

## **NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2024.**

### **WEST SHORE MINIATURE RAILWAY ISSUES.**

Passenger figures on most public running days could be described as rather disappointing. Whilst the faithful few turn up to give the public a ride on “our” railway, we have had skeleton staff waiting for the pundits, others are turning their hands to other projects requiring completion before the winter season steps in.

### **SIGNAGE TO GIVE OUR SOCIETY IDENTIFICATION.**

Digging a few holes, inserting a few posts then refill with postcrete or foam sounds pretty easy. I can guarantee you this is not the case on our site in West Shore. You could say we have two different ground conditions within our fence line. The lower half from the signal box towards our turntable area is sandy, making digging easy.



To be seen by the public, these signs have to be of a certain size (large !!). This is where our prevailing wind has different ideas. After a few weeks in the ground, even with support for the vertical posts, this position was not suitable. Another position was tried the ground being firmer and containing less sand, the result can be seen in the attached photo. The other half of our site has hardcore beneath the surface. Using the term hardcore is a bit of an understatement, I should use the term, - rocks. Having decided to site one of these signs pretty close to our main gate, the first hole was completed in a few hours, the second hole took us a complete shift on site. We encountered a large rock that needed smashing up using Mike Brown’s electrical percussion tool. Having removed the rock bit by bit, below was lovely sub soil.

The actual signs themselves have been a mammoth task. We’re so lucky that our members can adapt themselves to various skills. In this case woodworking.

We have no dedicated workshop on site so you can imagine the difficulty the members had in handling such heavy and awkward items during construction. Our newly manufactured picnic tables have come in very useful as portable work benches. A big thanks must also go to CTS, Complete Tooling Solutions of Rhyl for their assistance.

Finally, the artwork. Our members (on site) were asked for suggestions as to the design etc. It was suggested that we use a similar shape to British Railways totems. Originally, stations on the North Wales Coast would have had maroon coloured signs. The Cambrian Coast would have been brown. As we wanted a more vibrant colour it was agreed that we use blue, and as you can see, it was the correct decision. The plastic stick on artwork was produced by Mike Brown. I can only describe these as fantastic. I would like to thank everyone involved with this project. Thanks once again.

### **CLUBHOUSE ROOF REPAIR.**

We mustn't kid ourselves, our roof needs major long term remedial work. Manufactured of a kind of fibreboard sandwiched by thin mild steel on the upper and lower sides. The ingress of moisture has taken its toll on the inside causing rusty areas. One area that had been leaking water to the inside of the clubhouse has received some work. Following the rain we've experienced recently, I can confirm this temporary repair seems satisfactory.

### **SIGNAL BOX REFURBISHMENT.**



For those who turn up at the track, our signal box is suffering from exposure to the elements. Again, our usual volunteers have started cladding the building using "maintenance free!!" upvc material. At West Shore nothing is maintenance free but this cladding will make things a lot easier.

The next task will be replacing the glass windows using poly carbonate sheets (Perspex). To add a bit of authenticity, false Georgian bars will then be applied.

Hopefully, the roof doesn't look too bad. You never know what we'll find as we proceed with the window replacement!

### **JOHN & JAN'S NORTH ANGLESEY 7 ¼" RAILWAY VISIT.**

This visit will be on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Hopefully, we will have chosen a lovely autumnal day with fine weather. Please do make an attempt to attend this event as I'm sure everyone will have a good day out. I know of several members showing an interest so far. Robin Gibson one of our members who lives in Bromyard (Near Hereford?) is travelling up specially for this event, we all look forward to seeing you Robin.

John has posted details of his address etc. before, no doubt he'll repeat this in order to remind you all nearer to the event.

### **GRESFORD DISASTER 1934.**

In 1968 as a 17 year-old apprentice electrical fitter working on MANWEB's high voltage substations I was based in a depot in Johnstown near Wrexham. Most of the men I worked with had family or friends or knew someone that perished in this terrible disaster.

266 miners lost their lives due to an explosion underground. This year on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September these poor men were remembered in Wrexham on the disaster's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Whenever I travel along the A483 from Chester towards Wrexham I always have a quiet thought about what happened underground as I reach the top of the hill on the outskirts of Wrexham. In actual fact Wrexham MES have their track directly over the mine workings.



A very sad day

### **GRESLEY A4 ON NORTH WALES COAST.**

On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September enthusiasts witnessed quite a rare occurrence these days, a steam locomotive down on the coast. This "special" was travelling from Bangor (I'm not too sure if it was picking up passengers at Holyhead) to Cardiff.

The train was steam hauled as far as Crewe, then Class 37s via Shrewsbury and the mid Wales line from Craven Arms down towards Llanelli then Cardiff.

The steam locomotive was A4 pacific Sir Nigel Gresley resplendent in blue livery. A great shame I was in Cardiff on grandfather duties that day and no, I didn't bother going to see the train arrive in Cardiff late in the evening.

### **FOR SALE & WANTED.**

Members have asked me if I can advertise items for sale or wanted in my newsletter. I've discussed this with other members of the committee as I didn't want to offend David Davies our webmaster.

Frank has discussed this with David as he wants to sell his 3 ½" Black Five model. Dave has arranged to add this to our website so if you want to sell or want a specific item get onto our website.

### **1950'S ROBOTICS?**

In the 1950's Colwyn Bay promenade was a brilliant place to spend a day on the beach. My interest was the miniature railway running from opposite the pier along the promenade to the road leading up to Eirias Park. This is where the engine shed used to be.

Yes, I did say pier. In those days Colwyn Bay had a lovely pier. How many of you out there went to Dixieland on a Saturday evening dancing the night away. Enough of that.

How many of you remember the mechanical elephant?



I can guarantee you this creature hasn't escaped from the Welsh Mountain Zoo, and he also isn't keen on Parisella ice cream.

### **THE LONGEST YARN.**

During one of my recent visits to West Shore, a lady asked me if I minded sharing a few leaflets with our members advertising The Longest Yarn, this commemorates the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings. The event features an 80-metre 3D wool artwork depicting scenes from the Normandy invasion. All the scenes have been knitted by ladies in the UK.

The exhibition will be held at Llandudno's Holy Trinity Church from 2<sup>nd</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024 as part of the exhibition's UK tour. Well worth a visit, I'm sure.



## **EVENING LECTURES.**

Our October lecture was given by Phil Thomas on his travels in China along with a Video of his travels. The QJ 2-10-2 locomotives were very impressive, but I was more impressed by the geography and especially the blue skies with no clouds visible. Who says China are a polluting nation? Phil has also joined our society and we're looking forward to seeing him in control of his Sweet Pea locomotive very soon. Welcome Phil.

The next meeting at Craig y Don will be on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024. This will be our annual video night. I can't promise you any fire-works but I can promise you an interesting evening. Whilst I'm on about our lecture, I'm sure we all appreciate the refreshments we receive. A big thanks to Jim Payne for this service. Most of the time you might not notice Jim is present, this quiet gentleman just gets on with things. Very much appreciated once again.

## **John and Jan's 7 ¼" track visit.**

Today is the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024, and again I'm giving you all a gentle nudge to remind you that next Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024 is our planned visit to Llanfachraeth on Anglesey. Please make an effort to make this a successful event. If at all possible, can you give John a message to show your intentions via our members page.

## **West Shore Updates.**

During our public running day yesterday, a team completed the cladding on the signal box. Others completed another leak on our rather porous clubhouse. I don't know how many of you know about the workshop clearance our members have been involved with. Quite a few hours have been spent in Conwy by a few members, last Saturday was no different. Mike Brown's van is full to the rafters ready to visit Arch Motors. Although most of the equipment is useful, other bits are only useful as scrap.

The seagulls at the track have taken a fancy to our newly manufactured picnic tables. Not the food, but as toilets. You can't imagine the mess they've created.

## **PRIVATE TRACK RUNNING.**

This topic was discussed at our annual general meeting. At the moment our active members at West Shore seem to be doing everything except running their own locomotives. At our last committee meeting it was decided that Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> October shall be a track running day. Those who have a locomotive in ticket, bring it along, if you haven't, still come along. If you don't have any previous driving experience you can start on one of the battery locos. This day will purely be enjoying ourselves. See you all there!!

## **XMAS DINNER.**

Can I give you all an advanced warning that this year's annual dinner will be held at our usual venue, CONWY GOLF CLUB on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024. Not far away now!!

Nothing else to report regarding our society, so I'll sign off for another month.

Best regards,

Harold.