

Corwen Central News

All too soon the Dee Valley is putting on Autumnal hues, ready to shed its summer coat. The swallows and house martins have now quit their holiday homes and are heading south either across the Sahara or down the west coast of Africa to over winter in Republic of South



Red campion (Silene dioica) takes its chance to offer a little splash of colour on platform 1

Photo: PR

Africa. Migrating swallows cover 200 miles a day, mainly during day light, at speeds of 17-22 miles per hour. The maximum flight speed is 35 mph. They are followed on their journey by their close family members, the house martins. Once again, the last month has had mixed weather fortunes with rain and sunshine in equal quantities. Unfortunately the rainy alternative takes its toll on the the workforce at Corwen, especially when machinery repairs

have to be carried out in the open.! Despite the weather, work has continued with painting both wood and metal at the west end, loading , transporting and positioning of fine gravel in preparation for laying the pavers, realigning the main line and bringing in ballast from the stock pile at Bonwm Farm.

Necessary Repairs

Readers are now familiar with the fact that the building of the station has relied quite heavily on rather elderly construction equipment held



John Mason encouraging the hydraulic pump to be seated

Photo : PR

together by lots of “wings” and “prayers” and a lot of basic maintenance. Unfortunately whilst working on the site the JCB MkIIC had its main hydraulic pump drive shaft fail. This left the machine “high and dry” with no way of moving. Subsequently it was lifted out of harms way by the REXQUOTE/CASE road-railer.

Thankfully replacement parts are still available for the JCB and were soon on site to enable repairs to take place. The down side for this is what appears

Corwen Central News

to be a straightforward task usually turns into something more complex. However, after much crawling underneath and looking down through the engine compartment Peter Robson and John Mason got the new parts to where they were designed to go. The JCB was subsequently used to move the newly arrived ballast from Bonwm Farm to the cross over site.

Ballast from the East

Having positioned the Mermaid side tipping ballast wagons at *Colomendy Corner* earlier in the month, the 08 shunter arrived back on site to shuttle the wagons back and to Bonwm Farm to



Loading the Mermaids at Bonwm Farm Photo : PR

bring down ballast to spread on the site of the crossover. A recent survey of the site showed that the drop on the track was at least 45 cm so this needed to be built up to allow for the correct levelling of the crossover timbers and give an up grade of about 1:500 entering the down platform. Photographs show Arwel Dolben loading the Mermaids at Bonwm and their subsequent unloading at Corwen. A track extension to the

main line has ensured that the loads of ballast can get as close to their point of need as possible.



*Mermaids arrive at Corwen in charge of the 08 shunter
Photo: GJ*

At the end of the day's work eight wagon loads were delivered to Corwen amounting to about 120 tons of ballast. Track engineer, Peter Jump said he was more than satisfied with the amount of ballast now on site. He said that there were no more full track panels to go in as far as the main line was



Emptying the first load of ballast at Corwen

Photo : PR

Corwen Central News

concerned, with maybe 1 more for the UP platform.



Repaired JCB helping to clear the ballast from tipping site
Photo : PR

wheelbase” Thwaites dumper was needed to bring material into



Tipping infill at the East end. Mini digger grading-
in
Photo : PR

The extra panel recently laid (on which the ballast wagons were unloaded) will be more or less where the point starts which is 33 metres long plus twist rails either end of it which will add about another 15 metres. Peter is hopeful that work will start in laying out the points quite soon.

the confines of the underpass exit to the platform and to the east end near to the water column.

At the end of the day the 08 returned with the Mermaids to Llangollen Yard where they will be filled with firebox ash to make up track side walk ways

Bags of gravel fines have already been moved into position along the platform to form the level surface on which the pavers will be laid.

Platform filling

Taking advantage of a recent dry spell, infill has been moved from the Ruthin Spur up onto the platform. The main drainage points have been put along the length of the platform so it is now possible to bring the platform base up to the level required for block paving. The Project's own *Winget* dumper was put on delivery duties to the wide parts of the platform whilst a “narrow



Rolling and compacting the platform surface after the infill drop
Photo : PR

Corwen Central News

Pointing the way

Soon after the ballast had been spread, levelled and rolled the work gang did a “trial” positioning of one of the crossover components.



Paul Whitton and Peter Neve check the ballast level using a pre-surveyed datum point Photo: PR

The photograph shows the right hand part of the point leading over to the right hand side of the track in Platform 1.



Trial positioning of crossover component

Photo : GJ

Needless to say there is much more to be done, but there is nothing wrong with the track gang becoming familiar with the component parts and their positioning in readiness for the addition of the bearing timbers (sleepers).

Columns away

Having received the canopy columns back on site a couple of months ago, they have now to return to Barnett Engineering to have some additional brackets welded to the top in order to carry more bracing steel. These extra items are as a result of the redesign carried out by the Project's consulting engineers (see *CCNL passim*)



Blackfriars columns being loaded for return to Barnett Engineering Photo : PR

Youth will have its day

The LR Youth Group led by Mike Dodgshon made a welcome return to Corwen to help with veg clearance along the south batter. The warm and wet weather has led to a rapid growth of vegetation, not only at Corwen but also long the length of the railway, so getting it cleared is a necessary activity. Plant growth helps to obscure surveying level posts/markers, safe walking places

Corwen Central News

and has tendency to wrap itself around machinery. Thankfully the sun shone on the group and members had a very enjoyable and useful day out.



Clearing the south batter to the east Photo : MD

Corwen Project Fund. Sincere thanks are extended to Sue for her continued support. The Project's treasurer, Paul Bailey writes that “We now have 3 of the 4 Platform Lamposts sponsored but only 1 lantern. Readers are reminded that the remaining lampost costs £800 so if anyone or group of people want to sponsor the remaining Lampost then I would be very happy to hear from them!! The lanterns are priced at £200”.

Paul is also the collection point for anyone who wants to donate to the renovation of Glyndyfrdwy Signal Box (see End Piece)

For funding matters and tickets for the CCE 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

Funding and Lucky Numbers

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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 **61***

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **Paul Tanner**, with **Number 61**. Congratulations go to Paul on his win. Last month's winner, Sue Ronneback has kindly returned her winnings to the

End Piece

Whilst it's good to focus on the team bringing the new station at Corwen to life, it's sometimes worth reminding readers that there are other activities of a conservation nature going on along the line. After many years of “make do and mend” at Glyndyfrdwy signal box a group has been put together by Carrog Stationmaster and signalman,

Corwen Central News

Phil Coles to restore the signal box back to its original “just installed” condition.



Leaton Signal Box in the 1960s with station to the left Photo : The John Mann Collection

The box originally came from Leaton, a station on the Chester to Shrewsbury line. It was moved to Llangollen soon after its closure in 1987. Like most of the infrastructure along the line, the Glyn signal box has been on the receiving end of all the weather that Dee Valley could throw at it, until the loss of several slates produced a leaking roof, that simply could not be ignored!!



Scaffold in place - back view looking north Photo : PC

The difficulty with such work is that scaffolding needed to be erected all around the signal box, fouling the main line in the UP direction. Thus for about a week all trains had to arrive and depart via the Down platform.

The hydro-gas points at the west end of the Glyn loop were pumped over, scotched and clipped to allow for the safe passage of trains.

There was delay to services in the UP direction as trains had to be brought to a stand at the home signal whilst drivers asked permission to enter the down platform.



New slates for old looking west across the roof Photo : PC

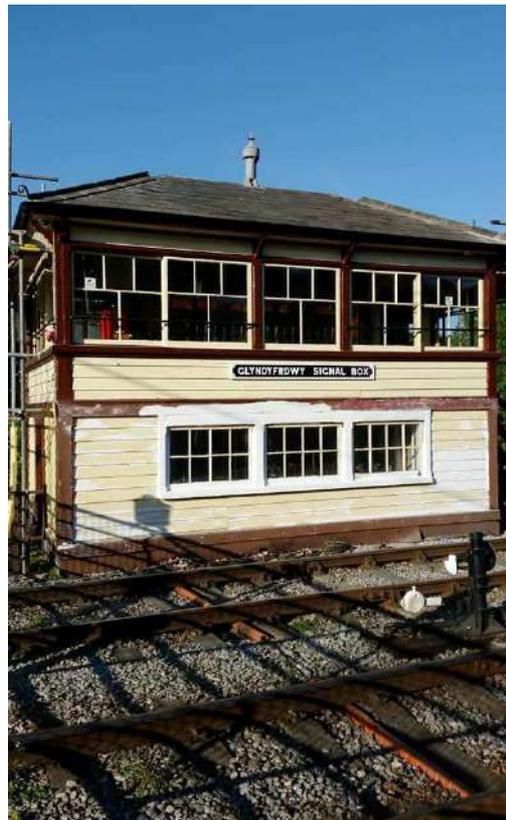
Thankfully the weather was mostly favourable for the roofing work which involved removing broken slates and carefully stacking the good ones ready for restoring to their rightful position on the newly placed roofing underlay and support battens.

Corwen Central News

Whilst the roofing activities were taking place, damaged facing timbers were replaced and the front of the box was painted in GWR colours of chocolate and cream – but only to “waist” height. For those readers who are unfamiliar with Glyndyfrdwy signal box – it is of all timber construction, (unlike others on the Llangollen railway which have a brick built base with a timber operating floor) and susceptible to damage around the base and side timbers.



Roof showing battens in place and slates being re-hung Photo : PC



Newly painted top and repaired bottom awaiting paint - smart work!

Photo : PC

Work will continue now that slates have been replaced on the side facing the track, access being gained via scaffolding at the rear. Painting and other renovation work can continue using portable platforms and ladders.

The work has been supported by the Friends of Glyndyfrdwy Station and if you wish to help the cause then you can send donations to Paul Bailey at the address given in the “Funding” section.