

Corwen Central News



Still in lockdown with the Dee Valley in all its Spring Time glory. So much to see, but with so few being able to take advantage. The Welsh Government has approved a little exercising and socialisation, but not nearly enough to breath life back into the tourism and leisure industry which is so much a part of North Wales.

been the Llangollen Railway being at once deprived of its main revenue stream – fare paying passengers and having to furlough its staff due to lack of income.



Looking East towards Carrog and Glyn Photo : RM



Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine Pratensis*)

Photo : PR

Manufacturing industry has never been totally closed, especially where employees have been unable to work from home. However, employers have been faced with the difficult task of keeping their businesses solvent whilst at the same time keeping their staff safe from infection by CoVid-19. As readers are well aware a principal casualty of the lockdown has

Like many heritage rail businesses the Llangollen Railway set about the task of rescheduling its payments for goods and services, already invoiced as well as seeking rates and utility relief. For the most part these endeavours have been successful, but a number of small suppliers have been unable to take “the hit” fostered by the pandemic so they have had to be paid.

Corwen Central News

restart its operations fairly promptly after safety and maintenance checks have been carried out.

Moving on

The last edition of CCNL contained a brief history of the line up to the opening of Corwen East Station. In this edition there is an opportunity to look at some of the administrative processes necessary to enable the railway to operate between Carrog and Corwen.



Robin Matthews's little terrier Dylan about to be overwhelmed by re-wilding west of Deeside

Photo : RM



(L-R) Neil Evans, Gordon Heddon and Bill Shakespeare look at the plans for the proposed Corwen Station

Photo : GJ

It is now well known that the Railway had a difficult year in 2018/19 and was set to restore the financial balance during the current operating season. However, the best laid plans were scuppered by mid March. In response, the Railway launched its emergency appeal, which thanks to the generosity of many “well wishers” has reached £75,000 and counting. The Railway heard in the last week that its application to the Welsh Government for a Businesses Resilience Grant has been accepted. Both of these sources ought to ensure that the Railway remains afloat and should be able to

The Llangollen Railway Trust was not unfamiliar with administrative affairs having successfully promoted a Light Railway Order through the Westminster Parliament to take the railway eventually to Carrog . In those early days (1970s) a LRO was relatively inexpensive to promote and to obtain. However, by the time the order was required to go from Carrog to Corwen, the world had changed. The LRO had now morphed into a more complex affair called the Transport and Works Order and another layer of bureaucracy had been added in the form of the new Welsh

Corwen Central News



Ballasted track bed west of Carrog Photo : GJ

Assembly government in Cardiff. Where there was once relative simplicity there now appeared an administrative minefield which required much ingenuity on the part of Llangollen Railway Trust and financial resources to negotiate. The Order took 4 years to obtain.

An extract from that order is shown below.

Welsh Statutory Instruments

2010 No. 2136 (W.192)

TRANSPORT AND WORKS, WALES

The Llangollen and Corwen Railway Order 2010

Made 25 August 2010

Coming into force 27 August 2010

An application has been made to the Welsh Ministers in accordance with the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006(1) for an Order under sections 1 and 5 of the Transport and Works Act 1992(2) ("the 1992 Act").

Objections to that application have been withdrawn.

The Welsh Ministers, having considered the report of the person asked by them to provide an appraisal of the application have determined to make an Order giving effect to the proposals comprised in the application with modifications which in the opinion of the Welsh Ministers do not make any substantial change in the proposals.

Notice of the Welsh Ministers' determination was published in the London Gazette on 24 August 2010.

Once the Transport and Works Order was confirmed work could start on clearing the trackbed and emptying the cutting alongside the A5 of debris dumped during the A5 improvement scheme west of Carrog. After all, the expectation was that no one would want to reclaim the trackbed and it was cheaper to dump than to cart away. In the 45 years since the closure of the line to Barmouth, a whole jungle of trees and shrubs had established themselves both alongside the track bed as well as in it!



Bonwm Gates just off the A5 and about 1 mile west of Carrog Station awaits the arrival of the track gang

Photo : GJ

Corwen Central News

Some serious pruning and uprooting would be required. Local farmers had established crossing points over the trackbed or had parked machinery on it or had stacked materials there. Much time would need to be spent convincing these



The Fencing Gang led by Vic Taylor (far right) at work. For every mile of track there are 2 miles of fencing/hedges to be dealt with Photo : GJ

landowners they could no longer have free access on to the trackbed and their belongings would have to be removed. On closure, the trackbed had been protected by the Gyndŵr District Council who had purchased it from the BR Property Board for £1. The subsequent Transport and Works Order gave the sponsoring company or trust access to the track bed to build an infrastructure necessary for the operation of a railway. Built into the Order, which had to be approved by an inexperienced parliament in Cardiff, transport matters having been devolved from Westminster, was planning permission for all the necessary works. These would have been stated in the application, which cost Llangollen Railway/Trust upwards of a quarter of million pounds to promote. Along with planning consent comes a string of railway bye laws such as those which govern the operation of

the national network – for example limiting trespass on the railway, endangering trains and not using designated crossing points correctly.



"It's official" - Works' regulations apply to the trackbed. Employees and volunteers are expected to wear PPE when entering the site Photo : GJ

It's a little understood point that heritage railways are governed by statute and regulations and as such can prosecute trespassers and fare dodgers in the same way as Network Rail or the TOCs. In return, heritage railways are subjected to the same inspection regime as the National network and must have in place qualified staff to maintain the infrastructure as well as a recognised training and competence assessment programme for operational staff such as train crew, signalmen and guards whether or not they are paid employees or volunteers.



The Track Gang with enough PPE to suit the regulations! Photo : GJ

Corwen Central News

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

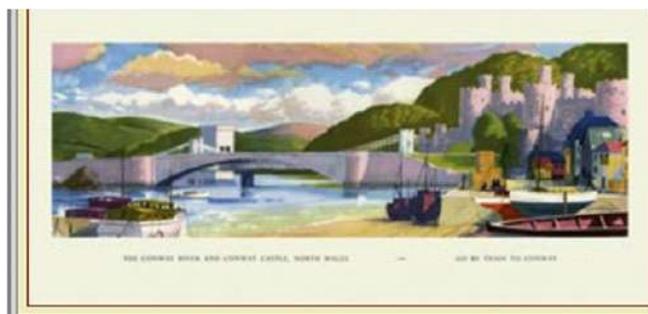
*This month's winning number is **34***

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **Charlie Brook with number 34** who is member of the LR Loco department where he is a Passed Fireman and the Cleaners' mentor. Congratulations go to Charlie on his win which he has kindly donated to the Railway's Emergency Appeal Fund.

In these uncertain times, the Corwen Project's treasurer, Paul Bailey has not been idle. He's still counting donations to the Project, which are very much appreciated, but also indulging in little bit of gentle fundraising for the 5532 Small Prairie Group with the launch of a Football Club raffle card. Participants choose one of 40 Football Teams at £2.50 each in the hope of winning a monthly prize of £50. Details of this draw can be found on the 5532 Restoration Project's Facebook page or direct from Paul Bailey at the usual address. With the Railway closed, the Group have been unable to open their Carrog Sales Coach so your support is most welcome.

Paul Bailey adds "when we come out of Lockdown our Suburban Group will be embarking on our 6th Restoration- a 9 Compartment Second Class "S" Coach which will require 45 Carriage Prints to be sponsored at £20 each. Anyone wishing to sponsor one please google "the travelling art gallery" and look under "landscape

prints" Once you've chosen your Print please contact me at the address below to discuss payment options.



Sample print - Conway River and Conway Castle by Reginald Montague Lander

<https://www.travellingartgallery.com/landscape/print/merchandise/prints/7.html>

Finally as Andy Maxwell nears finishing off the restoration of our Railway's 7754 Pannier Tank we require about £5k to cover the machining of the Brake Valve at Tyseley. We are looking for 50 people to pay £77.54 each for this final piece in 7754's jigsaw. If anyone can help please contact me at the usual address"

For donations to the Corwen Project - 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 or e-mail him at paulbaileywincham@yahoo.co.uk if you wish to discuss any other fund raising matter or if you wish to pay other than by Cheque.

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

Corwen Central News

End Piece

The item in last month's edition of CCNL generated some considerable interest especially from a correspondent in Lancashire who had vivid memories of early years spent in the cotton spinning mills of her local town. In the older mills, automatic doffing machines were still a long way off and young men and women "mill apprentices" were still carrying out the rather dangerous activity of manual pirn/bobbin *doffing*. Whilst she was busy spinning one of her cousins further south was "*bottom knocking*" as the first step in a career in the pottery industry of Stoke-on-Trent. *The bottom* that was being *knocked* was non other than that of a *sagger*, which brought to mind the unbelievable job title - certainly to non-potters – of *sagger makers bottom knocker!*



Retired Sagger makers having done their 30-40 firings
Photo : Wedgewood

Something of a mythological activity but was brought to life, briefly by a mime performed by a contestant in the BBC TV Panel Game "*What's my line?*" (1951-1964). However, *saggers* are real enough, being clay boxes into which pottery ware

is stacked prior to first or biscuit firing. The *sagger* prevents the pottery from being burnt and keeps firing debris/clinkers/dust/smoke away whilst in the kiln. Hundreds of *saggers* were made a year by each pottery or *potbank* as it was known in Stoke-on-Trent, the process being in the charge of a skilled tradesman. This tradesman employed pottery apprentices and their first jobs were to make the component parts of the *sagger* – bottoms, sides and tops. From these parts the *sagger* maker would construct the *sagger*. Amongst the apprentices could be found *frame makers and bottom knockers!!*



Frame filler and bottom knocker at work side by side
Photo: Gladstone Pottery Museum

The *framemaker* beat the clay into a sheet on a metal table using a large mallet, *the mow or mawl*. Using a frame he would cut the clay to size, sprinkle it with sawdust and wrap it round a wooden block to make the walls. The *framemaker* was usually an apprentice in his late teens. The *bottom knocker*, usually a boy in his early teens, did the same on a smaller scale, constructing the round or banjo-shaped bottom. Again the *mow* was used to beat the air out of the clay and flatten the sheet. The *sagger* maker was an experienced tradesman who paid his assistants out of his piece-

Corwen Central News

work earnings: he took the bottom and the sides onto a wheel and using his thumbs joined the sides to the bottom. The “green” *saggars* were dried and then placed on the top of bungs during the next firing of the kiln.



Pottery apprentices with two Mawls or Mows for bottom knocking

Photo : Gladstone Pottery Museum

When the *saggers* had themselves been fired they were ready to receive pottery wares for first firing (*biscuit*). In this stage the pottery is thoroughly



Sagger maker assembling a sagger
Photo : Gladstone Pottery Museum

dried and hardened ready to receive slip – liquid clay of a single colour – in many cases white which acts as a sealant and provides a working surface for further decoration. Once the slip has dried the pottery is reloaded into the *sagger* and is fired once more. These “blanks” can be decorated again using enamel paints before putting in the *glost or muffle kiln* for final firing. Much utility ware didn't get beyond the slip firing which offered a very serviceable product.



Modern saggars at the Sevres Pottery Works these are probably made with alumina or silicon carbide ceramic
Photo : Myrabella

The *muffle kilns* worked at a slightly lower temperature in order to fix glazes and were specially designed to keep the separate source. would wares' gasses



Electric Muffle Furnace
Photo : Guruleninn

designed to wares entirely from the heat This process protect the glaze from flue and contamination, maintaining the the completed

thus value of products.