

Review of 2025:

Safeguarding the Railway's Past; Securing the Future.

Treasurer's Report

The Financial Statements for 2025 accompany this review.

The accounts for 2025 show a surplus of £1,517.

The Group receives most of its funds from annual subscriptions and donations, and we are grateful to members for supporting the Group.

With the Group now being a charity, we are able to reclaim Gift Aid on donations and subscriptions. Thank you for those who have already signed Gift Aid forms, and if you haven't already completed one, there is a Gift Aid form enclosed with the AGM papers with details of where to send it.

During the year, funds were deposited with the Skipton Building Society who were paying a higher rate of interest than our bank.

Funds were set aside during the year for the full cost of the work undertaken at Glan yr Afon, which was completed in January 2026.

The Balance Sheet confirms that we had cash funds of £45,725 at the 31st December and identifies the funds we have earmarked for the future projects.

With the regular increase in postage and other costs, the Trustees took the decision in the year to hold annual subscriptions for those opting to have a digital copy of the WHH Journal at £15 but for those continuing to have print copies, increasing it to £18.

Paul Lacey - Treasurer & Trustee

Membership

Once again, another disappointing year. At the end of the year, membership stood at 223, a decrease of eight over the previous year. Eleven members failed to renew and there were sadly four deaths. However, seven new members joined during the year. As with last year, members were once again generous with their donations, sending a total of just over £400 which however was a considerable decrease over 2024. It was encouraging that Life Membership numbers continue to slowly increase.

The annual membership figures at 31/12/2025 were as follows:-

Life 58; Ordinary 165.

Dick Lystor - Membership Secretary

Archives

Before the last AGM visits were made to the XD117 archives at Caernarfon and verified that all the items we had placed there were still there and could be accessed on request. The footfall for accessing both railways' archives is too low to allow the Records Office to prioritise XD117 to be professionally catalogued by them. However, the current listing on the Group's website (compiled by Richard Maund) lists most of the individual items that are available. Only the folders of individual letters and forms are not fully listed. If anyone would like to volunteer to fill this gap, we would be most grateful.

A large, framed LMS poster advertising Snowdon and WHR day excursions from Abergele was purchased from ebay for the archives. This is quite a 'beast'(!), being over a metre tall and 600mm wide, with a lovely illustration of a train going up Snowdon (Eryri) and advertising the five valleys tour and dates probably from the 1920s.

During the year we drafted an agreement to allow the Group to store its photographic archives and remaining paper archives in the Minffordd Annex - remaining under our control, but closer to the railway for agreed access. This document was offered as a draft to the FR Co. Through the Heritage Advisory Committee of which the Nick Booker and Chris Jones are members, they suggested the format be changed to a 'Memorandum of Understanding' and offered a re-write in this format. This is now agreed and signed, allowing the future transfer of items to the safe care of the Annex and potentially to storage with the FR Modern Archives when a building is ready. For the Annex, the FRS has kindly installed more shelving to facilitate their arrival.

Chris Jones - Archivist & Trustee

Sales

Another quiet year for the Sales Dept. The F&WHR were our only trade customer, ordering across the range three times which is pleasing as it puts money into the Company's coffers.

There were just 14 retail orders, mainly the books on Bryngwyn, Croesor and of course, Saints Way. The older books, Buffet Car and Wheeler's Day are ordered rarely.

The revised 2nd edition of Ghosts due to be published in early 2026 has raised significant interest with some 50 retail pre-orders and an order for 30 copies from F&WHR. A busy April is anticipated and looked forward to!

Adrian Gray - Sales Officer & Trustee

The WHH Journal and Publications

During the year the usual four editions of WHH (plus an Index covering issues 51 to 100)) were published with articles on a wide range of subjects relating to the history of the WHR and its predecessors. My thanks go to our contributors who both manage to research what some may regard as obscure aspects of the WHR's history but also turn previously unknown facts into 'cracking good stories'! Whether it's 'A tale of two tearooms' at Nantmor, insights into the lives of the personalities who ran the WHR, aspects of the railway's signalling, profiles of those who spent their holidays photographing the brief life of the railway in the 1920s and 1930s, the Editor's contributions and those of others, there was as usual always something to interest and entertain all readers. During the year the Trustees took the decision to amend publication dates in order to facilitate the economic distribution of the Annual Report and Accounts to members.

A significant additional piece of work shared with some other Trustees was the preparation of the revised edition of Ghosts of Aberglaslyn, which goes to print in the early part of 2026.

Peter Liddell - WHH Journal Editor

Digital Media

The Group's webmaster, David Tidy retired during the year after many years of successfully managing and improving the Group's website and we wish him well for the future. David proved difficult to replace and we therefore took the decision to appoint an agency to maintain the site and welcomed Matthew Allen of Dunamis Web Services Ltd to look after the digital aspects and it continues to be our window on the world.

The Facebook page managed by the chairman continues to generate a lot of interest amongst aficionados of the Welsh Highland Railway and has proved instrumental in the recruitment of both our Treasurer and now our Secretary. At the time of writing we have 3,696 followers, 50% of whom are under 55 which is mildly re-assuring! Just over 80% are from the UK.

Nick Booker - Social Media Manager

Chairman's Review

When the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group was set up nearly three decades ago, its remit was clear: to salvage what remained of a once-pioneering narrow-gauge line's heritage before reconstruction nearly swept away the last physical traces of its past. Following the last demolition train of 1941, for many years after, enthusiasts and photographers picked their way along the abandoned track bed, noting the fading features of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway and its successor, the Welsh Highland Railway. Yet, until the mid-1990s, no systematic attempt had been made to record the remnants of a line that once threaded through some of Snowdonia's most dramatic landscapes.

The decades after closure were not kind. Many of the corrugated structures erected in the 1920s quickly disappeared; slate roofs, doors and windows from earlier NWNCR buildings were reclaimed by farmers, leaving the shells to succumb to weather and time. By 1996, with the Ffestiniog Railway poised to rebuild the WHR, a small circle of long-standing followers and friends resolved to document the line before it was transformed beyond recognition. They walked the old route from Dinas to Porthmadog in stages—photographing, sketching and cataloguing as they went.

Interest grew, and the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group was born. Its early leadership came from figures deeply rooted in the line's story: David Allan, whose initial idea had sparked the track bed surveys; Michael Davies, born on the final day of the WHR's independent existence in 1934; the late John Keylock, who shouldered both secretarial roles; and supporters such as Dick Lystor and Cedric Lodge. The first issue of the Group's journal appeared in November 1996.

In the years since, the Group's focus has evolved from emergency preservation to careful restoration and thorough historical research. Many original features - most from the NWNCR era - have been protected or reinstated, providing today's passengers something of the atmosphere that once defined the line.

The most ambitious and expensive undertaking has been the resurrection of Tryfan Junction station. Opened in 1877 at the meeting point of the main line and the Bryngwyn branch, the station embodied the confidence of the slate boom. After closure in 1937 it slid into dereliction, enveloped by vegetation and, according to local lore, briefly repurposed as a gentlemen's club. Tracklaying for the restored WHR prompted the Heritage Group to secure permission to rebuild the station. Work began in 2009, and by 2012 the building's shell stood once more; a platform followed, and trains now stop there on request.

The project was funded entirely by the Group, helped by book sales, appeals and generous bequests. Contributions from Cymdeithas Rheilffordd Eryri and Llanwnda Community Council supported specific elements, while individual donors funded memorial benches and signs. Today, the station acts as a gateway to the Llwybr Llechi - the Slate Trail - giving walkers access to the quiet slopes of Mynydd Mawr and Moel Tryfan.

Plans to complete a full "heritage cameo" at the site, including a reconstructed signal box and demonstration track, have been hampered by the location's remoteness and the practicalities of installation. Proposals for visitor facilities, such as toilets, have stalled for similar reasons. However, in 2025 trustees decided to explore new opportunities tied to the Snowdonia Slate Trail and the area's UNESCO World Heritage status, alongside potential uses in outdoor education, wellbeing walks and heritage interpretation, for which some essential services will be required to be installed, subject to agreement with the Ffestiniog & Welsh

Highland Railways (FR & WHR) management. We hope that 2026 will see the implementation of some of these ideas. Essential maintenance work has taken place on the building, partially funded by the Group.

Other restoration projects include the Beddgelert water tower, whose concrete supports - saved at the Group's insistence - now hold a new tank installed in 2013, creating a much-photographed heritage tableau when in use. The ash pit and lamp room, largely rebuilt by the Midlands Group of the WHR Society, have also been conserved, as have the Spooner graves at Beddgelert and the remains of the Bettws Garmon station building. However, it is worth noting that all restoration and conservation work creates long term financial liabilities.

One significant heritage survivor is the Glan-yr-Afon weighbridge and its surrounding site. Following persistent lobbying by the Group in 2025 and years previously, steps were taken by the FR & WHR management in the early months of 2026 to clear the vegetation and adjust the fencing to allow sheep to graze over the site and thus keep any new growth under control. This work has been funded by the Group as has the conservation work undertaken on the now revealed remains of the weighbridge building. Passengers on passing trains can now see the quarry incline and be in a position to better understand the importance of the quarry to the early history of the railway.

Research by members has produced a steady stream of publications, the latest being a revised edition of *Ghosts of Aberglaslyn*, which will be published in 2026. The book chronicles the thwarted ambitions of the Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway. The Group's archive continues to expand and includes what is believed to be the definitive collection of original tickets. The growing store of documents and other items is now held both at Minffordd and by Gwynedd Archives. The photographic collection is being scanned and is accessible through the Group's website.

Yet the future of the Group and its work relies on people. Recent appointments - Paul Lacey as Treasurer and Roger Greenhalgh as the incoming Secretary will help sustain the Charity's governance. But the Group needs new volunteers to take on key roles, from editor of the *Welsh Highland Heritage* journal to future chairmanship.

A year or so ago as I peered through a rain-streaked window at Tryfan Junction and as the mountains shifted colour with each passing cloud my companion reflected "Time and tide wait for no man, we need new hands if we're to keep the momentum going."

Others had ensured that the line was rebuilt, but it was the Heritage Group that had secured its soul - its stories, its forgotten corners, its improbable endurance - they were not left behind and lost.

The Welsh Highland Railway has endured war, dereliction and decades of uncertainty. The preservation of its heritage now rests, as ever, in the hands of those willing to carry the story forward.

Finally, our thanks must go to all those Trustees who made contributions during the year to the running of the WHR Heritage Group some of whom with their individual reports have contributed to this Review of the Year. In particular our good wishes go to Mike Hadley who is retiring as a Trustee and Secretary of the Trust. Mike has been involved with the WHR for many years, both through the Midlands branch of the Welsh Highland Railway Society and as a member and Trustee of the Heritage Group. He has been involved in many restoration and rebuilding projects on the railway including those at Bettws Garmon, Tryfan Junction, the Lamp Hut at Beddgelert and the Spooner Graves. His contribution will not be lost entirely as he has agreed to stay on as 'Buildings Advisor.' In his place, as Secretary and Trustee, we welcome Roger Greenhalgh.

Nick Booker - Chairman and Trustee

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY HERITAGE GROUP CIO

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
INCOME		
Annual Subscriptions	3,088	3,145
-Gift Aid recovered	203	-
Donations	485	1,384
-Gift Aid recovered	92	-
Legacies	-	18,515
Sales - journal, guidebooks, books etc	1,558	1,491
Sales - artefacts	-	71
Bank interest	829	324
TOTAL INCOME	6,254	24,931
EXPENDITURE		
Conservation		
Projects		
-Dinas Station Building	106	300
-Kerr Stuart 4415 Fund	-	1,000
-Baldwin 50 Fund	-	2,000
Artefacts	-	148
Books, guidebook printing, postage costs	1,192	1,022
Journal		
Printing	1,057	1,262
Distribution	1,131	186
Administration		
AGM/meeting expenses	665	140
Membership Secretary expenses	-	31
Website Maintenance	532	228
PayPal charges	54	75
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4,737	6,392
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	1,517	18,539

WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY HERITAGE GROUP CIO

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at bank Current Account	2,119	1,667
Cash at bank Deposit Account	7,930	41,277
Cash at Skipton Building Society	35,676	-
Debtors and Prepayments	233	-
Stock	4,806	5,655
	<u>50,764</u>	<u>48,599</u>
CREDITORS		
Subscriptions received in advance	302	720
Book orders	696	-
Other creditors	369	-
	<u>1,367</u>	<u>720</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>49,397</u>	<u>47,879</u>
REPRESENTED BY FUNDS AVAILABLE		
Funds- Unrestricted and Designated		
-Archiving	2,250	2,250
-Beddgelert Water Tower	538	538
-Building Maintenance	4,788	3,788
-Closed Halt Signs	561	561
-Digitising Historic Documents	874	874
-Dinas Station Building	594	700
-Dinas Goods Shed Roof	6,206	6,206
-Glan yr Afon	7,050	1,500
-Tryfan Junction	1,843	1,793
-Uncommitted	24,693	29,669
NET FUNDS	<u>49,397</u>	<u>47,879</u>

Checked by Celia Adams FCA.

Chartered Accountant membership number 6112390

I have checked the Balance Sheet
and Income and Expenditure Account

Celia Adams FCA

2/3/26