drawing of Penrhyn Station are available again still at the same amazing price of 8 (with envelopes) for £1. They can be obtained by post from Mrs Jean Selman, 10 Griffin Terrace, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6LR. Prices:

<i>No of packs</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>No of packs</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1	£1.34	2	£2.41
3	£3.58	4	£4.75
5	£5.84	6	£7.15

### **Getting the Message Across**

Andy Price (Glos Group) and partners are busily engaged in distributing publicity everywhere except North Wales. They very much need any help they can get in order to make sure that the FR's beautiful colour leaflets and new posters bring traffic to the Railway. If you would like to help, no matter where you live, Andy and the Group would like to hear from you. His address is 50 Thistledowns, Northway, Tewkesbury, Glos GL20 8RE. Telephone: (0684) 299956 (evenings).

Getting the message across is one of the most important jobs to be done, we want those 30,000 journeys back!

### **Boston Lodge Tool Fund**

Yes, you've guessed, it's scrounging time again.

As you will have seen from earlier reports on *Blanche, Palmerston*, Team X and the old truck gang, the number of volunteers working in the works has increased dramatically. Not only have the numbers increased, the scope of the work has changed enormously.

Whilst this is excellent, it has shown up some shortfalls in the works. On a major weekend it is not unusual to find in excess of thirty people working on projects and this has focused attention on the inadequacies of the tools available to volunteers.

It is quite possible to find all the machines in the machine shop in use and very quickly it becomes apparent that there aren't enough tools to go round. By this I mean fundamental tooling such as lathe tools, centres, tailstock chucks. One weekend three people were taking it in turns to use one live centre and one 9" vernier calliper. Also we struggle for simple things like spanners, relying on those owned by individuals, again we end up fighting over them.

All is not gloom; some donations have been made. East Midlands Group donated some money for electrical tools, plus some no longer required tools. They also purchased some breathing apparatus for firebox explorers; here they have a vested interest as they are the intrepid explorers. The Hants & Sussex Group kindly donated £220 with which we bought a digital vernier calliper. This is not only very accurate but an idiot can use it as the reading appears as a digital read-out.

Naturally, I'm not telling you this for the good of your health, I want your money or tools. The most effective way to donate is to send us the money to the Boston Lodge Tool Fund, we can then combine them to purchase larger items and then we can use our charitable status to get the best price.

We are also raising money by other methods. Andy Savage graciously donated £180 to the fund for which Ffrisco the Disco PLC Inc provided the disco in Y Ganolfan for his 70th birthday party. Other gigs are planned and a tour T-shirt has been produced; this exclusive item of clothing is available in a wide range of sizes and colours (XXL and white) from Roland Doyle for £6.50 plus postage, all proceeds to the tool fund. ORDER YOURS NOW. (Send donations to the Tool Fund at Boston Lodge. Please make cheques payable to the Boston Lodge Tool Fund.) PaulMartin

## The 'Lift Bank' Scheme

Do you travel to the Railway by car? Are you prepared to use your car to help promote volunteering?

A scheme is being set up to match car drivers with space available in their cars and volunteers who are in need of a lift.

The aim is to reduce the costs of travel by helping with petrol money and reducing the time and inconvenience of volunteering by rail. It does not matter if you travel rarely, or are not a regular volunteer.

If you can help contact Helen Waters (TFL, 105 Buccleuch Street, Edinburgh EH8 9NQ (Phone 031-668 1619 — term time only or 'Lift Bank Scheme', c/o Harbour Station during Long Vacation.)

The information required is: Your name, address and telephone number; date/dates travel; time (if known); route if willing to pick up *en route*.

Remember, the more people willing to help, the more likely the scheme is to be a success and the more volunteering is likely to be done. Thank you.

# Hunslet 100 — Grand Steam Gala

1st - 3rd May 1993

A Steam gala to be held in 1993 to celebrate the centenary of locomotives *Linda* and *Blanche*, built by the Hunslet Engine Company for Penrhyn Quarry and purchased by the Ffestiniog Railway in 1962 and 1963.

Preparations for this major event are in the early stages. The following is an outline of what we plan to do.

There is a possibility that *Charles* (the first loco built by Hunslet for Penrhyn Quarry in 1883) will be visiting the railway from Penrhyn Castle Museum to join his sisters for the weekend. If so, he will remain at Boston Lodge Works for inspection during the day and for photographing with *Linda* and *Blanche* before they go off shed in the mornings and on their return at night. Special photographic permits will be available for this and for photographing the other visiting locomotives at the start and close of the day.

A number of Hunslet locomotives will be visiting the railway for the gala from various parts of the country and it is planned to assemble them at Harbour Station for a cavalcade across the Cob to Boston Lodge — a unique opportunity for photographers. Our aim is to have 100 Hunslet engines attending the Gala. These will range from those which will earn their keep on our main line, operating between Porthmadog and Minffordd and on a shuttle service into Minffordd Yard from the station, to 3W, 5" and

7V\* gauge giving rides on the miniature railways and many, many models on display at the Ganolfan, Porthmadog. If anyone has, or knows someone who has a Hunslet model, please let the Event Coordinator know.

The Ganolfan, Porthmadog, 2 minutes walk from Harbour Station, will house a large model railway exhibition along with the models referred to above, a display of Hunslet locomotive photographs, trade stands and light refreshments. In the grounds of the Ganolfan there will be a 3W/5" gauge railway and fairground organ.

Harbour Station car park will be devoted to fairground amusements with a steam traction engine driving one of the rides and a large organ helping to create a real fairground atmosphere.

The café and bar in the station will be operating a full service as usual and a wide range of souvenirs, including specials to commemorate the event, will be available in the shop here and elsewhere along the line.

The engineering workshops at Boston Lodge will be available for inspection although, as yet, no special displays and demonstrations have been arranged at this site, other than as referred to above.

Minffordd Station will again play an important role at this event and there will be a lot of activity to keep both visitors and station staff occupied. We would like to have a number of buskers roving



## FESTINI OG RAILWAY SOCIETY LTD

Lime Tree Lodge,  
Thorpe Road,  
Mattersey,  
Doncaster DN10 5ED

### WE NEED YOUR HELP

Dear Member

To help the Society to fulfil its aims and commitments to the railway we are in need of your help —

- 1) **THE SOCIETY** needs more members
  - 2) **THE SOCIETY** needs more sponsors
  - 3) **THE SOCIETY** needs more volunteers
- 1) When you have passed on the enrolment form overleaf (complete with your membership number) and have successfully encouraged a new member to join, you will receive a voucher worth £2.50 to spend at the railway shop.
  - 2) When you have gained a sponsor for the Society who is prepared to donate £100.00 or more you will receive on receipt of the sponsor's cheque or goods, a voucher for £15.00 to spend at the railway shop.
  - 3) If you are inclined to volunteer for more work on the railway or encourage others to do so, there is a very special reward. "The pleasure of your own enjoyment; the enjoyment of other people and the secure future of the Society and the railway."

Yours sincerely  
P.K. Jordan  
Chairman

# Do You Know Someone Who'd Like to Join the Society?

## Annual membership of the Festiniog Railway Society offers:

- 10 free journeys on the Festiniog Railway, and then reduced fare travel
- 3 fare reductions for accompanying friends
- 4 free issues of the Festiniog Railway Magazine
- Free Travel on the Talylyn Railway
- Reduced Rate Travel on the Chemin de Fer de Vivarais (France)

Return completed form to: Festiniog Railway Society Limited,  
50 Thistle-down, Northway, Tewkesbury, Gloucester GL20 8RE

## Membership services include:

- The chance to undertake volunteer work on the Festiniog Railway
- Hostel accommodation when working on the Railway, if required
- Opportunities to make new friends

## CURRENT MEMBERSHIP RATES

Life _____	£300.00	Associate Life _____	£200.00
Full _____	£12.00	(Spouse of a Life Member)	
Junior (18 or under) _____	£6.00	Associate _____	£6.00
Family _____	£20.00	(Spouse of a Full Member)	
		Senior Citizens _____	£6.00

Please enrol me as a member of the Festiniog Railway Society.

N.B. If you are paying for more than ONE individual, please give full names and dates of birth for each person on a separate sheet.

Membership number of person who gave me this form \_\_\_\_\_

(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

Surname	Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms		
Forenames			
Address			
	Post Code		
Age (if under 18)	Tel No		
Signature	Date		

If another member of the Society lives at your address and is willing to share your literature, please tick here   
Cheques should be made payable to 'Festiniog Railway Society Ltd'. I enclose:

Subscription £ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation £ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed £ \_\_\_\_\_

## IF YOU WISH TO PAY BY BANKERS ORDER PLEASE COMPLETE BELOW

To the Manager\* \_\_\_\_\_ Bank PLC\*

please pay on receipt to National Westminster Bank PLC Branch †

Sort Code † \_\_\_\_\_ Account No † \_\_\_\_\_  
for the credit of Festiniog Railway Society Ltd quoting reference †

The sum of \_\_\_\_\_ and then on 1st March \_\_\_\_\_  
annually the sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_ until further notice

Please debit Account No \_\_\_\_\_

Account Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\* Enter name and full postal address of your bank  
† Please leave blank (will be completed by Membership Secretary)

# Ffestiniog Railway Society & Erewash Valley Cycling Club

## SPONSORED RIDE DERBY TO PORTHMADOG

*AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY SUNDAY*

What, another sponsored event. Oh No! Oh Yes! but this time with a difference. A group of young cyclists from the East Midlands are going to ride from Derby to Porthmadog on August bank holiday Sunday (August 30th.) to raise money for the new Ffestiniog Railway volunteer hostel at Minffordd. Why you may ask are youngsters from a cycling club in the Erewash Valley (Just east of Derby) helping to raise money for the new F. R. volunteers hostel.

Well, Edward and Michael are not just keen society members but are also keen young racing cyclists. Edward & Michael have been helping on the railway over the past three years and have stayed at Minffordd many times with their parents.

Edward thought that he could harness the help of his cycling friends he could raise money for both the hostel and his cycling club at the same Time. Any money raised is going to be split 60% for the hostel and 40% for the Erewash Valley Cycling Club.

The club will use the money raised to encourage youth cycling by promoting races and helping young cyclists with equipment.

Now what do we want from you? Firstly we would like you to give generously, write a cheque dated for the 31st August 1992 and, should the lads (aged from 12 years to 18 years) fail to complete the ride, your cheque will be destroyed. Secondly please ask your friends, workmates and relatives to sponsor them as well, use the form overleaf.

We hope to raise £6000 for the ride but would love to double this. It is possible that every pound raised for FR funds will be matched by grants doubling your contribution.

PLEASE SEND ALL MONEY RAISED TO...

R. N. Shrives, 48 Edmund Road, Alum Rock, Saltley, BIRMINGHAM B8 1HF.

Cheques payable to Ffestiniog Railway Society Ltd.



around the railway, stopping off at various stations to perform their music. If any readers are able to play a musical instrument or sing, please get in touch.

A shuttle train will take visitors from the station into Minffordd Yard where the 'Yard Arms' bar, serving real ale and light refreshments will be housed in the marquee. Visitors will again have the opportunity to drive a steam loco, ride on the 7 1/4" gauge railway and see a wide variety of exhibits, including model, miniature and full size steam road vehicles, vintage plant and machinery and demonstrations by local craft exhibitors. These are only some of the exhibits planned. This time there will be much more to keep the children, and wives who are not steam enthusiasts, happy.

Your journey can be broken at Tan-y-bwlch to enjoy the peaceful surroundings whilst partaking of refreshments from the cafe. The shop will also be open and we hope to have vintage cars and maybe other interesting things in the car park.

The Pianola Institute will welcome you at Blaenau Ffestiniog station and will play your requests from a wide selection of music.

Don't forget — the foregoing is only an outline of the programme. At the time of writing there are still eleven months to go before the gala and a lot could happen between now and then.

You may have heard it rumoured that the yards at Boston Lodge, Minffordd and Glan-y-pwll are being cleared up and made more presentable. The most important one, and that requiring the most attention is Minffordd. Quite a lot of time has already been spent sorting out what we would like and need to do before Minffordd is next opened to the public and a list of jobs has been compiled. This list comprises a wide variety of tasks and it is not all heavy or skilled work. If you think you could spare a day or longer, please contact Tim Oulton of the Dee & Mersey Group (0352) 740679 who is co-ordinating the Society labour for tidying this site. Additionally, the Parks and Gardens department is having its first yard clearance session on the weekend of 4/5th July and a mega-bash on 24/25th October. If you want to come along please contact Eileen and Neil Clayton on (0766) 770860.

We organise our special events by appointing a person responsible for each major activity. These people require a tremendous amount of help from now until the Gala. If you have something you would like to exhibit (all suggestions welcome), please contact Pat MacGregor, Event Co-ordinator, Boston Lodge Works, Minffordd, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd, LL48 6HT (Phone: work - (0766) 771099/ 512850; home (0766) 770264 and she will immediately pass on your offer to the appropriate person.

*Bogie detail on No 113, seen from the new Boston Lodge carriage maintenance pit. (Peter Johnson)*



# Ricket Rescue PLC — Quarterly Report

Paul Martin

Congratulations to Mrs Gia Sprocket, the winner of last *Magazine's* spot the *Blanche* report competition. Mrs Sprocket correctly identified it as being contained in a microdot on page 14.

Seriously, (why?) there was no report as we were all too busy working on *Blanche* and taking the micky out of Pointless Power PLC (*Palmerston*) to write a report. Well that's my excuse, it will be interesting to see what Roland's excuse is.

The *Blanche* has achieved her first mileage for three years, approximately

*Paul Martin boring Blanche's horn guides on 29th March. (Peter Johnson)*



200 yards, and as a 4-0-4, it was a little lacking in power! Following machining of the horns, as described later, and other frame repairs the loco frames were moved in to the new erecting shop at Easter to give access to the crane.

The horns were machined using a novel gizmo we cooked up. To repeat the recipe, take one hand shaper (thank you Mr Magnay), remove the pedestal, place against the loco frames, grunting, groaning and swearing as required, clamp in place. Add the odd spring to simulate gravity and you're away, start cranking remembering to change hands at 99. Thank you Mr L. Buzzard for this month's recipe. Further work on the horns has involved grinding the front and rear faces. Possibly for the first time the horns are now parallel and vertical in all the correct directions. Work will now progress to making the axleboxes fit the horns.

The biggest bit of visible progress has been the cladding and fitting of the boiler to the frames. This landmark was achieved on 12th May. The cladding is another example of lack of ability being inadmissible as an excuse. As a result we now have a small group of experienced tin bashers, guillotine and nibbler operators; their swearing has improved as well. So don't try 'can't' as an excuse with us, you'll get a lesson and a job! The lagging is now being completed ready for spray painting with etch primer. The new saddle tank has been delivered and is being made ready for fitting; it may well be on by the time you read this.

The pony truck has been completed by Glyn Whitehurst and awaits the rest of the engine. As a reward Glyn has been awarded the rebuild of the tender as his next project. The tender will require considerable work to adapt it to take roller bearings and leaf springs. New tanks are also required.

The loco wheels have had their tyres turned and the driving axle has had a

crack machined out. The crankpins have been removed for re-machining. Getting these out was an ordeal; they are fitted by an oil injection process. The crank and the pin have matching tapers, oil is forced between them ejecting the pin. Sounds easy, it wasn't. Firstly we had to re-invent the oil injection equipment as it had been stored broken. The pump was connected, pressurised, and nothing happened. A loco weighing jack was used to push the pin, 12,500 psi, there was a really impressive bang, a shower and the pin flew across the workshop. Most people missed this, so the second one attracted a crowd and came out with a pathetic phut! Theoretically the pins go back in by reversing the process. Watch this space!

The loco suspension has been remade, a set of springs overhauled, new spring pillars and pockets made. Wear in the frames has been built up by welding. Here a serious engineering lesson was learnt by

me. Don't lean on the bit you've just welded!

The cylinder overhaul progressed well. One slidebar is set up, the piston rod re-machined and neck rings and glands machined. New cylinder-mounted snifting valves have been made. Now the boiler is on some of the steam pipe work has been refitted following a severe decoke, carbon was restricting the live steam pipes to half size.

The lubricator is being overhauled; as a result the lubricator spares store has been overhauled. Phil Traxson is now the works Chief Lubricator Engineer (is that enough promotion, Phil?). A revolutionary new style of grease lubrication pipework is being fitted to replace that removed. The new stuff has a hole down the middle!

That about covers progress to date although things are happening so fast that this will probably be out of date by the time it's printed.

*The non-hostel buildings at Penrhyn, 3rd May. (Peter Johnson)*



# Palmerston — the missing article

Roland Doyle

My word processor was steaming badly last winter, failing to meet the copy date of the last *Magazine*, so here's the article that Jon Whalley referred to in that issue as 'elsewhere'!

To enable the axleboxes to be scraped in the loco had to be totally dismantled. On inspection, the driver's side leading axlebox had not been correctly assembled as excess whitemetal had not been removed to allow the keep to seat. The keep had been forced home causing the whitemetal to distort, the result being that the axle was misaligned in the axlebox. This explains the apparent stiffness in the coupling rods and has now been rectified.

The original method of attaching the firebox end of the boiler to the mainframe was by 5" x 4" x %" angles, 1 foot 3 inches long. These were fixed to the mainframe by fitted bolts and fixed to the throatplate by %" whit studs screwed through the throatplate into the waterspace! When the new boiler was designed, it was envisaged to use the same method but the late Paul Dukes quite rightly was horrified by this proposal. A fabrication was then designed and made to transfer the weight of the firebox end of the boiler directly to the mainframe. This is held on to the throatplate by specially designed studs welded to the surface of the throatplate which give a similar appearance as the original method (when viewed from a pit!). It was necessary to remove the driving axle to fit the boiler since four of the fitted bolts mentioned above are obscured by the driving wheels.

Now that the boiler is fitted, the driving axle, valve gear and outside rods have been re-fitted. A mechanical lubricator has been fitted to the driver's side motion bracket but the drive and feed pipe have yet to be made. The regulator rod has been finished off and the regulator valve is in the course of manufacture.

The pattern for the blastpipe halves was located in the pattern loft but no corebox could be found. It was decided then to

fabricate the blastpipe from steel pipe and weld bends; that fabrication is now well advanced. The main steam pipe may need to be a hybrid of steel pipe and weld bends with a portion of flexible pipe somewhere along its length; this is to allow for movement as boiler expansion is taken up in the smokebox. If the original design of a copper pipe proves to be a lot cheaper then the original design will be used.

The saddle tank is undergoing some cosmetic surgery. The lower portion of the tank is of new welded construction and so rivet heads are being glued onto the tank. The glue being used is the same glue as used on *David Lloyd George* which is another locomotive being built in the 'Dead Liberal Prime Minister' class.

A major task soon to commence is the lagging of the boiler for which the materials have arrived. Work will commence as soon as the regulator valve is finished. It has been decided to fit two pop safety valves on the dome as per *Prince* and put a dummy Salter safety valve in the cab; this is to comply with boiler regulations which state that two valves must be fitted. These valves will be set to 175 and 180 psi. A working Salter safety valve may be fitted in a future phase of the loco's development and will be nominally set to 165 psi though it is a driver adjustable safety valve; one reason for having valves on the dome!

## Update on the Update

The saddle tank, mounted on a slate wagon for manoeuvrability, has received much cosmetic work. A slight problem did occur with the last batch of dummy rivet heads after gluing them on — they fell off. This was traced to a faulty adhesive which had somehow become contaminated. Having rectified that, the saddle tank was shunted into the finishing shop where polyester filler was applied in an attempt to smooth the extremely pitted top surface. This was laboriously sanded, refilled and resanded. A coat of high build

primer was applied by brush and then rubbed back to complete the spraying preparations. The tank should soon be sprayed in gloss, the colour of which is unimportant; the final livery will be applied when the completed loco returns to the spray shop.

The lagging and cladding of the boiler has progressed well, with only the firebox remaining. A 'first' happened in April when three boilers (*Palmerston*, *Dave* and *Blanche*) were lagged and clad simultaneously in adjacent roads of the new erecting shop. On examining *Princess*, it seems that the firebox is clad but not lagged; would anyone like to buy a six metre roll of loco type boiler lagging?

The rear frame structure between backhead and buffer beam has been progressed nearly to completion. The fixing angles which fix the frames to the backhead have been given attractive curves on top as these project through the footplate as per *Princess*. Fitted bolts have been manufactured on the Holbrook lathe and await final assembly of the rear frame structure.

The cab steam turret originally had one Salter safety valve mounted on top, but the boiler inspectorate now require two valves; there is insufficient room for two *Prince*-type valves to fit under the cowling in the cab. The safety valves as fitted to *Prince* and *Linda* are the innards of a commercially procured side discharge valve fitted into a Boston Lodge manufactured top discharge bonnet. After inspection of the complete side discharge valves, it may be possible to mount two of these valves on the steam turret in the cab. Right angle bends and straight pipe would then carry the discharge steam up through the cab roof; all of this arrangement would be hidden by the brass cowling and discharge pipe of the original Salter valve. A bit more thinking and consultation is required before a decision is made!

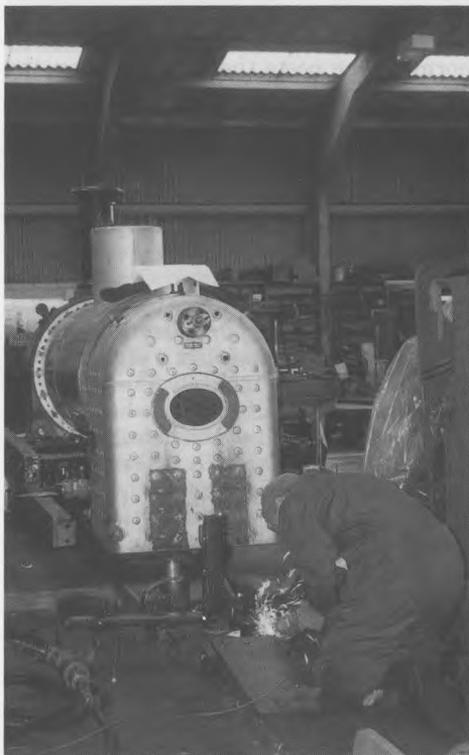
Work is continuing with the blastpipe and main steam pipe. The main steam pipe will be a hybrid of steel pipe, weld bends, flanges and a length of flexible pipe to allow for smokebox movement when the boiler expands; the flexible pipe

has been ordered.

So far only two people have taken up the offer of homework projects on *Palmerston*, their work now successfully incorporated on the loco. Would an FRS group like to fabricate *Palmerston's* ashpan as a homework project? I would like to hear from anyone who is suitably skilled; I can supply a drawing. The old FR Co. drawing has been found of the two standard FR whistles. Now I'm sure there is someone out there who would like to manage the mini project of making wooden patterns, having the parts cast, and machining, say, a batch of four whistles? The only problem is that I need two of them by Wednesday of last week.

Roland Doyle, 4 Morfa Lodge, Porthmadog, Gwynedd LL49 9PF. Phone (0766) 513548.

*Grinding rear-frame members of Palmerston on 29th March. (Peter Johnson)*



# For Good Measure (or how to break up a good walk)

Frank Collins and Brian Render)

The Festiniog Railway's Act of Parliament of 23 May 1832, section XCIX, provides that "the said Company shall cause the said Railway or Tramway to be measured, and Stones or other conspicuous Marks to be set up and forever maintained at the distance of One Quarter of a Mile from each other, with proper inscriptions." The 1863 series of 'posts' were literally Mile Stones, triangular in shape and suitably engraved, often set into the field walls bounding the railway. One or two of this type can still be found by the discerning, situated on the up side. (For the uninitiated, the terms Up and Down on the FR mean literally that — uphill and downhill. With zero for the Posts at Porthmadog, this means that, in terms of ordinary B.R.-parlance, up and down on the FR are the opposite way round to normal. The posts these days are on the down, or valley, side.)

The FR's eventful history has made its mark on the posts, too. Some changes in alignment had altered the original mileages, whilst of course the Deviation above Dduallt had completely changed the last four miles. The posts were installed by the Leicester Group of the Festiniog Railway Society in the mid-70s, to which those on the Deviation were added at the time of construction/restoration. Unfortunately it seems the posts on the lower section were set out without the benefit of the detailed survey information available in 1991, with the result that they were slightly irregular in their spacing, and, as it later transpired, almost all incorrectly spaced in relation to zero at Porthmadog! This had become apparent to Civil Engineering Manager Fred Howes, who put forward the question of sorting out the line's measurement as a volunteer project.

Enter Brian Render, and Margaret and Eric Parnell, neighbours who live adjoining the line at Tanygrisiau. Suitably

equipped and briefed — the FR is every bit as dangerous as a full-size railway, and in places more so, and so safety is absolutely essential — they set off from Harbour station to measure, mark and record every chain up to Blaenau Ffestiniog. They started out — fully waterproofed and windproofed — from Harbour Station, on to what must be the longest, coldest, windiest, most exposed mile of track measurement ever attempted in March. The Cob does however present no difficulties in sighting — and avoiding — trains.

However the next 8% miles from Boston Lodge to Dduallt have a succession of blind curves in a very narrow formation, in which the gap between the boundary walls is frequently less than 6 inches wider than the train on either side. Coupled with curves giving visual warning of approaching trains of less than 100 yards, some of the hazards of working on the railway can be appreciated. To make matters worse, the local topography can play tricks with the ears, such that in some parts the whistle of an approaching train can be heard between 1 and 2 miles distance, whilst at others one can struggle to hear it at 200 yards. Add to this the activities of the RAF, local farmers, streams under the railway, lorries on the main road in the valley or even a curlew on the Traeth, and relying on audible warning is also a problem. Constant reference to the timetable is therefore essential — but of course trains can run late or out-of-course, and Specials also operate. Just to add to the problems, certain locomotives — *Mountaineer* and *Merddin Emrys* particularly — can be almost silent in their approach, especially when running downhill. So the watchword was caution and alertness at all times; all activities must be planned with reference to the ability to reach a refuge. If in doubt, get off the line — it is unprofessional to leap over the wall in

sight of an oncoming train! The 'measuring team' became acclimatised to the difficulties; the 'labourers' spent much of their first visit doing so.

Measuring proceeded through a carefully planned sequence, as follows:

- 1) One person held the end of the tape on the previous mark.
- 2) The second person ran the tape out 66' to the next mark.
- 3) The third person marked the next length (66 feet) in the centre of the track.
- 4) The second person moved up to the third and marked this length — in hard chalk — on the rail on the driver's side, sighted through on the wall or rock and chiselled a bench-type mark.
- 5) The third person noted this mark on the previously prepared chart.
- 6) Painting the bench-type mark in mile/chain numbers in yellow paint required a separate visit to that length of line under the same stringent safety rules.
- 7) If no wall or rock or other permanent object was available to paint on any chain point then a short post would be required.

Once under the Rhoslyn Bridge at Dduallt the line is 'open' both in width and scenery up to Tanygrisiau station and so the measuring took place under easier conditions. However, Moelwyn Tunnel, although straight and wide, needed particularly careful selection of the timing of its measurement, not so much because of darkness, but to take special account of the passing trains — service or otherwise. A potential partial repeat of railway history had also to be overcome, because two of the measuring "horses did not mind the tunnel", but the third one did! Sympathetic blackmail ensured that all three went through, i.e. "either you measure through or go back to Tunnel South Gate, climb up the 1836 incline and down the north side!"

390 man-hours, 228 man-miles on foot and 9864 bendings-down-to-rail-level later, the line was measured from one end to the other, with a chain mark every chain on the up side throughout. Fred Howes' instincts had been proved correct,



for, of the 55 possible posts, only post 5V1 was in the correct position! The others averaged 13 yards uphill of where they should have been, but some were considerably more than that — almost 2 chains in one instance — whilst one or two were downhill of their correct positions and there were several missing entirely...

Enter the Railway Performance Society, through the good offices of one of its members, Eric Rudkin, and Fred Howes. The Railway Performance Society was established at the end of 1979 specifically to cater for those with an interest in timing trains and analysing traction performance, and remains the only nationwide society in the United Kingdom for which this is the primary objective. Principal communication with members is through a quarterly magazine, *Milepost*, and meetings in various centres around the country. All aspects of traction performance and all types of traction are covered, with the aim being to cover as much of the UK scene as possible, principally current, although steam, both

service and modern, and early modern traction appear from time to time. A regular series of articles on French running, and other periodic foreign articles, also appear. The Society is working on detailed mileage charts, aimed at the requirements of the train-timer, to cover the whole of the UK, although this task will take some years to complete! (Needless to say, a detailed chart for the FR was produced as a result of our first visit, and is appended.)

Fred Howes spoke to both the London-meeting of the Society in December 1990 and the Crewe meeting in February 1991 and mooted the idea of an RPS working party to carry out the task of re-positioning the posts and replacing those that were missing. Length of project uncertain — it would all depend on how we got on when on site, how difficult it proved to be physically to move and relocate certain of the posts — and, above all, what the elements threw at us.

So Martin Barrett, Frank Collins and Sean Emmett set off to rendezvous at Mrs Skellern's excellent B&B in Madoc Street, Porthmadog, on the evening of Thursday 18 April 1991, to do battle with the elements and everything else that nature in the Snowdonia National Park could throw at us. Some of the party left Bristol on a warm Spring evening in the thick of the rush hour, and reached Porthmadog, having stopped for refreshment, some 4% hours later in a torrential downpour! The following morning dawned with dramatic skies in the aftermath of the storm, with views across the Traeth to snow-capped Snowdon in the distance. Fortified by one of Mrs Skellern's superb breakfasts, we met in Fred Howes' office at Minffordd shortly after 08.30, for briefing and introduction to Brian Render and Margaret Parnell. We were informed that, in Festiniog terms, the weather at the upper end of the line looked favourable, so we adjourned to Glan-y-pwll and, armed with orange vests, an assortment of hand tools and working instructions based on the result of the survey, were introduced to the posts.

Every twist and turn of the line brings different and, with it, new variations to the local topography. Similarity between each of the mile-posts ends with the oval-shaped head. Each post therefore had its own set of problems; some are set into the ground, others on embankments or in walls, and our initial task therefore was to walk the line from one end to the other, attending to those posts which could be easily dealt with, and assessing the requirements of the rest. The objectives sounded easy enough: to equip the line with a full set of correctly positioned mileposts in secure mountings that were both visible to the train-borne recorder and were clear of the loading gauge. Those with detailed knowledge of the line will realise that this is quite a challenge and quite a safety problem for newcomers to the line!

Friday started gently enough, attending to the topmost posts, 13 V4 and 13%, fairly easily — although the former also required some gardening attention to ensure visibility. However, the weather gave us encouragement to work hard, for in Blaenau it was bitterly cold — with a hint of snow in the air! With the next three all missing only site notes could be taken, and so attention moved to MP 12 Vi, immediately east of Tanygrisiau station. At once, the tightness of the clearances of the original line became apparent, for the post was to be moved from the safety of a refuge into what is, in effect, a walled cutting; inspection of a passing train revealed that, even positioned hard against the wall, the thickness of the supporting pole would put the whole structure would foul the gauge by about an inch!

The real battle started after lunch with Milepost 12 — appropriately, since it was the current number of our magazine. Whoever had installed this originally clearly intended it never to be moved again. It took the full energies of two of us even to shake it in its foundation; when finally worked loose it proved to be set in about 3 hundredweight of concrete! Meanwhile, the other two members of the

party were having an equal struggle to create a hole at its intended site; some fell on stony ground, one might say. An hour, and two near-hernias, later the ensemble was once again embedded in terra firma.

During the course of the afternoon the weather improved considerably, and we worked our way down to Dduallt by early evening, before returning over the top to Tanygrisiau. We had worked up a good thirst and appetite for The Union at Tremadoc, and needless to say slept soundly; on Saturday morning some members of the party were complaining of aches and pains!

Saturday proved the most productive day. We started at Tan-y-bwlch, working initially downhill through the woods to MP 5%, then returning by train to Dduallt to pick up where we left off on Friday to cover the rest of the mountain section down to Tan-y-bwlch. That completed by the end of the service and with a fine evening in prospect, we then proceeded, via refreshment, to Rhiw Goch, to tackle most of the posts between there and MP 5% — somewhere around 5 miles of posts tackled in a single day! The food and beer in The Union were even more welcome afterwards! Sunday saw us in the rain on the 'urban' section during the day — Rhiw Goch to Boston Lodge, and stage one of the task completed.

In the evening, we went back up to Glan-y-pwll, and with assistance from *The Colonel* set off down the line to concrete in the posts moved so far. We got all the way to Boston Lodge before nightfall, and then sampled the rare experience of long-distance night-time *Simplex* haulage back to Glan-y-pwll — quarter after quarter clocked at 11% mph, giving welcome re-assurance that our efforts had been worthwhile! All safely stowed at the Depot, there following another high-speed run — this time to get to the Little Chef at Penrhyn before closing time! Phase one now complete, Monday was a day of leisure on the line before returning home.

Essentially, we had now dealt with 80% of the posts; the tricky ones remained. A thorough search at Glan-y-pwll revealed

that, with one exception (the % mile post which belongs in the centre of Moelwyn Tunnel), the railway possessed a full set of plates for the line; however, new or special fixings were required for these and some others which had been brought in during our first visit. A Festiniog speciality is the dry-stone embankment; it is surprising just how many posts needed to be fitted on such embankments, and how many more had to be moved on to them! Clearances and structures are such that it is not possible to plant these posts along the side of the line in the normal way; instead, the upright post is attached to a special metal spike and the whole assembly has to be driven with sledgehammers into the side of the wall until a secure fixing is found. This becomes an especially interesting balancing exercise when the wall is too tall to permit access from below! Other plates, especially those in the 'tight' spots, were to be removed from their posts entirely and drilled and bolted to the walls.

So — phase two involved another weekend visit in mid-July. Again the weather tried its best to be difficult, raining heavily on our arrival. Friday was reasonable, and during the day the embankment posts were taken to their sites and driven home. Fortunately most of these were reasonably convenient for road access, though one was carried by Brian and Margaret from Plas Tan-y-bwlch up a steep woodland path to Bryn Mawr and then along the line. At the same time, maintenance was carried out, checking the anchorage of posts and carrying out a little much-needed gardening! In the evening we set out again with the works train, this time with *Moel Hebog*, and drill, to set about those rock-mounted plates inaccessible by road.

Saturday morning — a grey mist hung over the bay and thick fog was reported in Blaenau, so our plan of starting at the top had again proved wise. The residents near Penrhyn station were treated to the spectacle of our attaching post 3% to the wall in the middle of the crossing! By lunchtime we had done all that the

weather would permit; the prime task remaining was to tackle those over the Cob, but these were a painting job, and conditions were unsuitable.

Subsequently, Brian Render has attended to the three on the Cob, and also painted a Zero post at Harbour station, and completed the repainting of the other posts along the line, adding visibility 'hoops' as appropriate. So we now have a complete set of correctly positioned (±one yard — one or two posts had to be placed slightly 'out' as no nearee footing was available) posts, bar the two in the Tunnels. We even have a MP8 ready for installation if and when Garnedd Tunnel is by-passed — only that will of course throw out all of the mileages above that point!

It has been an unforgettable experience; one to be savoured and enjoyed, and with a sense of achievement for the effort, despite the attempts of the elements at

times, though we gather these were, by North Wales standards, kind to us! We have found muscles we did not know we had, and adapted to skills never previously practised. We have cut, dug, pulled and carried; planted and packed; mixed and poured concrete; dismantled and rebuilt, drilled and fixed into stone walls; and practised acrobatics with sledgehammers high on mountainsides; all in the name of accuracy, and adding that bit extra to a 13-mile walk. At least 1084 chain marks have been painted on walls, posts or sleepers; upwards of 4,642 digits and arrows have been painted yellow; 617% man-hours were spent measuring and marking the line, and a further 212% man-hours in moving the posts themselves — a total of 830 hours to make the FR probably the only railway in Britain to be correctly posted throughout its length.

### RPS TIMING LOG Porthmadog-Blaenau Ffestiniog

Down Up									
Decimal						centre		PSR-mph	
miles	miles	M	C	Location	point	M	C	Up	Down
		0	00	Porthmadog	BS				
2.01	0.00	0	04	PORTHMADOG (Log purposes)					
1.82	0.19	0	19 <sup>1/2</sup>	UpStarter	Sig				20
1.70	0.31	0	29	Down Home	Sig				20
1.53	0.48	0	42 <sup>1/2</sup>	Whistle Board	Sign				20
1.17	0.84	0	71 <sup>1/2</sup>	Pen Cob Junction	GF				20
1.00	1.01	1	05	<i>BOSTON LODGE HALT</i>	Sign*				20
0.73	1.28	1	26)	Rhiw Plas Bridge (44 yds)	A487 OB				20
0.71	1.30	1	28)						
0.47	1.54	1	47 <sup>1/2</sup>	Lloc Meurig	PC				20
0.30	1.71	1	60 <sup>1/2</sup>	Quarry Lane Crossing	LC				15
0.18	1.83	1	70	Exchange Sidings	GF*				15
0.13	1.88	1	74	Minffordd Yard	LC				15
1.06	2.01	2	05	MINFFORDD	Tree	2	05	10	10
0.95	0.11	2	13 <sup>1/2</sup>	Bron Turnor	PC				20
0.72	0.34	2	32 <sup>1/2</sup>	Gwyndy Bank	UB				20
0.33	0.73	2	63 <sup>1/2</sup>	Pen-y-bryn	PC				20
0.28	0.78	2	67	Capel Nazareth	UB				20
0.17	0.89	2	76 <sup>1/2</sup>	Highgate	PC				20
0.09	0.97	3	02 <sup>1/2</sup>	Bron Gwynedd	PC				20
0.06	1.00	3	05	Penrhyn Station Crossing	LC				5
4.31	1.06	3	10	PENRHYN	Bdg				10
4.18	0.13	3	20	Penrhyn Crossing (A4085)	LC/MP				15
3.93	0.38	3	40	Pen Cefn	MP				20
3.50	0.81	3	74 <sup>1/2</sup>	Rhiw Goch Farm	LC				20

Down Up						centre PSR-mph	
Decimal						M C	Up Down
miles	miles	M	C	Location	point		
3.24	1.07	4	15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Rhiw Goch	Box		loop 10 20
2.48	1.83	4	76 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Coed Caefali	PC		20
1.55	2.76	5	70 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Tro Keepers	PC		20
1.35	2.96	6	07	Milestone Curve	PSR*		15
1.20	3.11	6	19	PLAS HALT	Shl/Sign*		15
0.95	3.36	6	39	Crossing Bothy	PC		15
0.80	3.51	6	51	Crossing Mawr	PC		15
0.49	3.82	6	75%	Three Gates	PC		15
0.15	4.16	7	23	B4410 Road	UB		15
6.16	4.31	7	35	TAN-Y-BWLCH	Cen	7 35	10 10
5.97	0.19	7	50	Signal	Sig		20
5.63	0.53	7	77 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> )	Garnedd Tunnel (66 yards)			10
5.59	0.57	8	00 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> )				
5.10	1.06	8	39 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	COED- Y-BLEIDDIA U HALT	Sign*/PC		20
4.50	1.66	9	08	CAMPBELL'S PLATFORM	Hut		20
4.38	1.78	9	17	Bunny's Crossing	PC		20
4.10	2.06	9	39 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Rhoslyn Bridge	OB		15
4.02	2.14	9	46	DDUALLT	Bldg	9 45	15
3.80	2.36	9	64	Deviation Stone	Monument		15
3.72	2.44	9	70	Rhoslyn Bridge	UB		15
3.68	2.48	9	73 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Barn Crossing	PC		15
3.60	2.56	10	00	Dingle Curve	MP/Culvert		15
3.20	2.96	10	32	Gelliwiog	PC		20
3.00	3.16	10	48	Tunnel South Siding	Pts		20
2.93	3.23	10	53 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> )	Moelwyn Tunnel (294 yards)			20
2.77	3.39	10	66 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> )				
2.66	3.50	10	75	Archer Dam	PC		20
2.20	3.96	11	32	Llyn Ystradau	PC		20
1.98	4.18	11	49	Ffestiniog Power Station	PC		20
1.73	4.43	11	69	Penstocks Road	LC		15
1.61	4.55	11	79	Stwlan Dam Road	LC		15 10
1.45	4.71	12	12	TANYGRISIAU	Access Gate	12 11%	10
1.37	4.79	12	18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Fron Tanygrisiau	FB No 1		20
1.08	5.08	12	41 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Pant-y-celyn	FB No 2		20
0.91	5.25	12	55	Troffatri	FB No 3		15
0.68	5.48	12	73	Fridd Lŵyd (Cronstadt Cottage)	PC		15
0.58	5.58	13	01	Groesffordd	FB No 4		15
0.39	5.77	13	16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Glan-y-pwll	LC		15 10
0.33	5.83	13	21 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Wakefield Crossing	PC		20
0.20	5.96	13	32)	Benar Road Bridge (34 yards)			20
0.18	5.98	13	33 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> )				
0.00	6.16	13	48	BLAENAU FFESTINIOG (Log Pur.)	Cen	13 48	10
		13	56	Blaenau Ffestiniog	BS		

Mileposts are on the up (right/south/ valley) side throughout but Posts Vi, % and % are painted on the sea wall along the Cob; Posts 8 and 10% are absent, as these should be sited within the Garnedd and Moelwyn Tunnels respectively.

Certain posts are still difficult to see, due to their positioning close to the track or adjacent to other structures etc — but on 14th July 1991 they were all there!

<b>KEY</b>	PSR	Permanent Speed Restriction		
	BS	Buffer stops	FB	Footbridge over the line
	GF	Ground frame	OB	Road Bridge
	MP	Mile post	UB	Bridge under the line
	PC	Foot crossing	Bldg	Building
	LC	Level crossing	Shi	Shelter

## Junior Corner

Ruth Hopkinson

Would you like to volunteer on the Ffestiniog Railway? During August there will be a special working party mainly for teenagers and we would like to welcome any new volunteers. The project is to replace the old fence around the Harbour Station water tower with railings like those at Penrhyn. There will be opportunities to learn skills such as using pillar drills, angle grinders and welders. You must be prepared to work, and also for some of the jobs being tedious and boring, but once finished the fence will greatly improve the appearance of the station. If you would like to help please let either me, on (0925) 263434 or Eileen Clayton on (0766) 770860, know as soon as possible as we may have to limit the number of places. We may also be able to help with accommodation.

On August bank holiday Sunday Erewash Valley Cycling Club will cycle from their homes near Derby. What has that got to do with the railway you may ask? Well, they are doing it as a sponsored

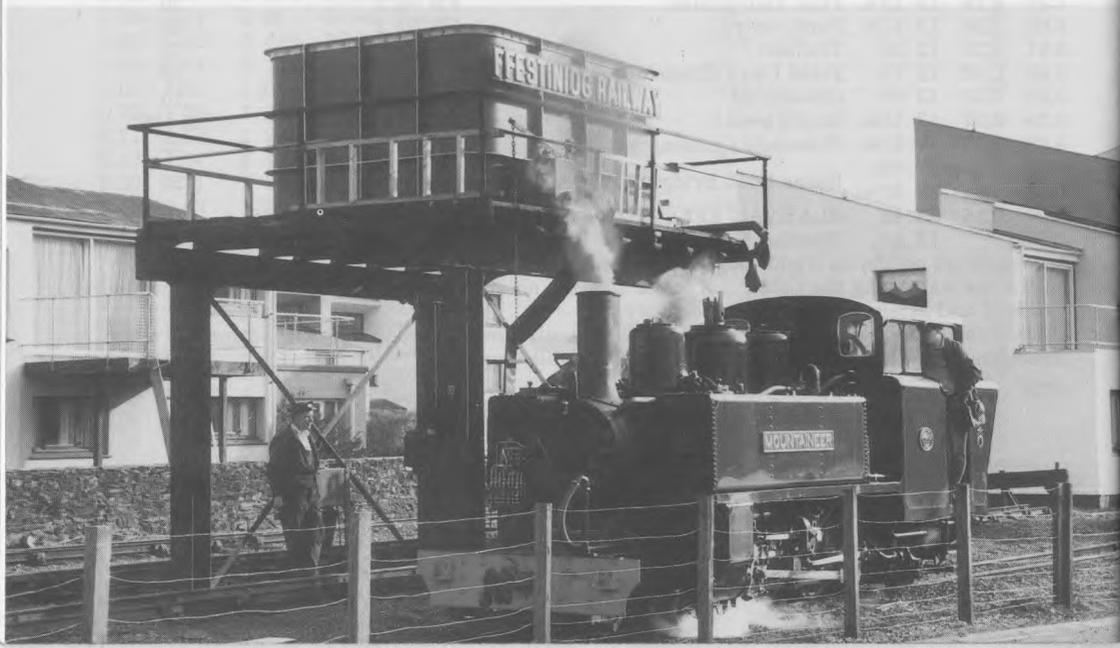
event in aid of the new hostel at Minffordd. If the boys, aged between 12 and 18, make the journey in the 15 hour time limit they have set themselves they hope to raise at least £6000. You should find a sponsorship form with this *Magazine* if you can help.

### What a Day!

Louisa Wasley

Easter and back for our annual visit to the FR. This was the first time we had seen the hourly service in operation over Easter. It was rather difficult to adjust to the new service and it played havoc with our walking plans. However, there was an extra train to see. It took us two days to realise that it is virtually impossible to see the up train at Dduallt and get to Three Gates in time to see the next up train. We only discovered this when we arrived puffing up the road to Three Gates Crossing in time to see the back end of the observation carriage disappearing through the trees. What made it even more aggravating was *Prince* and *Linda*

*The water tower fence which is to be replaced by a teenage working party in August. The Alco prepares for the off on 29th March. (Peter Johnson)*



were double heading. We then had a well earned rest at Three Gates while we waited to see the down train.

For *Linda's* next train we decided to wait at Coed-y-bleiddiau to take a picture just in case they were double heading. We were there in time to see the down train and waited and waited and waited for *Linda*. We heard an assortment of whistles from the other side of the valley but still no train. There was great excitement when a Chinook helicopter flew over, various comments were issued about it looking for the train. After waiting two hours for the timetabled train and meeting a friendly platelayer who had no idea what was happening either, we decided to head down to Tan-y-bwlch.

We arrived at the top end of the nature trail very sweaty and exhausted to hear *Merddin Emrys* leaving. A family conference decided that we would go to Dduallt to catch *Merddin* coming down. This is just possible (only if you walk very fast) but I wouldn't recommend it to anyone especially on a hot day. When *Merddin* arrived, very full, we were assured by the guard that there would be

another train, which we decided to wait for. Our next question was if they were double heading with a diesel and a steam engine because we had heard a whistle and a horn. The puzzled look on the guard's face answered our question.

When the train eventually arrived it was a double header, the two engines were *Upnor Castle* and *Prince!* An unusual combination I've not seen *Upnor Castle* along the line for several years. We learnt from the guard that *Linda* had run out of water just beyond Plas; *Merddin* was sent up from Porthmadog to push *Linda* into Tan-y-Bwlch. *Linda* went down on *Conway Castle's* train and *Upnor Castle* and *Prince* pulled *Merddin's* train. I now wish we had stayed at Tan-y-bwlch to see *Linda* in the afternoon, then we would have seen all the fun!

### Overheard on the line

'Look, here comes *Thomas*'

'Don't be silly Daddy, it's called *Mountaineer!*'

This was heard on the train Louisa describes, double-headed by *Prince* and *Upnor Castle*.

*Tan-y-bwlch scene after the events described by Louisa Was ley, and on p. 183. (Richard Kirk)*



Dad is about to get into one of the old coaches when he realises a French couple are standing close by.

Dad — Did you want to get in?

Frenchman — After 3 hours, no Thank You!

### Alasdair Stewart

In the early 1880s the London & North Western and Great Western direct standard-gauge access to the slate quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog threatened to cut out the Festiniog Railway? Portmadoc, Minffordd and the Cambrian Coast line. Fortunately this threat was more apparent than real; far more serious were the periodic trace recessions which hit the building industry and thus the slate quarries, which also suffered strikes and lockouts. Despite all this, the FR carried its highest tonnage of slates in 1897; but thereafter tonnages fell, sea exports slumped and from 1906 roofing tiles became ever more popular.

Although the standard-gauge railways took some of the slate traffic, they also brought more and more tourists to ride on the 'Toy Railway', as it became known, and, from 1923, onward over the new Welsh Highland Railway via Portmadoc and Beddgelert to Dinas (near Caernarfon).

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 cut dramatically the number of visitors to the area; on 15th September passenger services ceased. The Railway struggled on, carrying less and less slate (the last cargo left Portmadoc in 1942). After the war ended in 1945 there was no money to replace worn-out track and

rolling stock. On 1st August 1946 the last train ran, though the short stretch of track in Blaenau was still used by the quarries. The line lay as it was left; bushes, brambles and even trees grew up on the track; carriages and wagons were just left to rot in sidings, on the quaysides, at Harbour Station and in the yards at Boston Lodge. The line was generally in a very sorry state.

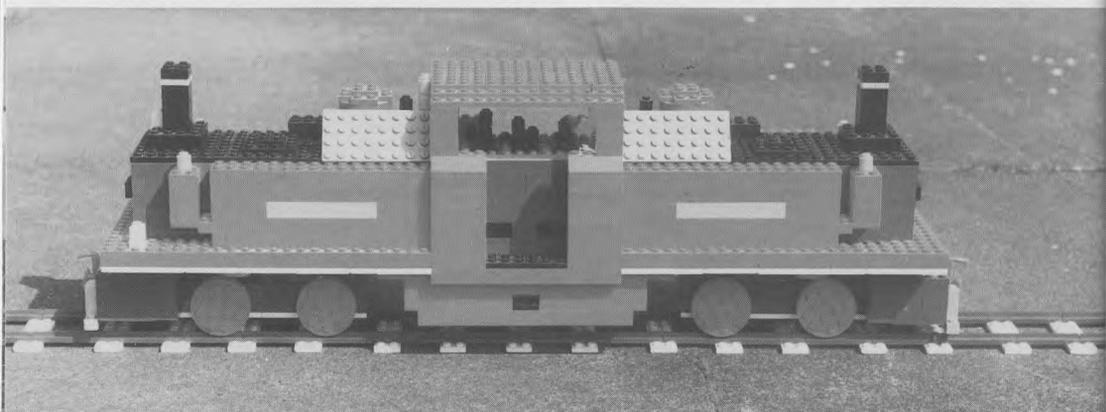
### Letter

Dear Ruth,

I think that you and other junior members may like to see the photographs of my Lego Double Fairlie. The loco has evolved into this form over the period of about a year. When first constructed, it had *Earl of Merioneth* style tanks but these have since been rebuilt to Merddin Emrys outline. The frame of the loco is 495mm long by 111mm wide (62 pips by 14 pips in Lego terms). From the ground to the top of the cab roof, the loco measures 160mm. Overall it is quite big in lego model terms! I feel that building a Fairlie out of Lego is great fun and I am sure that many other Junior members have the capability to build FR models out of Lego. At the Hunslet Hundred Gala next year, perhaps the FR could organise a Lego builders competition in a similar way to the photographic competition.

Michael Chapman

Michael Chapman is intending to publish a set of instructions on how to build this model, details will appear in the next *FR Magazine*. Please send any letters, comments, funny things passengers have said etc to Ruth Hopkinson, Thorn House, Green Lane, Appleton Thorn, WARRINGTON WA4 5NS.

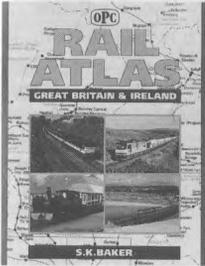


# Publications Received



**A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain Vol 11 North and Mid Wales** by Peter E. Baughan (David St. John Thomas Publisher, £19.95). First published in 1980, this is a welcome re-appearance of a well-regarded volume which has not been available for several years. Although substantially the same as before, the new edition has been extensively updated to give an accurate account of the area covered until 1990. New chapters cover changes on British Rail and the development of the tourist railways. Not just for the historian but ideal for those who require potted histories of the light and narrow gauge lines with which the area abounds.

**Rail Atlas of Great Britain and Ireland** by S.K. Baker (Oxford Publishing Co, £12.99). That a book can attain seven editions, as this has, is surely a measure of its worth. Including all operational railways — independent and minor lines as well as British Rail, the atlas is an essential companion for those who travel by rail as well as those who



dream about it. There are errors, the omission of the South Tynedale Railway, the failure to designate Sylfaen (Welshpool & Llanfair Railway) as a passing place, for example, but given the scale of the work they are insignificant.

**Railways of the Wnion Valley and the Mawddach Estuary** by Mark Hambly, Adrian Bodlander, Dave Southern (Llangollen Railway Society, £2.95). Another in the Llangollen Railway Society's series of albums of local railway history, this covers the Cambrian lines from Fairbourne and Barmouth to Dolgellau and the Great Western line thence to

Garneddwen, as well as the Fairbourne Railway and six narrow gauge industrial lines. The book has colour inside as well as on the cover and represents very good value for money.

**Welsh Highland Stock List Photo Fact File No 1** (Welsh Highland Railway (1964) Co, 29 Cefn-y-Gadair, Morfa Bychan, Porthmadog, Gwynedd LL49 9YH, £2.25 post paid). This 12pp A5 brochure gives the vital statistics of WHR stock and illustrates most of it. The design is rather busy and like most publications it could have benefitted with a few more pages.

**Wilson's Preserved Steam Railway Timetable 4th edition 1992** by David Wilson (Argus Books, £5.95). Preserved railway timetables have been tried before; this one has become so successful that the author has been able to get a commercial publisher to take it on. The unusual feature about it is the personal 'Wilson View' included with each entry, although we wonder if Wilson doesn't find it difficult to discover something new, and witty, to say about nearly 100 railways and railway museums. The design is reasonable but although there are over 100pp it is probably overpriced for something which is inherently disposable.

**VIDEO Ffestiniog & Conwy — A driver's eye view plus!** (Video 125, £19.95). This video takes the viewer on a journey from Porthmadog to Llandudno as though she/he were in the cab of a locomotive of multiple unit. As the FR part of the journey takes half of the 90 minute tape it will be seen that it is excellent value for the narrow gauge fan. Given some good camera work, skilful editing and a sound commentary (pun appreciated) we would go so far as to say that this is the best video to feature the FR that we have yet seen. Those involved with its production are to be commended.

# Correspondence



## Masterful

I notice, in the FR Summer Timetable, a colourful pamphlet, that the 'Summer Shuttle' will contain 'characterful carriages'.

May one hope that they will all be 'passengerful' or, in BR speak, 'customerful'?

PORTHMADOG,  
GWYNEDD

**David Wilkinson**

## Soberly

It is always a pleasure to be present at the AGM. How we must admire the trojan efforts of so many enthusiasts.

Only one thing spoiled it: why, oh why, must project organisers make constant references to alcohol, drunkenness and hangersovers?

The intention may be jocular — but it is not funny. The effect can only be to deter some prospective volunteers.

Solihull, **Lewis Edwards, OBE, JP**  
West Midlands

## Namely

As a Lancastrian I am most pleased that the Festiniog Railway Company has honoured my lot twice and at the same time ignored the lot from the other side of the Pennines.

Firstly there was the naming of a Permanent Way locomotive after a Castle made famous by the valour of Lancastrian soldiers during the Wars of the Roses. Secondly there is the naming of the newest Double Fairlie after a Lancastrian.

SOUTHPORT, MERSEYSIDE **J.B. Leech**

## Doggedly

After 136 editions of the *Magazine*, and an unknown number of earlier newsletters, we have at last seen within those hallowed covers a truly academic article of lasting quality. An article which proves

once and for all that FR volunteers are a dedicated, hard working superior breed. An article WRITTEN BY A DOG!

A most amusing article which I feel sure contained an awful lot of truth. Most importantly however it serves to confound all the sceptics by proving that dogs have immense intellectual capacity. Now that the proof is available let's build'on it. Enrol Zebee as the first canine volunteer with special duties. Post him to the Porthmadog end of the Cob so that he can remonstrate with all the dyslexic dogs who persistently ignore the notices and foul the footpath.

Crossing the Cob on foot involves a sort of dance which, rest assured, is no Welsh folk dance!

Sometime within the next few months Ian Allan and the Wales Tourist Board (?Ed) will descend on the FR incognito. If they award points on the sheer volume of dog droppings there there is no problem. If not, then dogs, dyslexic or not, and owners, short sighted or unconcerned, need to be aware of the damage they are doing.

LONG MELFORD, SUFFOLK

**Lassie**

## Visually

OK, I'm going to say it! (Well, someone has to). I'm referring to every Lady's crowning glory, her hat — or, in this case, her chimney. Poor old *Linda* has been going around for far too long now, sporting that awful piece of ironmongery that masquerades as her chimney. The latest in a line of insults which began with a silver smokebox years back, and now this. Marginally better than the spout she had originally when converted to Producer Gas, but only just.

C'mon, FR, you *did* promise us her old chimney back eventually. How about it for her centenary in 1993?

MARKET RASEN

**Richard Weston**

# Group Notes



## Bristol & West of England

1992 is our 30th Anniversary year and we'll be celebrating in style with dinner on the West Somerset Railway's 'Quantock Belle'. Think of us on July 25th sipping our champagne and nibbling our canapés.

Our homework has been increasing as we now construct whistleboards for the line. We also continue to send regular working parties to the railway, though would welcome anybody who would like to join us.

A full feature programme is being planned for the 1992-93 season, so come along and join us at our regular meeting place, Redland Park United Reformed Church in Bristol. Further details are available from our group secretary, together with a copy of our newsletter.

## Dee and Mersey

Once again we have run a successful railtour in conjunction with Chester Model Railway Society to the enjoyment of all participants and the considerable profit of the Festiniog Railway Trust. This time we went to the Nene Valley Railway and Cambridge for non-railway enthusiasts. Our next is on 10th October when we will visit the Settle and Carlisle again. The clash with Convention is unfortunate but we booked first!

The next date for your diary for meetings is 30th September at the Town Crier, Chester when we hope to have a speaker on the Channel Tunnel. Working parties are 25th/26th July and 5th/6th September. Do join us if you can, there is plenty of work for all!

## Milton Keynes

Well, it's all happening in MK. First we find that an LNWR Bloomer pops up outside the station and now the pillar of MK society steps down from his post as Chairman of the Group. Yes, you have guessed it! The good Doctor has decided that after 15 years of looking after the MK group it was time to let a new man in.

Peter Jarvis was only the third Chairman the MK Society has had since it was formed in 1972 and definitely the longest serving. A rare achievement for a small group. Peter is also retiring as a GP in July so does this mean that we will be seeing more of him in North Wales

in future? Peter does send his apologies to the editor of the 1992 FR Directory where it now requires yet another amendment.

On a serious note we would all like to pass on our thanks to Peter for his long and dedicated service as Chairman of the Group and trust that his continuing service on the committee lasts for many years to come. Our new Chairman is Bob Ballard to whom we also wish every success and trust his service runs long into the 21st century.

Autumn meetings start on 9th September at Rectory Cottages at 7.45pm.

## Sheffield

We have made a donation towards the painting of Harbour Station, as our treasurer, Fuzz Jordan, had his arm twisted by the lady in charge of the scheme!

A coach will be run from Sheffield to the FR on 3rd October, as a recruiting exercise.

Meetings will be held on 5th October, 2nd November, 8th December and 4th January; Peter Johnson will be showing Welsh narrow gauge at the latter.

## White Rose

For our 1992/93 season we have a full and interesting programme. Details to be finalised as yet but the first is on 17th September with ? — come and find out — it's not to be missed. Meetings are usually held at the Oxford Place Centre, adjacent to Leeds Town Hall (19.30-21.30 approx), our new Brochure should be out by early September.

Working parties are on the up with some new faces. The Tan-y-bwlch Special (3rd-5th July) is looking to be a great success with added variety to our P.Way related workings. Next dates are 11th-13th September and 23rd-25th October — all interests considered. Contact Joe Tarver, Bradford (0274) 551012 for information, booking, etc.



*Dduallt shelter/toilet block, being built by Upper Thames Group, takes shape at the end of March, above. (Peter Johnson)*



*Due to acute driver shortage the FR is resorting to desperate measures...*

## Members\* Advertisements



Watch the train go by as you breakfast in the comfortable home of Mrs Marian Williams, Trem-y-wawr (near Capel Nazareth), Penrhyn-deudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6PR. B&B, H&C in all rooms, ample parking. Phone (0766) 770271.

Holiday Accommodation at Porthmadog — Harbourside properties beside the FR Station. Modern well-furnished houses and maisonettes. Balconies with fine views across the estuary towards the Cob, Portmeirion and Harlech or towards the harbour. Sleep up to six. Colour TV, winter night-storage heating. Geoffrey Cauce, 16 Beaconsfield Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey. Phone Esher (0372) 465662.

Bungalow to let above the line in Penrhyn-deudraeth. Sleeps four. Superb views. Colour TV. Available all year round with weekend lets during winter months. Mrs M. Pye, Swn-y-gwynt, Penrhyn-deudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6RH. Phone (0766) 770740.

Porthmadog Holiday Accommodation Large house on the Garth overlooking the town, panoramic views over the Cob and estuary. Sleeps up to 7, colour TV. Excellent facilities at reasonable rates. Available all year round with weekend lets during winter months. Brochure from Eric Mitchell, 18 Bracken Grove, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0XA. Phone (0229) 57234.

Vale of Ffestiniog — Comfortable cottage and coach house (with river view) at Bryn Mawr. Open all year. Sleep 7/8. Moderate off-season terms for parties of 3 or less. Illustrated brochure from Audrey Lea, Bryn Mawr, Maentwrog, Gwynedd LL41 3YY. Phone 076 685 285.

Ground Floor Flat sleeps four, overlooking harbour. Vacancies July, September, October, winter bookings by arrangement. Mrs M. Parker, Alderley, Borthygest, Porthmadog, Gwynedd LL49 9TP. Phone (0766) 512118.

Wanted N gauge Arnold 0-6-0 chassis (model without valve gear) to build into an 009 *Snowdon Ranger*. Phone M. Chapman, (0274) 575993.

For Sale — FR *Magazine* Nos 19-136 (not No 120). Offers to T.E. Worsley, 35d Gibson Square, London N1 ORB.

For Sale — 5 Park Road, Penrhyndeudraeth,

adjacent to garage on main road. Double fronted house with detached garage and central heating. Lounge, dining room, kitchen, 4 beds, bathroom. £45,000. Phone T.G. Jones, (0222) 514559.

Wanted by General Manager, FR *Magazines* Nos 27, 34, 36 to complete set.

Contributions of articles and photographs for editorial consideration are always welcome. Copy should, preferably, be typed double-spaced, on one side of the paper. Copy can be accepted on computer disc: PC — all formats except 2.8Mb; PCW — 3in, 3Msin and 5'Ain. Text formats supported: Locoscript PC and PCW, Word Perfect 5.1, ASCII and anything which will import into PageMaker 4. Discs will be returned. Copy may also be faxed to (0533) 357268.

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date panel stickers 1991/1993	£0.20
BACK ISSUES - 94,96, 98-133	£1.50

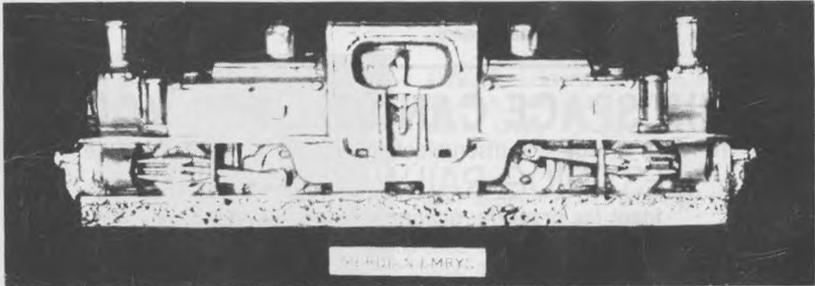
All the above prices include postage, increased prices reflect new binder stocks and increased VAT and postal charges. It may be possible to arrange collection/delivery in Notts/Yorks/Derbys, please contact me.

### EARLIER BACK ISSUES

From time to time we have limited numbers of other issues available. These are sold for £2.00 each. Enquiries should be sent with an sae (but no money). Please remember to enclose a sae even when ordering other items as they are dealt with separately and a reply may be delayed some time until the issue you require becomes available.

Orders for Magazines and binders should be sent to John Flower, 111 Anston Avenue, Worksop, Notts S81 7JF.

### Merddin Emrys — Centenary Plaque



Brass on Slate — Boxed — without certificate £10.00



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*Plus all the items shown on the reverse of the last magazine.*

Orders for Society and Other Items go to Richard Pyatt, 135 Manor Way, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1EJ.

Please make all cheques payable to the 'Festiniog Railway Heritage Group'. All prices include p. & p. within the UK, and we ask that any orders for overseas should be paid by Sterling draft, and add £3.00 as a contribution towards the substantial extra postage costs involved.

### KEEP THE WHEELS OF HISTORY TURNING

The Festiniog Railway will not die. It has been restored to a new and popular life which relies heavily on the donors, workers and visitors who contribute to its upkeep and continued operation.

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*There are no administrative costs.*

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28 Grove Way, ESHER, Surrey KT10 8HL

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