

Corwen Central News



Last month proved to be rather dry, with less than half the expected rainfall for April. Even so, the Dee Valley has fully emerged from its winter slumber with both flora and fauna in good heart.

At Corwen, the work gang has been putting most of its effort into completing the brickwork



Cowslips (*Primula Veris*) adds colour to the trackside

Photo : PR

The hawthorn hedge rows are pushing out their white blossoms and primroses are inhabiting the recently cleared spaces on the railway's embankments.

Around Llangollen ornamental cherry trees are adding a splash of pink to the local scene, all too fleeting in some cases as the effect is carried off on the breeze.



First Wedding Belle of the season comes through Good Junction Loop on its way into Llangollen

Photo : PR

on the station building, whilst awaiting the “Levelling-up” grant (approximately £160,000 from the Westminster Government) which will go towards providing the station canopy.

Contractors are in place to provide the steelwork but cannot go ahead with the order until the finance is assured. Towards the end of the month the Plasser ballast tamper arrived on site to raise and align the track throughout the station loop and its approaches.

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Lifting and packing

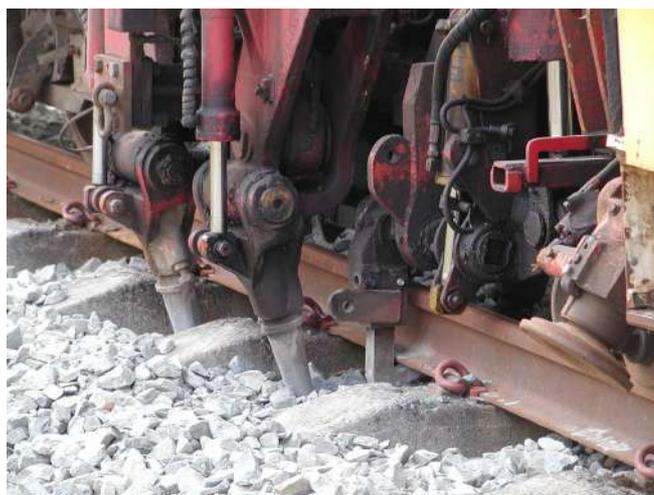
As April drew to a close Bob Foster's (B & R Track Services) 07 Series Plasser Tamper machine came to the railway to complete the levelling

of the track at the west of Llangollen station, through Deeside and finally the approach to Corwen Station and the platform loop.



Tamper at work in Llangollen Station

Photo : PR



Tines down into the ballast pushing it into place. Hooks on the right lift the track
Photo: PR

The work in Corwen platform loop has required the addition of more ballast as the original bed proved to be 20mm too low to meet the correct rail heights in the platform. Final tamping will take place in the first week of May.

The Plasser & Theurer 07 series tamper/liner was conceived in the 1970s.



Plasser at work on the straight approaching Corwen Station

Photo PR



Tamper working through Corwen Down Platform Photo : PR

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These machines which were mainly introduced during the BR chairmanship of Sir Peter Parker (1976-82) were game-changing in that they packaged the track tamping and lining capabilities within a twin-cab design that had the rail-roaming convenience of a single car DMU powered as it was by the Cummins NT855 diesel engine which found further use in the second generation of railcars.

Station building

Work has continued on the station building,



Brickwork almost to steel frame

Photo : PR



Roof beams in place

Photo : PR

completely encase the steel frame. Joist hangers have been fitted to the top part of the inside wall and already carry some wooden beams for both the low sloping roof (to go under the canopy) and ceiling boards.

At last running water!

Towards the end of April Welsh Water were able to approve the installed water supply and drainage for the on platform station building. At last “type approval”, for which management team, member Peter Neve (see CCNL Passim) has been “fighting” for the last three and half years.



“Out of sight out of mind” - the water pipe buried at last

Photo : PR

Unfortunately when the time came for the WW inspector to call to view the work, Peter was on holiday in the north of England. Although he missed “the moment” , the successful outcome has been a testament to all the hard work and dogged determination that Peter has put in to having this signed-off.

Who knew that on the surface, a simple well documented administrative procedure would turn

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into a Byzantine bureaucratic nightmare!! Great work, Peter! What might be the next challenge?

Welcome return



*Ron and Marie Stansbie rest a while on Corwen platform
Photo : PR*

Project team members were delighted to welcome back project carpenter Ron Stansbie and his wife Marie to view the tamper at work on the Corwen Loop. Ron is recovering from a period of serious illness, so it was especially good to see him on the platform, looking a little frail, but in good voice and determined to film the progress of the tamper. The whole team would want to wish Ron and Marie good fortune in the coming months and they look forward to their next visit.

Funding

The Project's Treasurer, Paul Bailey, writes : “ Our Corwen “*Fitting Out Appeal*” for the On Platform Building continues to grow with almost £1500 now raised against a target of £12,000. As usual anyone wishing to donate can contact me for payment options. Gift Aid is available on these giving us an extra 25% from the Taxman.

An encouraging start has ben made to the *Llangollen Standard Tank Tube Appeal (80072)*. We have had sponsors for 15 £50 tubes. That’s the good news, but the less good news is that we still require another 142!!

A few people have already joined our new *Standard 4 Club* donating £10pm to 80072’s boiler fund. If you can afford either £50 to sponsor a tube or £10pm then please get in touch with me. As yet we’ve had no takers to sponsor our 21 Flue Tubes @£400 each or our 21 Superheater Tubes @ £1200 each.



*Small Prairie 5532's boiler wrapped and ready for dispatch to Tysley Loco Works later in the year
Photo : PR*

Finally this month, many of our readers using social media will see that I run a weekly football scratch card raffle for the *Llangollen Railway Great Western Locomotive Group's Small Prairie 5532*. The card has 40 football teams on it costing £2.50 each. The weekly winner gets £50 and 5532 gets £50 into its boiler fund. Payment is usually done online but other payment options are

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available. If you want to support 5532's restoration please consider joining this raffle. The raffle also benefits various other Groups and Projects on the Railway as several winners ask that their winnings be donated to a particular project"

For donations to the Corwen Project especially the Canopy Appeal and "Fit me Out" - Please make cheques payable to CCRD (Corwen Central Railway Development) and forward to times

End Piece

The arrival of May is usually celebrated in some way, traditional or otherwise. A village fête including dancing around the Maypole is still popular with many, along with welcoming the May blossom such as flowering cherry (Japan) and hawthorn (the May tree). However, for many May 29th is the time to celebrate - "Oak Apple Day" or "Royal Oak Day" or "Restoration Day". This was an English public holiday, observed annually on



An oak apple is also known as an oak gall. It is caused by the larvae of a cynipid wasp. They are so called because the gall looks a little like an apple. Photo : EapClochydd

May 29th, to commemorate the restoration of the English monarchy in May 1660. In some parts of the country the day is still celebrated. It has also

been known as "Shick Shack Day", or "Oak and Nettle Day".

In 1660, Parliament passed into law "*An Act for a Perpetual Anniversary Thanksgiving on the Nine and Twentieth Day of May*", declaring 29 May a public holiday "*for keeping of a perpetual Anniversary, for a Day of Thanksgiving to God, for the great Blessing and Mercy he hath been graciously pleased to vouchsafe to the People of these Kingdoms, after their manifold and grievous Sufferings, in the Restoration of his Majesty...*"

The public holiday was abolished under *the Anniversary Days Observance Act 1859*, but the date retains some significance in local and institutional customs. It is, for example, still observed as Founder's Day by the Royal Hospital Chelsea, which was founded by Charles II in 1681.



Traditional celebrations to commemorate the event often entailed the wearing of oak apples (a type of plant gall, possibly known in some parts of the country as a "shick-shack" or sprigs of oak leaves, in reference to the occasion after the Battle of Worcester in September 1651, when Charles II escaped the Roundhead army by hiding in an oak tree near Boscobel House.

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Anyone who failed to wear a sprig of oak risked being pelted with bird's eggs or thrashed with nettles. In Sussex, those not wearing oak were liable to be pinched, giving rise to the unofficial name of "*Pinch-bum Day*"; similarly it was known as "*Bumping Day*" in Essex.



Descendant of the Royal Oak at Boscobel House Photo : Oosoom

In Upton Grey, Hampshire, after the church bells had been rung at 6 am the bell-ringers used to place a large branch of oak over the church porch, and another over the lychgate. Smaller branches were positioned in the gateway of every house to ensure good luck for the rest of the year.

Events still take place at Upton-upon-Severn in Worcestershire, Marsh Gibbon in Buckinghamshire, Great Wishford in Wiltshire (when villagers gather wood in Grovely Wood), Aston-on-Clun in Shropshire and Membury in Devon. The day is generally marked by re-enactment activities at Moseley Old Hall, West Midlands, one of the houses where Charles II hid in 1651.

At Fownhope in Herefordshire the Heart of Oak Society organise an annual event, where members of the society gather at the local pub and march through the village holding flower and oak leaf decorated sticks, whilst following the society banner and a brass band. The march goes first to the church for a service, and then to houses who host refreshments. The Heart of Oak Society was previously a friendly society, but had to reform in 1989 to keep the tradition going. Although Oak Apple Day celebrations have decreased in popularity and knowledge, Fownhope has managed to keep the event going, increasing in popularity and turn-out every year.



A statue of King Charles II by John Hunt was erected on the portico parapet of the rebuilt church in 1712. The original church burnt down during the Great Fire of Northampton

At All Saints' Church, Northampton, a statue of Charles II is garlanded with oak leaves at noon every Oak Apple Day, followed by a celebration of the Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer.