

# NORTH WEST WALES

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## Railway to Red Wharf Bay

Last updated: 10 April 2006

**David Mills from Llandegfan** has a keen interest in industrial history and here he tells us about a long-forgotten Anglesey railway.



"As early as the 16th century coal mining was carried out in the Malltraeth marshes in central Anglesey. Coal would have been transported away at considerable expense by mules, packhorses and wagons. By the early 19th century a canal was proposed to reduce costs, but was later rejected in favour of a cheaper and simpler tramway, either to Malltraeth on the west coast or Traeth Coch (Red Wharf Bay) on the east coast.

Malltraeth was later rejected due to strong on-shore westerly wind that would have made it difficult to sail the small ships into the prevailing winds. The more sheltered shores of Traeth Coch were favoured as it was also cheaper to transport from there to Ireland than from other North Wales ports. An Act of Parliament was finally granted in 1812 to build it, but it never materialised, despite the many later rumours of its one-time existence.

It wasn't until 1899 that Parliamentary powers were obtained by the LNWR to build a six-mile single line branch line from Holland Arms to Red Wharf Bay, branching off the old Anglesey Central Railway that ran between Gaerwen and Amlwch. This development occurred long after coal mining had ceased in the area due to constant flooding. It did, however, run very close to the proposed early tramway route.

The line was built by J Strachan of Cardiff and was opened on July 1 1908 as far as Pentraeth and carried passenger and goods traffic. The line was extended to Red Wharf Bay and Benllech station and fully opened May 24 1909. An early type of twin coach push-pull train ran on the branch for some years, later to be incorporated into the LMS grouping in 1923.

The stations were named Holland Arms, Ceint, Rhyd y Saint, Pentraeth, Llanbedrgoch and Red Wharf Bay and Benllech - the latter station being located typically quite some distance from both communities it was intended to serve.

Trains comprised of passenger and freight trains carrying coal, agricultural produce, building materials, farm feed, livestock etc. It could become very busy during summer weekends in the early years, with sometimes about 300 passengers, and the 4pm was sometimes met with as many



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#### Tai Hanesyddol

O blastai crand i ffermydd gwledig, camwch dros drothwy rhai o dai mwyaf hanesyddol yr ardal

as 50 horse traps and carts.

The winter of 1922/3 saw a great herring shoal between Moelfre and Benllech. Five hundred tons were landed and moved in two weeks in 12 special trains destined for London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham etc.

[More ... plus slideshow](#)

#### your comments

**Ron Jones, Penrhyn Bay**

My father Richard Jones was the stationmaster at Red Wharf Bay from 1909 up to 1917, when he was promoted to stationmaster at Aber Gwynnegrin. I believe he could be the person on the left in the photo heading this article.

Tue Aug 18 14:34:04 2009

**David Mills**

To celebrate the centenary of the opening of the railway on 24th May 1909, I gave a talk in Llangefni Library on the 9th May 2009. I much appreciate the opportunity to have presented it and my thanks go to Felicity Roberts and the library staff. My thanks also go to the North Wales Model Engineering Society for displaying some of their model locomotives on the day. I believe there is a cine film of the line taken in the 1940s just before its closure. I would be very pleased to see it and to receive any further information and photos.

Mon May 11 14:09:10 2009

**Prof Mike Brogden - Llandegfan**

David, been doing a lot generalised work in the archives - specifically relating to the industrial heritage of the Cadnant valley. Did you know that there was once a share funding to drive a railway from Menai to Penmon (through "the coalseams of Glen Garth")

Wed Nov 14 11:04:49 2007

**Stephen McBride, LLannerch-y-medd**

I was very lucky to attend a talk and slideshow given by Mr David Mills on this fabulous railway. David is obviously a very dedicated and clever man and he has collected more photographs and plans etc. It is very sad that railways like this have fallen into dis-use, however their remains give us a chance to explore (legally and with care and consideration for landowners) our considerable heritage and history. It is also fascinating to listen to people talk about their experiences with the railways, if one is lucky enough to meet someone who used them. We must preserve these memories as well as the infrastructure, if we can.

Fri Nov 3 09:57:29 2006

**Christine Mottram New Zealand**

My mother Gwendolen Evans, whose grandmother lived at Penrallt, Pentraeth, told me about her grandfather William Jones finding some old Roman coins when they were digging for the rail line which ran past their farm to Red Wharf Bay.

So at some time there must have been a Roman settlement near there. I do not know what happened to the coins but she remembered him showing them to her as a child; she was born in 1904. My great grandparents went to the opening of the station at Pentraeth. I visited the farm at Pentraeth in 1998.

Thu Apr 13 09:08:55 2006

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Engine 'J. Strachan' No 10 K class 1617 built by Manning Wardle 1903.

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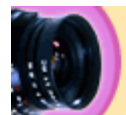
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your comments

**Peter Bell**

I remember seeing Holland Arms station in about 1969. It was still intact but covered in brambles, but being nosey I hacked my way in one of the doors. It was a gents toilet with big slate-partitioned urinals. In the toilet was a Gwr toilet roll holder which I promptly removed (still have it). Somewhat scratched, I fought my way out again through the bracken. I wonder if it's still there?

Wed Aug 12 09:47:02 2009

**Peter from Mansfield, Notts.**

The Timperley Model Railway Group built a 4mm:1ft scale (EM gauge) model of the Central Anglesey Railway including the branch to Red Wharf Bay some 30 odd years ago and still exists. I have plans to build a model of Red Wharf Bay Station and will do once I find the time.

Mon Sep 22 10:19:07 2008

**MELINDA HANMER**

i am very interested in railways and as a child i remember the line through pentraeth being pulled up. i also spent a lot of time playing on the railway sites.little did i know then, that i would actually live in a house on the site of the pentraeth station. our houses are known locally as 'tai station'.I am looking for is pictures of bodorgan station in the 1900's and any right of ways or public paths on to surrounding land past the station. mamy thanks.

Tue Mar 25 10:01:25 2008

**P Bennett (benny/ben)**

I was one of the Tynyngongl kids who played on Red Wharf Railway Station in the late 50s to early 60s. I remember the track, waiting rooms, ladies and gents toilets - everything was there then. Then one day it was all demolished and lost forever. That's progress.

Wed Nov 7 12:27:54 2007

**Bill FROM RHOSGOCH**

Myself and my brother have investigated both the disused railway lines on Anglesey, and we visited the old HOLLAND ARMS TO RED WHARF BAY LINE,and this is what we found, at Holland arms we found the wonderful old station building still with its railway memorabilia i.e old enamel signs, gas lanterns on the wall, and inside it was like going back in time as the old toilet cubicles were there plus a lovely big fireplace, the local coal merchant now owns it. In CEINT contrary to W REAR`s book on ANGLESEYS branchlines stating that ALL traces of the station being totally obliterated. we found part of the old platform, and it`s earthworks. At RHYD-Y-SAINT we also found platform earthworks(albeit covered in trees and brambles)and the roadbridge over the station site is still in place(also contrary to the previously stated books comments about the site being cleared for road improvements).

PENTRAETH station site has now been built on, and has 16 houses on it, however there is still ONE BRIDGE ABUTMENT still standing by the roadside for the bridge that crossed over the pentraeth to talwrn road. Llanbedrgoch station site is as good as non-existent as a caravan park now sits on it, however (albeit filled in) the bridge that crosses the site is still intact.

RED WHARF BAY AND BENLLECH station site has been cleared of just about all traces of the station, however on closer inspection we found a dip in the undergrowth where the buffer stops would have been, and the station masters house is still lived in of course. The trackbed is traceable in parts between Pentraeth and Red wharf bay with a partly filled in 3 arched bridge in a field next to a small campsite in Pentraeth. well worth a look.

Mon Oct 15 16:36:07 2007

#### **Bob pentraeth**

I live on the old pentraeth station site, 16 houses built 40 years ago, I do hope they don't re-open the line. It would go straight through my garden.

Wed Jul 4 10:10:25 2007

#### **gerallt hughes ceint**

i am 17 and a farmers son and i live near ceint. we hold about 1.5 miles of this old railway which is now used as a useful track. although the timber building may have gone the bridges still stand and it is a credit to the engineers who built them that they are still up and can as well support the weight of the big agricultural tractors of today, many architects today would struggle to come up with a structure that would stand for 200 hundred years and still be used.

Tue Apr 3 09:36:12 2007

#### **ann williams llanfaethlu.my gg grandfather**

my gg grandfather william taylor was the driver of the train that crashed into a river between rhosgoch and llanerchymedd in 1877. i have the written account of the disaster plus a photo of the train.

Mon Nov 27 10:50:15 2006

#### **ted owen llandegfan ex pentraeth**

born pentraeth 1935 have fond memories of the old r line, as a boy we used to run to the station, hide behind bushes and place a half penny on the rail wait for the train to pass over it then off to the shop to buy penny's worth of sweets, some hopes. memorable times spent in the station master's office [john aubrey] pending on the train driver once i had the privilege of riding on the footplate to benllech and back to pentraeth. thanks david for jolting the old memory cells of the times gone by in pentraeth and its railway.

Fri Nov 17 09:27:49 2006

#### **Gethyn Hughes- Menai Bridge**

I cycle a great deal in Anglesey and have often come across relics of this railway line. You can still see the route, though it is amazing how nature has reclaimed the land especially in the Ceint area. The route from Pentraeth to Benllech would make a fantastic cycle route which would appeal to a large

amount of families both locally and on holidays and would go some way to preserving memories of this line.

Mon Sep 4 10:31:39 2006

**Terry Potter Liverpool**

We started to stay at Pen-y-Bont in Red Wharf Bay in 1944 and used to send our luggage in advance to Pentraeth Station. We had to carry it from there to Pen-y-Bont to the third cottage from the small farm. I remember the track of the line that went just short of Benllech.

Tue Aug 22 09:33:12 2006

**Joy Brobyn, St Helens**

Very interesting. My mother's mother was a Sanderson. She had a relative George who was station master at Bangor in 1861. His son John Sanderson was the stoker on the train that crashed in 1877 29th Nov when the bridge collapsed due to rain at a bridge between Rhosgoch and Llanerchymedd.

Thu Jul 20 09:44:50 2006

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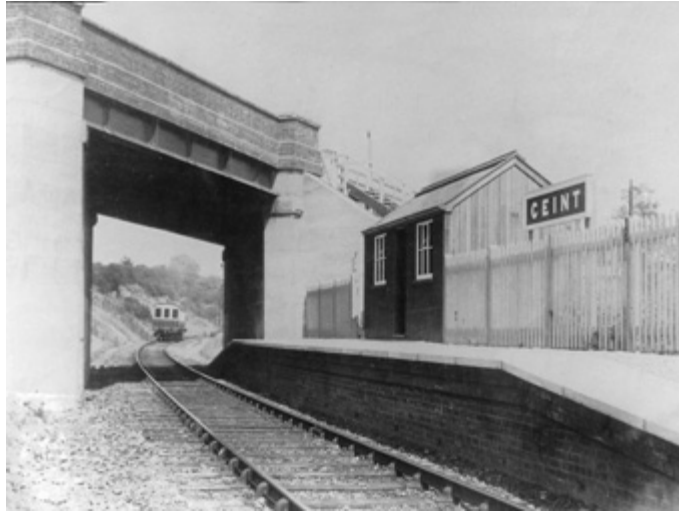
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Ceint Halt - with 'push-pull' train.

1 2 3 4 5 6

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Rhyd y Saint Halt near Plas Penmynydd, c1910.

1 2 3 4 5 6

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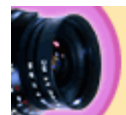
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First train on opening day, July 1 1908, at Pentraeth station.

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First train from Pentraeth at Holland Arms station on opening day, July 1 1908, a L&NWR 2-4-0 'Chopper' Tank No 1441.

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Red Wharf Bay & Benllech Station on December 28 1948.

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- Pontio: Dim prif weithredwr

amount of families both locally and on holidays and would go some way to preserving memories of this line.

Mon Sep 4 10:31:39 2006

**Terry Potter Liverpool**

We started to stay at Pen-y-Bont in Red Wharf Bay in 1944 and used to send our luggage in advance to Pentraeth Station. We had to carry it from there to Pen-y-Bont to the third cottage from the small farm. I remember the track of the line that went just short of Benllech.

Tue Aug 22 09:33:12 2006

**Joy Brobyn, St Helens**

Very interesting. My mother's mother was a Sanderson. She had a relative George who was station master at Bangor in 1861. His son John Sanderson was the stoker on the train that crashed in 1877 29th Nov when the bridge collapsed due to rain at a bridge between Rhosgoch and Llanerchymedd.

Thu Jul 20 09:44:50 2006

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