

Corwen Central News



Still being teased by the changing weather pattern over the Dee Valley, increasing numbers of visitors couldn't make up their minds whether to leave their raincoats at home and chance it or to come fully equipped for a wet day and then being treated to a hot sultry surprise.

somewhat muted joy that the Railway was re-opened to some volunteers and employees on Monday July 6th to help get the business restarted, with the first public running day being pencilled in for 1st August.



The line west of Carrog approaching the Corwen Down Distance signal - almost a green way Photo: PR



Woolley Thistle (Cirsium eriophorum) makes a bold statement Photo : PR

At one stage humidity was showing a “drippy” 90%!! Although the Welsh Government has been steadily raising the lockdown and permitting a wider radius of travel, many businesses in the Valley and the wider part of North Wales were still showing signs of financial fragility. So it was with relief and

As might be expected most of the infrastructure gave off an air of sad neglect, with rails almost obscured by weed growth and a stretching tree canopy above!! All this new growth was in need of cutting back especially where signals and whistle boards had disappeared into a green entanglement.

On day one a weed killing road-rail vehicle was engaged in spraying the whole line from the buffer

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stops at Llangollen Station to the buffer stops at Green Lane in Corwen. Work also included all the sidings along the line and the loco and carriage yards at Llangollen and Pentrefelin.



Land Rover RRV spray makes its way down the Bonwm straight towards Carrog *Photo: GJ*

The 08 shunter acted as a pilot for the spray whilst pulling out rail vehicles parked in the sidings so they could be sprayed.



Class 08 shunter at the buffer stops, Green Lane, Corwen with Driver Paul Reynolds and Robin Matthews at the point lever *Photo : GJ*

After the passage of the weed spray the vegetation cutting team went out to prune the overgrowth and to improve all the signal sightings and clear away any veg fouling point rodding and signal wires.

The members of the newly returned Corwen Work Gang were on hand to welcome the 08 shunter and the spray vehicle to Corwen Station and to observe the work, before turning their attention to what was required to get the work site up and running.

Enforced inactivity has cost the project dear in terms of time, especially as the weather has been very favourable for the most part which could have been used to start laying 40,000 platform pavers! Overall the site survived quite well and relatively free of vandalism or theft, although the venerable Leyland Freighter flatbed truck with HiAb had its air brake pipes cut. Such a pity, as the engine fired up with no trouble after the first try for 3 months but was unable to do any assisting!!



Rexquote Superailer awaits the attention of plant engineers *Photo : PR*
A.J. Hargreaves

The layover was also unhelpful to the RRV Crane/digger, as on starting (fine) the control system computer would not allow the machine to be moved due to some ill-defined electrical fault. The on-board diagnostics wouldn't go beyond "Fuse 2 Fault"! But what was causing the fault - "Ha!Ha! - that's for you to go seek!!" Indeed it was, but wisely this was turned over to plant

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machinery specialists Messers A.J Hargreaves who eventually tracked down the errant faults and put the RRV back into action, just in time to lift the mini-digger from its deep trench!!

Draining away and raking out the fines



*Hive of activity at the west end with trenchers and drainers
Photo : PR*

There was much unfinished business since the March closure included completing the platform drains – a must before any paving work could begin and raking out and levelling the limestone fines for the pavers which have been placed along the platform edges ready for work to start.



*Graded limestone fines ready for paving
Photo : PR*

Carry on trenching

As part the groundworks's design for the proposed platform canopy, a large concrete casting is required onto which to anchor the columns. The anchor point is east of the underpass steps. The size of the trench is approx 2 metres by 3 metres with a depth of 1 metre. With access for road transport now non existent any incoming concrete will need to be loaded into the concrete skip and ferried to the site using the RRV and match truck. Ideally the hire of a concrete pump would meet the need to transfer the concrete from the mixer in one continuous move.



*Peter Neve (L), Peter Robinson and Mike Plant check measurements on the concrete shuttering
Photo : PR*

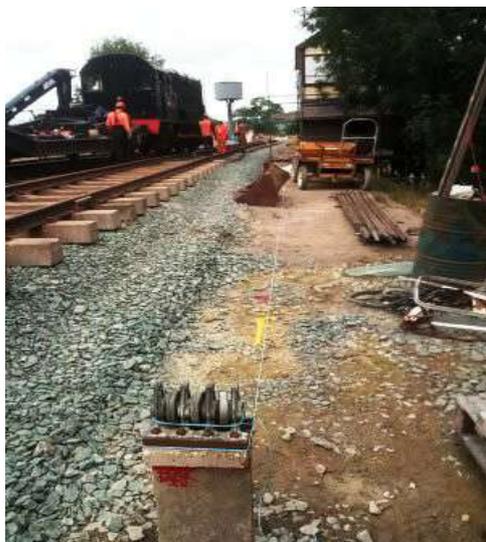
However, the hire of such a machine will cost far more than the concrete is worth, so the low tech method may well be employed! At the time of writing the options are still under consideration.

Pointing the way

Work has started to set out the point rods for the east end crossover. The S&T Projects Team have been on site to mark out the point rod runs and install the first point rod pad. The Veg Clearance

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Engineering train was able to assist by picking up the point rods from the store at Carrog and to



Point rods delivered by 08 team on right by dumper with first point rod pad in place and rod run marked on the ground

Photo : PR

deliver them to Corwen. They were also able to deliver point compensators to the S&T workshop at Llangollen where they will be stripped down, fettled up and painted ready to be delivered back to Corwen. In a change of plan, the ground frame for the crossover will now go on the Upside near the signalbox, which would make any subsequent linking to the signalbox frame a much easier proposition.



Position for point crank block Photo: PR

The original plan had the ground frame on the Downside – on the opposite side of the track to the signalbox.

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
<i>Lucky Numbers</i>									
<i>This month's winning number is 11</i>									

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **Tom Taylor with number 11**. Tom is the proprietor of Taylored Catering, who currently run the catering services at Llangollen, and also offers support and business advice to the Corwen Project. Congratulations go to him on his win. However, Tom has kindly donated his winnings to the Llangollen Railway Great Western Locomotive Group's Small Prairie 5532 Boiler Tube Appeal, whilst June winner Mike Hunter has returned his winnings to go back into the Corwen Project.

This month, the Project Treasurer Paul Bailey writes, "Many supporters of the Railway and 7822 *Foxcote Manor* will remember that about 20 years ago the Foxcote Manor Society (FMS) commissioned a painting by renowned artist Phillip Hawkins depicting Foxcote on Shed at Aberystwyth circa 1960. These are Limited Edition Prints all signed by the Artist. FMS has a few left and in a Cross Group spirit of co-operation with the Llangollen Railway Great

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Western Locomotive Group (LRGWLG) to help fundraise for Small Prairie 5532, have agreed to pay the 5532 Group a commission for each print sold. Unframed Prints are available @ £95 and Framed Prints @ £150 .” Anyone wanting to own one of these superb paintings and also help both Locomotive Groups, then please contact Paul at the address below.

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

End Piece

"So iconic! "So Welsh!" "So traditional!" They all said of what.....?? The Welsh Hat of course!! Readers might remember this column featuring the painting of *Salem Chapel* by Sydney Curnow Vosper in which an elderly female chapel goer, *Siân Owen* is depicted wearing a Welsh hat and a finely embroidered shawl. By the time of Vosper's painting (1908) Welsh hats were already in short supply and were no longer the headware of choice of working country women in Wales. Their style was more akin to the generality of hats favoured by working women at the beginning of the 20th century.



Passengers on the Mumbles tramway 1910 – Lots hats and caps but no tall hats!! Photo: National Library of Wales

The Welsh hat first appeared during the 1830s and over 380 examples are known to have survived. It is said that the Welsh hat was part of a traditional Welsh costume propagated by Lady Llanover but it is unlikely that she had much influence on anyone other than her friends and servants.



The hat may have developed from a number of types of tall hat including the riding hat, which ladies wore during the early part of the 19th century, but no evidence has been discovered which explains why, during the 1830s, the tall hat

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with the stiff, flat brim, which is unique to the Welsh hat, replaced the other types of men's hat worn by many rural women in Wales at the time.



Old country woman Pegi Llwyd of Llangollen c1875 Photo : John Thomas (1835-1905)

By the late 1840s the Welsh hat had become an icon of Wales and was used in cartoons to represent Wales as a nation. It brought forward the image of a happy, hearty, healthy, hard-working Welsh woman. It became part of the national identity and was normally worn with the other elements of Welsh costume, especially the gown or bedgown or Welsh: "gŵn neu betgwn".

The women's tall hats are often cited as a deciding factor in terminating the attempted last invasion of Britain by Napoleonic forces in 1797. The French soldiers are said to have mistaken the women, seen at a distance returning from work in the fields, carrying pitchforks and wearing red shawls and tall Welsh hats, for a detachment of British "redcoats", whose uniform included tall black hats or shakoes. This is likely to have been a fanciful embellishment as the Welsh hat, in the form known

today at least, didn't exist until the 1830s. There is much evidence to suggest that women in rural Wales had taken to wearing felt hats, like those worn by working men by at least the 1770s.



18th Century country costume and farming implements likely to be carried by a rough and ready local muster Illustration : National Library of Wales

It is difficult to date silk Welsh hats; they were being produced in significant numbers during the 1840s and it is possible that they went out of production only a decade or so later. Unlike other fashionable hats, the Welsh hat may have been worn by its owner for many years and then passed down to succeeding generations. The large numbers of surviving hats implies that they were invested with much more than being just an expensive fashion item .

19th century Welsh hats were made in the same way and with the same materials as top hats. Most surviving examples were made by *Christys of Stockport and London, and Carver and Co of*

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Bristol who also made top hats. Some were made by Welsh hat makers. The shell was made of buckram (linen fabric), strengthened with shellac or resin and covered with black silk plush (sometimes confusingly known as beaver) but some were made of felt (originally beaver fur, but later fur from other animals).

During the 20th century most Welsh hats for adults were made of card covered in black fabric but a few were made of felt especially for Welsh dance teams and women's choirs. Welsh hats for children are made of felt and are normally worn with a cotton or lace cap underneath or may have lace attached to the underside of the brim.



Traditional costume as seen by photographer John Thomas in 1871 National Library of Wales archive.

Princess Victoria (aged 13) and her mother (the Duchess of Kent) were in north Wales between the 4th August and 15th October 1832. They stayed at the newly opened Bulkeley Arms hotel, Beaumaris. It is thought that they spent much of their stay at Plas Newydd, Llanedwen, Anglesey, the home of Henry William Paget, first Marquess of Anglesey.



Cambrian Doll presented to Princess Victoria in Llangollen Photo : BBC/NLW

In terms of Welsh costume, there were two significant events associated with this stay: she was presented with a doll in Cambrian costume at **Llangollen** suggesting that Welsh costume was not only distinctive but being marketed. When they passed through Bangor a week later, the duchess and princess **wore Welsh hats** 'in compliment to the fair maids of Cambria'. This is the earliest known reference to the term 'Welsh hat', but unfortunately no description or drawing of them has survived. They also presented prizes at the Beaumaris Eisteddfod.