

Corwen Central News



The sun has really been beaming down on the Dee Valley over the last month or so producing the hottest and driest spell since 1976. Although this has been very encouraging for visitors and businesses supplying refreshments it has nonetheless carried in its wake one of the most severe fires seen in the Valley for many years.



"Burn out" - south face of Llantysilio Mountain

Photo: PR

Over a period of about four weeks local fire and rescue services have had to deal with a massive fire which started "little" on the south facing slope of Llantysilio Mountain before sweeping north to the Horseshoe Pass and then towards the Ponderosa Cafe on top of the pass.

Firefighters were brought in from a number of surrounding fire brigades to help support the

mainly "retained" men and women of rural North Wales. Thankfully the fire was brought under control and subsided in the light of cooler temperatures and heaven sent rain. During some of this period steam train services on the Llangollen Railway were suspended in favour of either diesel haulage or DMUs. The fire service could not spare resources to deal with potential lineside fires as well as the fire on the mountain.

To the west, the project team have carried on with building the locking room of the signal box, adding to the blockwork for platform 1, infilling the platform space, levelling the area around the new booking office and preparing the SB operating floor for removal from Carrog yard.. Behind the scenes designs have been prepared for the island platform canopy and waiting room.

Locking Room

This particular build has now moved from a low priority to a high one with the realisation that if it is not completed to receive the operating floor soon, then this area is in danger of being shut out from the site. Consequently the locking room is now nearing completion including traditional arched brickwork to accommodate the window

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frames, the formers for which have been prepared by carpenter Ron Stansbie.



Locking room window arch and former Photo : PR

Platform 1

As well as the locking room, team members have been adding to the block work for Platform 1 which has now moved on quite quickly beyond the temporary crossing to the Ruthin Spur. Having worked successfully on their “prentice piece” -



Easi-blocs approaching Ruthin Spur crossing Photo: PR

the 160 metre Platform 2, the team described Platform 1 as “going together quite well!”.



Platform 1 - Easi-blocs and second layer moving east - note infill – top left - also taking shape Photo : PR

Station building - “Smart as Paint”

This building has been painted in chocolate and cream and had new doors fitted, as appropriate for an office building. Work has now begun to level



Ground works for station building access Photo : PR

the site in preparation for the provision of ramped access to the main door and from the fire doors.

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Spoil has been taken from the Ruthin Spur to complete the work.

Summer visitors



“Blue Badge Guide” - Phil Rogers welcomes Neville Howell and Friends to the work site *Photo : GJ*

The Project Team were delighted to host two different visits to the work site namely a party of 18 led by Neville Howell Trustee & Events Secretary, Friends of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley and secondly North Wales AM, Mark Isherwood., who is a regular visitor to the railway and a keen supporter of the Corwen Project with its implications for travel, tourism and employment in the Dee Valley.

Neville's group arrived on site for 10am for what turned out to be a near two hour tour. It was a mammoth session led by Phil Rogers who by now has earned his “Blue Badge” and went into detail about the work to date and the future prospects. The group were most impressed and showed lots of interest and raised some excellent questions. A much appreciated donation of £85 was made to the Station Development Fund.

Mark Isherwood last visited the work site 8 months ago and was mightily impressed by the

progress which has been made. He was accompanied by LR Chairman, Liz McGuinness and Project Manager Richard Dixon-Gough. During his tour Mark observed “So much has been achieved in the months since I last visited this magnificent project, with the water tower installed on prepared footings, the walls up for the former Weston Rhyn signal box, the temporary Station Building re-roofed and externally painted, and much more. The temporary station at Dwyrain Corwen East has brought in people despite its out of town location and Corwen Central Station, located near to Corwen town centre, should attract more with its car park and bus interchange. With the engagement of local businesses, the station could make a major contribution to the town’s regeneration as a visitor and business destination.”



Mark Isherwood A.M and LR Chairman, Liz McGuinness by the Water Tower *Photo : RDG*

Funding and Lucky Numbers

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is Alan Parr, a Trust Member and supporter of a number of railway appeals with **Number 13**. Congratulations go to Alan on his win.

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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 13

**Please make cheques payable to CCRD
(Corwen Central Railway Development) and
send to**

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

**Information regarding share purchases and
donations of paint and materials can be made
by phoning 01978 860979 or via e-mail at
info@llangollen-railway.co.uk**

The Project's fundraising guru and treasurer, Paul Bailey is currently undergoing treatment in hospital, however, before his departure he did manage to report that the CCRD Fund had raised just under £71,500 and after disbursements had a balance of £49,000. This fund has been invaluable to the Project in keeping it running smoothly between claims and payments made via the WAG. It's worth bearing in mind that these claims always operate in arrears – never in advance!! So the usual big round of thanks from the Project to all its supporters, without you nothing could have happened and the will and resources to succeed are still required - “To the end of the line.”!!

The plea is still out for paint. Things are starting to appear above ground and they need protecting from the elements. Donated paint goes to make up undercoats, whereas the finishing top coats to the correct spec are provided from Project funds – or sponsorship!!

Finally the Project Team and its supporters would like to send sincere greetings and best wishes to Paul Bailey in the hope that he has a speedy recovery back to full health and strength.

End Piece

Adjacent to the Corwen Station work site is the Corwen Health Centre, now undergoing a £1.5 million refit courtesy of the Welsh Government and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. The large collection of temporary buildings on the car park draw almost as much attention as the station work site!



*New Health Centre rises above temporary "Health village"
Photo : PR*

A number of visitors arriving by train at Corwen East venture out into the town and walk past the ad

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hoc “village” and return wondering what is going on. Explanation is sometimes available and usually ends up with the closing words “.....Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board”. These final words mostly go unremarked as the enquirer moves on, others ask “Is Betsi Cadwaladr the name of a town in Wales or is it a person????”. To those living in North Wales Betsi Cadwaladr is /was very much a person, almost as famous as Florence Nightingale or Mary Seacole because she shared their common enterprise of nursing British and allied soldiers in what became the disease ridden hell of the Crimean War.

Unlike Florence Nightingale, Betsi came from a poor background one of sixteen children born to Dafydd and Judith (née Erasmus) Cadwaladr. Her father was a Methodist lay preacher and she grew up on Pen Rhiw Farm, Llanyceil, near Bala. Her mother died when she was five leaving the family to draw heavily on its own resources.



Plas yn Dre, Bala circa 1875

Source : National Library of Wales

As soon as was practical Betsi got a job as a maid at Plas yn Dre a large house on the High Street in Bala, the home of Simon Lloyd and his wife Sarah. By all accounts this did not prove a happy place for Betsi and she ran off to Liverpool where once again she entered domestic service, changing her name to Betsi Davis. She later moved to London and lived with her sister taking up the position of a lady's maid and personal assistant, in which capacity she travelled the world. A brief return to Bala was followed by employment as a maid to a sea captain, in which capacity she continued her world wide adventure. At this time she was not trained in nursing, but during the course of her time on board ship she became involved in the care of the sick, and the delivery of babies. On her final return to Britain she decided to train as a nurse at Guy's. Following her training, at the age of 65 she joined the military nursing service with the intention of working in the Crimea, despite the attempts of her sister Bridget to dissuade her.



Elizabeth (Betsi) Cadwaladr (1789-1860)

Photo: Date/ Source Unknown

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Florence Nightingale did not want the Welsh working-class Cadwaladr to go, saying that if Betsi went to the Crimea, it would be against her will, and that Betsi would have to be made over to another superintendent. Betsi responded, "*Do you think I am a dog or an animal to make me over? I have a will of my own.*" Cadwaladr was subsequently posted to a hospital in Scutari, Turkey a hospital being run by Florence Nightingale.



Hospital and Cemetery, Scutari by J. Needham (1856)

Source: National Army Museum

Cadwaladr worked there for some months, but there were frequent clashes between the two; they came from very different social backgrounds and were a generation apart in age (31 years). Nightingale was a stickler for rules and bureaucracy, some of which she set up. Cadwaladr often side-stepped regulations to react more intuitively to the ever-changing needs of the injured soldiers. Whilst Nightingale subsequently acknowledged Cadwaladr's work and the progress that she made against the unhygienic conditions, the two fell out to such a degree that Cadwaladr, by now aged over 65, moved by choice from the hospital, nearer to the frontline at Balaclava. Here, apart from her nursing work and her supervision of

the camp kitchens, she again gained notoriety for her fight with bureaucracy to ensure that necessary supplies got through. Nightingale visited Balaclava twice and, on seeing the changes brought about by Cadwaladr's methods, gave her the credit she was due. Clearly Betsi's native wit and determination were born out of years of hard practicalities whereas Florence Nightingale's approach came via intellectual rigour and application to the facts as she found them. (Nightingale was a very fine statistician – linking patient morbidity rates to food, hygiene and nursing standards)

Conditions in the Crimea eventually took their toll on Cadwaladr's health. She was ill with cholera when she returned to Britain in 1855, a year before the war ended. She lived in London, again at her sister Bridget's house, during which time she wrote her autobiography. (*Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis*, 1857. Republished as *Betsy Cadwaladr: A Balaclava Nurse* Honno 2015). She died in 1860, five years after her return, and was buried in the pauper's section of Abney Park Cemetery in north London. A new memorial stone was placed on her grave in August 2012



Head stone placed on her grave in 2012

Photo : Hsq7278

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CORWEN PLATFORM APPEAL

“FIVE FOR FIFTY” AND “TEN FOR ONE HUNDRED”

I would like to donate £50 for Five Tonnes of infill for the Corwen Station Island Platform and claim my 2 Tickets on the CCE (Corwen Central Express) ✓

I would like to donate £100 for Ten Tonnes of infill for the Corwen Station Island Platform and claim my complimentary Return Tickets (2+2) to travel the Llangollen line on any Timetabled Services (*Excluding Special Events*). ✓

Please make Cheques payable to
Corwen Central Railway Development or CCRD and send to

Mr Paul Bailey, Dolwen, Brvneglwys, Corwen, Denbighshire LL21 9LY

Contact Details :

Name :

Address :

Phone E/Mail :

Please enclose an SEA to receive your complimentary tickets