



590 at Harbour Station in 1934

Photo: J. E. Simpson  
(WHR collection)



Baldwin 794 at Khatauli

Photo: L. Marshall

## **Baldwin press release - "WHR 590 lives again"**

The Welsh Highland Railway Ltd (WHR Ltd) and Imperial War Museums (IWM) are pleased to announce that the ownership of Baldwin Locomotive WDLR 794, currently on long term loan from IWM to the WHR Ltd, has been permanently transferred to WHR Ltd. As part of the ongoing review of their collections and in consultation with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, IWM believes that the WHR Ltd, being a registered charity, is the most appropriate long term home for the locomotive.

Built in January 1917 at The Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, USA as works number 44699, the engine is a 4-6-0PT of the Baldwin class 10-12-D. Given the number WDLR 794, like many of its class the engine was shipped to Europe for use by the Railway Operating Division (ROD), in support of the WW1 trench lines. In total 495 locomotives of this class were ordered from Baldwin for delivery to Europe; of this total, nine engines were lost in transit. After the cessation of hostilities, 50 of these locomotives were rapidly dispatched to India to support the defence of the Afghan border area from local skirmishes after the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Afghan War. Subsequently, the surviving locomotives were sold off into Indian industrial use, WDLR 794 ultimately ending its career at the Upper India Sugar Mills in Khatauli. In 1985 the engine was repatriated to the UK by the IWM to become part of a display at the IWM Duxford. Although some initial refurbishment work took place following its return to the UK, serious restoration of the locomotive did not commence until after 2003, when it was placed on long term loan with the WHR Ltd., which owns and operates the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway (WHHR) in Porthmadog, and a major fund raising campaign then commenced. WDLR 794 is now in the final phase of a 14 year long programme of refurbishment using specialist engineers and contractors (Graham Morris Engineering Ltd, Israel Newton & Sons Ltd, Alan Keef Ltd and the Vale of Rheidol Trading Ltd) and is expected to be unveiled to the fund donors and supporters at the WHHR during Spring 2023.

In 1923 the original Welsh Highland Railway, then newly opened, purchased a sister WW1 Baldwin locomotive (WDLR 590, built in October 1916 as works number 45172) as War Dept. surplus from the Government Property Disposals Board to supplement its locomotive requirements and this engine was used alongside the existing locomotive 'Russell' (built in 1906 by the Hunslet Engine Company, works number 901) on both passenger and goods trains until the railway closed at the end of the 1936 summer season. Although the iconic engine 'Russell' still exists in preservation on the present day WHHR, 590 was not so lucky and was cut up in 1942 as part of the Government's WW2 scrap drive. 590 was very much part of the Welsh Highland scene in the 1930s and it has long been a desire of the WHR Ltd to re-create the engine so that today's visitors can appreciate the two locomotives working together again. When the opportunity arose to receive WDLR 794 on long term loan, WHR Ltd sought and received permission from the IWM to refurbish the engine in the guise of 590. Thus, when the restoration is complete, 590 will live again.