

Corwen Central News



August 1st welcomed the first trains back in service on the Llangollen Railway. A CoVid-19 Emergency timetable saw the introduction of DMUs, Diesel and Steam Haulage, with a day of the week given over to each form of traction – Monday and Tuesday DMUs, Wednesday Diesel haulage and Thursday to Sunday Steam haulage. A great deal of planning and financial investment went into allowing the public to



"Jennifer" approaches concrete road on the 1510 service ex Llangollen on 28/08/2020 Photo : Iain Ross

visit Llangollen again and ride on the railway. It was uncertain how the provision of services would be received, but it became clear as the days unfolded that the steam service was once again proving very popular, and profitable. This service has been provided by ex GWR 2-8-0 heavy goods engine 3802, until vacuum brake

problems curtailed its outing in the second to last week of August. The remaining diagrams will be covered by Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 tank "Samuel Fox and Co No.20", *Jennifer* and a rapidly relocated ex GWR Manor Class, 7822 "Foxcote Manor", which will remain at



Almost socially distancing – young House Martins (Delichon urbicum) gather at Corwen in preparation for the fight south to Africa Photo: PR

Llangollen until the end of October. Interlaced with all this, the Dee Valley has seen its usual mix of hot sunny days, cooled again by heavy rain, heralded by thunder and lightening. When it appeared to be safe to emerge, the west coast was lashed by both Storms Ellen and Francis which caused severe flooding in South and Mid Wales, but thankfully only caused minor disruption in the Dee Valley with broken tree branches across both rail and road.

However, not to be outdone by the weather, the Corwen Works' Gang have managed to cast the wind column foundations at the west end, for the final pair of canopy columns along with

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the erection of the columns themselves as well as to see the installation of point rod stools with associated rods for the crossover at the east end.

A block to tackle

As part of the platform preparation work, a large trench was dug just east of the location of the on-station building foundations.



Ready Mix and concrete pump prepare to deliver to the trench Photo : PR

This is required to carry the “wind columns” which in themselves will support the (eventual) platform canopy. The trench having been shuttered was filled with concrete after careful positioning of the bolting plates onto which the columns would be lowered and secured.

As reported on many occasions, the station is now inaccessible to road vehicles, especially to those the size of a “Ready Mix”, concrete mixer so a concrete pump had to be employed to carry the concrete over the boundary fence to the trench. (Approx 12.5 cubic metres). Further additions of steel work will be required so that the platform can be paved to the correct height.



Mike Plant adds final touches to the concrete. Note one of the bolting plates in the centre of the photo Photo : PR

Once the concrete had set the posts (Blackfriars Station canopy columns) were craned into position and bolted down.



(L-R) |John Mason, Tony Cooke and Peter Robson show off the newly erected columns and bracing steelwork Photo : GJ

Stools to sit on

Last month's edition of CCNL showed the marking out of the point rod runs. This month can be seen the rod stools and point rodding in place.

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It is quite noticeable from the photographs that the stools are set quite high, indicating that a lot of



Point rod stools and point rods in place. Notice the current gap between the rod height and ground level. This will need to be filled on each side of the stools to make for a safe walking area

Photo : PR

additional infill is required to bring up the level as well as additional ballast to raise the track before the points can be connected and tested.



Unloading of the ground frame from the Lowmac delivery wagon

Photo : Peter Neve

In the meantime, the ground frame was delivered to Corwen ready for fitting onto concrete blocks

near “Chicken Dock”. Once again complete fitting out will be subject to the correct levels of ground and ballast being in place.



Groundframe airborne from the Lowmac ready to be lowered towards the right

Photo : GJ

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 7</i>									

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **Lynda Hodgkinson**, with number 7. Lynda is a long time volunteer at Llangollen. Congratulations go to her on her win. Lynda has kindly donated her £50

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winnings to the Llangollen Railway Great Western Locomotive Group Boiler Tube Appeal for Small Prairie 5532.

Paul Bailey writes “Just as an update the above Boiler Tube Appeal has now had 90/196 Small Tubes sponsored @ £50 and 3/6 Large Superheater Tubes @ £275. We are almost half way to our target. If readers are interested in supporting this Appeal then please contact me on the links below.”

Extra Funding News

From the General Manager, Liz McGuinness

“I want to pass on some fantastic news. We have been awarded a Heritage Lottery grant for £161,000. I would like to thank Tom Taylor and Peter Middleton (Peter carried out the Governance review) for their support in applying for the grant. The three of us worked together to secure the grant. The grant has been awarded to help us through the next few months but mainly to support us through the governance review and organisational restructure.

The lottery were pleased with the governance review and would like to support us moving forward.

Our bankers, with whom I have been working closely over the last few months will continue to offer their support and advice as the results of the review start to bear fruit. Our next important revenue earning activity will be our Santa trains, which will be run very differently this year so as to allow for social distancing and will need to call on fewer volunteers. I hope you are all encouraged by this news as it shows we are turning a corner

which will enable us to stabilise the business and maybe to apply for further grants in the future”.

For donations to the Corwen Project - *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 or e-mail him at paulbaileywincham@yahoo.co.uk if you wish to discuss any other fund raising matter or if you wish to pay other than by Cheque.

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

End Piece

A picture, they say, paints a thousand words. If that is so then many millions of words have found their way into the works of artists down through the ages who have taken their inspiration from either living in or visiting Wales. J.M.W Turner, John Sell Cotman and Sydney Curnow Vosper were visitors whilst Thomas Jones, Hugh Hughes and Kyffin Williams were very much domiciled in Wales. Each of these artists was either inspired by the landscape often dark and brooding or by its people – rich or poor, agricultural or industrial.

Prehistoric Wales has left a number of significant finds: Kendrick's Cave, Llandudno contained the Kendrick's Cave Decorated Horse Jaw, "a decorated horse jaw which is not only the oldest known work of art from Wales but also unique

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among finds of Ice Age art from Europe", and is now in the British Museum. In 2011 "faint scratchings of a speared reindeer" were found on a cave wall on the Gower peninsula which probably date to 12,000–14,000 BC, placing them among the earliest art found in Britain.



The Mold gold cape - Bronze Age Photo : David Monniaux

The Mold Gold Cape, also in the British Museum, and Banc Ty'nddôl sun-disc in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff are likewise some of the most important British works of art from the Bronze Age.

Wales has rarely been very prosperous, and the most striking medieval architecture is military. There are castles built by the Welsh Prince Llywelyn the Great (such as Criccieth and Dolbadarn Castles) as well as those by the English King Edward 1st in Gwynedd, Beaumaris Castle in Anglesey, and Caerphilly Castle. There are a number of impressive monastic ruins such as Valle Crucis Abbey in Llangollen; Welsh medieval churches are nearly all relatively modest, including the cathedrals. They very often had wall-paintings, panel altarpieces and much other religious art, but as in the rest of Britain very little has survived. Conwy, an English garrison town with its medieval walls almost entirely intact, has

a notable example of a 13th-century medieval stone town-house.

Within Wales, portraiture is not common in the medieval and post-medieval periods, and the Welsh nobility and gentry usually went to London or other English centres to have their portraits painted; many of these remain in Welsh collections. Katheryn of Berain, who claimed Tudor ancestry and earned the nickname "Mam Gymru" ("Mother of Wales") because of her network of relationships and descendants from four marriages, was painted by Adriaen van Cronenburgh, a Dutch painter. The portrait was commissioned by her husband, Sir Richard Clough, a merchant whose business caused the couple to settle briefly in Antwerp.



Plas Clough, Near Denbigh by Moses Griffith

Clough himself died before he could bring his wife to the new house he had built for her. Plas Clough, near his home town of Denbigh, includes a Flemish-style crow-stepped gable. There are no surviving contemporary portraits of Clough himself.

William Herbert, 1st Earl of Pembroke (died 1570), was one of the first Welsh nobles known to have collected paintings on a large scale. A portrait of him, dating from the 1560s, is held by the National Museum of Wales; it is attributed to Steven van Harwijck, another Dutch artist.

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The best of the few Welsh artists of the 16th to 18th centuries tended to move elsewhere to work, but in the 18th century the dominance of landscape art in English art brought them motives to stay at home, and brought an influx of artists, such as JMW Turner, David Cox, and John Sell Cotman, from outside to paint Welsh scenery, which was "discovered" by artists rather earlier than later landscape hotspots like the English Lake District and the Scottish Highlands. The Welsh painter Richard Wilson (1714–1782) is arguably the first major British landscapist, but rather more notable for Italian scenes than Welsh ones, although he did paint several on visits from London.



Richard Wilson - Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle 1766

By the 1770s a number of guide books had been published, including Joseph Cradock's *Letters from Snowdon* (1770) and *An Account of Some of the Most Romantic Parts of North Wales* (1777). Thomas Pennant wrote *Tour in Wales* (1778) and *Journey to Snowdon* (1781/1783).

What might fifty years earlier have been merely regarded as inconvenience in travel could now be

seen as an exciting adventure worth making the subject of a painting, as in Julius Caesar Ibbetson's *Phaeton in a Thunderstorm* (1798) which shows a carriage struggling up a rough mountain road in Wales.



Phaeton in a Thunderstorm (1798) Julius Caesar Ibbetson

North Wales tended to be more visited; the young watercolourist John Sell Cotman embarked on his "first extended sketching tour"



John Sell Cotman - Barmouth Estuary with Cader Idris (1800)

in 1800, starting from Bristol then following "a well-trodden path into the Wye Valley, through Brecknockshire to Llandovery and north to Aberystwyth. In Conway he joined a group of artists gathered around the amateur Sir George

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Beaumont" and continuing to Caernarvon and Llangollen. A second trip followed in 1802; he continued to use motifs from his sketches throughout his career.

It remained difficult for artists relying on the Welsh market to support themselves until well into the 20th century. The 1851 census records only 136 people describing their occupation as "artist" out of a population of 945,000, with a further 50 engaged in fine arts-related occupations such as engraving. An Act of Parliament in 1857 provided for the establishment of a number of art schools throughout the United Kingdom, and the Cardiff School of Art opened in 1865. Prior to that the annual report for 1855 of the government Science and Art Department shows a list of the larger type of Art School in many British cities, but none in Wales. Under a recently introduced new system "Local Schools of Art" had been established in 1853 in Llanely and Merthyr, but had already closed; those in Swansea and Carmarthen continued, and Flint had applied to establish a school.



Old Bet gathering firewood - Charles Mansel Lewis



A Welsh Funeral - David Cox (1850)

There were "Drawing Schools" in Aberdare and Bangor, but apparently nothing at all in Cardiff. However all these pre-1857 schools, except perhaps Swansea, were mainly teaching school age children, usually in their normal schools, and training in industrial design or teacher-training under the elementary stages of the "South Kensington system".

Graduates of the new fine arts Welsh colleges still very often had to leave Wales to work. Established artists continued to move in the opposite direction, at least for the summer. David Cox was an English 19th century landscapist who spent much time in Wales, for many years spending the summer based in Betws-y-Coed, a popular centre for artists. Landscape continued to be the main focus, although the Welsh artist Charles William Mansel Lewis was among those who painted common working people, with varying measures of realism or picturesqueness. The "Betws-y-Coed artist's colony" was one of the groups forming the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art in 1881; this was always a group for exhibiting rather than a teaching institution, based in Conwy, until 1994 in Plas Mawr, since restored by CADW.