

Corwen Central News

The beginning of the month saw some very bright warm weather, with highs across the nation drawing up hot air from North Africa. The Dee Valley has rapidly put on the greens and yellows of summer, with local farmers taking advantage of the situation by taking cuts of hay and silage, resulting in large black packages dotting the slopes and the valley floor. Not to be outdone by all this activity, the



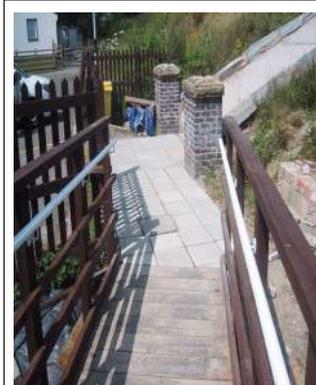
Jowetts at the Classic Transport Weekend - Yellow Javelin (1952) and Green Jupiter (1952) Photo : GJ

Corwen work force has been busy finishing off the entrance and exit to the ticket office, laying drainage channels and pipes on the island platform, preparing the way for the installation of the wheel chair lift and digging out the reinforcing trenches on the the station building.

Station Approach

Although not strictly part of the platform project, the work gang have been helping Station Master Wayne Ronneback to prepare access to the ticket office by installing ramps and paving. Wheel chair users and less physically able passengers will have a smooth route through the ticket office and to the platform via the wheel chair lift. In the interior of

the office railway artefacts are now on display whilst Jim Ritchie's "N" scale presentation of Corwen continues to develop along with a railway themed play table to interest younger visitors.



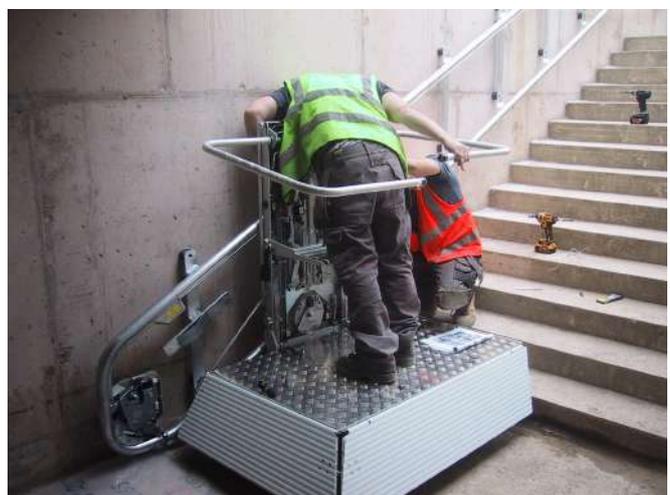
Ramp to paved entrance to underpass Photo: PR



Ready for our younger visitors Photo: PR

Reaching for the stars/stairs

At last, after much technical reappraisal, the wheel chair lift has arrived and has been installed by Stannah Contractors. The lift will accommodate



Setting up wheel chair platform Photo : PR

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one wheel chair user – NOT mobility scooter user – or one seated passenger, using the built in folding seat. Although designed to be user operated, the lift will be under the control and supervision of station staff. When not in use, the lift platform will be folded up with an all weather cover and situated at the bottom of the staircase.

The lift is part of the Project's obligation under The Equality Act (2010) which provides for everybody living in the UK to be entitled to the same level of service and to live and work free of discrimination and irrespective of characteristics.

..... and the drains

As part of the platform development, drainage grids have now been positioned on the west end to carry rainwater away.

The grids are connected to the main drainage pipe running under the platform.

This an example of an unglamorous but essential job which needs to be carried out prior to the pavers being added. Drainage pipes have also been fitted to the east end of the platform.



Drainage channels looking east

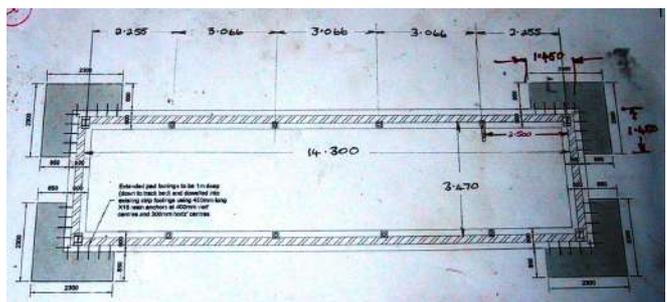
Photo : PR

Foundations, foundations, foundations....

When questioned about the main problems of being in government, Harold MacMillan has alleged to have responded to the enquirer “*Events, dear boy events!!*”

When asked similar questions about the progress at Corwen Central Station, the reply could easily be “*Weather, dear boy, weather – especially rain!!*”

The last few months have offered the work gang plenty of the latter, interspersed with bright sunshine. However, other “events” have put a drag effect onto the project. The Project's consulting structural engineers have recently reviewed the



Ground plan of platform building showing position of the corner reinforcing with dowel pins to link to the original foundations. The position of support columns are shown along the internal walls. These columns are RSGs not the “Blackfriars” columns. Diagram courtesy JM

design of the on platform station building, which is also an integral part for supporting the canopy and concluded that steel work is now required within the building to take the weight of the canopy but also to stop it from potentially “blowing away”.

The steel work will have to be grounded to a concrete base at least a metre in depth. The station stands on an exposed embankment raised to 4 metres above the ground subject to cross winds and turbulence along the Dee Valley.

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The additional steel work will increase the cost of the building by £10,000 – so... once again we need your support to allow the station to be opened.



Pouring concrete into the corner foundations using a concrete skip. The Readymix machine is behind the rail crane and can no longer get up to the site Photo : PR

The accompanying drawing and photographs show the design for the foundations and the resulting ground work being undertaken. As well as the



Corner post support is now concreted into place. The new steel work will be bolted to the support shown in green Photo: PR

additional cost, the whole Project has probably been knocked back by about five weeks so setting out the long anticipated east end crossover and uniting the station to the main line has had to be put temporarily on hold. However, the upside of this is that the track plans have been prepared and approved with the help of retired track design engineer (BR/NR), Richard Jones, who will also be assisting Peter Jump with the ground work.

Summer Visitor

The work group at Corwen were pleased to welcome Transport for Wales's new North Wales Development Manager, Lee Robinson.

Appropriately Lee made his way to Corwen via a cab ride, courtesy of Driver Mark Smales, to Carrog and then onwards by car to the station site. He was accompanied by the Project's Publicity Officer, George Jones. Lee was much impressed by the site and by the sheer scale of the project,



Lee Robinson about to board 31 271 for his cab ride to Carrog Photo : GJ

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especially when he heard that the majority of the work force were well into their retired years!!

In conversation with George, Mr. Robinson said

“At Transport for Wales we are on a journey to transform the transport sector throughout our Wales and Borders network, through implementing our £5 billion investment programme.

It’s been great to visit Llangollen, to see the railway first hand and also the ongoing work to complete Corwen station. We understand the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits of the railway and these improvements will attract more visitors and allow them to leave their car at home to experience a fantastic day out.”

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 **74***

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is John Thornton, a member of the guards' department - with **Number 74** . Congratulations go to John on his win.

The Project's Treasurer, Paul Bailey writes “Fundraising is now concentrating on raising

monies for the On Platform station buildings namely waiting room, toilets and canopy, especially when faced with the sudden increase in the cost of the building! Attention is also being directed towards lamp posts and lanterns. Unfortunately the previously reported costings for these in the June CCNL were slightly misleading in that they too have gone up in price since last ordered for Glyndyfrdwy two years ago and will now cost £850 each. Lanterns are extra to this cost but I have found a supplier for these at £200 each. We already have one sponsor for a lamp post but need 2 more and sponsors for 3 lanterns. On a separate matter, subscribers might like to know that I attended a Railwayana Auction in June and have acquired the original GWR " **Corwen East Box** " cast iron Signal Box Name board. This will be fitted to the former Weston Rhyn Box now



sitting on the East End of our New Corwen Platform just like the original Corwen East Box did on the original Corwen Station Platform.”

For funding matters including sponsorship of the lamps 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



John Godfrey Parry-Thomas, racing driver, at Brooklands at the wheel of his Leyland-Thomas. Scan of plate 122 from Eyston and Lyndon (1935). Motor Racing and Record Breaking.

The Classic Transport Weekend held over the Saturday and Sunday of July 6/7th was an apt time to remember and reflect upon the achievement of the Wrexham born engineer and land speed record pioneer John Godfrey Parry-Thomas (6th April 1884 - 3rd March 1927), who just over 93 years ago drove his car *Babs* on Pendine Sands at 170 mph. This was a new land speed record and stood for almost a year, before being taken by Malcolm Campbell, driving the Napier-Campbell *Bluebird*. Once again Parry-Thomas, eager to regain his speed record from Campbell returned to Pendine in March 1927 and whilst accelerating to over 100 mph *Babs* probably caught some damp soft sand and rolled over and slid along the track, resulting in the death of Parry-Thomas. As a mark of respect for Parry-Thomas, his car was buried in the sand at Pendine and remained there until it was recovered

in 1969 and rebuilt over a period of 15 years by Owen Wyn Owen.

Although Parry-Thomas was born in Wrexham, the son of the curate of Rhosddu, the family moved to nearby Oswestry when he was five years old when his father took up a new appointment. He went on to study engineering at *The City and Guilds College* in London.

After qualifying as an engineer, Parry-Thomas gained experience with a number of firms before becoming chief engineer at Leyland Motors, a company whose main products were commercial vehicles. He filed for and received a number of patents, in the fields of electrical and automotive engineering.



1927 Leyland Straight Eight Photo : Mark Brown

After the First World War he and his assistant, Reid Railton designed the *Leyland Eight* luxury motor car, which was intended to compete with Rolls-Royce. His experience of driving this car around Brooklands in 1920 persuaded him to give up his career with Leyland to become a full-time motor-racing driver and engineer.

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In partnership with another engineer, Major Ken Thomson from New Zealand, he started *Thomas Inventions Development Co.*, based inside the Brooklands circuit itself. After his death, this company became *Thomson & Taylor* and went on to build such cars as Malcolm Campbell's *Blue Bird*. Reid Railton went onto design the *Railton Mobil Special* that brought John Cobb the World Land Speed Record in 1938.

From 1923 Parry-Thomas lived in the "flying village" at Brooklands, in a bungalow converted from a First World War hut named The Hermitage. He achieved some success on the circuit, winning 38 races in five seasons and setting numerous records.

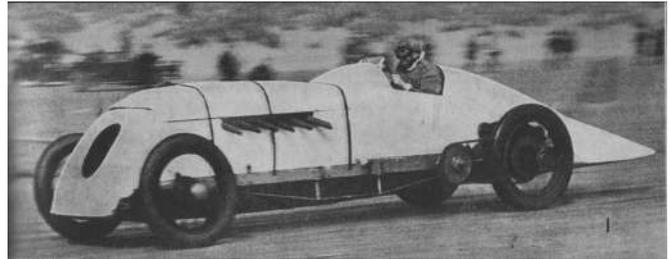
By 1925, Parry-Thomas realised that commercial success required a higher profile than Brooklands could offer, and switched his attention to the land speed record.



Higham Special aka "Chitty 4" thereafter "Babs"

He acquired the *Higham Special* from the estate of the deceased Count Louis Zborowski and rebuilt the car with new bodywork for improved aerodynamics. The car was powered by a huge 27-litre *Liberty V-12* aero-engine. Parry-Thomas really wanted to obtain a brand-new Napier Lion aero-engine - just as the other record contenders

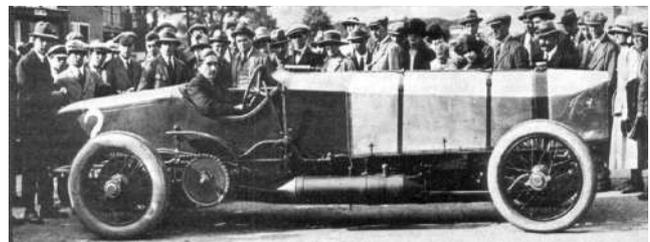
were planning - to power his car, but he lacked the glamour and "pulling power" of men like Campbell and Sir Henry Seagrave and had to settle for "*the Liberty*".



Parry-Thomas and "Babs" at Pendine Sands 1926

In April 1926 the car, now named "*Babs*", emerged with at least another new body. He celebrated by driving the lanes around Brooklands that same evening, despite his lack of headlamps!!

Note



Count Zborowski with Chitty Bang Bang 1 at Brooklands in 1921 – Photographer unknown

Some readers may recall that Count Zborowski's thirst for speed didn't just reside in cars, but it was he along with his racing friend and rival Capt Jack Howey who planned to drive 15" gauge pacific locomotives flat out against each other along parallel tracks on the Kent coast – the dream became the *Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway!* Unfortunately Count Louis didn't live to take part.