

# Corwen Central News



From some of the highest temperatures on record in March to some of the wettest days recorded in May (297 mm of rain in Bala 3 times the expected level), the Dee Valley has seen its usual churn on the weather front. Some

visitors from inside Wales but also those from across the border in England.

Unfortunately the opening of businesses has run alongside the receivership of the Llangollen Railway Plc and selling of a large number of railway assets, mainly coaching stock and machinery to settle the accumulated debts. Thankfully the Railway Trust, with the support of its members and many anonymous friends was able to retain control of the track and infrastructure whilst gaining ownership of the heavy lifting cranes, some coaching stock and intellectual property rights involving the domain name and associated data.



*Germander Speedwell (veronica chamaedrys) finds shelter in hedgerow*  
Photo : PR

of these extremes have coincided with the Welsh Government's lifting of some of the CoVid regulations to allow people to be served meals and drinks inside pubs and restaurants. Businesses in and around the Dee Valley have started to reopen and to welcome not only



*Greater periwinkle (vinca major) catches the afternoon sunshine*  
Photo : PR

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**Although the rain was falling heavily and much gloom had descended across the railway enough of the assets were retained to offer a fully functioning railway later on in the year.**

**Amongst all this, the Corwen Project Team have managed to keep going, albeit at times in reduced circumstances, but have nevertheless completed most of the restoration of the signal box, started on the brick work of the platform waiting room as well as reorganising the gang and workshop accommodation to the Ruthin Spur.**

### **Building on**

In last month's CCNL, it was reported that recovered blue bricks from the bridge piers carrying the Corwen - Denbigh railway over the River Dee were to be used for the bottom courses of the platform waiting room. However, after closer examination of the quality of the bricks, many of which were made on site, it was decided they were just unsuitable for their modern task, so modern blue and red bricks will be used.

The photos show the building work underway with corners set, a first course laid and the positions of the door frames now included.



*Peter Jump building up around a corner post Photo : PR*

Later on a waterproof membrane will be spread over the floor and then lapped over and secured in a course of blue bricks. This will keep out the damp and will then be covered with a cement floor.



*Standard red bricks awaiting their turn Photo : PR*



*Door frame in place on the south side of the building Photo : PR*

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### Moving house



*The JCB with Paul Whitton makes a start on the leveling and tidy-up on the Spur* *Photo: PR*

With major works now complete, attention has turned to moving the workshop and mess room from the east end adjacent to the former crossing into the sewage works to relocating them on the Ruthin Spur. To this end the Spur site has been levelled and cleared of unwanted material with unused equipment being moved and stacked further north along the embankment.

The mess room is going to be replaced by a “new” demountable building, whilst the fate of “*Chicken Dock*” remains to be decided. The Bomac path from the car park and the crossing will remain in place to give a safe walkway for signalmen and other railway staff.

### Mapping the future

At the end of the month Corwen was visited by Ian Hayward a surveyor from the Ordnance Survey (OS) in order to put Corwen New Build Station officially on the map. At the moment the latest OS map has Corwen East as the LR's western terminus, so it was now time to update the work.

Ian began the work from the head shunt stop block at the western extremity of the railway to roughly the position of Corwen East stop block (now removed of course). This meant that the new data could be “stitched” on to previous data collected by OS. Ian stated that OS updates its digital maps every six weeks, so the new station complex at Corwen will appear in data sets after that.



*Ian Hayward, holding GPS receiver and key pad makes a start on the mapping of Corwen's new station* *Photo : PN*

Obviously, it will take longer for printed paper versions to contain these amendments. However, it will undoubtedly provide the railway with some valuable “publicity”, in terms of permanently identifying the full extent of our operation for any would be tourists to the area. Those familiar words on many OS maps “*Course of dismantled railway*” will no longer apply to the 10 miles that is the Llangollen to Corwen Railway!

### Slow Visitors

Preparations are continuing for the re-opening of the Corwen Station Ticket Office. Weeding and planting has taken place and the paddock outside the office is looking very smart. There are plans to offer some picnic accommodation here. An

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emergency gate is to be added to the fence by the exit to the underpass.



*Just in case there is a dry spell - water butts ready for action at the Ticket Office* Photo : PN

Whilst working on some site clearance the station volunteers, uncovered some slow worms camping out by the ticket office door. These are fascinating



*Jean Neve ready to return the slow worm (Anguis fragilis) to a safer site* Photo: PN

legless lizards, very rarely seen but often mistaken

for snakes. They are on the protected species list in Wales and were passed to Jean Neve to exercise great care in putting them in a safer location on the railway embankment where they were soon lost to sight.

### 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 65</i>									

This month's winner of Lucky Numbers is **George Jones**, a long time member of the Railway Trust, publicity officer and local transport guru with **Number 65**. Congratulations go to George on his win, which he has kindly donated to **5532**, Small Prairie Group for the next stage of the boiler rebuild – replacement of the stays.

With regards to the *Small Prairie 5532*, shares are still available in the *Llangollen Railway Great Western Locomotive Group* can be purchased in blocks of £25. Membership to “5532 Club” is still open to subscribing £10 per month towards the Boiler Fund. Further details can be obtained by contacting Paul Bailey at the address below.”

All donations to Trust managed schemes (including CCRD – The Station Project) and appeals, **must be sent directly to the Trust's Office at The Station, Abbey Road, Llangollen**

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**LL20 8NS.** You can mark your envelope for the attention of Paul Bailey who is still willing to take phone calls and e-mails regarding appeals. Independent groups, that Paul supports can still receive cheques and enquiries at Paul's usual address.

***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***

***For donations to LRGWLG Boiler Appeal - Please make cheques payable to LRGWLG***

***For details and payment method for the "5532 Club" please contact Paul below***

***Mr Paul Bailey, Dolwen, Bryneglwys, Corwen, Denbighshire LL21 9LY***

***You can Telephone Paul on 01490 450271 if you wish to pay other than by Cheque.***

### **End Piece**

The visit from the OS surveyor to Corwen (See above) offered a suitable opportunity to take a look at this much revered government agency. The agency's name indicates its original military purpose which was to map Scotland in the wake of the Jacobite rising of 1745. There was also a more general and nationwide need in light of the potential threat of invasion during the Napoleonic Wars.

Since 1 April 2015 Ordnance Survey has operated as Ordnance Survey Ltd, a government-owned company, 100% in public ownership. The

Ordnance Survey Board remains accountable to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and



*The Battle of Culloden, oil on canvas, 1746 by David Morier (1705?-1770) Royal Collection Trust*

Industrial Strategy. It was also a member of the Public Data Group.

Paper maps for walkers represent only 5% of OS' annual revenue. They produce digital map data, online route planning and sharing services and mobile apps, plus many other location-based products for business, government and consumers.

Ordnance Survey mapping is usually classified as either "large-scale" (in other words, more detailed) or "small-scale". The Survey's large-scale mapping comprises 1:2,500 maps for urban areas and 1:10,000 more generally. (The latter superseded the 1:10,560 "six inches to the mile" scale in the 1950s.)

These large scale maps are typically used in professional land-use contexts and were available as sheets until the 1980s, when they were digitised. Small-scale mapping for leisure use includes the 1:25,000 "Explorer" series, the 1:50,000 "Landranger" series and the 1:250,000 road maps. These are still available in traditional sheet form.

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The origins of the Ordnance Survey lie in the aftermath of the Jacobite rising of 1745 which was finally defeated by forces loyal to the government at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Prince William, Duke of Cumberland realised that the British Army did not have a good map of the Scottish Highlands to locate Jacobite dissenters such as Simon Fraser, 11th Lord Lovat so that they could be put on trial. In 1747, Lieutenant-Colonel David Watson proposed the compilation of a map of the Highlands to help to subjugate the clans. In response, King George II charged Watson with making a military survey of the Highlands under the command of the Duke of Cumberland. Among Watson's assistants were William Roy, Paul Sandby and John Manson. The survey was produced at a scale of 1 inch to 1000 yards (1:36,000) and included "the Duke of



*The triangulation mesh over Britain, 1860. Peter Mercator*

Cumberland's Map" (primarily by Watson and Roy), now held in the British Library.

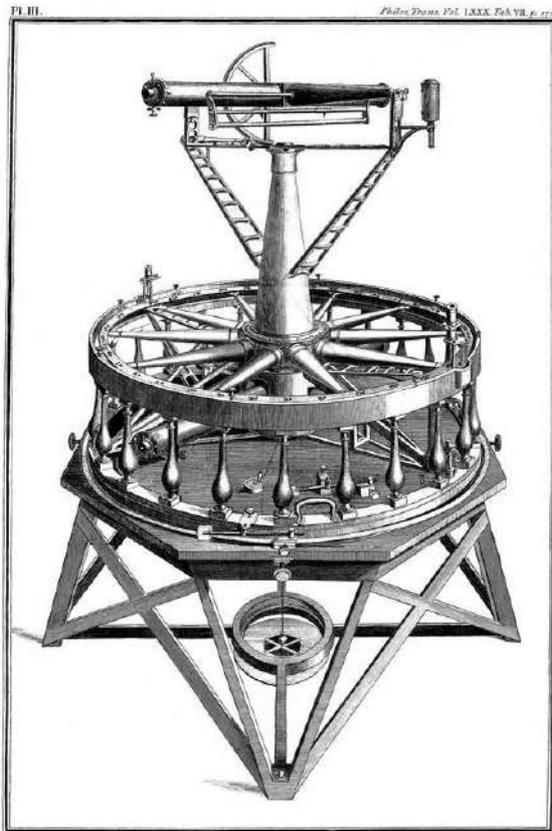
Roy later had a career in the Royal Engineers (RE), rising to the rank of General, and he was largely responsible for the British share of the work in determining the relative positions of the French and British royal observatories. This work was the starting point of the Principal

Triangulation of Great Britain (1783–1853), and led to the creation of the Ordnance Survey itself. Roy's technical skills and leadership set the high standard for which Ordnance Survey became known. Work was begun in earnest in 1790 under Roy's supervision, when the Board of Ordnance (a predecessor of part of the modern Ministry of Defence) began a national military survey starting with the south coast of England. Roy's birthplace near Carlisle in South Lanarkshire is today marked by a memorial in the form of a large OS trig point.

By 1791 the Board received the newer Ramsden theodolite (an improved successor to the one that Roy had used in 1784), and work began on mapping southern Great Britain using a five-mile baseline on Hounslow Heath that Roy himself had previously measured; it crosses the present Heathrow Airport. In 1991 Royal Mail marked the bicentenary by issuing a set of postage stamps featuring maps of the Kentish village of Hamstreet.

Surveying was hard work. For instance, Major Thomas Colby, the longest-serving Director General of Ordnance Survey, walked 586 miles (943km) in 22 days on a reconnaissance in 1819. In 1824, Colby and most of his staff moved to Ireland to work on a six-inches-to-the-mile (1:10,560) valuation survey. The survey of Ireland, county by county, was completed in 1846. The suspicions and tensions it caused in rural Ireland are the subject of Brian Friel's play *Translations*.

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General View of the Instrument.

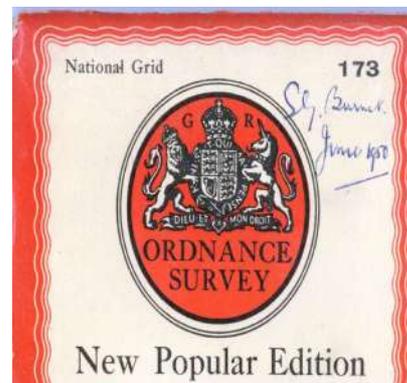
*Ramsden's three foot theodolite of 1787 destroyed by wartime bombing in 1941*

Colby was not only involved in the design of specialist measuring equipment. He also established a systematic collection of place names, and reorganised the map-making process to produce clear, accurate plans. Place names were recorded in "Name Books", a system first used in Ireland.

Whilst these procedures generally produced excellent results, mistakes were made: for instance, the Pilgrims Way in the North Downs labelled the wrong route, but the name stuck. Similarly, the spelling of Scafell and Scafell Pike copied an error on an earlier map, and was retained as this was the name of a corner of one of

the Principal Triangles, despite "Scawfell" being the almost universal form at the time. In Ireland the charmingly labelled *Teach Cnoc/Tigh-Cnuic* (tchoc knock) (house on the hill) became *Ticknock!!*

Colby believed in leading from the front, travelling with his men, helping to build camps and, as each survey session drew to a close, arranging mountain-top parties with enormous plum puddings.



In 1995, Ordnance Survey digitised the last of about 230,000 maps, making the United Kingdom the first country in the world to complete a programme of large-scale electronic mapping. By the late 1990s technological developments had eliminated the need for vast areas for storing maps and for making printing plates by hand. Although there was a small computer section at Ordnance Survey in the 1960s, the digitising programme had replaced the need for printing large-scale maps, while computer-to-plate technology (in the form of a single machine) had also rendered the photographic platemaking areas obsolete. Part of the latter was converted into a new conference centre in 2000, which was used for internal events and also made available for external organisations to hire.