

Corwen Central News



Bright early and mid-mornings leading to cool afternoons with the sun receding from the scene quite quickly, has been the order of most days across the Dee Valley during the last month.

In recent days the overnight temperatures have fallen to just below freezing, thus producing frost on the hill sides and enough for parked cars' windows to be decorated with seasonal greetings!



*Wind turbine catches the rainbow on the scarp to the west of Caer Drewyn
Photo : PR*



*North west towards Craig y Rhos and Pant y ffynnon
Photo : PR*

In the meantime the Project work gang have been busy (as usual) tidying the site, installing safe walk ways, refurbishing the interior of the signal box whilst adding the guide rails to the front windows.

A view from the box

With laying of the floor boards on the operating floor of the signal box, and access gained by



*Operating floor interior now ready for a tidy
Photo : PR*

Corwen Central News

secured ladder (temporary fix), a new, but familiar view of the station is now available.



Looking west along platform 1 from the signal box

Photo : PR

Looking west out of the signal box windows along the platform there is a fine sense of pride in what has been achieved by a dedicated and persistent workforce, and with opening day within touching distance they are doubly determined to deliver the job.

Walking safely



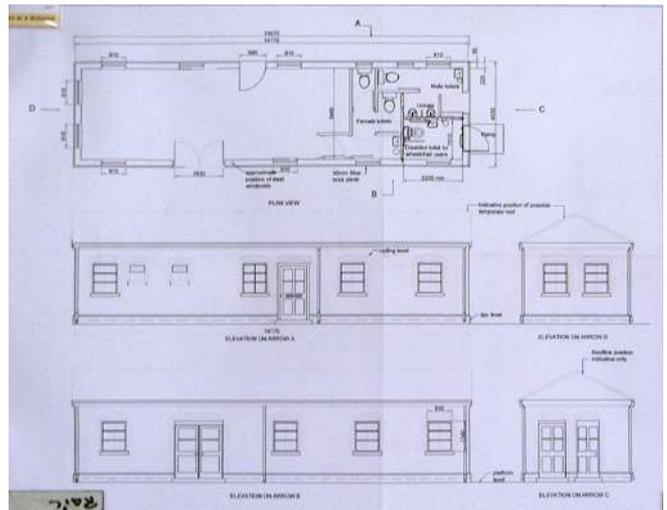
Preparing the ground for the Bomac blocks - shown to left and right of the point rods

Photo : PR

As part of the finishing touches – there are many many more to come – the work gang has been laying “Bomac” blocks from the base of the signal box stairs towards the ramp of platform 1 to allow for a safe walking route for the signalman.

Readers may recall that a similar technique was employed up the side of the embankment to eliminate the “pioneer scramble” resulting from the filling of the gap and raising the embankment.

The top and bottom



Station waiting room based on original drawing by John Mason

Photo : PR

With the direction and style of the station having been settled by the Trust's new board of trustees, the Project team are pleased to offer sight of the revised building plans, complete with a 3D presentation and an artist's impression of the station with its canopy.

The crowning glory – the canopy is still some time away and will be subject to another round of fund raising (see *Funding and Lucky Numbers*). However, the good news is that some of the steel

Corwen Central News

work has already been ordered and is now subject to a final quantity audit by the suppliers, Barnett Engineering.



3D view of Station Waiting - developed by Paul Reynolds

The station building will have a temporary roof, allowing it to be used whilst awaiting its official “top hat”.



Looking east from the staircase - columns, railings and canopy roof - artist's impression by Neil Evans

With all the activity now taking place surrounding a possible opening date sometime during next year the word has started to get around that additional staff will be required to assist Station Master Wayne Ronneback and his team. An early applicant was spotted taking a look round



Looking west showing columns, waiting room and canopy - artist's impression by Neil Evans



An early applicant for station cat starts to tour the site

Photo : PR

Funding and Lucky Numbers

This month's winner of Luck Numbers, with **number 24 is Ian Macer-Wright**, an LRT member and also a member of the Llangollen Diesel Group. Congratulations go to Ian on his win, and a cheque for £50 will soon be winging its way towards the Dee Bridge Appeal,

Corwen Central News

to which Ian has kindly agreed to donate his winnings.

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 24

Correction – In last month's edition of CCNL, the Lucky Numbers' winner Tez Pickthall was incorrectly credited with the LRT's communications director portfolio, which is currently held by fellow Llangollen Diesel Group member, Peter Edwards. *Apologies to both Ed.*

This month, The Corwen Project's treasurer, Paul Bailey writes : “I’ve had a good response to our2021 raffle with over 50 of the 80 Numbers having already renewed for next year. Anyone who has not renewed yet please either let me have your renewal subscriptions or advise if you're not renewing as I have a couple waiting to join. As previously advised all proceeds from the Raffle will be going to the Corwen Station Canopy (see sketches above done by Neil Evans, LRT member and Former Chairman, giving an illustration of what the Canopy will look like when viewed from both ends of the Platform). Anyone not wanting to join the Raffle but wanting to Donate to the Canopy Appeal please contact me for payment options at the address below.

LLANGOLLEN STATION LANTERNS

I am pleased to report that ALL four of the Lanterns for the Lampposts on Platform Two at Llangollen have been sponsored and the order has now been placed for these so they will be arriving later this month (December) to be fitted. Thank you to the sponsors and also to resident Electricians Phil Coles and Jeremy Price who will be connecting these up in the near future.

DEE BRIDGE APPEAL

Our Dee Bridge Appeal to raise monies for replacement timbers is also going extremely well and we have already raised over £10,000 towards our £15,000 target. A big thank you to everyone that has supported this Appeal to date without which we would not be able to fund the repairs to allow us to run trains over this next year. A bit more is still required but hopefully funds permitting this work will be able start in December and we can get it finished early in the New Year. Anyone wishing to Donate to this Appeal please contact me for payment options.



Dee Bridge - deck and timbers with rails on top
Photo: GJ

What you are buying – 18 hardwood timbers, 16 of which are cut to 8 metres with the remaining 2 at 5 metres. 9 timbers will be laid each side to

Corwen Central News

carry the rails. The timbers with their rails will be held in place with cross ties, giving a span of 69 metres (226 feet). Before the new timbers are fitted and after the current arrangement has been removed the bridge deck will be cleaned and repaired as appropriate prior to receiving a coat of sealant."

For donations to the Corwen Project (including the raffle) - Please make cheques payable to CCRD (Corwen Central Railway Development)

For donations to the Dee Bridge Appeal - Please make cheques payable to The Llangollen Railway Trust Ltd

All cheques and enquiries to Paul Bailey at the following address

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 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

“The Dee Valley gets a mention every time”, said my correspondent, “but the Dee, the River Dee, never gets a mention, other than when causing flooding! Can't you give it a starring role??” The observation is indeed true. There is so much to see and listen to along the Valley, so much history and folk lore to engage the traveller, that the river - *Afon Dyfrdwy* - River Dee mostly gets forgotten. It starts its journey on the slopes of Dduallt above

Llanuwchllyn in Snowdonia then meanders, rushes, rumbles and glides its way to the weir in Chester where it becomes tidal to make a total journey of 113km (70miles) to the sea emptying out at West Kirby and Hilbre Island.



Arenig Fawr and Moel Llyfnant from Dduallt summit

Photo : Gabby77

The River Dee was the traditional boundary of the Kingdom of Gwynedd in Wales for centuries, possibly since its founding in the 5th century. It was recorded in the 13th century (in Middle English lacking the letters v and w) as *flumen Dubr Duiiu*. This name probably derives from the Brythonic *dēvā*: "*River of the Goddess*" or "*Holy River*".



Bala Lake- Llyn Tegid

Photo: Necrothesp

Between its source and Bala Lake the river is known by its Welsh name, *Afon Dyfrdwy*. Legend

Corwen Central News

tells that the waters of the river pass through Bala Lake and emerge undiluted and unmixed at the outflow. On leaving Bala the river meets with Afon Tryweryn and passes through the Bala sluice gates, originally installed by Thomas Telford (1805) to control the river level to supply water to his Ellesmere Canal. The modern sluices help protect communities lower down the river from flooding and were built in the late 1950s as part of a major remodelling of water management. Skirting the village of Llanfor, the path of the river takes it past Llandderfel and under the Grade II listed Pont Fawr bridge. The river trends generally east-southeast through the Vale of Edeyrnion, shadowed by the B4401 Bala to Cynwyd road. Leaving Gwynedd and entering Denbighshire the Dee flows beneath other historic bridges at Llandrillo and Cynwyd before arriving at the town of Corwen. From here the river passes the Iron Age hillfort of Caer Drewyn and enters the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB. Through its forested valley its course takes it through Carrog, Glyndyfrdwy and Llantysilio, with the Llangollen Railway following the river on its route between Llangollen and Corwen, home of the railway's new western terminus.

At Berwyn the river passes over Telford's Horseshoe Falls (1808), before picking up speed on a downhill gradient past the Chain Bridge Hotel and its historic pedestrian bridge. First built in 1814, and later refurbished by Henry Robertson in 1870, it was considered a marvel of early suspension bridge design. In 1928 the original bridge was destroyed by severe flooding and was rebuilt in its current form from original parts in 1929 and refurbished in 2016. The river then passes through Llangollen and under its 16th-century, Grade I listed bridge, considered one of



Horseshoe Falls. The feed to the Llangollen Canal is off the bottom left corner of this image. A floating tree trunk is secured by chains across the water to prevent debris from entering the canal.
Photo : R Haworth

the *Seven Wonders of Wales*. On leaving Llangollen the river continues east, generally skirting the outcropping Karstic limestone exposures of Eglwyseg Rocks (Welsh: Creigiau Eglwyseg). Overlooking the river here is the medieval Castell Dinas Brân, (*Place of the Crows*) a ruined fortress abandoned by John de Warenne, 6th Earl of Surrey in 1282. The river then enters Wrexham County Borough, passing south of



Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (1805) Photo : Peter Craine

Corwen Central News

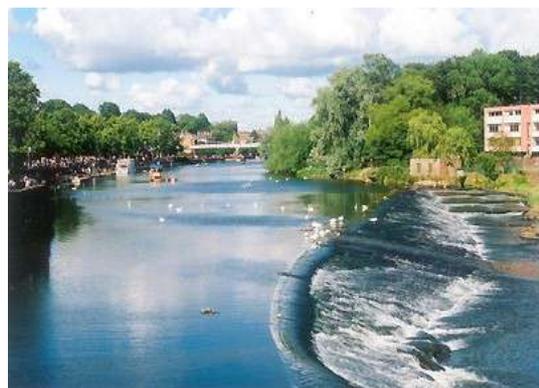
Trevor and under Thomas Telford's Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, of 1805, which carries the Llangollen Canal 37m (120 feet) overhead.

Less than a mile east of the aqueduct at Cefn Mawr, the river is crossed by the Cefn Mawr Viaduct. Built in 1848 by Thomas Brassey, (later engineer of the Llangollen - Corwen Railway) it carries the Shrewsbury to Chester railway line across the Dee. Beyond this point the river forms the boundary between Wrexham County Borough and Shropshire. Passing Chirk and the confluence with the River Ceiriog, the river begins to trace gentle meanders on the level ground at the beginning of the Cheshire Plain. The course continues past Erbistock on the Welsh side, and the 5th-century earthwork of Wat's Dyke on the English, before passing wholly into Wales at Overton bridge. A couple more miles downstream is Bangor-on-Dee, known for its Racecourse. Until 1974 this area was part of an exclave of historic Flintshire known as English Maelor (Welsh: Maelor Saesneg). The Dee meanders past Worthenbury where it is joined by the River Clywedog. At this point the border between Wrexham and Cheshire West and Chester follows the course of the river. It passes the Cheshire village of Crewe by Farndon, before cutting between Holt in Wales and Farndon in England beneath the 14th-century, Grade I listed Farndon Bridge.

Approaching Churton and Aldford, the river crosses entirely into England, and passes Eaton Hall, the seat of the Duke of Westminster. It then continues past the village of Eccleston and beneath the A55 North Wales Expressway, tracing northwards past the Roman Eaton Road to the Chester suburbs of Huntington and Handbridge before reaching the centre of Chester. In the city

centre the river passes and around the Earl's Eye(s) meadow at Queen's Park. In this vicinity, the riverside is used as a recreation area (the Groves) with a bandstand, benches and boat cruises, being crossed by four bridges. The first is the pedestrian Queen's Park Suspension Bridge. The second is the Old Dee Bridge, a road bridge and by far the oldest bridge in Chester, being built in about 1387 on the site of a series of wooden predecessors which dated originally from the Roman period.

Above the Old Dee Bridge is Chester Weir, which was built by Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, to supply power to his corn mills. Throughout the centuries the weir has been used to power corn, fulling, needle, snuff and flint mills. The same weir was used as part of a hydroelectric scheme in 1911 with the help of a small generator building which is still visible today, used as a pumping station for water since 1951.



Chester Weir, Handbridge

Photo : Wikityke

On this weir is a fish pass and fish counting station to monitor the numbers of salmon ascending the river, and also a weirgate for navigating the weir at spring tides. A little further downstream stands the Grosvenor Bridge (designed by architect Thomas Harrison of Chester), which was opened in 1833 by Princess

Corwen Central News

Victoria to ease congestion on the Old Dee Bridge.

West of Chester, the river flows along an artificial channel excavated between 1732 and 1736, planned and undertaken by engineers from the Netherlands and paid for by local merchants and Chester Corporation. It was an attempt to improve navigation for shipping and reduce silting. Chester's trade had declined steadily since the end of the 17th century as sediment had prevented larger craft reaching the city, spelling the end for the Port of Chester.

The channel runs in a straight line for 8km (5 miles) and passes into Wales and Flintshire at Saltney. On the west shore is Hawarden Airport and the Airbus factory at Broughton. This region is known as Deeside and contains several heavy industries. From here the Dee passes beneath three road bridges. The first two are adjacent to each other at Queensferry. They are a 1960s fixed-arch bridge carrying the A494 Queensferry to Dolgellau trunk road and its predecessor the Jubilee Bridge, which is a rolling Bascule bridge, designed by county surveyor RG Whitley and engineer Basil Mott, completed in 1926. The third crossing, and the most recent, is at Connah's Quay. The Flintshire Bridge is a fixed cable-stayed bridge which opened in 1999.

Between the second and third road bridges is Hawarden railway bridge at Shotton, originally constructed as a swing bridge to allow for ships bringing goods to the John Summers steel works, but now never opened. It carries the Bidston to Wrexham Central Borderlands Line (TfW) over the river. Hawarden Bridge station serves the Deeside Industrial Park, Deeside Power Station and the works at Dee Marsh.

Beyond Connah's Quay the river opens out into the Dee Estuary, forming the northeasternmost section of the North Wales coast and the western coast of the Wirral.

The estuary is hugely important for birdlife and has been designated both as an SSSI and as a Ramsar (place in Iran where the agreement was signed) site accordingly. Its value lies in the huge expanses of mud which are exposed between tides and the extensive saltmarsh developed on both sides but principally on the right bank north and south of Neston.

The estuary owes its origins to the scouring of a broad channel through the Triassic sandstones and Carboniferous mudstones by glacial ice during successive ice ages to form an iceway. The channel continues inland south of Chester but its higher reaches have long since been infilled with sand, gravel and mud. The process of infilling by mud continues to the present day as the rapid growth of the saltmarsh in the last century testifies, pushing the high tide line further out into the estuary.



Marshes at Parkgate - all that remains of a busy 18th century port, from where Handel sailed for the first performance in Dublin of "The Messiah

Photo : PR