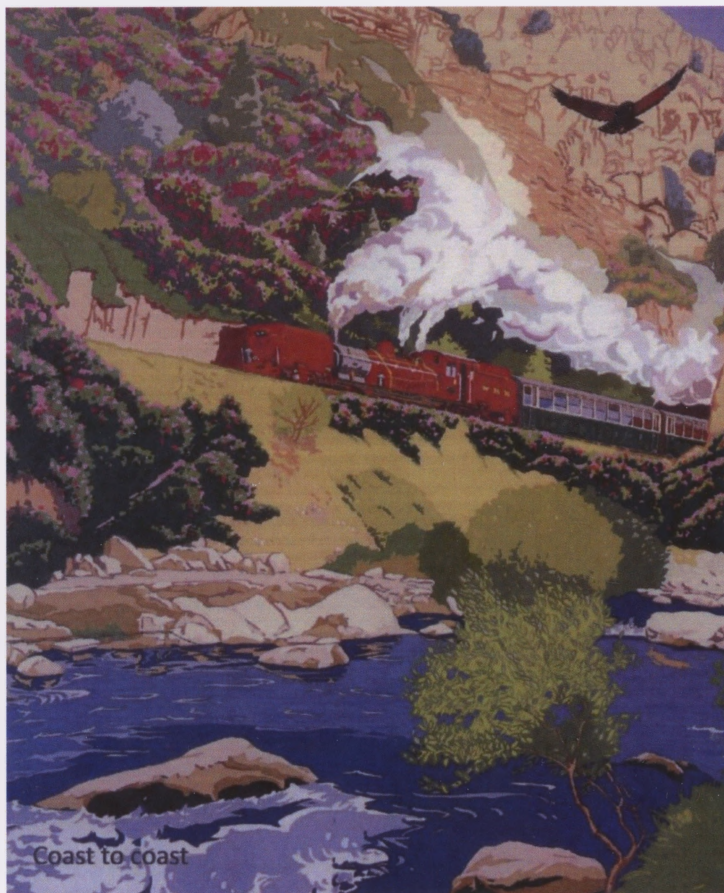


TRACKBED CONSOLIDATION LIMITED

and the Welsh Highland Railway

by Ernie Preston

with an appreciation by John Hopkins



Coast to coast

The Aberglaslyn Pass by David Grosvenor 1993

TRACKBED CONSOLIDATION LIMITED and the Welsh Highland Railway

By 1980, the '64Co., which today operates as the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway, had built a three quarter mile long railway on the former Beddgelert Siding adjacent to the track bed of the old Welsh Highland Railway and was operating passenger services on the line. The Company had struggled unsuccessfully for nineteen years to purchase or lease the track bed of the original Welsh Highland Railway to enable it to be rebuilt. Three years later, with still no progress, the '64Co. voted to support Gwynedd County Council's ("GCC") proposed purchase of the freehold of the entire track bed. If successful, GCC had stated that it would lease sections of the track bed to the '64 Co in stages, beginning with the section from Beddgelert Siding to Pont Croesor, a distance of 2 miles.

Those who were to form and support Trackbed Consolidation Ltd. (TCL) and WestCo were determined that the whole route of 23 miles should be restored, however long it might take. They suspected, on evidence, that if GCC obtained the freehold, it would turn much of the track bed into a footpath and cycle track, and that this would effectively inhibit any further extensions of the railway north from Pont Croesor.

This publication is mostly a first-hand account of how a few of these individuals obtained influence over shares and debentures of the old WHR (1922) Co which, due to complicated legalities surrounding it, still existed despite the fact that its track had been torn up more than forty years previously. They were able thus to stall GCC's proposed purchase and exert significant influence upon the outcome of later critical legal proceedings in 1991.

The outcome of these led to the passing of initiative from TCL and WestCo to the Ffestiniog Railway Company which was able to apply greater resources in every respect. The amazing forty mile railway of today is the outcome of all those endeavours.
(50 pages of text with illustrations)

Trackbed Consolidation Limited and the Welsh Highland Railway

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