

Corwen Central News



How the weather turns on a sixpence!! Within weeks of the hottest driest period in the Dee Valley for many years, rain and mist have returned to the mountains. Swallows and martins have departed for warmer winter quarters whilst quiet Sunday mornings have been disturbed by the rat-a-pat-pat of rain on the signal box roof at Carrog, interspersed with the “bark” of a passing raven.



Common Raven - Corvus Corax

Photo : R. Altenkamp

September heralds the last (mostly) full month of steam operations followed by the conclusion of the public timetable at the end of October. However, throughout all these changes the Project Team have been hard at work completing the locking room of the signal box, restoring and painting the woodwork of the operating floor stored in Carrog yard, adding

to the wall of platform 1 and adding to the infill at the both the west and east end of the platforms.

Locking Room

This has now been completed and awaits the arrival of the operating floor from Carrog. Glazing and the addition of doors will take place once the cabin top has been positioned. If all goes well with the move, fitting out can take place in the dry and at a pace to suit the needs of the Project.



Drone view of completed locking room

Photo: Dewi Davies

Signal Box

The work on this has now been completed, at least as far as the preparation for the move is concerned.

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The small team of volunteers led by Peter Neve have done what they set out to do – and more. Given that the roof level of the operating floor will be some 9 metres above the foot of the north batter and virtually inaccessible when installed it was important to ensure that as much conservation work as possible was carried out in Carrog yard.



Front window frames under renovation now in chocolate and cream Photo : PR

Block by Block



Looking east along the work site showing platform 1 & 2 walls Photo : Dewi Davies

Since last month's CCNL was published the wall for platform 1 has moved steadily east. Work has now come to a temporary halt awaiting the digging of more footings which in turn will depend on the final alignment of the track. This in itself will depend on the swift arrival and positioning of the operating floor before the loop can be closed. Time is of the essence as these critical pieces of the jigsaw await placement!!

A new *Helpmate*

The very ancient, but dependable Thwaites Orion dumper, star of many work site photos has regrettably chugged to the end of its career , after suffering a crank seizure in late August. Considerable time and mechanical effort will be needed to get the machine running again, resources the Project Team no longer has at its disposal.



Winget 2B 1000 dumper Photo : D. Jones Plant Hire

The decision was therefore taken to replace the Orion with a new dumper of similar capacity. A call to Messers David Jones (Plant Hire) of Denbigh brought forth a 1996 registered Winget dumper, fully serviced and delivered to site. The Winget has one or two refinements, unknown on the Orion namely electric self-starter and a twin

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ram hydraulically tipped skip. This new machine will enter service after the fitting of a new roll bar and a traditional re-paint. Once again the generosity of Project supporters is much appreciated in the timely purchase of this machine!

Fleeting Visit

Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport made a quick visit to the work site whilst on his way to his constituency surgery on September 21st. Ken is a keen supporter of the Corwen Project and is always interested to view and discuss progress with the Project Team. He was much impressed by the amount of hard work that had gone into the site since his last visit and to hear of prospects for the opening of basic facilities – watering of locos and run round – in time for the 2019 timetable.



Ken Skates looks at the drone photos of the station site
Photo : GJ

Discussion also ranged over transport facilities along the Dee Valley/AONB with the need to provide through ticketing from Ruabon to Llangollen and the Bala Lake Railway. The

Project Team were privileged to hear about the possibility of the Dee Valley/Clwydian Range moving from AONB status to that of National Park. The Minister's view was such a move would bring added kudos to the area and in conclusion "*Completion of the Corwen Central station will be a high boost to the Railway and the town opening up great opportunities for more visitors in 2019.*"

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 41</i>									

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is Gordon Bridge, from Sheffield with **Number 41**. Congratulations go to Gordon on his win. Last month's winner, Alan Parr kindly re-donated his winnings to the Corwen Station Fund. Sincere thanks go to Alan for his continuing support for the Project.

The temporary hospitalisation of Project Treasurer, Paul Bailey has not meant that fund raising has been put on the “back burner”, far from it!! Paul has been at work from his hospital bed organising the accounts and talking to supporters. Thus he reports that total income has moved to £75,500, whilst the balance of the account is nearly

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Many passengers now start and finish their journeys in Corwen and are making a positive contribution to Railway income. This augers well for the success of Corwen Central.

To close that “Tenner a Tonne” gap -

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

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

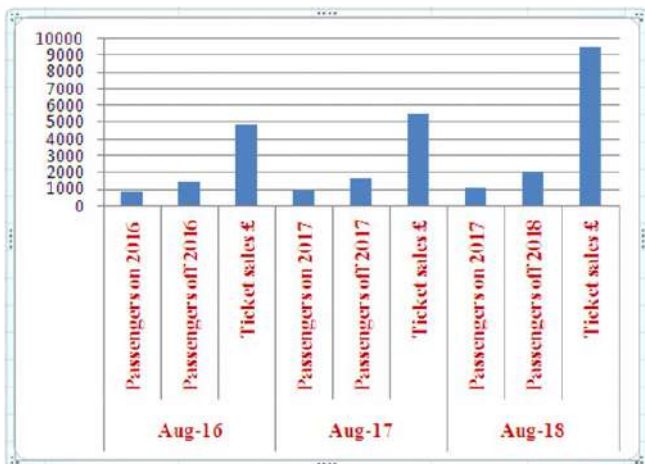
Offers of materials can be made via the LRT by phoning 01978 860979 or via e-mail at info@llangollen-railway.co.uk

End Piece

£52,000. The Tenner a Tonne appeal is about £800 short of its £10,000 target!!

Over the last three years station staff at Corwen East, under the leadership of Station Master Wayne Ronneback have been keeping monthly passenger records to include arrivals, departures and ticket revenue. The selected data shown below compares like for like figures for August of each year.

It is strange at times what appeals to visitors to the Dee Valley. Last month there was talk of Betsi Cadwaldr, this month it appears to be sheep, wool and mills! Some visitors had spotted the name



Upper Dee Mills Llangollen

Photo : PR

Upper Dee Mills whilst parking their car in Llangollen and were given to wondering what sort of Mills these could be – flour, wool or cotton or

Data : Courtesy Jim Neal

Graphic Extract : PR

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some other process. Seeing the very busy tourist activity today in Llangollen and its relative freedom from industry, it's hard to believe that Llangollen was the centre of factory based wool spinning and the weaving of flannel cloth in North Wales.

Many of the early industries harnessed the use of water power, most notably in the Vivod, Llangollen, Pant-y-groes and Dol-isaf historic landscape character areas. Mills were principally sited on the river Dee as well as on the river Eglwyseg and the Cyflymen stream to the south of Llangollen and elsewhere. Water powered corn mills appear to have been in existence since the 13th century, including those belonging to Valle Crucis Abbey which are thought to have existed at Pentrefelin and Llangollen. Water powered corn mills and mills for animal feeds were still in operation in the 18th, 19th and in some instances in the earlier 20th century at Llangollen, Trevor Mill and the Bache and Pengwern mill complexes.

The Dee valley, particularly the town of Llangollen, became an important textile manufacturing district during the 19th century, when large mills were erected, resembling those of Yorkshire and Lancashire. In the 1830s there were three large mills — the Mile End Factory, the Upper Dee Mills and the Lower Dee Mills. Power mills were known at Llangollen earlier than anywhere in Wales, being introduced as early as 1805.

The large mills of Llangollen were different in character to those in the remainder of Denbighshire, not being a natural development from the earlier *pandai* or weaving shops, but requiring considerable investment by incoming entrepreneurs but until the 1860s most of the mills

were only engaged in carding and spinning wool that produced yarn for a large number of domestic weavers in the surrounding districts.



Carding Engine with finished wool threads Photo: PR

George Borrow (CCNL passim) in the mid 19th century, for example, describes in his *Wild Wales*



Mile End Mill Berwyn Road Photo : Onthemarket.com

how John James, his guide at Llangollen, showed him the path across the mountain along which he used to carry the flannel he wove at home to the mill-owner that employed him.

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The three Llangollen mills operated until the 1940s and the last, the Lower Dee Mill finally closed in 1960, being mainly concerned with



Thread twisting and doubling Photo : PR

blanket and tweed manufacture with Australian, New Zealand and Shetland wools. The decline of textile manufacture during the inter-war and post-war periods released a number of former mills for various alternative uses.



Mule Spinning - 360 spindles Photo: PR

The partners John Hughes and Edward Roberts took over the Lower Dee Mill in the 1840s, and built another mill, the Upper Dee Mill, in the mid-

1850s. On the 1881 census returns for Llangollen, a number of 12 and 13 year olds are listed with occupations such as 'wool spinner', 'factory hand', 'wool picker', and on the 1871 census returns a ten-year-old boy is recorded as a weaver.

The Mile End Mill was situated approximately a mile from Llangollen Town Centre on the A5 Corwen Road.



Remains of the Upper Dee Mills turbine power supply Clockwise from T/L - Sluice control from canal, remains of outfall to the river, looking up the turbine penstock, and down from sluice control shed

Photos : PR

Visitors to the area can still see traditional woollen mills at work if they visit Trefriw Mill in the Conwy Valley.

This factory has been in the Williams family since 1859 and continues to market its products all over the world.

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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