

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY HERITAGE GROUP

Registered Charity 1202400

Trustees Report for 2023 - Heritage - Past Present and Future

Year ending 31 December

Apart from the memories, there are at least two legacies of the WHR Centenary Celebrations. One is Stephen Murfitt's winning Centenary Competition essay and the other, the station name boards now installed at historic halts along the WHR.

Originally, the intention was to have Stephen's Murfitt's essay - "The Saints' Way: a failed mission – Ffordd y Saint" as a free pdf download on the Group's website. The story of how a wise High Court Judge secured the preservation of a railway, rather than the creation of an albeit saintly long-distance footpath has created a good deal of interest among visitors to our website. However, just recently Stephen enquired about a print version. Fortunately, we had set up the pdf as a 'proper printed book' including having an ISBN number and with the correct number of pages to facilitate printing and binding. A short sample run convinced us – it looked 'jolly nice' - so by the time this article appears you should be able purchase the printed version that includes a cover picture commissioned by Stephen from the artist Rebecca Whalley plus some additional photographs, demonstrating that railways and footpaths are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

In his essay, Stephen explores the history of negotiation and manoeuvring behind the original failure of the Welsh Highland Railway and its subsequent resurrection. Mr Justice Vinelott's decision proved to be a significant milestone in the Welsh Highland's one hundred years of history and is now accorded the recognition it deserves. A 'must' for the bookshelf and only £9! The shops at Caernarfon and Harbour station will be stocking it and it will be for sale via our website.

The Station name boards' project was proposed as a WHR Centenary Legacy Project in the early spring of 2023. It is a credit to Adrian Strachan, who managed the project, his team of volunteers and the company who manufactured them that nearly all of them were installed by the end of 2023. All the locations will ultimately have a notice along the lines of 'Trains no longer stop here' so that unsuspecting walkers do not attempt to wave down a passing train! The work was jointly funded by the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group and the Welsh Highland Railway Society from existing funds.

In the early years of the WHR's reconstruction, a guide was created as an aid to the many railway staff having to learn the new route of the rebuilt WHR using photographs taken by that master of the camera David Tidy who has been involved with all manner of WHR activities over the years and is the Group's webmaster. The guide is now a feature on the Group's website and follows the route from

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Caernarfon to Porthmadog in stages. Photographs of key landmarks and features are displayed and there are operational information notes. The later sections of the line from Rhyd Ddu to Porthmadog are covered in the greatest detail, being depicted before the opening of the line. The earlier sections which were already in operation by then are covered less fully using photos taken from the train.

The Group has a very extensive photographic archive of over 5,000 images of the railway and other relevant subjects dating from the 19th century and into the current century including those taken and collected by David Allan, John Keylock and many others. Many of these are now available for members via a link on our website, as we scan and post them.

We continue to buy prints and negatives at auction and elsewhere when we are not beaten to the mark by others. For example, last year we bought some 300 colour slides taken in the 1980s and 90s of slate quarries in Gwynedd – some of immediate interest to ourselves. The images were originally taken by Clive Stevens for an illustrated talk by Nick Pell. The Group now own the copyright. The quality is generally quite good and the subject matter / content generally interesting and certainly provide a good impression of how things were in the 1980s early 90s. The Croesor ones in particular are interesting because they have a couple of good views of the converted winding house. More recently, we acquired a works photo of SILURIAN a Hunslet built locomotive that worked at Glan yr afon Quarry.

In line with the continuous improvement of our website and as we create 'added value' for our £15 annual subscription, member Richard Maund has set up links on the History/Archives page which give access to for example, the transcript of the 1922 Contract and the accompanying plans, the 1923 Working Instructions, the 1934 Lease and a Chronology of the Stations and Operations of the WHR. Much of our Archive is at Gwynedd Archives relating and a list of holdings can be accessed via our website.

Our quarterly journal 'Welsh Highland Heritage' covers the history of the WHR and its predecessors and for example from the current edition includes articles on the Croesor Tramway, the management of the FR and WHR in the 1920s, Company 'personalities' such as Colonel Stephens and the regular feature 'Peter Liddell's Photo Analysis' where our esteemed editor of WHH manages to tell the reader a story about the image which might include the time of day from the shadows cast quite apart from subject itself.

Possibly the most significant pieces of North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways' architecture that remains untouched is the Glan yr Afon Weigh Bridge building. For many years before the coming of the 'new' Welsh Highland Railway, this was very visible evidence of one of the major sources of traffic for the NWNGR. Yet in 2024,

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the site is overgrown and the remains of the building unconserved despite the importance of the quarry to the early history of the railway.

There are significant practical obstacles to doing anything on the Glan yr Afon site including access and the ownership of the quarry and the surrounding land. However, those kind of obstacles did not put off the founders of the original WHR Society / '64 Company and later those who drove the eventual building of the railway we have today. Some clearing was done in 2019 as part of the 'Journey into the Past' trains programme but sadly, the vegetation is once again engulfing the site and the weigh bridge building.

A project was discussed at a FR/WHR Heritage Company Board meeting pre Covid but along came down the 'lock down' and rather more urgent matters got in the way. However, the time may now have come for revisiting a Glan yr Afon Weigh Bridge project that ought to lead to the conservation of the building remains and to opening the site line to the incline of the quarry that played such an important role in the history of the NWNGR / WHR.

The Boston Lodge Project has raised the profile of the heritage legacy of both the FR and the WHR and the benefits to interpreting and explaining both the physical and intellectual history of the railways. The UNESCO World Heritage Status of 'The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales' has served to underline and enhance the importance of the slate industry and its associated transport communications. Heritage attracts millions of domestic and international visitors annually, many to Wales and the future of both railways surely lies in developing further heritage assets for the railways to promote and exploiting their potential for providing 'added value' to those who pay to travel on them.

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY HERITAGE GROUP CIO
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	Year	2023	2022
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Plant & Machinery		947.00	947.00
Less: Accumulated Depreciation (@ £176 pa)		947.00	947.00
Current Value		0.00	0.00
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at Bank (C/A: £1,330.27. D/A: £22,680.99)		24,011.26	26,558.81
Debtors (see note 1)		0.00	0.00
Stock		5,441.14	5,998.41
Cash float - A Gray		131.71	131.71
Total		29,584.11	32,688.93
Less: CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors		0.00	0.00
Subscriptions received in advance		243.71	271.57
Total		243.71	271.57
NET CURRENT ASSETS		29,340.40	32,417.36
REPRESENTED BY FUNDS AVAILABLE:-			
COMMITTED (see separate sheet for details)		15,449.61	13,739.13
UNCOMMITTED (see separate sheet for details)		15,832.09	16,691.78
Surplus/Deficit (-) for year on Income and Expenditure Account		-1,941.30	1,986.45
NET CURRENT ASSETS		29,340.40	32,417.36

Notes to the Accounts:

1. Debtors (under 1 year): £0.00
2. As it is impossible to estimate, no provision has been made for the future liabilities of Life Members such as supply of Journals and membership costs.

Pete Roughley Feb 2024

Checked by Celia Adams FCA

Chartered Accountant membership number 6112390

I have checked the Balance Sheet and
Income and Expenditure Account
20/3/24
Celia Adams FCA

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY HERITAGE GROUP CIO**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2023**

	Year	2023	2022
INCOME		£	£
Annual subs		2,581.20	2,774.08
Subs in Advance		243.71	271.57
Life subs		0.00	691.52
(Total Membership 2022 = 259; 2023 = 240 (Life:53))		2,824.91	3,737.17
GENERAL DONATIONS		670.18	656.90
SPECIFIC DONATIONS (see Committed Funds)		60.00	60.00
 SALES of Journal, Guidebooks, Books, DVDs etc			
Income		1,338.59	2,227.81
Less: cost of sales Xmas Cards: + P&P: - 28.57 Postage Rec'd:)		28.57	-222.05
Profit/Loss (-) on Sales		1,367.16	2,005.76
 Bank Interest		213.49	12.46
 TOTAL INCOME		5,135.74	6,472.29
 EXPENDITURE			
 JOURNAL			
Printing		1,292.20	1,265.00
Distribution		2,390.08	1,140.31
Total		3,682.28	2,405.31
 CONSERVATION			
Artefacts Purchased: £579.17 less Sales: £283.56		398.15	295.61
Committed Fund Spending (see separate breakdown)		2,723.27	1,425.08
Preservation (Photo Gallery Housing)		0.00	82.42
 ADMINISTRATION			
A.G.M/Meeting Expenses		15.59	57.56
Centenary Expenses		24.00	6.95
C.I.O. Costs		0.00	12.60
Depreciation of Plant & Machinery		0.00	0.00
Membership Secretary's Expenses		49.73	17.49
Website maintenance		184.02	182.82
 TOTAL EXPENDITURE		7,077.04	4,485.84
 EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		-1,941.30	1,986.45

Pete Roughley Feb 2024