

Corwen Central News



Last month opened with a cold blast of winter air resulting in snow covering the hills and mountains along the Dee Valley. Thankfully, the snowy conditions were very short lived, but were in place for long enough for the Project Work Gang to make an early exit from the Corwen station site! The usual mixed bag of

Better Together

Last month saw the joining of platform 2 to the main line, whilst this month has seen the completion of the loop through platform 1. The weather conditions have played havoc with the platform building schedule, producing far too much rain to allow for the paving of any part of the island platform's surface.



*Early season's snow over Llantysilio Mountain
Photo: PR*

mild damp air, with low cloud and some sunshine returned to the Valley which allowed work to be resumed leading to the completion of the station loop and its joining to the main line. For the first time in over 50 years end to end running has been re-established between Llangollen Station and the buffer stops at Corwen, Green Lane, through both of the platforms.



*Aligning the points
Photo : PR*

Energies have therefore been applied to completing the track work which isn't quite so weather dependent as those activities involving sand and cement! Unfortunately the work in this area got off to a limited start as partial hydraulic power was lost to the gearbox and slewing gear on the Rexquote road-rail vehicle. A call to plant engineers Messers A.J Hargreaves produced on

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site repairs which allowed the Rexquote to regain full capacity.



*All coming together - greasing up the fishplates
Photo : PR*

As space on the work site has steadily diminished, the operating room for the HIAB lorry and the JCB has mostly been eliminated leaving a “last throw” opportunity for the Leyland/HIAB to lay out some sleepers ready for the railing of the Up siding. Both machines - HIAB and JCB will soon



*Looking west through the completed loop to P1
Photo : PR*

leave the site and be placed in the engineering compound on the Ruthin Spur. Meanwhile, the rejuvenated Rexquote has been the major asset at work placing rail chairs, points and rail in the quest to complete the station loop.



*Peter Jump and Bob Gwynne fix last fishplate for the loop
Photo : Phil Hebson*

The job was finished on November 23rd. A huge vote of thanks must go to the project's track gang,



*Muscleman aligning track in P1 loop
Photo: PH*

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led in this instance by Peter Jump, assisted by retired NR track engineer, Richard Jones.

As reported last month, much thought has had to go into getting the crossover and track geometry correct, to allow for a smooth entry and exit to platform 1.



Track Gang led by Peter Jump (R) close the gap after 50 years
Photo: PH

Guards on parade



Guards arrive at Corwen - (L-R) David Rowlands, Jen Gardiner, Clive Palmer, Maureen Theobald, John McGowan, Rob Plimmer, John Doyle
Photo : PR

During the recent Guards' Training Day the opportunity was taken to visit the Corwen Station Site. For many this was their first visit to the new station, despite regular trips to the now closed Corwen East whilst guarding service trains.



Phil Rogers (centre) introduces the station site to the guards
Photo : PR

The guards were divided into two groups of approximately ten and were conducted around the site by the management teams own "blue badge",



Exhibits in the ticket office including a model of Rocket which once adorned the bar of the Royal Oak pub.
Photo : PR

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Phil Rogers. The chair lift was demonstrated by Corwen Stationmaster, Wayne Ronneback, with a number amongst the group keen to be lowered down to the underpass.



Guard, John Doyle samples the chair lift

Photo : PR

Each group then went to the ticket office to be shown the ramped access available from the car park and to hear about future plans for the building and its contents, over tea and biscuits.

The guards had arrived at the east end on board two guard's vans propelled by the Class 31 diesel, driven by Iain Ross. The first “passenger” train from the east for about 18 months.

Digging in

The Project Team is still awaiting permission to connect the sewer and water supply to the station buildings. This request has now been in hand for almost 2 years. However, not to be outdone by this the sewer and water pipes have been laid within the platform structure and a trench dug to carry the water supply at the west end, courtesy of traditional “trencherman” John Bearne.



Pipe trench - dug out using traditional methods

Photo : PR

Funding and Lucky Numbers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80

Lucky Numbers

This month's winning number is 52

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **Pat Reynolds**, a member of the Llangollen Railway Trust, with **Number 52**. Congratulations go to Pat on her win. Pat has decided to split her winnings between the Corwen Project and the Pannier Tank fund, as has last month's winner Jeremy Price. Both winners are thanked for their continued generous support.

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The Project's treasurer, Paul Bailey would like to thank “everyone who has participated in our raffle this year” and to note he is going to run it again next year because “we still need monies to finish off the on Platform Station Buildings once we have our new Station open”.

The process to enter the 2020 Raffle remains the same as previous years – namely a nominated number in the range 1 to 80 (inclusive) plus the £36 annual subscription (or £3 per month over 12 months). The monthly draw prize remains at £50. Paul asks that existing participants should let him know if they wish to continue in 2020, accompanied by appropriate subscription. For new subscribers Paul will supply a list of available numbers

Away from the Raffle, Paul reports that “we now only require one more Lantern at £200 to be sponsored for our Corwen Platform Lamposts, the other 3 lanterns having already been claimed along with 4 accompanying lamposts. A huge thank you goes to these sponsors. We look forward to you being all lit up very soon!!”

For donations to the Corwen Project, including the Raffle subscription - Please make cheques payable to CCRD (Corwen Central Railway Development) and send to

***Mr Paul Bailey, Dolwen, Bryneglwys, Corwen,
Denbighshire LL21 9LY***

You can Telephone Paul on 01490 450271 if you wish to pay other than by Cheque.

Cash payments can also be made to Richard Dixon-Gough, the Corwen Station Project Manager

Offers of materials for the Corwen Project can be made via the LRT by phoning 01978 860979 or via e-mail at info@llangollen-railway.co.uk

End Piece

In the words of Sellar and Yeatman (*page 17 – 1066 and all that*) King Alfred was the first Good King, with the exception of Good King Wenceslas , however, nobody was quite sure “*what King Wenceslas was king of*” The well known Victorian carol bears no relationship to its melodic source and the (Saint) Wenceslas mentioned was only a duke of Bohemia and not to be confused with the three centuries later, King Wenceslas 1.

Wenceslas was considered a martyr and a saint



Wenzeslaus, probably by Peter Parler, in St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague

immediately after his death in the 10th century,

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when a cult of Wenceslas rose up in Bohemia and in England. He had been assassinated by his younger brother Boleslaus the Cruel. Within a few decades of Wenceslas' death, four biographies of him were in circulation. These had a powerful influence on the High Middle Ages giving credence to the principle of *the rex iustus*, or *righteous king*—that is, a monarch whose power stems mainly from his great piety, as well as from his princely vigor.



Wenceslaus' assassination: the duke flees from his brother (with sword) to a church, but the priest closes the door. (Gumpold von Mantua, 10th century)
Vita des hl. Wenzel

Referring approvingly to these biographies, a preacher from the 12th century said:

But his deeds I think you know better than I could tell you; for, as is read in his Passion, no one doubts that, rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's

churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty, so much so that he was considered, not a prince, but the father of all the wretched.

Several centuries later the legend was claimed as fact by Pope Pius II, who himself also walked ten miles barefoot in the ice and snow as an act of pious thanksgiving.

Although Wenceslas was, during his lifetime, only a duke, the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I (962–973) posthumously "*conferred on [Wenceslas] the regal dignity and title*" and that is why, in the legend and song, he is referred to as a "king".



Cardinal Miloslav Vlk with the skull of Saint Wenceslas during a procession on September 28, 2006
Photo : Kmenicka

The tune used in the song/carol is that of "*Tempus adest floridum*" ("*It is time for flowering*"), a 13th-century spring carol first published in the Finnish song book *Piae Cantiones* in 1582. This is a collection of seventy-four songs compiled by Jaakko Suomalainen, the Protestant headmaster of Turku Cathedral School,

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and published by Theodoric Petri, a young Catholic printer.

A text beginning substantially the same as the 1582 "Piae" version is also found in the German manuscript collection Carmina Burana as CB 142, where it is substantially more carnal; CB 142 has clerics and virgins playing the "game of Venus" (goddess of love) in the meadows, while in the Piae version they are praising the Lord from the bottom of their hearts!!

John Mason Neale, who was Warden of



X. **Good King Wenceslas.**

CHOIRS.

Good King Wen - ces - las look'd out, On the Feast of Ste - phen,

When the snow lay round a - bout, Deep, and crisp and e - ven:

Sackville College, East Grinstead, Sussex wrote the carol, *Good King Wenceslas* sometime after 1849, based on the 10th century tradition, before a received copy of the 1582 edition of *Piae Cantiones*. The book was entirely unknown in England at

that time. Neale translated some of the carols and hymns, and in 1853, Novello & Co published twelve Neale and the Reverend Thomas Helmore's (Vice-Principal of St. Mark's College, Chelsea) carols in *Carols for Christmas-tide* (with music from *Piae Cantiones*). In 1854, Novello & Co published a dozen more Neale and Helmore carols in *Carols for Easter-tide* and it was in these collections that Neale's original hymn was to be found.

Below is a verse from each of the sources. Have a go at singing them to the 1582 tune used in GKW!!

Neale's "Good King Wenceslas" (1853)

Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night, tho' the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight, gath'ring winter fuel.

"Tempus adest floridum" (*Piae Cantiones*, PC 74)

Tempus adest floridum, surgunt namque flores
Vernales in omnibus, imitantur mores
Hoc quod frigus laeserat, reparant calores
Cernimus hoc fieri, per multos labores.

English translation of PC 74 by Percy Dearmer (1867–1936)

Spring has now unwrapped the flowers, the day is fast reviving,
Life in all her growing powers towards the light is striving:
Gone the iron touch of cold, winter time and frost time,
Seedlings, working through the mould, now make up for lost time.

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**The Corwen Project Team
would like to wish all
friends and supporters a
Merry Christmas and Happy
New Year for 2020**