

Corwen Central News



As the last days of November come into sight, once again a noisy exit to the month was brought in by the first violent storm of the Autumn/Winter in the shape of Storm *Arwen*. The west coast of Wales received its traditional pounding with sand and shingle dumped on the sea front approaches to a number of towns.

sooner has work started, so it appears, then it is time to stop. However, for all these limitations,



South Beach Lighthouse Aberystwyth *BBC News*



Car damage in St. Asaph *Photo : Meinir Llwyd Roberts*

the work gang at Corwen has been proceeding with three major tasks namely the ballasting of the station loop and siding, the brickwork on the station building and the cladding of the signal box.

Further inland, trees were uprooted causing considerable damage and disruption to power supplies and road and rail communications. A number of people were seriously injured by flying debris and dislodged tree branches.



Tree block road near St Trillo's Church Rhos on Sea
Photo : Jo Nuttall

Earlier in the month, the weather was relatively mild and damp in the mornings but clearing to provide some dry periods and sunshine for the rest of the day. The main disadvantage of this time of year is the limited daylight hours. No

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Ballast in the station loop

The main ballasting of the station loop and Down Siding has now been completed. Lifting and packing of the track is the next move so that the points can be aligned and the joints welded at the east (Carrog) end of the Up platform. It is only at this stage can a tamping machine be brought on site to complete/confirm levels and alignment.



Ballast dropped in Green Lane Head shunt *Photo : GJ*

Approximately 300 tons of ballast has been dropped through the station site, using four



"Two down Two to go" - Loading Ballast at Bonwm Farm *Photo : PR*

assorted ballast wagons and the Shark ballast plough powered by the Llangollen 08 yard shunter.



Ballast plough ready to push the stone to each side *Photo : GJ*

The stone was brought in from the stock pile at Bonwm Farm placed ready for the finishing moves in Corwen station.



Ballast complete in the down platform - looking east *Photo : PR*

It is estimated that there is about 150 tons still remaining at Bonwm Farm , some of which will be used to fill in at Corwen, prior to final tamping.

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Signal Box

The cladding of the signal box has moved on since last month, and is very nearly complete.. Some excellent patient work by the gang has led to some very smart results.



*Signal Box cladding neatly surrounds locking room window
Photo : PR*

The addition of the window frames and careful fitting of the wood over the window arches of the Locking Room makes for a fine finish.

The realigning of the steps down to the signal box basement and the addition of safety hand rails all contribute to restoration of quality.

Station building

The brickwork on the station building has been growing apace, along with the addition of door and window frames.

The stone window sills look very good and work has now started on adding in the arched brick work above the doors. Formers have been used to support each arch which are then removed once the mortar has set.



*Archway takes shapes over the west facing doorway
Photo : PR*

Rare sighting

As the track/sleeper renewal has gone ahead in Llangollen Station about 50 tons of used ballast has been reclaimed and placed into the Mermaid side tipper wagons. These have been taken to Corwen where the material will be used to fill in low points along the side of the track. Over the last



*Class 26 - 5310, driven by Tez Pickthall runs through the down platform
Photo : PR*

two weekends of November these recovered ballast trains were tripped to Corwen behind Class

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26 diesel 5310. This was the first time, since a breaker's train was worked to Green Lane behind a member of the same class in 1964, that a mainline diesel had arrived in Corwen. The breaker's train was used to take up the track after the original line closed consequent upon the Beeching Report.

Funding and Lucky Numbers

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
<i>Lucky Numbers</i>									
<i>This month's winning number is 22</i>									

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **Nan Williams** with **number 22** who , along with her husband has supported the Corwen Raffle since its inception. Many congratulations go to Nan on her win. The customary £50 cheque will make its way to you shortly.

As this year draws to a close, the Project's treasurer, Paul Bailey writes : “ Thank you to everyone that has supported our Corwen Raffle over the last 5 years, which has resulted in a great boost to our Corwen funds leading to a successful outcome for our various projects. The last few Llangollen Railway 2022 Calendars (20 @ £6 each) and 10 packs of Xmas cards (Berwyn snow scene by Neil Evans @ £5 for pack of 10) remain to be sold”.

For donations to the Corwen Project especially the Canopy Appeal - Please make cheques payable to CCRD (Corwen Central Railway Development) and forward to the Llangollen Railway Trust, The Station, Abbey Road, Llangollen, LL20 8NS

If you want more details /payment options. on any of the appeals or merchandise then please contact Paul Bailey on 01490 450271 or email “paulbaileywincham@yahoo.co.uk”

End Piece

The arrival of Christmas and the New Year brings in its wake a whole host of traditions both religious and secular. Many local primary schools will be putting on for example a Nativity Play whilst more senior schools and colleges might be entertaining their local communities with some element of musical theatre.



The Christmas Pantomime colour lithograph book cover, 1890, showing harlequinade characters Source : UniKent

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For the country as a whole many families will be booking some seats in a village hall or professional theatre to see and join in with a Pantomime – *Peter Pan, Cinderella, Puss in Boots* etc. Modern pantomime includes songs, gags, slapstick comedy and dancing. It employs gender-crossing actors and combines topical humour with a story more or less based on a well-known fairy tale, fable or folk tale.

The word pantomime was adopted from the Latin word *pantomimus* which in turn derives from the Greek word *pantomimos*, consisting of *παντο-* (*panto-*) meaning "all", and *μῖμος* (*mimos*), meaning a dancer who acted all the roles or all the story. The Roman pantomime drew upon the Greek tragedy and other Greek genres from its inception, The English word came to be applied to the performance itself. According to a lost oration by Aelius Aristides, the pantomime was known for its erotic content and the effeminity of its dancing.



2nd-century Macedonian theatrical sculpture, thought to represent a pantomime's mask Photo: Fkitselis

Roman pantomime was a production, usually based upon myth or legend, for a solo male dancer—clad in a long silk tunic and a short mantle (*pallium*) that was often used as a "prop"—accompanied by a sung libretto (called the *fabula saltica* or "dance-story") rendered by a singer or chorus (though Lucian states that originally the pantomime himself was the singer). Music was supplied by flute and the pulse of an iron-shod shoe called a *scabellum*. The dancer danced all the roles, relying on masks, stock poses and gestures and a hand-language (*cheironomy*) so complex and expressive that the pantomime's hands were commonly compared to an eloquent mouth.

Roman pantomime was immensely popular from the end of the first century BC until the end of the sixth century AD, a form of entertainment that spread throughout the empire where, because of its wordless nature, it did more than any other art to foster knowledge of the myths and Roman legends that formed its subject-matter – tales such as those of the love of Venus and Mars and of Dido and Aeneas.



St. George slays the dragon, in a 2015 Boxing Day production, by the St Albans Mummers.

Photo : Michael Maggs

In the Middle Ages, the Mummers Play was a traditional English folk play, based loosely on the

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Saint George and the Dragon legend, usually performed during Christmas gatherings, which contained the origin of many of the typical elements of the pantomime, such as stage fights, coarse humour and fantastic creatures, gender role reversal, and good defeating evil. Precursors of pantomime also included the masque, which grew in pomp and spectacle from the 15th to the 17th centuries.

The development of English pantomime was also strongly influenced by the continental *commedia dell'arte*, a form of popular theatre that arose in Italy in the Early Modern Period. This was a "comedy of professional artists" travelling from province to province in Italy and then France, who improvised and told comic stories that held lessons



John Rich as Harlequin, c. 1720

Source : Unknown

for the crowd, changing the main character depending on where they were performing. Each "scenario" used some of the same stock characters. These included the innamorati (young lovers); the vecchi (old men) such as Pantalone; and zanni (servants) such as Arlecchino, Colombina,

Scaramouche and Pierrot. Italian masque performances in the 17th century sometimes included the Harlequin character.

In the 17th century, adaptations of the commedia characters became familiar in English entertainments. From these, the standard English harlequinade developed, depicting the eloping lovers Harlequin and Columbine, pursued by the girl's father Pantaloon and his comic servants Clown and Pierrot. In English versions, by the 18th century, Harlequin became the central figure and romantic lead. The basic plot of the harlequinade remained essentially the same for more than 150 years, except that a bumbling policeman was added to the chase.

In the first two decades of the 18th century, two rival London theatres, Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (the patent theatres) presented productions that began seriously with classical stories that contained elements of opera and ballet and ended with a comic "night scene". In 1717 at Lincoln's Inn, actor and manager John Rich introduced Harlequin into the theatres' pantomimes under the name of "Lun" (for "lunatic"). He gained great popularity for his pantomimes, especially beginning with his 1724 production of *The Necromancer; or, History of Dr. Faustus*.

By the early 1800s, the pantomime's classical stories were often supplanted by stories adapted from European fairy tales, fables, folk tales, classic English literature or nursery rhymes. Also, the harlequinade grew in importance until it often was the longest and most important part of the entertainment. In the second case, harlequin was used as an adjective, followed by words that described the pantomime "opening", for example:

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Harlequin Cock Robin and Jenny Wren; or, Fortunatus and the Water of Life, the Three Bears, the Three Gifts, the Three Wishes, and the Little Man who Woo'd the Little Maid. Harlequin was the first word (or the first word after the "or") because Harlequin was initially the most important character.

At this time children from more well off families started to go to the theatre around the Christmas and New Year holiday (and often at Easter or other times) primarily to witness the craziness of the harlequinade chase scene. It was the most exciting part of the "panto", because it was fast-paced and included spectacular scenic magic as well as slapstick comedy, dancing and acrobatics.



Dan Leno (L) and Herbert Campbell in *Babes in the Wood*, 1897, at the Drury Lane Theatre in London's West End

The plot of the harlequinade was relatively simple; the star-crossed lovers, Harlequin and Columbine, run away from Columbine's foolish father, Pantaloon, who is being slowed down in his pursuit of them by his servant, Clown, and by a bumbling policeman. After the time of Grimaldi,

Clown became the principal schemer trying to thwart the lovers, and Pantaloon was merely his assistant.

Scottish comedian Craig Ferguson, in his 2020 memoir, (Ferguson, Craig (2020). *Riding the Elephant: A Memoir of Altercations, Humiliations, Hallucinations, and Observations*, New York, Penguin,) summarizes contemporary pantomime as classic folklore and fairy tales loosely retold in a slapstick theatrical comedy-musical ("Think Mamma Mia! featuring the Three Stooges but with everyone's back catalogue, not just ABBA's"), and furthermore including audience participation reminiscent of showings of the film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

And Finally.....

The Corwen Project Team would like to wish friends, supporters and LRT members and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year – Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda



Just about there! - Nadolig Llawen - Photo : GJ