

RHEIDOL REVIEW

NEWSLETTER



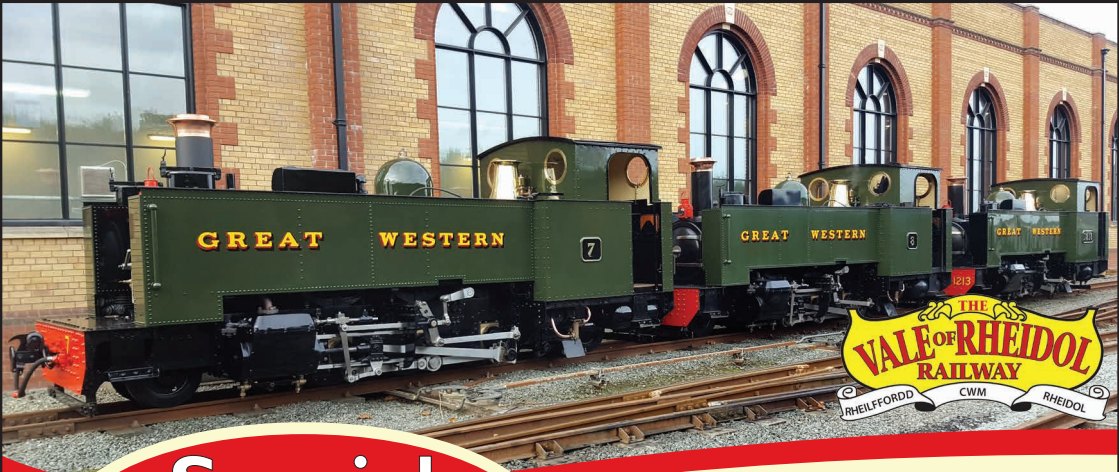
Celebrating
30
1989 - 2019
YEARS
of Private Ownership

ISSUE 5 - 2019

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REGULAR STEAM TRAIN SERVICES RUNNING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



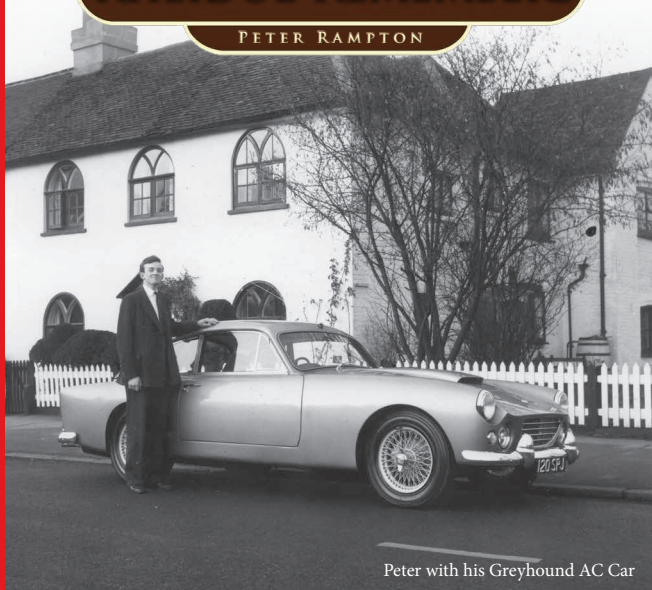
Special Edition

A Special Edition newsletter to commemorate the life of Mr Peter Rampton, Chairman and saviour of the Vale of Rheidol Railway available now featuring the full list of Collection X



RHEIDOL REMEMBERS

PETER RAMPTON



Peter with his Greyhound AC Car

SPECIAL EDITION

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Welcome

A steam festival of celebration...

The summer has been and gone already with the year continuing to fly by, a definite high point of September however was our steam festival weekend.

It was one of the busiest weekends ever at the railway and enjoyed by both visitors and staff alike. With photographers lineside throughout the route of our line in all the publicly accessible places. Personally I was tasked with guarding during the weekend, two passenger services on Saturday and the goods train & one passenger service on Sunday, it was enjoyable interacting with all our lovely visitors.

Our next event to look forward to is our Sunday Lunch Specials. An opportunity to take in the glorious autumn colours, and a fantastic roast dinner at Devil's Bridge. For more information check out our website: <https://www.rheidolrailway.co.uk/sunday/>

Speaking of our website we have been working to improve the information on it so our readers and visitors can find out more about what we are up to; for example

we have added a blog to our workshop page to track the progress of the different projects within our works. Also a section about past projects below it.

<https://www.rheidolrailway.co.uk/workshop/>

We aim to improve the general appearance and readability of our other web pages over time too, adding to the information available for those interested in differing aspects of our activities.

If you have any suggestions to improve our website let us know via newsletter@rheidolrailway.co.uk



Gareth D Jones
Editor

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A poster for Sunday Lunch Specials at The Vale of Rheidol Railway. The poster features a steam train in a valley with autumn foliage. The text on the poster includes: 'THE VALE OF RHEIDOL RAILWAY', 'ABERYSTWYTH TO DEVIL'S BRIDGE', 'SUNDAY LUNCH SPECIALS', '3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th November 2019', 'End your weekend with an extra special trip to Devil's Bridge, taking in the ever changing stunning scenery and stop at the Hafod Hotel for a sumptuous roast before heading back', '1 course £11.95, 2 course £16.95 + standard train fare', 'Please book in advance', and 'www.rheidolrailway.co.uk'.

Vale of Rheidol Railway News

'Forgotten Engines 2' is a huge success

Our 'Forgotten Engines 2' event on the 14 & 15 September was well received by all. With almost all of our workshop tours booked out and large queues for the chance to drive a Rheidol tank, the first time we have ever offered the opportunity to do so.

The three engines line up each morning proved popular with photographers, the locomotives and crew posing in differing positions within the yard for the amassed camera wielding public.

The trains were also well patronised with our visitors making full use of the intermediate stations on the line to get into the best places for viewing the engines working within the Rheidol Valley with the passenger and goods set. We thank everybody who came and supported our event making it the success it was and we hope to see many of you in the run up to our next steam festival event in 2021.



VoR team member Jeff Cargill honoured for his work as an Archive Conservator

Nominated by his peers in the conservation community and the ARA Board, Jeff Cargill (photo, right) is the first 'archive conservator' to receive this award. Jeff recently retired from Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies. He has worked in a number of archive conservation roles across a distinguished career, including the National Library of Wales and Cheshire and Buckinghamshire Record Offices. He was also a visiting lecturer at Camberwell College in London (specialist conservation training centre) for three years.

Jeff has been an instructor on the sector-leading ARA conservation training scheme for many years, being the UK and leading international authority on the conservation of mediaeval wax seals. Most – if not all – the archive conservators in the UK in the last twenty years will have been taught by him. As well as his opinion-leading and influencing work on seals, Jeff has also been a leading light in the use of the leaf-casting method of the repair of paper documents.



Lord Clark of Windermere, PC, co-Chair of the All-Party Group (photo, left), said:

"I am delighted that the All-Party Group has chosen the first-ever archive conservator to receive this award. This highly-specialised community represents a 'thin red line' in the conservation and preservation of some of our most important and fragile documentary heritage. It is right that – though this award to Jeff Cargill – the all-party group is also recognising the outstanding contribution of archive conservators everywhere."

**ARA Preservation & Conservation Section
– Conservation Today**

Vale of Rheidol Railway News

Your never to old to drive 'Margaret'!

Hans, 95 years young, was born on 1st July 1924 in Bocholt, Germany. He is we believe the oldest person to drive 'Margaret' so far on our 'Driver for a Fiver' experience.

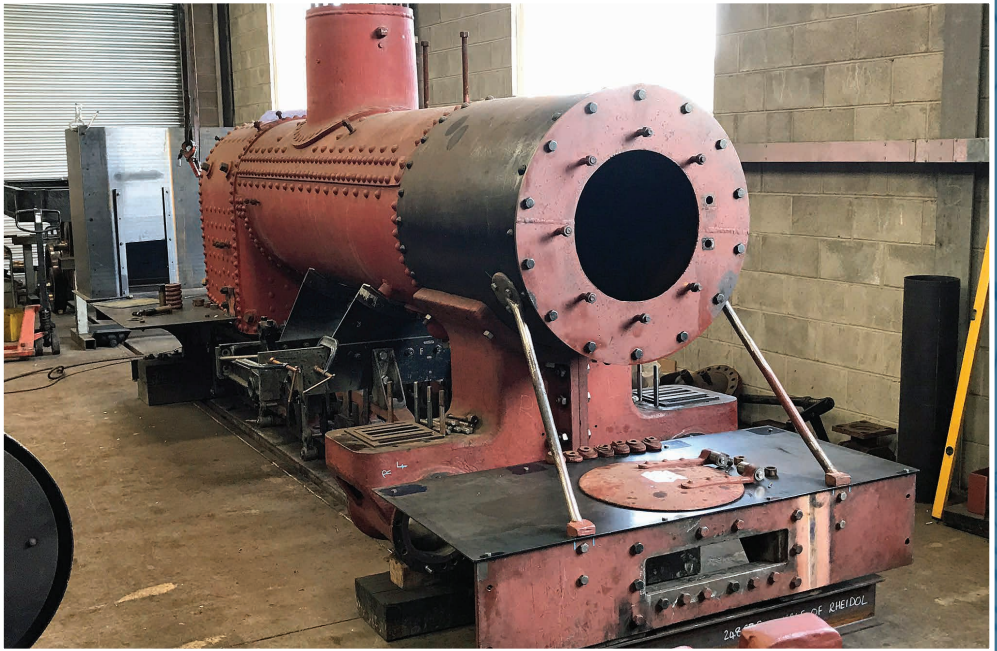
He came to Britain in 1946 to assist a deficit in labour after the Second World War. He married a Welsh lady called Winifred and settled in Berriew, Powys.



Progress on our new Devil's Bridge Car Park

Our new car park in Devil's Bridge station is now almost complete, with just the finishing touches remaining. Our thanks go to Tregaron Trading Services (TTS) who have worked hard to complete this on time.





Baldwin No.44699

Since our last edition, the new metal work to enable fabrication of the bunker for the Baldwin has been delivered and the metal panels have been temporarily bolted into position. New side sheets for the cab have also been fabricated and this has been assembled using the original roof and ironwork.

Work has taken place on the 'face' of the engine, with the fitting of the smokebox front and attachment of the smokebox door. a new chimney for the engine has been made using parts salvaged from the original chimney.



UPDATE

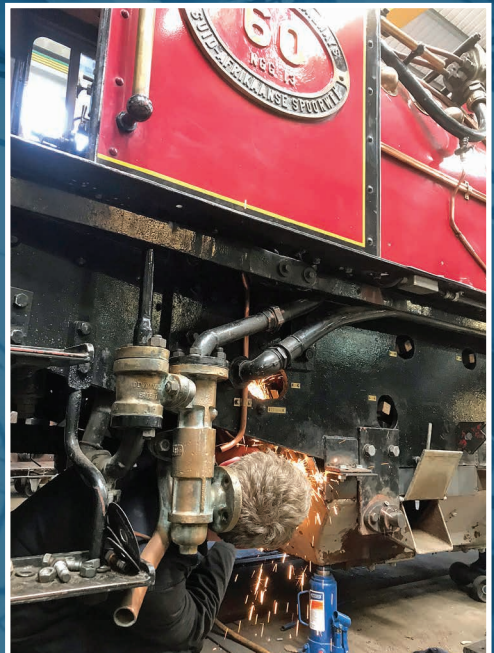
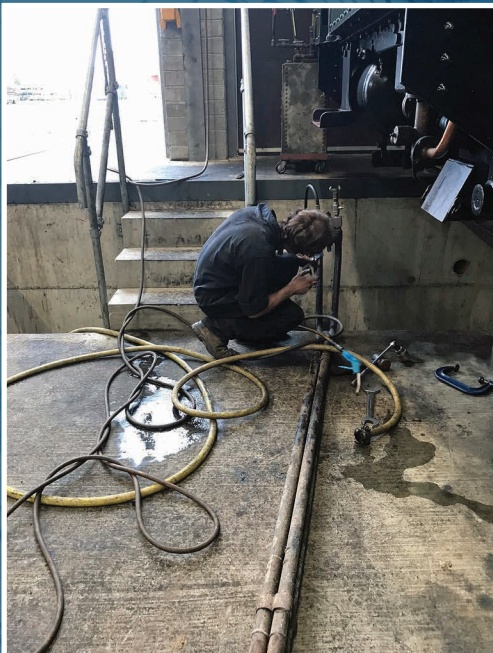
Garratt NGG13 No.60

Since the last update on Garratt NGG13 No.60, it has had a new, original design, chimney fitted. The kit of parts to fabricate the new spark arrestor has been designed, ordered and fitted.

The ash pan has been modified to ensure there are no gaps for smouldering embers to escape through.

Lapping of the joints for the steam pipes and super heater tubes has taken place along with hydraulic testing of the tubes to check for leaks.

Work has also begun to prepare the pipe runs and equipment to add air braking to the engine, necessary for compatibility with our stock.



WORKSHOP UPDATE

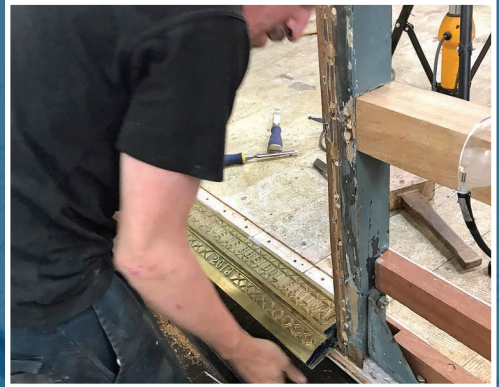
Carriage Project

The transformation of Carriage No.11 has been continuing with the test fitting of the new brass doorsills that have been cast in our forge at our Surrey workshops.

A mock-up has been made for the folding table design for the first class compartment.

Work is also continuing to develop the mouldings for the First class compartment with the beginning of a design mock up being fitted to the door interior and the door moulding being lined up with those on the carriage interior.

The interior wall panel has been lacquered and a storage area has been custom built for the storage of the guard's equipment, including a bespoke slot for storage of the ramp required for wheelchair access to the carriage.





www.devilsbridgefalls.co.uk

01970 890233

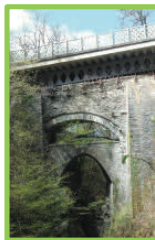


To visit the 300ft Waterfalls, Punchbowl and 3 Bridges built one on top of the other, turn left from the train station and walk down the hill past the Hafod hotel (approx 5 minutes).

The **Nature Trail** circular walk includes views of the waterfalls, 3 Bridges, Robbers Cave and Jacobs Ladder (A steep flight of 100 continuous steps). It takes roughly 45 minutes and is a challenging walk with 675 steep steps. It is not suitable for pushchairs and those with walking difficulties. Adult £3.75 Child £2.00 **20% discount on Nature trail walk by showing this advert to the attendant.**

Not enough time for the long walk? Too many steps?

To view just the 3 Bridges and the Devil's Punchbowl enter through the coin operated turnstile. Only £1.00 per person
Recommended time 10 minutes.



WOODLANDS CARAVAN PARK

Devil's Bridge

01970 890233

www.woodlandsdevilsbridge.co.uk

Looking for somewhere to stay near the train station at Devil's Bridge? Call our friendly staff and enquire about our 2 bedroom self catering bungalow or Gypsy Pod. Alternatively pitch a tent or bring your touring van or motor home. We are situated just 10 minutes walk from the train station and 5 minutes walk from the waterfalls and Hafod Hotel & Brasserie.
enquiries@woodlandsdevilsbridge.co.uk



Vale of Rheidol Volunteers

By Clive Higgs, Railway Volunteer

The summer has seen the usual tidying, weeding and watering of the plants in the gardens, troughs and tubs at all the stations and Nantyrnen Halt. Volunteers have been away on holiday or busy elsewhere so there have been short, intense weeding and dead-heading sessions at Capel Bangor, Nantyrnen and Aberffwrdd. With the warm showers come black fungal carpets growing on top of the geranium flowers. But these are easily removed and new flowers are budding underneath.

Some of the Devil's Bridge plants like the azaleas are inaccessible whilst the new car park is being built behind safety fences. Great efforts must have been taken to avoid digging them up! The plant boxes, platform tubs and two garden areas are accessible and are still bright with flower.

At Aberystwyth, besides the normal weeding and deadheading, there has been a surreptitious planting of bright

dahlias in the small plot by the new toilets. The station has been so busy it was thought best to plant early when very few people use the toilets. So no-one needed to step over equipment and volunteers littering the paths near the building.

Besides the plant work there has been some brushing of the platforms with hoeing out a few weeds. At Aberffwrdd there has been some cutting back of brambles growing onto the back of the platforms. At Capel Bangor a Buddleia bush had grown enough to scratch the locomotives' tanks and was trimmed.



Some volunteers have started work on the repainting at Capel Bangor, Nantyrnen and Aberffwrdd in the colours of the three railway companies who owned the railway before its nationalisation in 1947. The station building at Capel Bangor is being painted in the 1902-1913 cream and brown colours of the original Vale of Rheidol Light Railway Company. Hopefully, this will be finished during the August Bank Holiday weekend. These photographs show the painting just after starting and just before finishing. The windows need



their final coats.

The station building at Nantyronen is to be painted in the light stone and dark stone colours of the Great Western Railway Company who owned the railway between 1921 and 1947. This will have the same colours as the water tower at Nantyronen. Aberffwrdd station and water tower will be painted in the 1913–1921 dark green colour of the Cambrian Railways Company.

The job of finishing the fencing the woodland below the railway line at the west of Aberffwrdd station has again been postponed but the lower fencing at the western



end has been unrolled, ready for pulling and stapling to the posts.

The volunteers will still be busy weeding and dead-heading the plants. The plants still seem to be flowering well. The painting at Nantyronen will hopefully start next week, weather permitting. Then hopefully the painting of the station and water tank at Aberffwrdd before winter.

Our volunteers meet once a week, and through their efforts our stations always look at their best no matter what the weather. If you wish to join our amazing band of volunteers helping to maintain our stations then please get in touch via email: info@rheidolrailway.co.uk



New guided history tours at mid-Wales' old metal mines

By Ioan Lord

Mines around Aberystwyth in Ceredigion have been worked for copper, lead and zinc since the Bronze Age, making them amongst the earliest mine sites known in Britain. For the first time in their history, some of the mines are being made accessible to the public through specialist guided tours led by Ioan Lord. These tours will take visitors into areas which have been untouched since the departure of the last miners over a century ago.

Mid-Wales Mine Adventures was established in 2019 to make the important history and remains of the area's mining heritage accessible to the public. It offers a range of trips where people can see and

explore the surface sites and underground mine workings, as well as see and learn about the landscape, people and working conditions of the prehistoric miners up to those of the early twentieth century. Some of the locations are amongst the most important and oldest industrial sites in Wales, and provide a variety of trips which can be suited to the customers' interests. Mid Wales Mine Adventures aims to engage local and national audiences in promoting mid-Wales' vast former mining industry which has been neglected for many years.

A huge number of mid-Wales' mine sites have, and continue to be, bulldozed, landscaped and destroyed; sites which have

great significance in Welsh heritage, and which shaped and transformed mid-Wales forever during the nineteenth century. Very few of these local industrial sites are protected, and many more can still be saved and preserved out of the hundreds which are scattered across the region. Some of Europe's earliest industrial sites in mid-Wales are now being used as local rubbish tips; sites which all contributed to forming one of the largest and most important industries which mid-Wales ever had, and probably ever will have.

Mid Wales Mine Adventures was established to promote interest in the area's mining heritage through guided trips over the dramatic landscape and into the mine workings themselves.

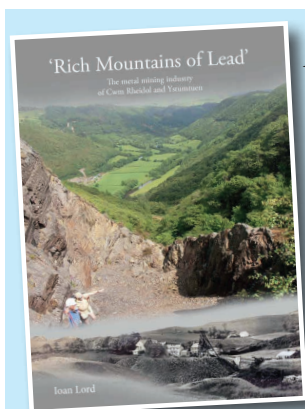
"I have always been astonished at how little attention is given to mid-Wales' metal mining industry. At least 10 mines in mid-Wales were started in the Early Bronze Age over 4,000 years ago, and the industry's lack of appreciation and representation is unbelievable. The range of surface and underground tours are aimed at anyone who have an interest in history, underground exploration or those looking for something different to do in the area. They will make accessible this integral part of Welsh history and culture, as well as providing a memorable

experience for visitors and tourists to the area."

The surface and underground guided trips will introduce visitors to the spectacular man-made caverns and landscape of one of Wales' forgotten industries, and celebrate the lives and legacies of hundreds of families who worked here through exploring a labyrinth of underground passages containing numerous artefacts and old equipment. The range of tours will engage local and national audiences by providing a memorable experience of adventure and discovery, as well as Welsh history and heritage.

For further information and to book your tour, please email loan at rheilffordd@gmail.com, phone 07415 440172 or visit the website at <https://www.midwalesminetours.com/> for more information and a list of available trips and dates.

loan has recorded some of his underground explorations on a helmet mounted camera. See some of the footage here:
https://youtu.be/rAtfvqG_CpQ



'Rich Mountains of Lead' The Metal Mining Industry of Cwm Rheidol and Ystumtuen by Ioan Lord

Available for purchase in our shop or online £45
<https://shop.rheidolrailway.co.uk/products/rich-mountains-of-lead-ioan-lord>



N.B. These mines are on Private property and entry is forbidden unless by prior arrangement. Mines in the Valley are very dangerous owing to the vertical shafts and the potential for them to be hidden within woodland. Exploration should only be undertaken by experienced persons!

A44 LLYWERNOG, ONLY 15 MINUTES FROM ABERYSTWYTH



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Come and explore The Silver Mountain Experience, a fantastic day out for the whole family. Embark on an adventure with a choice of guided tours, discover the history of our very own Silver-Lead Mine and explore our exciting surface attractions.

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This guided tour introduces you to the original and rare setting of our unique mine, both above and below ground. Discover the fascinating facts of mining life in a bygone era, as it would have been seen through the eyes of a miner.

**THE
BLACK CHASM**
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Ancient myths, local legends and gruesome history brought to life in this thrilling underground adventure! Not recommended for under 10's.

Plus there's our interactive Time Lab show and a whole host of exciting surface attractions! Visit our website for more information, and take a look at the special events we run throughout the year.

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Vale of Rheidol Photo Archive

By Rob Bance, VoR Archivist



Carriage Repairs at Aberystwyth Loco Shed

In the early 1980s much of the carriage stock required repainting and refurbishment, with much of the work taking place in the Cambrian Bay platform at Shrewsbury station under tarpaulins. Carriages also went to the Carriage and Wagon Shop at Chester.

In 1983 a welcome change took place with 6 of the carriages being repainted back into the

familiar Chocolate and Cream livery. Whilst a lot of the refurbishment was done away from the line, some of it was done at Aberystwyth in the loco shed.

Here we see Jack Smith, nicknamed “Lurch” a carriage fitter from Shrewsbury attending to the blinds on one of the summer cars.







Photo: John R Jones



Photo: Andrew Simmonds



Photo: Alecia Jackson



Photo: John R Jones



Photo: John R Jones



Italian & German Miners at Frongoch

Frongoch Mine: An Italian Tragedy

By Geraint Roberts

One of the largest metal mines in Ceredigion, Frongoch lay west of Pontrhydygroes and Devil's Bridge. It was worked first in 1759 as a lead mine and gained fame under the successive ownership of the Cornish mine captains John Taylor and John Kitto in the 19th Century. Under the latter, the mine began to work the previously ignored reserves of zinc ore. Crushing and separating of the ore was performed on site and the machinery was powered in the main by Ceredigion's greatest resource - water. The cost of transporting coal at least 60 miles from source across a land using mostly basic transport, was always problematic and expensive. Thus, waterwheels, equalling the Great Laxey waterwheel on the Isle of Man, were common sights in the landscape. Frongoch itself sported many, the largest being 70 ft in diameter.

The mines would mill the ore down to a sand made up of virtually pure metal ore by means of crushing, shaking and flotation. The waste products were dumped on spoil heaps, leaving the mounds of rock seen in the Rheidol valley (iron rich Siderite in the waste rock breaks down to form the brown rust colour seen at CwmRheidol). In the case of the Gelli mine, the rock tips form a delightful 'Stag' shape, visible above the lake near Aberffwd. The spoil is

mostly waste rock, but that near the crushing mills was sand. These tips are full of unclaimed base metal products and still cause pollution to the rivers. The pure ore was then sent to harbour for shipping to smelters as far afield as Swansea and Antwerp.

Getting the ore to the harbour was a contrived process of commandeering dozens of wagons from local farms. The convoys must have been an impressive sight! The development of the railways always looked at the lead mines like Frongoch, Cwm Rheidol and Cwmystwyth, as potential business partners and the projected railway plans looked at ways to negotiate the severely challenging topography to reach them. The Manchester & Milford railway at first looked at steering its main line through Myherin Mountain from Llangurig to Pontrhydfendigaid via Devil's Bridge. They then proposed a branch of this from Devil's Bridge down the Rheidol Valley to Aberystwyth and even a branch from Llanilar towards Frongoch. None ever came to fruition, but the Vale of Rheidol Railway was of course built and promoted heavily by the industries of the area as a means of modern transportation, a more efficient way of taking the ore to the harbour.

The VOR was incorporated in 1896, but

this particular piece of history happened just before the railway opened in 1902. John Kitto was successful in running the mine, steering it through the recession in the 1880s and building up a reputation of fair dealings with his men. He had attracted a noted Doctor to the area to open his practice, doubling the GP's income from his own funds. He had also changed his miners pay cycle from monthly to every four weeks - allowing them thirteen pay packets a year. He was a popular mine captain of the day by all accounts and also served as Mayor of Llanidloes. By 1898 he was rapidly approaching 70 and his two sons had forged their own careers elsewhere. He needed to sell his flourishing business and it attracted interest from Europe. A Belgian smelting syndicate took over looking to own the whole process from extraction to smelting and would have monthly sailings of ore ships from Aberystwyth to Antwerp. They looked to revitalise the mine by employing up to 450 miners, but they struggled to recruit from the local area.

By the time the Belgians had arrived, the mining industry in Cardiganshire and Montgomeryshire had shrunk. What once had supported 200+ mines now supported less and the workforce had dwindled accordingly. Some had swallowed their pride and moved to the coalfields of South Wales, others had moved to the Americas, Australasia and Africa. The mining belt that had once attracted expertise from Cornwall had seen their talent move on to pastures new.

The company, Société Anonyme Minière di Liège, employed an Italian, Bernardino Nogara, as their mine manager. Nogara set about with the mammoth tasks of modernising the mine, and recruiting workforce whilst still producing ore and making a profit. A hydro electric scheme was constructed by building a series of lakes feeding a generator sited in the Cwmnewydion valley. Electric power was used to power the surface mining buildings, although they were relatively unsuccessful in providing electricity below ground. A brand new large ore processing centre was built below Frongoch and a tramway built to run from the shaft to the top of this building. All electric powered, the building had split levels, so that each step of the process was sited below the other to allow easier transfer of ore by gravity. Rocks were sorted, separated, crushed, filtered and the waste rock separated on site, leaving the pure ore sand to be bagged and delivered to the nearby railway at Trawscoed for shipping to the harbour.

“
The
convoys
must have
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impressive
sight!
”

The shortfall of employees was made up in March 1900, by recruiting Italian miners from Bergamo and Tuscany, with a few from Switzerland. The men were shipped over to work on a fixed contract. Nogara organised lodging in purpose built barracks for nearly 100 men and 3 women, employed as 'washerwomen'. The barracks was basic in modern terms, but the dormitories of 20 beds with bedding and sprung mattresses would have been heaven to the Welsh miners - those who worked away from their village during the week would stay at barracks where they would sleep in straw and two to a bed. The bedding would always be warm, as the returning shift would wake the incumbents so they could start their stint underground!

As well as this, Nogara secured the abandoned English language Wesleyan Chapel nearby. Built for the long departed Cornish workforce, he set about converting it into a Catholic church, partly at his own expense. The church was consecrated by the Bishop of Wrexham, although Nogara failed to persuade him to attach a permanent resident priest to it. To encourage links between the two mining communities, Nogara and his wife arranged a tea party in April for the whole workforce at the barracks, which was enjoyed by all. Speeches were made, songs were sung and friendships forged. From this giddy height of this bonhomie, within a year, the mine had embarked on a precipitous collapse of tragic proportions.

The first sign of trouble was in that month of April. The Italian workforce had discovered that the company was charging them the cost of transport and accommodation from their wages. They went on strike and looked to take advice from the Italian consul in Cardiff. They were not happy, but resolved to redress that balance by working as much as they could. This upset the local miners, as they had long held traditions of not working Saturday afternoons and the first Monday after payday (The so-called Mabon's day), and found their Italian counterparts were being allowed to do so.

Mabon's day (named after the MP William Abraham, whose bardic name was 'Mabon') was a hard won holiday granted across the mines of Wales. In Mid Wales, it coincided with another tradition of setting the 'bargen' (bargain). At the company's counting house or general office, the miners would be paid. The counting house at Pontrhydygroes is still in existence. It has a flight of steps either side of the office door, leading up to and down from it. There, miners would queue for their pay and then descend on the other side. At the back of this building, a raised

stone platform was where the mine captains would announce the areas to be worked the following month and groups of miners (known as a *pare*) would bid for the working at so much per ton. A 'bargen' was then struck. The affair attracted traders from Aberystwyth to come and sell their wares, one miner recounts of the sweet sellers enticing the child workers to buy sugary treats. By 1900, this appeared to have been out of practice, as reports talk of set rates for the miners.

Nogara met with delegates from both groups and the Italians agreed to stop working the Saturday afternoon. However, they refused to stop working on Mabon's day, having their own religious holidays to observe. A peace was established, but the problems had only just begun. This did not stop the newspapers of the day from printing a story that the Welsh had been chased into the hills by the Italians after a fierce fight that had seen three men killed. A few poured scorn on the report. The Welsh had not supported the Italian miners on their strike but had been sympathetic.

On the 2nd August, it was reported that the Italians were on strike. They had been paid a wage of four shillings, but it was being reduced to three. The Welsh were only earning three shillings and had been kept in the dark about this arrangement and were understandably upset. The company had managed to hide this by paying the Italians on a Sunday. This segregation would have done nothing to bring the two sides together. If anything, it would have propagated the 'us and them' mentality. Whether the extra shilling was to pay back the debt owed by the Italians is not noted, and if so, it could have possibly been presented in a better way. The Italians were not happy but as they were living in company digs, they were faced with the choice of accept the wage or leave. Twenty did, but the rest carried on.

On 15th August, the German mine captain Heine found two Welsh miners riding on a tram without using any lights, both against regulations. He instantly dismissed one but inexplicably let the other return to work. The Welsh went on strike, to the extent that they blocked access to the mine for the Italians and engineers to man the water pumps. The local constabulary took residence to keep the peace and negotiations began. Heine refused to reinstate the man until Nogara agreed, but Nogara was travelling to Italy at the time. Nogara resolved the deadlock by agreeing to the reinstatement by telegram from London.

Nogara was not to return. Shareholders blamed him for the dramatic fall in returns, in spite of the redevelopment during that time. With the strike over pay, his life had been threatened to the extent that he was forced to take a trap to

Llanilar, 6 miles away to hide. He must have been fearful of his safety and that of his bride of only a year. Feeling he was being made a scapegoat, Nogara left and moved on to other things.

In September the Welsh miners demanded the removal of the Italian workforce. Industrial relations at the time in the UK were fraught, as the working population grew to adopt the practice of unions. At this time, the largest slate quarry in the world, Penrhyn in Bethesda had locked out its workforce in a bitter dispute that would last three years and still has an impact on the community. The Cardiganshire mining belt had never had major industrial issues before - possibly due to the bargin system, but now it had been rattled. New working practices, an imported workforce, a Belgian company, employing an Italian manager, German mine captain and French surveyor, perceived favouritism towards the outsiders. It all added up to stoke the tensions. As an indication of the lack of understanding of the culture, the company posted signs in Italian and English. The majority of the workforce were monoglot Welsh speakers!

Also in September, a tragic event occurred. The nearest taverns lay in Pontrhydygroes a few miles away down a wooded hilly road. On returning one night, a group of Italians were ambushed by a gang who set about them with sticks. The newspaper report claimed one of the party was not expected to last the night. As is the case of the newspapers of the time, the story disappeared. No reports of a follow-up, murder investigation or coroner's report. The following week, it was as if nothing had happened. However, there is an unmarked gravestone in Llantrisant graveyard nearby. The local folklore is it being that of an Italian miner 'who pulled a knife out on a Welsh miner and it was returned with interest...' In December, summonses were made against 10 miners who had assaulted 3 Italians at the time. The case was dropped after the Welsh agreed to pay expenses. This was probably the same event, but nothing is recorded to link the two.

In mid-November, the Welsh struck again. A group of trammer boys (those normally employed to push the trams of rock underground) had been working on a new reservoir for the dressing mill, presumably Llyn Frongoch. On their return underground, the company returned their wages from 3 shillings to 2 shillings ten. Once again, the police took up residence, as the Welsh stopped the Italians from working. The trammers over 16 were reinstated at the higher rate, but once again the Welsh complained about the Italians working Saturday afternoons and Mabon's day.

Things came to a head in mid-March 1901.

An underground rock slip caused a cessation of work in that area. A large amount of miners were working there and Captain Heine suspended all the Welsh miners in the area, pending investigations. However, he allowed the Italians working in that part of the mine to continue to work. This caused a huge furore and the police were once again in attendance. Then a new aspect came into the dispute. Mysterious dynamite blasts started to happen. Firstly, close to the Italian barracks, then outside Captain Heine's house. Finally, the lander (the wooden channel feeding water to the top of a waterwheel) was targeted on the largest of Frongoch's wheels. Dynamite was very liberally controlled at the site – the Welsh miners would leave their unused charges in an unlocked storage box when leaving on a Saturday and many a fishing exhibition was reputed to have involved lobbing a stick into the lake and skimming off the dead fish! The company was fined for the lack of control, but nobody was charged with what amounted to terrorism.

There was no way back, exasperated and losing money, the mine terminated all contracts at the end of March 1901. Frongoch as a mine was closed. The mill was kept working for a few years afterwards in the reworking of older spoil, which had been extracted using less efficient methods. A few years later, the spoil heaps of other mines were also harvested, a long aerial ropeway ran down the valley towards Gwaith goch mine, but the large underground workings had ceased.

Now all that remain are the enigmatic ruins of Victorian buildings and a grey sprawl scarring the land that once produced many riches for its owners but ended in such tragic circumstances. What is known of the Italian workforce is

slim. One family group moved to Nenthead in Cumbria. Others were reported in Cwmystwyth and the coal mines of South Wales and the North East. One cannot help feeling sympathy for these men. They were employed because there were none available locally, but seem to have borne the brunt of the anger towards a company that was ignorant of the cultural differences between the two groups, let alone between Wales and England. Their woeful industrial relations led only to underpin the segregation and form a masterclass in how not to go about it. Nogara appeared to grasp this, but was judged by the balance sheet by others and forced away. After the Great War, he would revitalise the finances of the then poverty stricken Catholic church in Rome, turning it into the rich institution of today. He was the first 'God's banker'. Frongoch's loss was the church's gain.

It is reported that the Frongoch mine did use the Rheidol railway when we had opened, although it would have more likely have sent its fleet of hired carts full of heavy bags of metal ore to the goods yard in Trawscoed. The lead was carried on special wagons, lower than the standard ones and shipped out. Today, the land is quiet and tranquil, a far cry from the events of over a hundred years ago.



Pictured above: huge cast-iron and wooden pump rods underground in one of the 800-foot-deep Frongoch pumping shafts.



Railway Reviews

Google Review

Amazing all round. Staff were amazing, helpful and so happy. Beautiful train ride, worth every penny! My son loved his first train ride. Thank you for such a wonderful time.

Zoe French

Facebook Review

fabulous day out. very well run. freindly staff.

Lynda Wheeler

Tripadvisor Review

I was unsure about doing this trip but wow what a joy it was from the staff that enjoyed their jobs at the ticket office to the train driver. Well done all of you. You made my husbands' day as he was just a young lad when he first went to see Devil's Bridge. You deserve all the funding you can get.

Sue W

Facebook Review

Fantastic place to visit. On 6th August 2019 my wife Cheryl drove Margaret on the day of our silver wedding anniversary. Fantastic and very friendly staff. We also did the fish and chip special again really enjoyed the time spent. Look forward to returning again soon.

Matt Crowe

About our staff

David Beck

Apprentice and Fireman



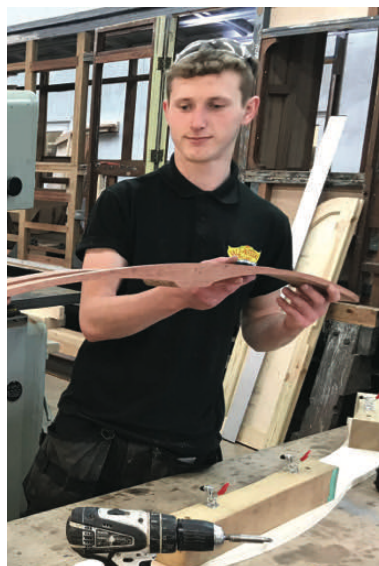
Who'd have guessed this cheeky chappy would have grown to become a valued team member at the Vale of Rheidol Railway. David joined the team in September 2017 and has developed his skill sets to include becoming a qualified Fireman as well as gaining skills in carpentry under the guidance of our master craftsmen.

When away from the railway he enjoys playing football on weekends.

David also enjoys exploring new areas on foot, often with his trusty four legged friend at his side.

When not out walking or playing football, he also enjoys getting dirty on the trails with a bit of mountain biking.

If you see him around then say hello.



Paul Beswick

Booking Clerk

Paul recently joined our team after moving into the area.

He has had many various jobs in his working life from driving vans, working as an MC and DJ's in various clubs, along with Radio Trent outside broadcasts, Ski instructor at Tamworth Snowdome and in Tignes in the Haute Savoie France plus many normal jobs in sales and customer services.

Paul's hobbies include Steam railways (he grew up with a railway line at the bottom of his garden next to Toton loco works and marshalling yard where he played as a child. His uncle also drove Castles and Halls on the GWR later British Rail out of Bristol), gardening, fishing, D.I.Y., fish keeping, dogs, watching Formula 1 and Moto GP and model railways.

His passion though is and has always been for as long as he can remember motor cycles. He has had more modern and classic road bikes than hot dinners but now he concentrates on off road Classic trial bikes and has reduced his collection to just 4 in varying states of repair. He loves making parts for them on his lathe in his workshop and has produced frames, hubs, wheels, exhausts, tanks, seats etc.

Paul now lives in a 19th century cottage in Ystrad Meurig along with his wife Donna and 8 rescue dogs, 3 cats, 26 Koi carp and a duck called Gemma.



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We then turn towards the seaside, starting with the line between York and the east coast via Malton and what is

now the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Finally we travel down to the North Yorkshire coast from Teesside to Whitby and end at Scarborough.

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Although the rebuilds were covered in part one of this series, out of print for some years now, the level of detail did not match the quality of later parts and so the authors decide to cover the whole story in one book, which makes for a more logical and complete account.

The drawings include twelve at large format, printed on to six fold out pages neatly bound into the book, as in some earlier volumes in the series. Style and design follow the earlier volumes in the series, but with some well executed and subtle

changes that have freshened the concept, including putting the title on the spine(!)

This is the first book in this series for nearly ten years and I hope to now carry on with further titles. If this book sells well then there is the prospect of producing a pictorial supplement in the near future as John Jennison has uncovered a wealth of previously unseen material on these singular locomotives.

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Garden Railway Shop



MOD LOW LOADER KIT

This range of wagons has been inspired by the well-known MoD wagons used extensively on military railways and therefore not seen by the general public during their working lives. Unlike much narrow gauge rolling stock, they were not sold off when no longer

required but were burned on site because they might have been impregnated with explosives! Some examples have avoided this fiery fate and can be seen on a number of preserved railways throughout the UK. In real life these wagons ran on 2' 6" gauge track and were of modest dimensions. We have sized our kits to look 'right' with a typical Roundhouse, Cheddar or Accucraft loco making the range more accessible to the mainstream garden railway enthusiast. The Mod Low Loader kit is for you to transport your cars, trucks or bulky loads around your railway

As with all our rolling stock range, these kits are complete with steel wheels (32 or 45 gauge), axles, bogies, buffers and detailing castings. The bodies are simply constructed from pre-cut and planked wood; you require no special tools and only need to supply glue and paint. Note vacuum pipes are illustrated but are only available as an option. Dimensions are L 430 mm W 110 mm H 38 mm

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2019 / 2020 Timetable

1. Pick your day of travel from the calendar.

2. Match the colour to the relevant timetable below.

Please note there are no services on white days.

The ticket office and shop is open and work shop tours are available on white days.

On light blue days we are closed

OCTOBER 2019

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER 2019

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DECEMBER 2019

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JANUARY 2020

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FEBRUARY 2020

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MARCH 2020

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APRIL 2020

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27	28	29	30			

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ORANGE

YELLOW

Aberystwyth	dep:	10:30	2:00	10:30	12:10	2:00	3:45
Capel Bangor	dep:	10:50	2:20	10:50	12:30	2:20	4:05
Aberffrwd	dep:	11:10	2:40	11:10	12:50	2:40	4:25
Devil's Bridge	arr:	11:30	3:00	11:30	1:15	3:00	4:45
Devil's Bridge	dep:	12:30	4:15	12:30	2:15	4:00	5:45
Aberffrwd	dep:	12:50	4:35	12:50	2:35	4:20	6:05
Capel Bangor	dep:	1:10	4:55	1:10	2:55	4:40	6:25
Aberystwyth	arr:	1:30	5:15	1:30	3:15	5:00	6:45

GREEN

GOLD

Aberystwyth	dep:	10:30	12:10	2:00	3:45	6:00	11:00
Capel Bangor	dep:	10:50	12:30	2:20	4:05	6:20	11:20
Aberffrwd	dep:	11:10	12:50	2:40	4:25	6:40	11:40
Devil's Bridge	arr:	11:30	1:15	3:00	4:45	7:00	12:00
Devil's Bridge	dep:	12:30	2:15	4:00	5:45	8:00	2:00
Aberffrwd	dep:	12:50	2:35	4:20	6:05	8:20	2:20
Capel Bangor	dep:	1:10	2:55	4:40	6:25	8:40	2:40
Aberystwyth	arr:	1:30	3:15	5:00	6:45	9:00	3:00

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