

Corwen Central News



The summer season is almost upon us, with the longest day of the year ready to light the Dee Valley for at least 16 hours. This month has been mostly warm and dry with the odd downpour causing a little “local difficulty”. The Project Team have been making the best of the dry spell and have now closed “the gap” between the new station and the main line from

time some infill was added to the platform gap, which can now be completed.

Filling the Gap

Filling the gap cut through the old formation to allow traffic access to Welsh Water’s sewage treatment works has now been completed. This is literally a “landmark” achievement, along with the underpass, the water tower, the signal box and the new road to the treatment works – all key pieces of infrastructure which have allowed the station to be completed.



Summer woodland – Plas yn Lâl Photo: PR

Llangollen and are preparing to set out the eastern cross over. Everyone associated with the Project would like to thank all of you have contributed to the “Fill the Gap” Appeal which has resulted in local contractors being able to spend two intensive periods on site digging out and moving material to the gap. At the same



Clockwise from top left - Grading in top surface, Filling south batter, Layering and rolling, - almost complete, Gap filled - new 3 metre batter bars the way Photos : GJ and PR

With the closure of the gap direct vehicular access to the site will no longer be possible. The west end

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of the single platform still has a gap in it as does the east end. These will be closed soon to allow for completion of the island platform. Again local contractors have been engaged to pave the surface of the platforms. This work will be paid for out of the grant allocated by the Welsh Government as part of the EU Fund for Rural Communities.

Columns.....

The “*Blackfriars Columns*” returned from Barnett Engineering at the beginning of the month, ready for their installation to support the station canopy.

The columns have been cut to size, and had the addition of a bolting plate at the base, as they were not suitable for use in their “recovered” state. The restoration of the castings has mainly been in the hands of volunteer, Tony Warren with some help from Peter Neve and Tony Cooke. Some of the iron work decoration was damaged but was replaced by “spares” sourced from the unused



Columns being unloaded showing counter balances and base plates Photo : PR

columns. Thanks to their original Victorian designers all the decorative pieces could be unscrewed from the reserve columns and

transferred to where they were needed. None of the decoration was cast into the columns, all were “add ons”, including the counter balances.

.....and Fences

The first piece of “hoop top” fencing has been added to the top of the underpass. The gap under the fence will be filled by brickwork.



Hooped fencing at the top of the underpass with renovated fence posts Photo : PR

The rest of the fence will follow after the wheel chair lift has been installed, the manufacture of which has now begun after some technical changes to the design.



Traditional spear top fence completes the West end Photo : PR

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Spear top fencing has now been completed on the western edge of the single platform. The fencing gang under the leadership of Vic Taylor have been hard at work repairing the flood damaged fences and installing the recovered palings, from Corwen East platform, on the fence alongside Welsh Water approach road. Peter Neve along with other volunteers have been adding palings to the fence from the site of the former Corwen East station building through to the entrance to the former breach (now filled).



Julie McNamara's impression of Corwen station - long before anything was in place! Photo : PR

.....and Bridges

Back in January 2018 (*see CCNL January 2018*) it was reported that Peter Jump had made a start on building the facing pillars at the foot of the underpass. Very soon Peter's attention was drawn to other aspects of the project build and the pillars were left untouched for over a year – until now!



Slate block edging and bridge caps complete the entrance to the underpass Photo : PR

The pillars have now been completed, capped and the sloping side walls dressed with slate blocks. All of these materials were recovered from the station site and assigned to their new role.

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 38

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **Paul Mason**, a supporter of the Railway from the Wirral. - with **Number 38**. Congratulations go to Paul on his win.

The Project's Treasurer, Paul Bailey reports that the CCRD Fund has now banked in excess of £113,250, which after disbursements has a balance of just over £86,000. Paul is at pains to point out that the grant from the Welsh Government/EU was to construct a basic island platform and did not include “refinements” such as a waiting room and toilets, a canopy, support columns and a wheelchair lift! Such additions have had to be funded via the Share Issue and direct fund raising. Paul writes “Donations for Corwen

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have been a little slower now that we've "Closed The Gap" but welcome none the less. These are now being put into our "General " Fund to be used for the on Platform Waiting Room and Toilets. To date there have been no takers for sponsoring any of the 6 GWR Style Lamposts and Lanterns (£750 each) for the New Platform. Maybe this might be an opportunity for a family group to sponsor a lamp as a memorial object or as a quirky present for a rail fan??" All queries about these and other funding issues can be directed to the address below.



The above photo of Lamp post shows the correct pattern for the casting. The lantern top, although rather "smart" is not the "correct" pattern. The authentic lantern top is shown in photograph 2 standing next to Carrog Signal Box



The resulting lamp at Corwen will have the Glyn casting and the Carrog lantern. Altogether a pleasing combination worthy of any sponsor.

Photos : Robin Matthews

Mention is always made about our many supporters, to whom we are exceedingly grateful. However, sometimes offers of support cannot be used.

Recently two local companies got in touch with the Project to aid the "Gap" Appeal they were Stonewest Construction, Talybont, Gwynedd and Knights Construction Ltd, Middle Sontley, Wrexham. Unfortunately the offer of equipment did not quite fit either the Project's nor their own construction programmes. Stonewest have also stated that they would be happy to help out on any other project that we may need to undertake in the future and also wished us well in our endeavours.

Jamie Brooks of Stonewest, was mayor of Barmouth in 2018 and a strong supporter of improved transport facilities in rural areas and for example has been campaigning for better public access along the Barmouth railway viaduct.

For sponsorship details and any other funding matters please contact Paul Bailey at the address below

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.

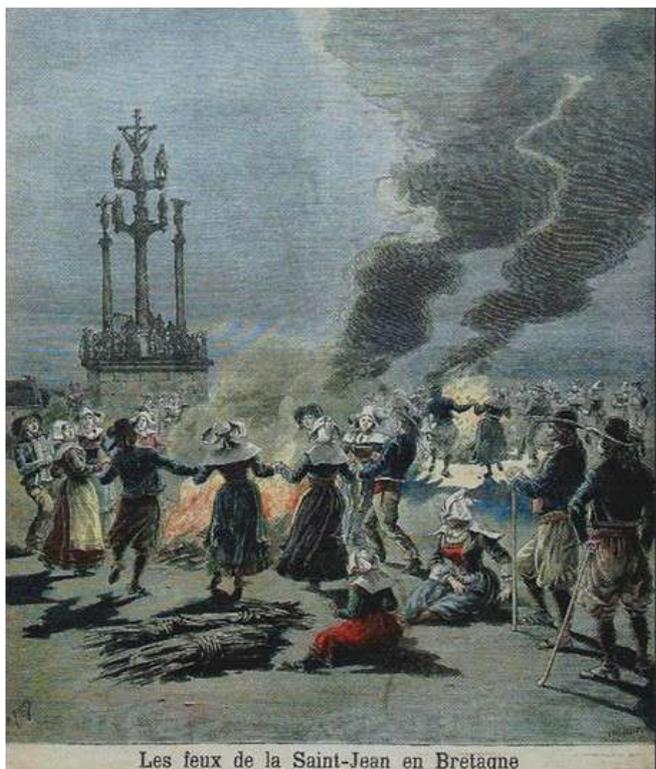
Offers of materials can be made via the LRT by phoning 01978 860979 or via e-mail at info@llangollen-railway.co.uk

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End Piece

June brings the summer solstice another time of ancient and modern celebration. In Great Britain from the 13th century, Midsummer was celebrated on Midsummer Eve (St. John's Eve, June 23) and St. Peter's Eve (June 28) with the lighting of bonfires, feasting and merrymaking.

In late 14th-century England, John Mirk of Lilleshall Abbey, Shropshire, gives the following description: "*At first, men and women came to church with candles and other lights and prayed all night long. In the process of time, however, men left such devotion and used songs and dances and fell into lechery and gluttony turning the good, holy devotion into sin.*" The Christian Church decided to put a stop to these practices

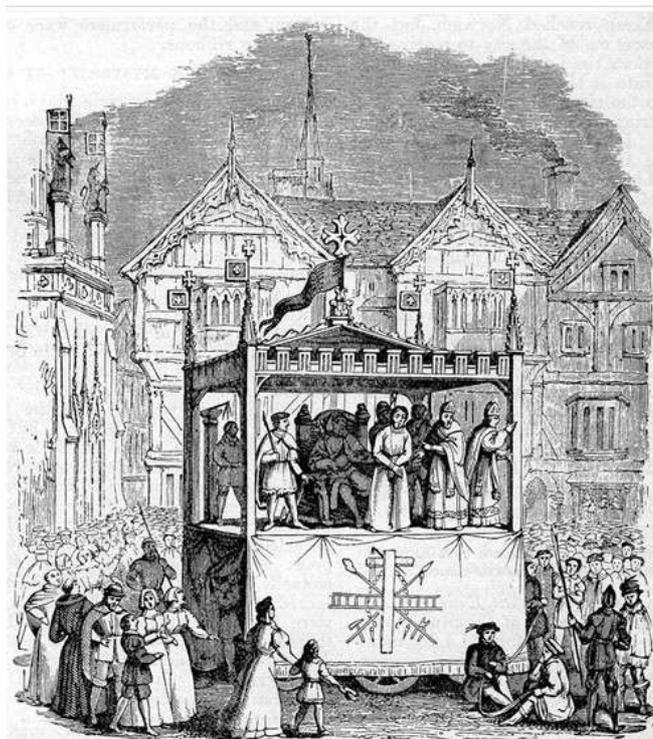


Midsummer/Saint John's Day bonfire with festivities in front of a Christian calvary shrine in Brittany, 1893

and ordained that people should fast on the evening before, and thus turned waking into fasting.

Mirk adds that at the time of his writing, "...*in worship of St John the Baptist, men stay up at night and make three kinds of fires: one is of clean bones and no wood and is called a "bonnefyre"; another is of clean wood and no bones, and is called a wakefyre, because men stay awake by it all night; and the third is made of both bones and wood and is called, "St. John's fire" (Festial 182).*" These traditions largely ended after the Reformation, but persisted in rural areas up until the 19th century before petering out.

Other Midsummer festivities had uneasy relations with the Reformed establishment. *The Chester Midsummer Watch Parade*, begun in 1498, was



Engraving depicting an early Chester Mystery Play Image scanned from first edition of the Chambers Book of Days (1864) by Robert Chambers (died 1871).

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held at every Summer Solstice in years when the *Chester Mystery Plays* were not performed.

Despite the cancellation of the plays in 1575, the parade continued; in 1599, however, the Lord Mayor ordered that the parades be banned and the costumes destroyed. The parade was permanently banned in 1675.

Traditional Midsummer bonfires are still lit on some high hills in Cornwall (see *Carn Brea and Castle an Dinas on Castle Downs*). This tradition was revived by the Old Cornwall Society in the early 20th century. Bonfires in Cornwall were once common as part of *Golowan*, which is now celebrated at Penzance, Cornwall. This week long festival normally starts on the Friday nearest St John's Day. *Golowan* lasts several days and culminates in *Mazey Day*.

This is a revival of the Feast of St John (Gol-Jowan) with fireworks and bonfires.



Tansys Golowan – A Cornish hilltop bonfire on Midsummer's eve. Photo : Talskiddy

In Wales Midsummer is called *Gŵyl Ifan*, or *Gŵyl Ifan Ganol Haf* (St John's of Midsummer) to distinguish it from *Gŵyl Ifan Ganol Gaeaf* (St John's of Midwinter, the feast of John the Evangelist).



Royal Welsh Show

Great agricultural fairs used to be held at this time, along with “..merriment and dancing”.



Midsummer Dance 1897 by Anders Zorn

A bonfire was also kept this night. With the advent of non-conformist beliefs on the Welsh socio-political culture, this (among so many other similar festivals) suffered greatly, and its observance finally died out in south-east Wales by the end of the 19th century. However, since 1977, a folk-dance revival started in Cardiff, and is held now annually on this feast day.