

SOUTH WALES VALLEYS

Railways and Industry in the

TONDU VALLEYS

BRIDGEND TO TREHERBERT



JOHN HODGE & STUART DAVIES

SOUTH WALES VALLEYS SERIES

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Cover pictures

Front cover

The now preserved Large Prairie Tank 5101 Class 2-6-2T No. 4144 departs from Tondy with the two coach 12.45pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi service on 21st August 1962, a very undemanding task for an engine of this power, against the background of the long footbridge which served all platforms. (Gerald T. Robinson)

Back cover top

Recalling the days when the main branch lines radiating from Bridgend were still open, the Down Platform Running-In Board shows that passengers should change here for the Llynvi, Ogmere and Garw Branches and also for the Vale of Glamorgan Railway, the wording reflecting the very early disposition of the concerns on 2nd July 1950. (R.K. Blencowe)

Back cover bottom

The top end of the Llynvi Valley was at Abergwynfi, a single terminus platform seen here on 29th August 1951 as 3100 Class No. 3100 waits to depart for Bridgend with a two-coach train, both coaches still in the former GWR chocolate and cream livery. (Ian L. Wright)

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Every effort has been made to properly credit the photographers concerned with all the illustrations. Where this has not been possible, they should contact John Hodge to rectify the situation.
(Email: john_hodge@tiscali.co.uk)

PREFACE

Stuart Davies, a native of the Ogmore Valley, worked in various capacities for British Rail, including Margam which from the 1960s had operationally embraced the Tondu Valleys. In 2014, he approached John Hodge, also a life-serving railwayman, to say that he wanted to publish a detailed history and insight of the railways in that area. As John was already embarking on a series of books across the Valleys, it was agreed they should produce this volume together, combining their mutual knowledge, efforts and passion for the subject matter.

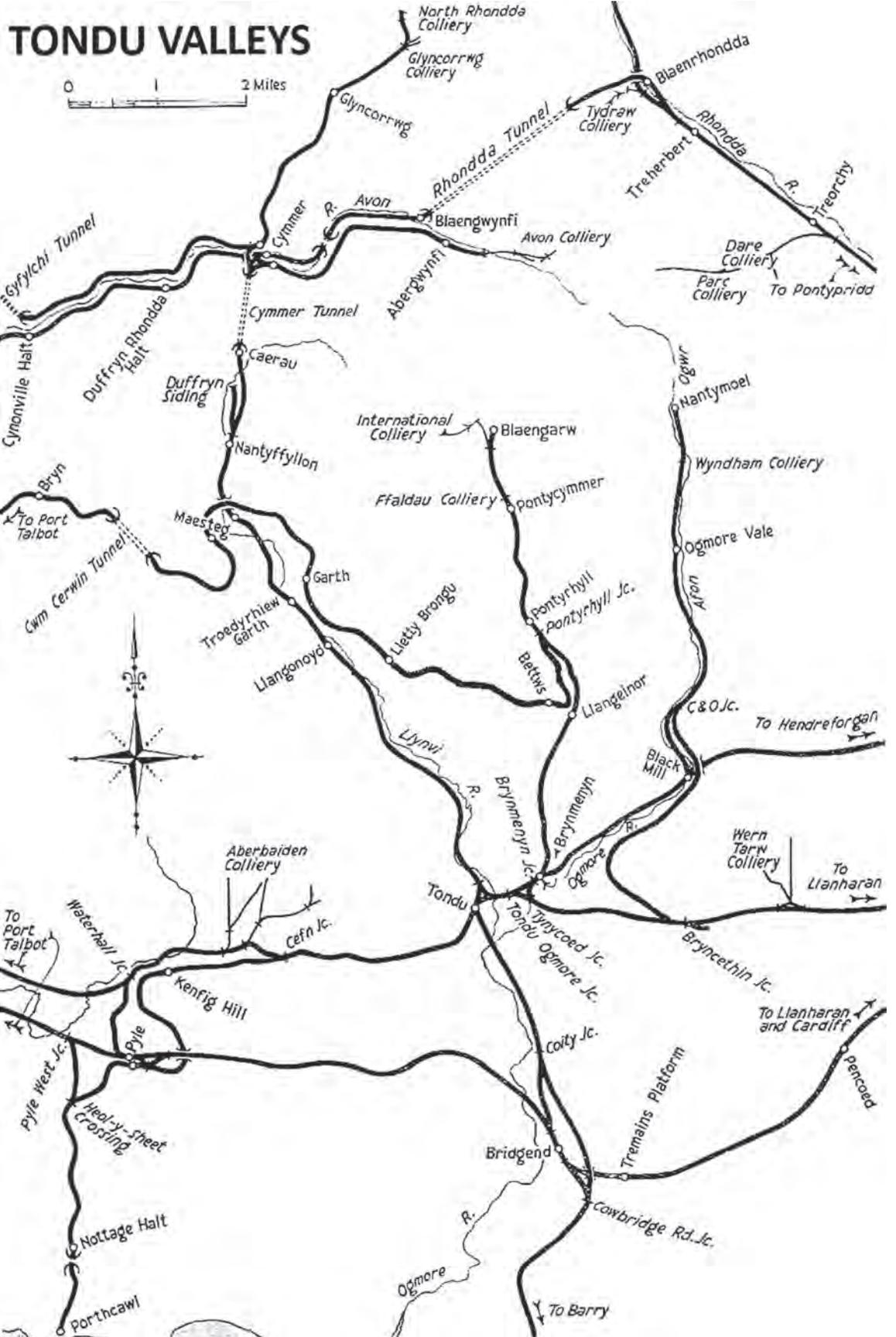
Composed principally of the Llynfi, Ogmore and Garw Valleys we have used the generic railway term 'Tondu Valleys' throughout the text, although in the geographical sense, they are the Mid Glamorgan Valleys. In the railway sense, Blaengwynfi to Treherbert and the Glyncoirwg Branch were not strictly part of the Tondu Valleys; however, with closures and rationalisation during the 1960s, the Llynfi Valley passenger service was extended to the former and the latter could only be accessed through Tondu.

This book deals with the full history, tables and a detailed survey of the Llynfi Valley, through to Treherbert and the Glyncoirwg branch. Tondu Depot was the nucleus, providing the resources for this network and is also detailed here. The second book deals with the Ogmore & Garw Valleys, the Porthcawl, Gilfach Goch and Llanharan branches. It also includes special features covering Main Line Diversions, Enthusiast Specials and two photographic chronologies.

Unlike any other South Wales Valley railways, those radiating out of Tondu were a network in themselves, even to having their own seaside resort. Indeed, most of the resources and associated timetable were concerned with moving coal and passengers from one end of this network to the other (if one includes the Steel Works at Margam) or to some points between. There were no unique features or impressive installations, except perhaps several railway operating practices not commonplace. Other than the Bulldogs allocated in the 1930s and the 4400 Class used on the Porthcawl Branch until the 1950s, most locomotives were unnamed tank engines and all of standard Great Western Railway (GWR) origin. So, we present a workaday system that went about its tasks unsung and only now comprehensively recorded.

As more than 50 years have passed since the last steam engine left Tondu, it is likely some readers will be unaware of the implications of large scale steam operation on a daily basis. Though not unique to Tondu, we have explained a number of fundamental principles to better appreciate the preparation and planning that underpinned such operations. We hope the very informative outcome will please the reader.

The situation continues to develop, and though all the modern scene in this book has been recorded under the Arriva Trains Wales franchise, this has now passed to Transport For Wales.



(Courtesy of Railway Magazine)

CHAPTER 1

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TONDU VALLEYS

PRE-INDUSTRIALISATION SCENE

Early records show that in the Middle Ages, Robert Fitzhamon, Earl of Gloucester and Norman conqueror of Glamorgan in 1075, set up hunting reserves in the area, which enjoyed flourishing woods, sparkling streams and game coverts. The Cistercian Monks of Margam Abbey were using locally mined coal as early as 1246 and there are increasing references to mining in the area throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Iron working is first recorded in 1730 and it is thought the reddish-brown colouration along the edges of some of the local streams suggested its presence. The ore ran closely to the blackband seams of coal and the surface configuration of both made mining comparatively easy.

Until the eighteenth century, many of the farmsteads in the Llynfi Valley were focuses for local culture. Records show that Llwydardh, home of the influential Powell family, was a centre for writers and poets in the seventeenth century. In 1770, John Bedford purchased an 80-acre estate at Cefn Cribbwr. Here he built an ironworks, complete with blast furnace and forge. Included in the estate were local collieries, brickworks, mines and stone quarries, for a princely sum put at £36,000. He was attracted to the area by its indigenous raw materials and proximity to the sea, having plans to use the harbour

at Porthcawl. This was the first major industrial development of the area.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the greater part of Mid Glamorgan was sparsely populated mainly by those closely linked to the soil. These few inhabitants lived in scattered farmsteads, cottages and tiny hamlets dotted among the hillsides. Their houses were either stone built, thatched or slated. However, amongst the poverty were several mansions that housed the landed gentry, such as Tondu House, built by Sir Robert Price, founder of Tondu Ironworks. Tondu translated means the Fortified Settlement (Ton) of Black (du) Ithel; seemingly in the present name, Ithel has been vanquished.

Porthcawl as such did not as yet exist and the settlements of Newton and Nottage between them amounted to less than 500 inhabitants. To both west and east lay wind-blown sandy wastes, Merthyr Mawr boasting the largest dunes in Europe. To the north existed the hamlets of Cornelly, Pyle, Llangonoyd, Cwmdru and Duffryn Llynfi (Nantyffyllon) with considerable wooded areas in between. To the south the Bristol Channel or Severn Sea boasts a world-renowned difference in water depth between High and Low tides of 32 feet.

Most of the population was involved in farming crops (potatoes and corn) or raising cattle and sheep. Newton had access to a creek allowing small

boats to land. This access gave the local communities trading opportunities on the other sides of both the Bristol and English channels. Drovers made the long trek to Brecon and Hereford. Others, using the available ports of Penarth, Aberthaw, Swansea and Aust, supplied the market at Bristol. Along the coastal ridge, much quarrying and burning of limestone yielded large quantities of lime for fertilising the land. This burnt limestone was conveyed into the valleys by mule and donkey trains returning with coal gathered from surface outcrops.

Track ways in the north-to-south-running valleys were along ridges to the higher ground or hillsides. Wheeled traffic was confined to the east to west roadway which ran across the southern part of the county. Five turnpike trusts controlled this traffic located in Cardiff, Cowbridge, Bridgend, Neath and Swansea. The one at Bridgend was responsible for the section Crack Hill to Aberavon Bridge and links from Ewenny Bridge, Bryncethin, Coytrahen, Cwm Ffos, Llanharan Brook, Nottage and Aberkenfig.

INDUSTRIALISATION OF THE TONDU VALLEYS - DEVELOPMENT OF IRON AND COAL INDUSTRIES, RAILWAYS AND DOCKS

The poor condition of the roads with their bad surfaces and costly toll gates, the steep and narrow valleys of Mid Glamorgan that precluded the building of canals were not conducive to supporting the early industrial activity in the Llynfi Valley, based on the indigenous coal, iron ore, limestone and soft water from the River Llynfi. Consequently, a more satisfactory transport solution that included an outlet to the sea became crucial in order to exploit the full potential of the valley's resources. The industrialisation of the Llynfi Valley starts in earnest from the early years of the nineteenth century, with much progress being made during the 1820s. As previously mentioned, there had however been an earlier development at

Cefn Cribbwr where John Bedford had set up an ironworks with associated coal mines, a quarry and brickworks from around 1770.

Industrialists, landowners and other speculators had turned their minds to the development of a tramroad linking the coal mines being developed in the Llynfi Valley with a harbour at the mouth of the River Ogmore as early as 1814, to transport the valuable steam coal being produced to markets abroad. However, it wasn't until 22 January 1825 at a meeting held in the Wyndham Arms, Bridgend, that a scheme became firmly established. The Duffryn Llynvi & Porthcawl Railway Company (DL&PR) subsequently obtained an Act of Parliament on 10 June 1825 which included the building of a pier at Porthcawl for the shipment of coal. In 1828, a 15-mile horse-drawn tramway was completed between Garnlwyd and Porthcawl. This was extended to run from Coegnant in 1830.

In 1828, an Act of Parliament authorised a horse-drawn tramway from Bridgend to link into the DL&PR at Cwm Ffos, near Cefn Cribbwr. This was opened on 22 October 1830. It was a separate company to the DL&PR but shared a common engineer in John Hodgkinson of Newport. This tramroad accessed the John Bedford ironworks at Cefn Cribbwr and from there could carry iron products and coal to Bridgend, as well as traffic from/to the Llynfi Valley.

The building of the railway opened up the district. This led to the formation of the Maesteg Iron Company in 1825. It began building a works in 1826 on Maesteg Uchaf Farm (giving its name to the company) near the present-day town centre. By 1831, two furnaces were in blast. At about the same time, one of the first zinc smelters in Wales was set up on Coegnant Farm, near the northern terminus of the DL&PR.

The upper parts of the railway were the last to be completed but there is evidence that traffic was conveyed on the finished sections before this. The original line, which opened in 1829, ran from Caerau Duffryn down the Llynvi Valley to Tondy

thence westwards along the northern flank of Cefn Cribbwr, southwards through Kenfig Hill to Pyle and finally Porthcawl. To this was added the Bridgend Railway in 1834. The gauge was 4ft 7in and totalled 21 miles with no connection to any other system at the time. Even at this early stage, the workshops and main traffic centre were at Tondy.

The whole line had an overall gradient of 1:180 despite the land rising almost 500 feet between Porthcawl and Duffryn Llynvi, keeping for the most part, to the 300ft contour. This was testament to the engineering prowess of John Hodgkinson. Hodgkinson was originally an assistant to Benjamin Outram, the great tramroad engineer of this period. Cast iron rails 3ft. 10in in length, each of 50lbs, were carried on stone blocks quarried locally of varying size and shape. The stone blocks were not to be less than 8ins. thick and 150-200lbs in weight but the most important aspect was that a small portion of the upper surface was to be level to provide a firm bed for the adjoining rail ends. With three horses, it is believed the wagons each carried 5 tons in short trains in the charge of a haulier and a boy.

Construction of the docks at Porthcawl was undertaken concurrently and consisted of a walled rectangle with an opening in the eastern wall. The work was carried out by day and night. The harbour was fully operational by 1830. Further improvements were made at later dates, but the harbour was always difficult to enter, given the tidal effects and treacherous presence of the Tusker, Nash and Scarweather rocks nearby.

The Llynvi valley witnessed a large influx of Irish workers for the railway's construction and in the developing coal and iron industries. The population of the valley is recorded at 237 in 1811 but 40 years later had risen to 3,350; similar increases were experienced in the Pyle/Porthcawl area and Bridgend which hosted its first market in 1836. Construction commenced on a second and larger Ironworks at Maesteg, the Llynvi

works, in 1839 by the Cambrian Iron & Spelter Co., which was bought by the Llynvi Iron Company in 1845. The two ironworks, with associated collieries and new housing, transformed the area into a growing township, the population rising from about 400 in 1821 to 4,000 by 1841.

The Llynvi Works attracted investment from a number of prominent figures of the time, including the poet Wordsworth, the gin distiller Sir Felix Booth and the Unitarian writer and political reformer John Bowring. Bowring especially invested heavily in the Llynvi works and was well known and appreciated in the neighbourhood, the area around the works being known as Bowrington. However, the trade depression of the 1840s reacted badly on capital investment and Bowring lost his capital, though the iron works survived and remained in production.

At Tondy, alongside the DL&PR, the Glamorgan Coal and Iron Company, owned by Sir Robert Price, began to develop an ironworks in the late 1830s with the first furnace blown in in 1844. Extensive reserves of ironstone were discovered in 1843 six miles away in the Maesteg area. This prompted further development of the works at Tondy using the Tywith Coal and Ironstone mine near Nantyffyllon. A period of prosperity at the works lasted from 1843-47, raising the industrial profile of the area. However, this did not last and in 1854, the Tondy Ironworks faced bankruptcy. They were bought, together with the associated mines, by the Lancashire firm of John Brogden and Sons. James Brogden (John's fourth son) rapidly reorganised and expanded the works in 1861 which then employed 900 men and farmed 1,100 acres with 20 men. In 1863-1865 Brogdens opened Coal mines at Tywith, Garth, Wyndham and Tynewydd.

In 1869, John Brogden died and Alexander Brogden (John's eldest son) came to Tondy to take charge of the business. In 1872 a new company was formed, the Llynvi, Tondy and Ogmores Coal and Iron Company Limited but

was wound up by creditors in 1878. It was taken over by North's Navigation Collieries (1889) Ltd. John Street, the main thoroughfare in Porthcawl, is named after John Brogden, while a signal box south of Tondy station on the line into Bridgend was also called Brogdens.

The Maesteg Iron industry prospered in the 1850s and 60s with a reputation for the production of high-quality iron with many export contracts. These included rails for the developing American railroads and contracts with the Admiralty for its highly-regarded cable iron used for anchor chains. However, the introduction of steel making in the 1870s, which the works could not be adapted to produce, proved to be an obstacle too far for both works. Trying to compete against this newer, cheaper and more versatile product proved impossible and the two works closed by 1885, when iron making ceased in the entire area.

Decimated by the closure of the iron works and associated collieries, the population of the area, which had now grown to some 10,000, faced the same uncertain future that was experienced in the Merthyr and Dowlais areas. However, in 1889, with the formation of North's Navigation Collieries Ltd led by Colonel North, the local coal industry began to expand. From 1900, the Elder Dempster Shipping Line, headed by Sir Alfred Jones, developed collieries in the valley, using the steam coal produced for their own steamships. Coegnant and Garth collieries of the former Maesteg Iron Company were modernised and two new collieries sunk at Caerau and St John's (Cwmdu). The Valley had changed from being largely dependent on iron production to a future based on coal. The local population increased from about 10,000 in 1891 to almost 30,000 by 1921.

Authorisation of the South Wales Railway (SWR) in 1845 had a significant bearing on the DL&PR. It resulted in a new company, the Llynvi Valley Railway (LVR), constituted in 1848, with the express purpose of rebuilding the tramway (or if necessary making new alignments) to

the broad gauge. It was to be built with heavier rails and chairs in order to be worked by steam locomotives and connect with the South Wales Railway both at Bridgend and Pyle. Due to lack of funding the scheme did not materialise until 10 August 1861 and costly transshipment took place meantime. The new railway deviated considerably from the old tramway except for the section between Kenfig Hill and Porthcawl. On 25 February 1864, a passenger service was inaugurated between Maesteg and Bridgend with an addition to Porthcawl on 1 August 1865. The original line from Tondy to Pyle crossed the SWR on the flat to the east of Pyle but from 1876, a new alignment took it under the main line further east.

A clause written into the LVR Act of 1852 prevented any device other than animal power from passing through the lands of the Rt. Hon. Charlotte Guest and Rev. Henry Knight. Nottage Tunnel was constructed in order to prevent damage to their property arising from smoke and sparks but until 1861, steam locomotives went only as far as Pyle. The 63-yard tunnel was cut through solid rock and at each end, steel sheets were erected for additional smoke deflection. In August 1862, a third locomotive was ordered and the LVR continued as such until 1863.

During the years 1890 to 1925, the valley gained a worldwide reputation for its steam coal (with much supplied to the Admiralty), high quality coking coal and house coal. By the early 1920s, there were over 7,000 miners at work in the valley. However, as the area depended to such a large extent on the coal export trade, it was seriously affected by the trade depression of 1928-38 and the population of the Llynfi Valley decreased by almost a third, as widespread poverty and unemployment affected the district, again mirroring the position at Merthyr and Dowlais.

In 1938, the coal output in the area revived reaching three million tons in the mid-1950s. The opening of the Steel Company of Wales (Port Talbot) steelworks, in 1933, ensured this part

of the South Wales Coalfield had its demand sustained longer than many other areas. After the end of the war in 1945, the coal industry and the railways remained the largest employers by far in the area. As in other areas, the post-war Labour government reacted quickly to the unemployment situation in South Wales and opened government-built factories and introduced new industries to the area.

The population of Maesteg stabilised at about 20,000 in the second half of the twentieth century. With the demise of the coal industry in the 1980s, the Llynfi Valley moved towards being a residential area with people commuting to Cardiff, Bridgend and Port Talbot daily for their work.

The withdrawal of the passenger rail services in the 1960s proved a bitter blow. The nature of the daily travel requirement in the valley saw a new service between Maesteg and Cardiff introduced from 1998, which has proved highly successful. The closure of two local factories in 2007/8 has placed more emphasis on commuting for work. This need has increased the demand for the rail service to be augmented to half-hourly, though this will necessitate the provision of a new loop at Tondy.

The freight railway continued to serve the remaining collieries from Tondy Yard during the 1950s. The opening of a new marshalling yard at Margam in 1960 and the increase of block train working through to destination, brought about the demise of marshalling at Tondy. The many wagons of house coal still produced at the likes of Garw Colliery received a better service through the new yard and the block trains avoiding intermediate marshalling ran direct from the colliery to the Steel Company of Wales (SCOW) which speeded up their transit, thereby reducing the number of resources required. Train speeds were improved by the use of vacuum brake fitted 21ton wagons on the steelworks flows. Haulage by the 4200 Class 2-8-0Ts gave way in 1962/3 to dieselisation using English Electric Type 3s, improving train

speeds and loads, further reducing the number of resources required. Permissible line speeds were not increased, and introduction of diesels made little impact on point to point times.

The demise of the coal industry in South Wales, following the miners' strike of the mid-1980s, was a bitter blow to the Tondy Valleys which relied on coal mining as the basic indigenous industry and wholesale lifestyle re-organisation has resulted. Though SCOW is now the biggest employer in the area, the workforce there has continued to be cut back. Much of the Maesteg working population now is primarily employed in light industry within the area or commutes to Cardiff. A few opencast sites were temporarily brought into use following the pit closures. The coal was used largely to supply the Central Electricity Generating board (CEGB) at Uskmouth and Aberthaw. With its railway station re-opened, Maesteg remains the focal point of the Tondy Valleys as it was in times past.

THE LLYNFI & OGMORE RAILWAY AND GWR DEVELOPMENTS

The Llynvi and Ogmores Railway (L&OR) was incorporated on 28 June 1866 by the amalgamation of the Llynvi Valley Railway and the Ogmores Valley Railway. The latter had merged with the Ely Valley Extension Railway in 1865. It was a dispute between the Brogdens of Tondy Iron Works and the LVR that resulted in a rival plan of the Ogmores Valley Railway (OVR) and Ely Valley Extension Railway (EVER) to divert traffic to Cardiff away from Porthcawl.

The OVR obtained an Act of Parliament in July 1863 to construct a standard gauge railway from a junction with the LVR at Tondy to Nantymoel at the head of the Ogmores Valley. It opened on 1 August 1865 with three engines supplied by Sharp, Stewart and 500 wagons from the Lancaster Wagon Works.

The EVER was incorporated only weeks later with authority to construct

a broad-gauge railway from Blackmill (where it formed a junction with the OVR) to Gellirhaidd where it linked into the Ely Valley line from Llantrisant to Penygraig. The line was opened on 16 October 1865 which entailed a junction at Hendreforgan to serve Gilfach Goch. The passenger services ultimately operated were from Bridgend to Gilfach Goch reversing at Hendreforgan. There were never any regular passenger services between Gilfach and the Ely Valley proper.

Once these Acts had been secured, the Brogdens approached the L&OR with a view to co-operation which was accepted. This resulted in proposals for the joint construction of the West Dock at Porthcawl. This development would substantially increase the port's capacity as ships of 1,100 tons could now be accommodated. More significantly, the line from Tondy to Porthcawl was fitted with a third rail to allow through standard gauge running from the Ogmore Valley. Thus, the L&OR pioneered the concept of an integrated port and railway system as well as having unique mixed gauge workings. In 1868, the third rail was extended to the remaining broad-gauge sections.

At this time the broad gauge LVR engines, which had become redundant, were exchanged for four West Cornwall locomotives, where the GWR had recently introduced the broad gauge. The GWR worked the broad-gauge traffic in the Llynfi Valley until final conversion to the standard gauge 4ft 8½in in 1872.

From Brynmenyn (Junction with the Ogmore line) to Blaengarw, the Garw Valley line was opened on 25 October 1876, serving Llangeinor, Pontyrhyll, Pontycymmer and Blaengarw. This was an area rich in mineral deposits which the coalowners were keen to develop. By 1873, the GWR had already taken over the SWR and with further expansion in mind, sought to acquire the L&OR with an offer to pay interest on the preference shares and a minimum dividend of 6% on ordinary shares.

The GWR also agreed to continue the building of the Cardiff and Ogmore Valley Railway (C&OVR) from Blackmill to Llanharan which opened on 2 October 1876. This was along with the northern extension of the Llynvi Valley line through Cymmer Tunnel to Cymmer. This opened for freight on 1 July 1878, for passengers on 16 July 1880 and finally to Abergwynfi on 22 March 1886. A further part of the C&OVR was available on 1 May 1877, giving direct access from Tondy to Llanharan and Bryncethin. On 1 July 1883, the L&OR was dissolved and completely taken over by the GWR.

Triangles at Tondy and Brynmenyn were installed on 21 November 1892, an extension to a new passenger terminal at Porthcawl in 1916 and a west loop at Pyle on 15 September 1946. This loop enabled direct access to Porthcawl from the Swansea direction. This completed what was the L&OR network referred to by the GWR and its successor as the Tondy Valleys.

In 1899, a shorter route to Port Talbot from Cefn Junction was opened by the Port Talbot Railway (PTR) known as the Ogmore Vale Extension Line. This enabled an avoiding line from Llanharan through Tondy to Port Talbot capable of taking all classes of locomotive then in use. On 14 February 1898, the PTR also opened its line from Port Talbot to Pontyrhyll Junction on the Garw branch.

When the GWR finally took over the L&OR in 1883, the basic traffic of coal haulage from pit to works had grown while the iron works had succumbed to the growth of fewer but larger steelworks. Tondy developed as a major junction with the ability to send trains in most directions, its network serving twenty-seven collieries in 1931.

Porthcawl Harbour and Docks became a busy exporting port for coal, coke and iron, the produce of the neighbouring valleys in the first half of the nineteenth century, before being eclipsed by the new and larger docks at Cardiff, Barry, Port Talbot and Swansea in the second half of the

century. In 1840, the docks were enlarged and improved. The broad-gauge Duffryn, Llynfi & Porthcawl tramroad which developed into the standard gauge Llynfi Valley Rly. and the Llynfi & Ogmore Rly., brought increased volumes of traffic to the Dock from the Tondy Valleys, requiring further improvements to the facilities.

In 1864, improvements were carried out to the original entrance to the outer basin and the lock gates to the inner basin, to enable larger vessels to use the port. In 1865, the L&O Railway reached Porthcawl Docks with its standard gauge railway, increasing traffic and potential even more, mainly due to the work of the Brogdens. In 1871, Porthcawl exported 165,000 tons of coal, compared with about 17,000 before 1864. A setback was suffered by 1878 with the decline in the iron industry but this was soon made up by the huge increase in coal exports. By 1889, the port was handling 800 vessels a year, three quarters with coal exports.

The opening of the new Barry Docks in 1889 was a huge blow to Porthcawl as was the opening of Port Talbot Docks in 1898. In addition to being far more modern with new facilities, they were considerably larger and deeper, enabling much larger vessels to be handled. In 1903, Porthcawl handled less than 2,800 tons of cargo and was now hopelessly uneconomic. The GWR closed the main Dock in 1898, the Inner Harbour in 1906, vessels using the Outer Harbour until 1911. In so doing, the GWR gained the dubious honour of being the owner of the only South Wales Dock to close at a time when the coal export trade was nearly at its peak while elsewhere in every decade from 1841 to 1910 at least two new docks had been opened. Shipment coal from the Tondy Valleys went either to Swansea or principally Cardiff. The Barry Railway, via the Vale of Glamorgan, failed to attract the volume of mineral traffic originally anticipated.

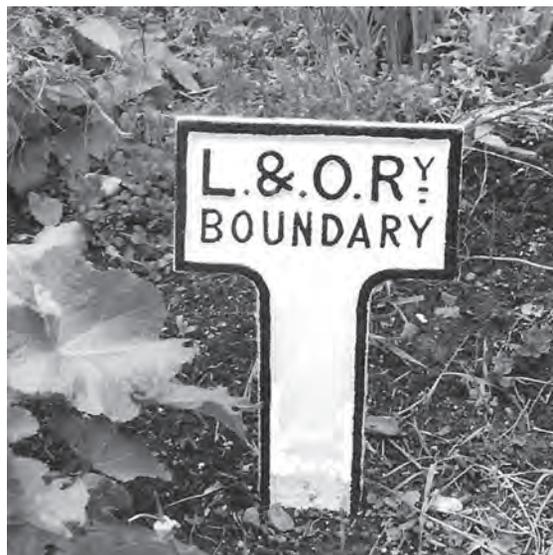
The Inner Harbour became a popular recreational area for boating and bathing and the main Docks were filled in progressively until the 1940s, the area

becoming a car park for the many daily visitors. The outer harbour is still used by pleasure vessels.

Porthcawl, like Barry Island further east, became a haven for day-trippers from the Valleys. Many local and main line excursions were run from a wide variety of places by rail and by road with large fleets of buses and coaches. With the huge increase in continental holidays and greater use of the private car, the level of this traffic declined considerably from the later 1960s and is now history. Both Porthcawl and Barry Island have survived as seaside resorts but Barry still has its rail connection, though weekend excursions are a thing of the past.

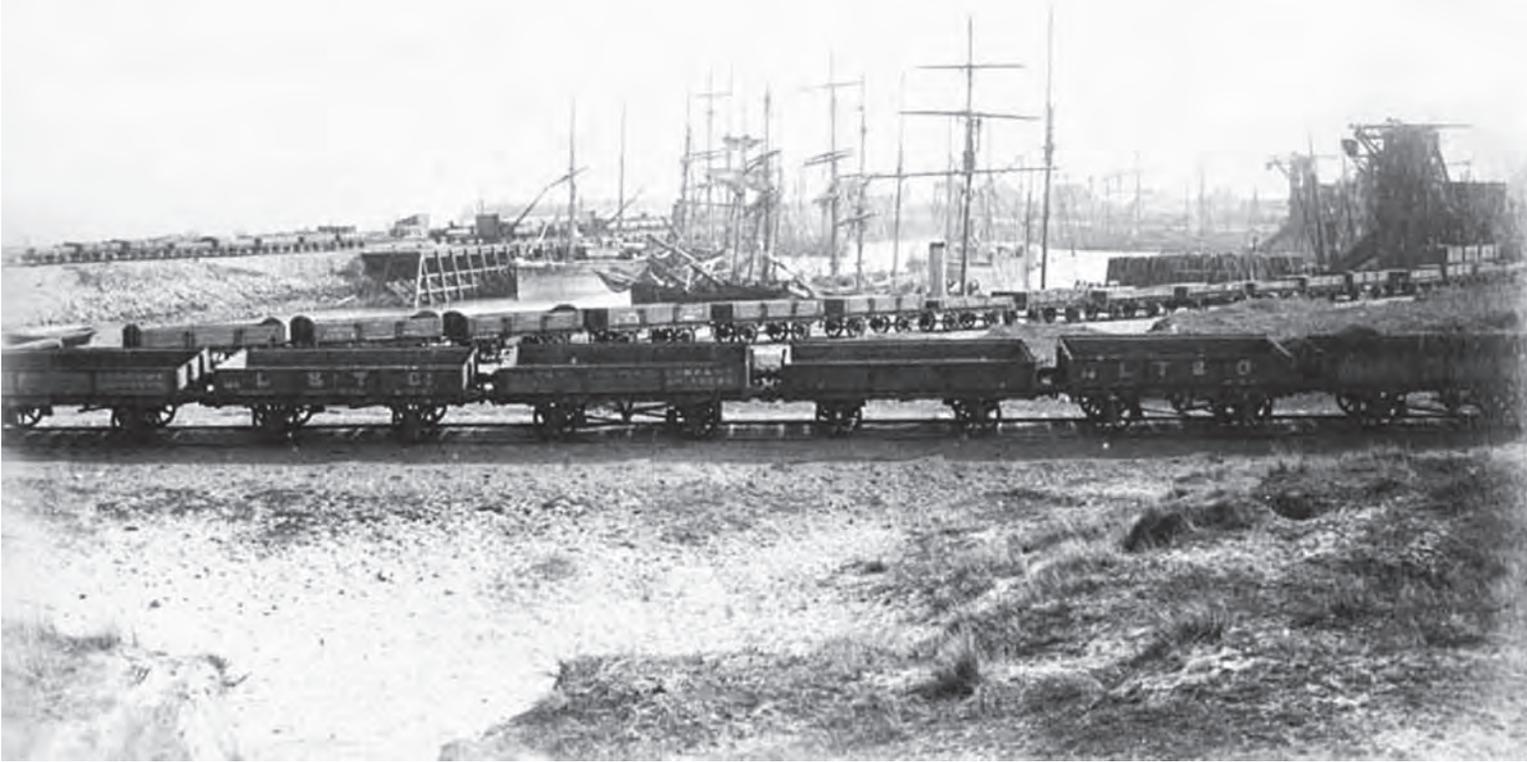


The official seal of the Llynvi and Ogmore Railway Co. invested in 1866.

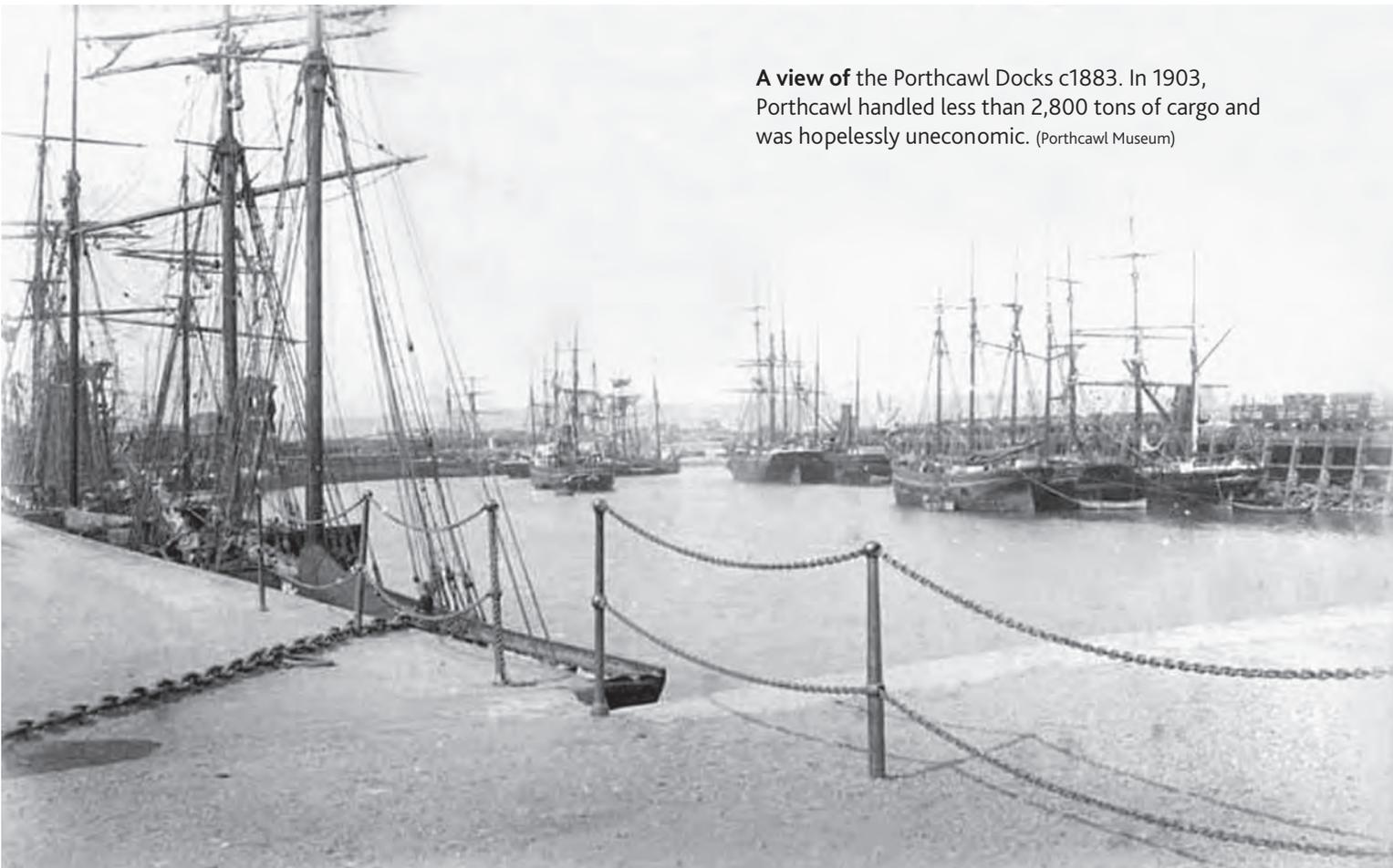


A Boundary marker of the Llynvi and Ogmore Railway Co. This one is preserved at Winchcombe Railway Museum and another is to be found at the Great Western Society's Didcot Railway Centre. (Stuart Davies)

A view of Porthcawl Docks showing Llynfi & Ogmore Co. wagons in the foreground. The L&O was taken over by the GWR in 1883 so this dates the scene to about that time. (Porthcawl Museum)



A view of the Porthcawl Docks c1883. In 1903, Porthcawl handled less than 2,800 tons of cargo and was hopelessly uneconomic. (Porthcawl Museum)

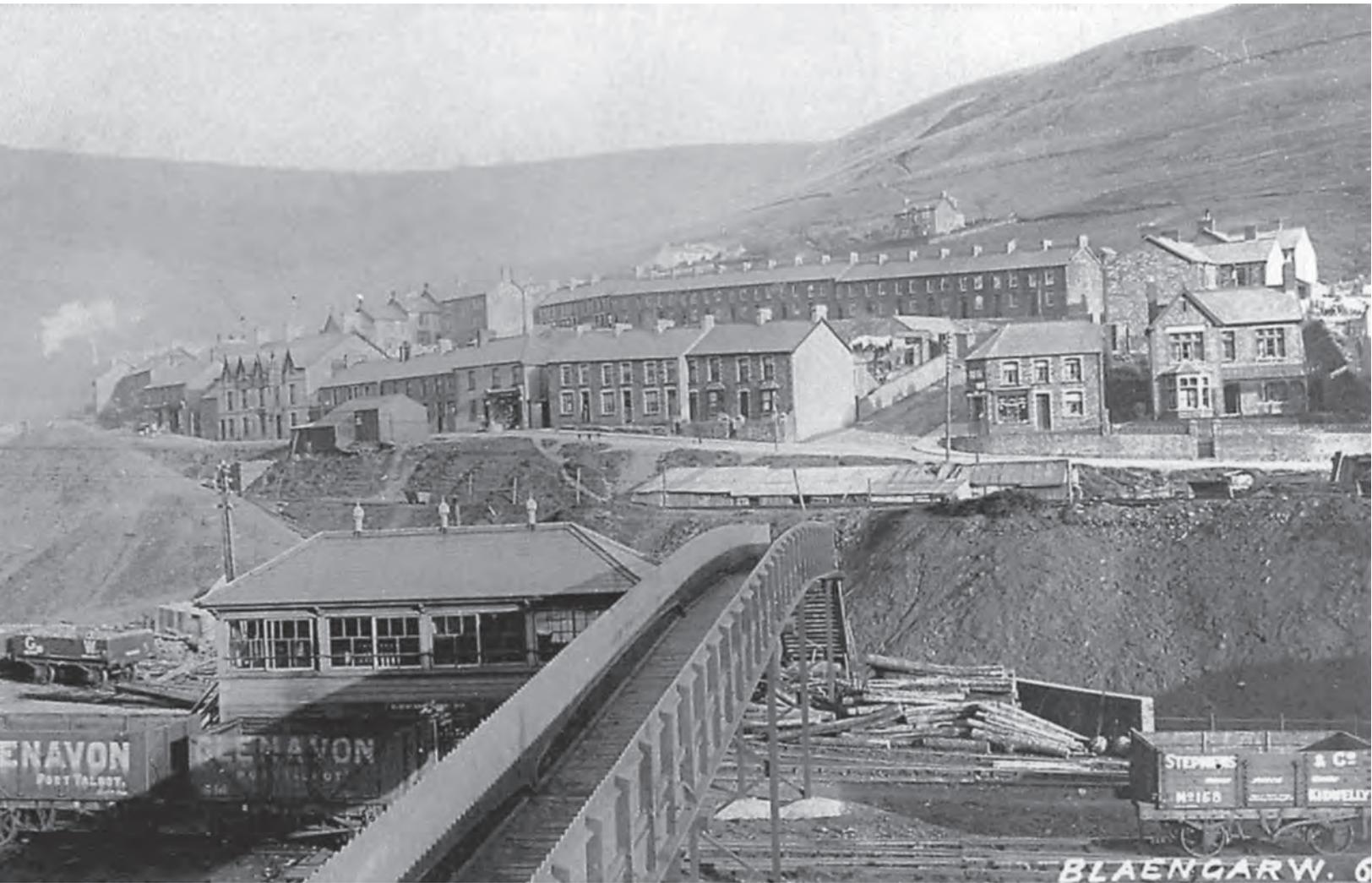




A view of the approach to the Porthcawl Docks c1883. (Porthcawl Museum)

A Victorian picture of the building of the tunnel beneath the Porthcawl branch to allow traffic to and from the Tondy Iron Works, Brickworks and North's Colliery and Coke Ovens to pass to and from the Bridgend route at Brogdens SB. The engine is reputed to be 1638 which indeed was a Tondy engine in 1901. Some of the wagons are identified as from William A. Boyle of Bridgend. Note the dumb-buffered, short wheelbase wagon.





A view of Blaengarw circa 1910. The signal box was opened on the 29 April 1902 following major track alterations ready for the introduction of the passenger service in September that year.



Construction of Pontyryll station, which had staggered platforms, part of which can be seen in the top left as saddle tank 959 stands at the head of the engineer's train with Toad AA3 17628 on 17 January 1898.



Bridgend c1900 with the station staff posing for an unrecorded event. Meanwhile, a Buffalo Class 0-6-0T is in the process of running round one of the Tondu Valleys services in the adjacent platform 4 by means of the Up Main Platform 3. Bridgend opened on 18 June 1850 but the footbridge dates from 1884 and is seen here before the fitting of its protective canopy and sides. (Courtesy of Colin Prosser)

CHAPTER 2

THE SUCCESSION OF GREAT INDUSTRIALISTS IN THE TONDU VALLEYS

JOHN BEDFORD (1720-91)

Born near Birmingham, he followed his father into the iron trade in 1748 as a japanner, a trade applying varnish or lustre to wood, metal or glass. By 1765, he moved to Trostrey in Monmouthshire to manage a forge and he purchased another at Rogerstone, north of Newport. He left there in 1772 when he purchased an 80-acre estate at Cefn Cribbwr, where he opened a colliery and brickworks. By 1775, he had begun the construction of an ironworks with blast furnace and forge together with other mines and stone quarries, for a combined sum put at £36,000, attracted to the area by its indigenous raw materials and proximity to the sea, with plans to use the harbour at Porthcawl.

The venture only achieved partial success, partly due to Bedford himself who was rather eccentric, relied heavily on borrowing and lacked the necessary business acumen. He seemed more interested in developing iron-making methods rather than running a profitable business. He was a romantic with a great love of architecture and took more note of an object's beauty rather than its functionality. He cared for his workers well and built cottages for them to live in.

Though hardly a successful businessman in the iron world, he was recognised for the contribution he made to the iron industry in the Tondy area and much of his considerable paper work is now held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

When Bedford died in 1791, his works were taken over by his son, also John, who leased the works to Green & Price, and also mortgaged the property in 1798. By then disused, the works were taken over by William Bryant in 1824 who rebuilt the furnace and began production, no doubt seeing the market for rails for the Duffryn Llynfi & Porthcawl Railway that opened in 1828. In 1836, iron production was terminated and transferred elsewhere but the colliery and brickworks continued in production until about 1920. The ironworks site and remains were acquired by the Ogwr Borough Council in 1987 and have now been built into a local country park.

SIR ROBERT PRICE (1786-1857)

The MP for Herefordshire from 1818 to 1841, Price had aspirations to become an ironmaster. When John Bedford died in 1791, he acquired leases for land around Tondy Farm, previously granted

to William Bryant, liquidator of John Bedford's business. In his quest to follow the several ironmasters who were making fortunes in other parts of South Wales, including on his doorstep at Maesteg, he founded the Glamorgan Coal & Iron Company. He developed an ironworks alongside the Dyffryn Llynvi & Porthcawl Railway at Tondy in the late 1830s.

The discovery of large reserves of blackband ironstone in the Maesteg area in 1843 and an unprecedented period of growth in the iron trade in the mid-1840s, prompted him to expand his works at Tondy and open the Tywith (Nantyllyn) coal and ironstone mine. As so often happened in the iron trade which was much influenced by the market in war equipment, at home and abroad, a surplus of supply over demand led to a fall in prices after the boom. This resulted in his Tondy works struggling in the early 1850s when he was almost bankrupted. However, thanks to the associations he had made in the boom years of 1843-7, he was able to survive the downturn and the Tondy ironworks and associated mines continued. The success during that period and the potential of the works and mines was recognised by John Brogden of Lancashire who bought out Sir Robert in 1854.

JOHN BOWRING (1759-1856)

Born in Exeter, Bowring was educated at a Unitarian school and started work in his father's firm as a wool merchant, coming under the influence of Jeremy Bentham, the philosopher and social reformer. Bowring was a diligent student of literature and foreign languages, claiming to speak a hundred foreign tongues. He was editor of the political *Westminster Review* in 1825, became well known as a political economist and reformer, advocating the cause of free trade, parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation and education for all. On Bentham's death in 1832, he became his literary executor and produced a collection of his works in eleven volumes in 1843.

MP for Kilmarnock Burghs, in 1835 he led various trade investigations into the state of commerce between this country and France, Switzerland, Syria and Germany. He was MP for Bolton from 1841-9. It was during this time that, without inherited wealth or income, he chose to invest in the South Wales iron industry. He led a small group of wealthy London merchants and bankers as Chairman of the Llynfi Iron Company, establishing a large integrated ironworks in Maesteg in 1845-6. He made his brother Charles the Resident Director and quickly named the area around the works Bowrington. The trade depression of the late 1840s cost him his capital but he gained a reputation in the area as an enlightened employer. It was said of him that 'he gave the poor their rights and carried away their blessing'. The failure of his works at Maesteg led to him accepting Lord Palmerston's offer of the consulship of Canton, China.

In 1854, he became Governor of Hong Kong, receiving the award of KCB. He was instrumental in causing the Second Opium War with China between 1856-60. However, he allowed Chinese citizens in Hong Kong to serve as jurors and lawyers. He is also credited with the establishment of the colony's first public water supply system and introducing its first building ordinance to oversee the safer design of construction projects. An area of Hong Kong was named Bowring City in tribute to his work.

He retired in 1859. In 1861, he was appointed commissioner to Italy to report on British commercial relations with the new kingdom and took on various government roles involving the negotiation of treaties.

Bowring married twice, first in 1818, having five sons and four daughters, several having distinguished careers. After the death of his wife in 1858, he married again in 1860 to a prominent Unitarian activist and supporter of women's suffrage. He died in 1872 at the age of 80,

having been knighted by several foreign countries. The name Bowrington which he had given to the ironworks area of Maesteg was revived in the 1980s when a shopping development in the area was named the Bowrington Arcade, while several places and schemes in Hong Kong also took his name.

JOHN BROGDEN (1798-1869)

Brought up on a farm near Clitheroe in Lancashire, whilst still a young man he moved to Manchester. There he became a cleaning contractor, working with Joseph Whitworth and his patent cleaning machines, soon extending his contracting to Westminster. He moved into the construction business and in 1838 obtained contracts with the Manchester & Leeds Railway to build their passenger station in Manchester which later became Manchester Victoria. His company also built the viaduct from there to Miles Platting and other railway structures.

He had five sons. Four joined him in his business which now became John Brogden & Sons. They acquired mining leases in Furness, witnessing and quickly becoming involved in the expanding railway system. They promoted the Ulverston & Lancaster Railway running from Carnforth to Ulverston across the Morecambe Bay area. This was authorised in 1851, completed by 1857 and was soon taken over by the Furness Railway.

From 1853, John Brogden turned his attention to the Tondy Valleys of South Wales. Here there were successful iron works, associated mines and works at Tondy owned by Sir John Price. The area had a developing railway and dock system involved, very much the sort of enterprise in which he was expert. He purchased the ironworks, all associated mines and works in 1853. He sent his fourth son James to run the business early in 1854. A new 99-year lease was signed with the landowner Jane Nicholl in July 1854 and James Brogden soon expanded and reorganised the works, employing 900 men. He rebuilt what had now become the

family home, Tondy House, in 1854-7 and farmed the attached estate of over 1,000 acres with a staff of 20 men.

Between 1863-5, Brogden & Sons opened coal mines at Wyndham (Ogmore Vale), Tywith (Nantyffyllon), Garth and Tynewydd, managing them all from Tondy. In July 1863, the company obtained an Act to construct a standard gauge railway to run from the top of the Ogmore Valley (the location of their Wyndham Colliery) to Tondy. This was to link with the broad gauge Llynvi Valley Railway on to Porthcawl which they would convert with a third rail to convey standard gauge traffic. The unwieldiness of having two railway systems in the same area was overcome in 1866 by merging the two concerns to become the Llynvi & Ogmore Railway (L&OR). By 1867, they had built and opened a new dock at Porthcawl and transformed the transport potential in the area.

John Brogden died in 1869 and the business was left to his sons Alexander, Henry and James. Alexander moved to Tondy to take charge of the business, forming a new company in 1872 – the Llynvi, Tondy & Ogmore Coal & Iron Co. Ltd. to cover all their local business interests.

However, in his will, John Brogden had set up a trust fund of some £17,000 which they were empowered to use in the interest of the business for a period of five years after which it was to be covered by an increase in assets within the business and become payable to the beneficiary. They failed to achieve this so that at the end of 1874, they were in breach of trust and were sued by the beneficiary. With a downturn in trade to add to their other problems, the Tondy Works closed in 1878 and the company was wound up by its creditors. The liquidator made various attempts to make the business viable but a court case to recover the trust money held in 1887/8 went against the Brogden family and the company was acquired by another giant of the industrial world of the time, Colonel North of North's Navigation Collieries Ltd.

JOHN THOMAS (COLONEL) NORTH (1842-1896)

North was born in Leeds; his early industrial life was spent as an apprentice millwright, engineer and mechanic. At 23, he moved to Chile and Peru. There he worked on boilers, as a waterworks operator progressing to a ship owner and importer. He purchased a large quantity of bonds in the Peruvian nitrate industry during the War of the Pacific (1879-83), following which the Chilean Government transferred ownership of the nitrate fields to the bond holders. Overnight and with little capital expenditure, he established a large business empire, became hugely influential and wealthy in the Chilean nitrate industry, becoming known as the 'Nitrate King'.

He returned to Britain and in 1883 founded the Liverpool Nitrate Co., with operations continuing in Chile, his mines there producing 3,000 tons of nitrates per month by 1884. He was able to pay dividends of over 20% from the vast profits he was making from these assets. He founded the Chilean Nitrate Railway Co. and also held a monopoly over water supplies elsewhere. He owned several Chilean coal fields, ironstone fields and a gasworks.

He used his wealth and business acumen to involve himself in the developing railway, iron and coal mining scene. He became notorious for blocking competition through the courts and government channels, which eventually led to the Chilean Civil War of 1891. He also invested heavily (£40,000) in the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company in the Congo. This involvement, solicited by King Leopold II of Belgium, proved a highly profitable venture. Two years after North's death in 1896 however, his heirs sold their shares in the company.

Back in Britain, he set up North's Navigation Collieries (1889) Ltd. in the Tondy Valleys. This turned out to be one of his most continually successful enterprises, purchasing coal mines and ironworks in the area. The successful development of

this company was largely responsible for the rapid growth of the town of Maesteg and the Llynfi Valley generally during the period 1890-1910, though North himself died in 1896.

In Chile, he moved in Government circles and in Britain had the status of a high society gentleman. He was worth \$10 million in 1889, when his coal mining empire company was founded here. He was a friend of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. He owned a mansion on a 600-acre estate near Eltham in Kent with extensive racing stables whose horses had won him several racing trophies. Following his appointment as Honorary Colonel of the Tower Hamlets Regiment of Volunteer Engineers in 1885, he became addressed by the title Colonel North.

Having achieved a vast fortune from his exploits and investments across the world, by the time he died in May 1896, his fortune had dwindled considerably and it was up to his heirs to continue the successful operation of his North's Navigation Colliery Company.



Colonel John Thomas North (1842-1896) founded North's Navigation Collieries in 1883, the development of which was largely responsible for the rapid growth of the town of Maesteg. (Welsh Industrial & Maritime Museum)

NORTH'S NAVIGATION COLLIERIES (1889) LIMITED (NNC)

The amalgamated holdings of the Llynvi & Tondy Coal and Iron Co. Ltd. (L&TC&ICo.), together with those held by Messrs. Brogden and Sons, were bought by Colonel North in 1889. North's Navigation Collieries Ltd. was floated with a capital of £450,000.

The two shafts at Coegnant Colliery (opened by the L&TC&ICo. in 1882) were deepened to reach richer seams and new pits were opened at Caerau (1897) and St John's, Cwmdu (1910). By the early 1920s, the Llynvi Valley had developed a significant coal producing area due to the enterprise of NNC and Celtic Collieries Ltd., formed in 1909. Both had been boosted by the opening of the Port Talbot Railway and the Vale of Glamorgan Railway (from Coity Junction) in 1897 giving access to the Docks at Port Talbot (9 miles away) and Barry respectively.

In order to connect its collieries with the existing railway in the Llynvi Valley, NNC constructed its own private system. The two lines from Nantyffyllon and Maesteg Deep Colliery that connected the Llynvi Iron Works with Llynvi Junction were integrated into the Company's system in 1889. The opening of Caerau Colliery in 1897 resulted in a mineral line running southward from Coegnant Colliery to Maesteg Deep Colliery connecting into the existing link thence to Llynvi Junction. Coegnant Colliery had already been linked to the GWR at Coegnant since 1882. In 1897, a further link connecting Caerau Colliery was made with the GWR between Caerau and Nantyffyllon.

A Private Siding agreement dated 5 April 1900 between NNC and PTR led to the laying of a new line from Caerau and Coegnant collieries to a Junction with the PTR at North's Collieries Signal box.

The opening of St. John's Colliery at Cwmdu in 1910 created a link between the colliery and the PTR at Cwmdu. NNC had running powers over this section from Cwmdu again to North's Collieries Signal box. This practice, initially with the PTR, continued under GWR and BR ownership until the whole line was completely vested with the NCB from 1 September 1964, when the PTR section closed and all traffic diverted via Llynvi Junction and Tondy.

In 1922, NNC took control over the whole of the Llynvi Valley coal output, with few small exceptions. By the mid-1920s total annual production was in excess of a million tons. In 1930 following the economic depression, only three working collieries remained in the district, Caerau, Coegnant and St. John's; these finally closing in 1977, 1981 and 1987.

The engine shed (which finally closed in 1975) and workshop used by NNC for maintenance and repairs was located within the area that had formed part of the old Llynvi Iron Works complex. A separate workshop also existed at Tondy and a further wagon repair shop at Nantyffyllon. The internal system now under NCB auspices was dieselised in 1973 and they continued the NNC practice of naming locomotives (steam and diesel) after daughters of various Company officials.

Just to the north of Maesteg Castle Street, the GWR line was spanned by an elliptical-arched bridge which had been originally constructed by NNC in 1867 to link the Maesteg Iron Works with the Llynvi Iron Works. It was later widened to additionally accommodate the PTR line and faced on the north side only with red brick. The bridge was demolished in 1987 as part of a road widening scheme.

In 1896, just after the company was formed, seven collieries were included within the group:

Mine	Area	Manager	Employed	
			Undergd.	Surface
Caerau South Pit	Maesteg	J.T.Salathiel	450	83
Caerau N ^o 2 Level	'	'	2	1
Coegnant	'	Jenkin Jones	488	81
Maesteg Deep	'	David Davies	133	23
N ^o 9 Level	'	'	299	54
Park Slip	Tondu	Thomas Twist	210	58
Tynewydd	Ogmore Vale	D.Simms Rees	159	45
Wyndham N ^{os} 1 & 2	Nantymoel	John Jones	762	112
Total			2503	457
Total All			2960	

Details for 1933 showed the following position.

Mine	Area	Manager	Employed	
			Undergd.	Surface
Caerau (Temp.Closed)	Maesteg	David Evans		
Caerau N ^o 3	'	'	1526	219
Coegnant	'	W.M.Llewellyn	1544	118
Maesteg Deep	'	David Davies	136	35
St. John's	'	Wm.Morgan	594	132
Total	3800	504		
Total All			4304	

By 1940, there had been a considerable reduction in the number of miners employed by the company and Maesteg Deep pit had been closed, details being:

Mine	Manager	Employed	
		Undergd.	Surface
Caerau	S. Bryant	442	82
Caerau N ^o 3			
Coegnant	W.H. Llewellyn	979	140
St. John's	R.E. Petty	1267	167
Total	2688	389	
Total All		3077	

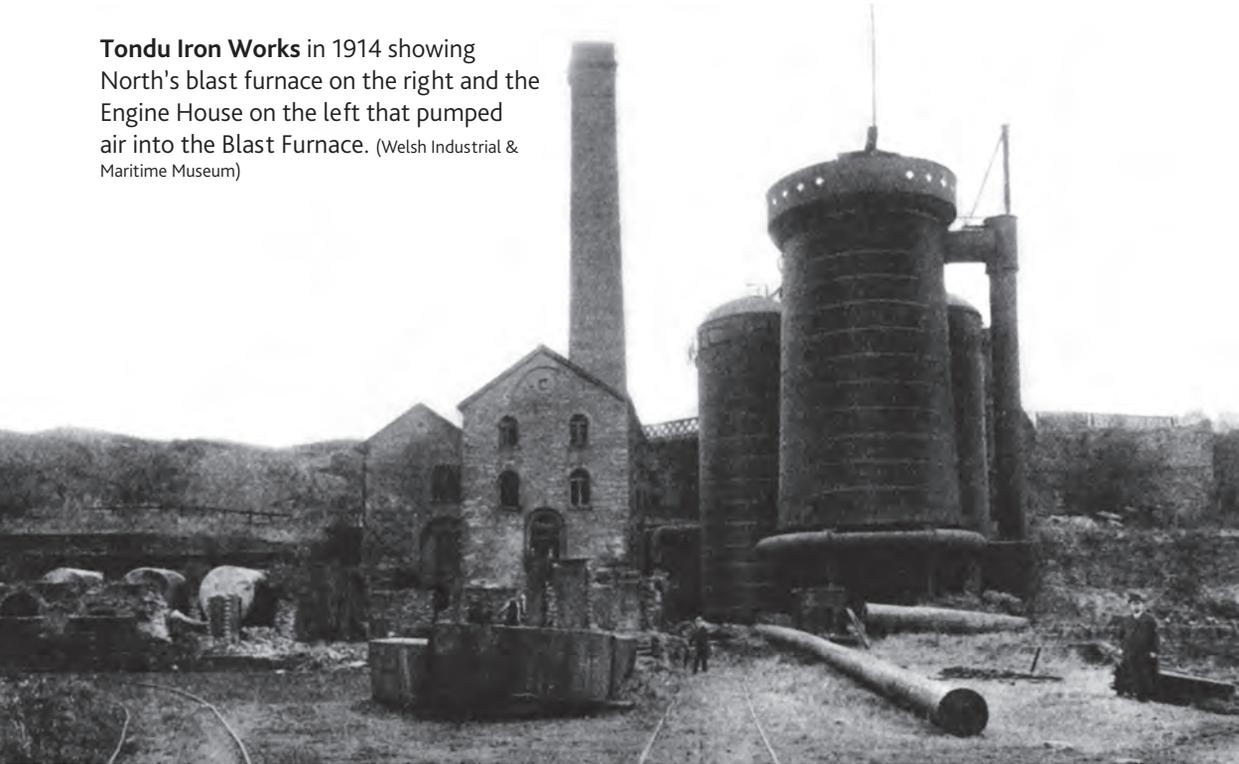
Tondu Iron Works were established by Sir Robert Price in the late 1830s. This and the associated mines were purchased by John Brogden and Sons. James (the fourth son) rapidly expanded the works in 1861 and employed 900 men.
(Welsh Industrial & Maritime Museum)



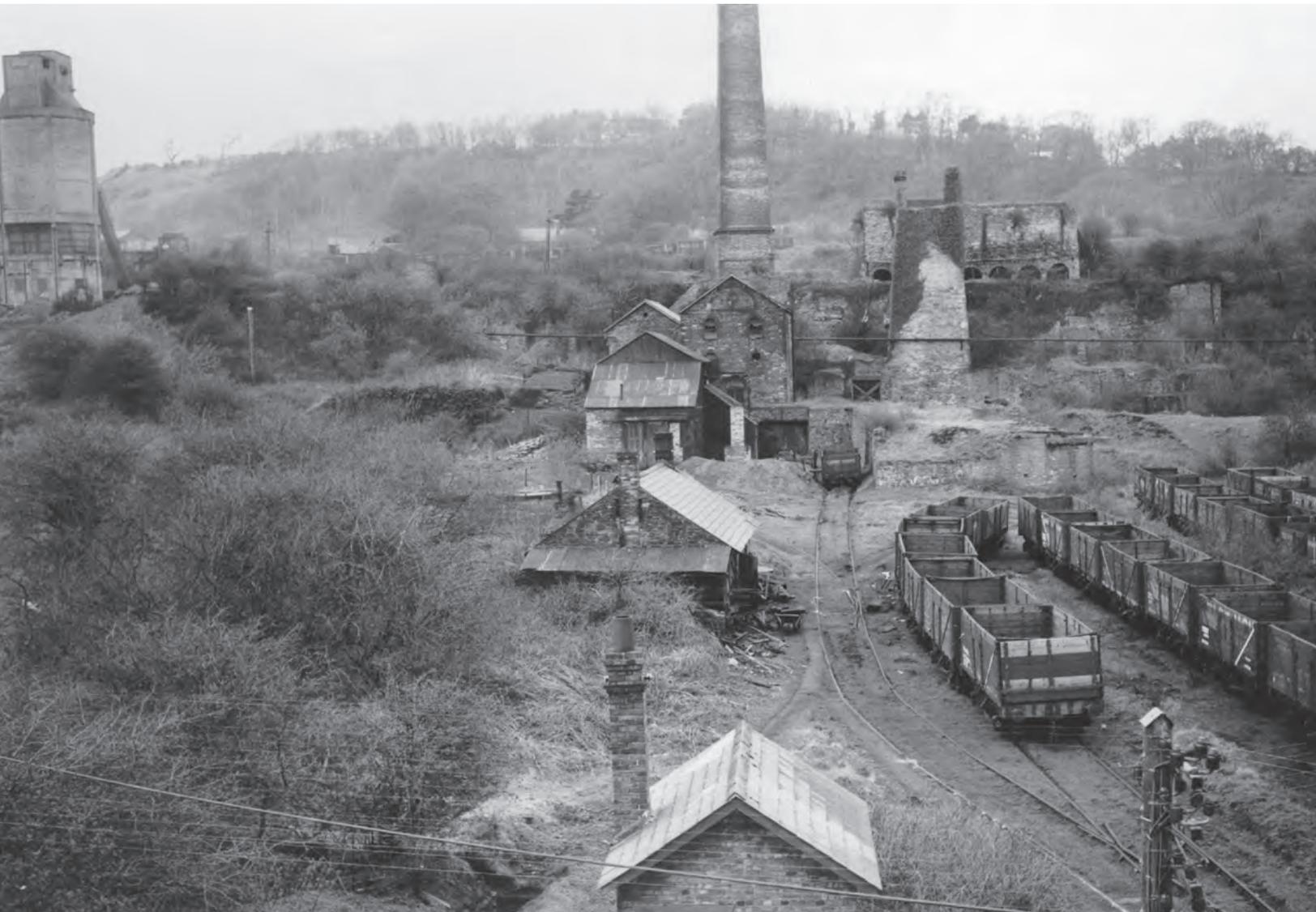
Due to a slump in the Iron Trade the works at Tondu were taken over by Colonel North in 1888 who kept it going as a coal production unit, photographed here in April 1963.
(Welsh Industrial & Maritime Museum)



Tondu Iron Works in 1914 showing North's blast furnace on the right and the Engine House on the left that pumped air into the Blast Furnace. (Welsh Industrial & Maritime Museum)



Tondu Iron Works, photographed here in 1949, was taken over by Colonel North in 1888 who kept it going as a coal production unit. The kilns and furnaces went into disrepair after 1947 but have now been preserved as an historic site. The Works was accessed off the Bridgend line south of Tondu station and also via Park Slip on the line to Cefn Jct. (Welsh Industrial & Maritime Museum)

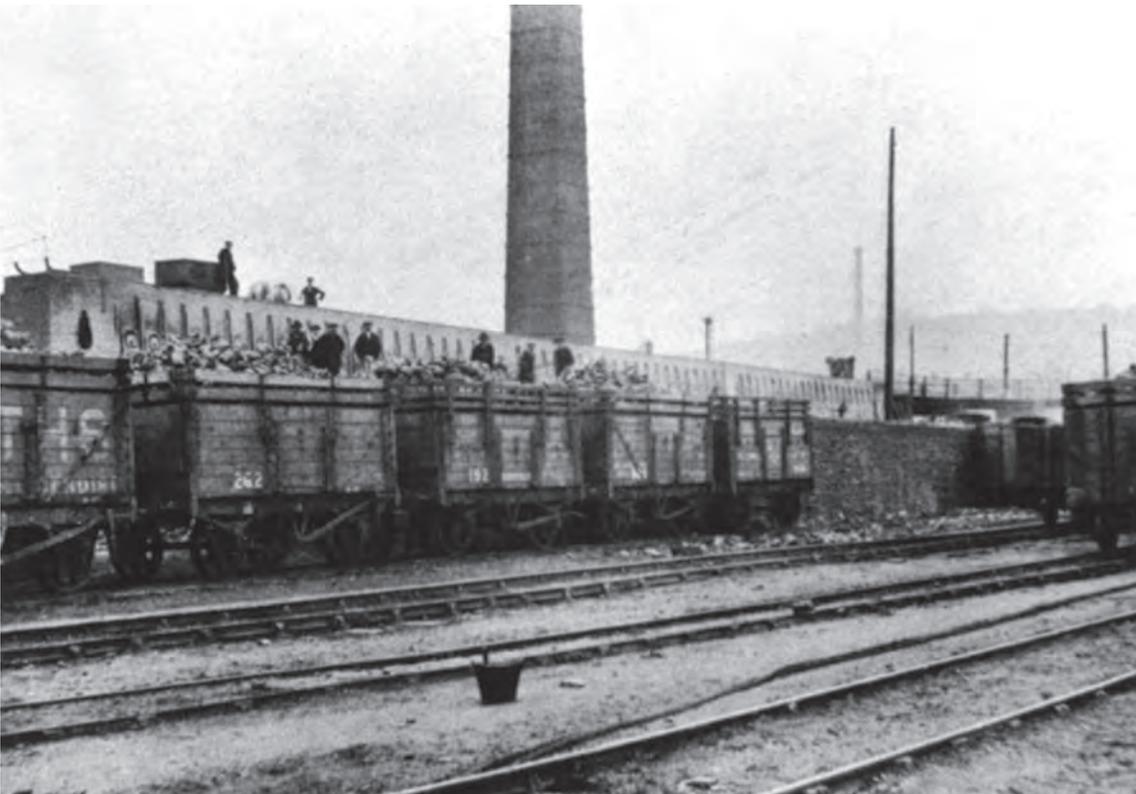




Tondy Iron Works 'owned by Sir Robert Price (MP for Hertfordshire)' opened in 1838. The firm was taken over by John Brogden & Sons in 1854 but went into receivership in 1878 due to a slump in the Iron Trade. It was taken over by Colonel North a decade later. The kilns and furnaces went into disrepair after 1947 but have now been preserved as an historic site. (Stuart Davies)



Central Washery at Tondy next to Tondy South Sidings with coke wagons on the left and wagons receiving washed coal on the right. The Washery was replaced by new ones at Maesteg and Caedu just to the south of Ogmore Vale.



Tondy Coke Ovens at the top of the incline leading from Tondy South. The Coke wagons are owned by North's. Their sides have additional raised planking to provide extra capacity for the lighter weight of coke compared to coal.

CHAPTER 3

THE TONDU VALLEYS POSITION IN THE SOUTH WALES COALFIELD

The Tondy Valleys, located in the middle of the South Wales Coalfield together with the Afan Valley, were the most westerly of the bituminous and steam coal producing Valleys. The Neath Valley to the west was the start of the anthracite coal producing area. The Tondy Valleys, composed principally of the Llynfi, Ogmore and Garw Valley, can also be considered to include those collieries in the Gilfach Goch area and those on the southern outcrop of the coalfield on the line to Porthcawl and Margam.

The Tondy Valleys formed an important part of the South Wales coalfield. This is the largest continuous coalfield in Britain, extending from Blaenavon in the northeast of Monmouthshire, through the Ebbw (Western), Sirhowy, Rhymney, Taff, Cynon, Rhondda and finally the Tondy Valleys. All these areas produced bituminous coking and steam coal. The anthracite-producing western section comprised of the Neath, Swansea, Amman and Llanelly Valleys, extending as far west as the Gwendraeth. The coalfield covered approximately 1,000 square miles in the counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan, Carmarthen and touching on South Pembroke. From north to south, the coalfield extended for 21 miles at its maximum, from the heads of the valleys down to Bedwas, Nantgarw, Tondy and Cefn collieries which marked its most southerly point, though further west it extended out under the sea into Swansea and Carmarthen Bays.

Geologically, the coalfield developed over some 250 million years ago when the land mass that became South Wales gradually sank to form a basin shape. This then became flooded and a carboniferous limestone formed on the original surface, which slowly began to rise after, filled with mud and sand. As a cyclical pattern of floods, drainage and vegetation growth began, the buried vegetation formed peat and then lignite as it was buried deeper and deeper, eventually becoming coal. The pressures exerted underground by the geological movement of rocks and earthquakes, together with surface floods, produced huge movements in the seams of coal with some seams riding up over others under intense pressure and causing what became known as arch-type folds or anticlines, such movement producing areas where there were now huge deposits and others where there were none, called washouts. Maesteg lay in the path of one of these faults where the coal seams became buried significantly deeper. The result of such phenomena was that what started as a continuous sheet of developing coal ended as a hugely distorted network of levels, or seams which varied in nature, depth and accessibility with attendant dangers caused by the chemical characteristics involved such as those causing firedamp.

The result of such geological activity was that South Wales mined coal was

divided into three types, bituminous, steam coal and anthracite. The first two were found in the eastern part of the coalfield which stretched from the Eastern Valley to the Tondy Valleys, the third in the western part from the Neath Valleys to the Gwendraeth Valley. The quality ranking of South Wales bituminous coals improves from east to west, so the Tondy Valleys' quality was some of the best.

In the coal seams, the top levels (or Upper Coal Measures), nearest the surface, were most suitable for use as house coals and in gas production. This coal had a volatility rating of up to 40%, a carbon content of 80-90% and a low ash level but caused a variable amount of smoke when burnt. The Middle Coal Measures produced coking coal for use in the making of iron and steel, manufacturing and for power station use in the generation of electricity, while the Lower Measures provided the best steam coal, used in the generation of steam especially by railway engines and ships. Anthracite (smokeless) is found deepest in the ground, has the highest carbon/lowest ash content, is used for central heating and in smokeless zones, set up in the late 1950s. Patent fuels, such as Phurnacite produced at Abercwmboi in the Aberdare Valley, Crown Fuel at Cardiff Docks and Maindy, aimed to produce similar qualities in their ovoids.

South Wales bituminous coal was comparatively soft and friable (brittle). This meant that great care was needed to be taken to avoid degradation when screening, tipping into holds of ships or loading into bunkers and tenders of locomotives. Because of the friable nature, the GWR and other users of South Wales coal were unable to use coaling plants with long drops. They could only coal engines from just above cab height. In the tipping of coal into the holds of ships, the coal trimmers, employed by the shipping lines and the lines themselves, used a variety of means to avoid unacceptable amounts of degradation caused by the long drops involved. As steam traction disappeared from the railways, the steam coal was

used in steelworks and power stations, whilst the decline in the use of coal for gas production enabled it to be either used for domestic markets or crushed and used in small coal blends.

Welsh steam coal was recognised as the best in the world and was in huge demand from foreign markets for industry, railways and ships until the advent of oil-firing. This was due to the high proportion of carbon (almost 90%) and hydrogen (4%) which with its other constituents of 4% oxygen, less than 2% ash and less than 1% nitrogen, sulphur and water gave it a huge advantage in the market. The valleys north of Newport, the Aberdare area and the Tondy Valleys provided vast quantities of steam coal for the GWR and Southern Railways until 1960. The Elder Dempster Shipping Line owned a colliery in the Tondy area in the 1900-1920s. In the 1960s, as steam engines were displaced by diesels, the steel production process at Llanwern Steelworks (a Government sponsored development) created an alternative demand for coal.

In 1864, a government committee, at the insistence of MPs from constituencies in the Northeast of England, recommended that in future, naval contracts should specify a mixture of $\frac{2}{3}$ Welsh and $\frac{1}{3}$ Newcastle steam coals. After complaints of poor steaming and the consequent effects on a ship's performance, the admiralty reverted to the exclusive use of Welsh steam coal from 1872. However, coal fuelling of Royal Navy ships was increasingly challenged from 1904, when strategists successfully argued for oil-firing of the steam boilers.

The prime coking coal seams (coded 301a and b) run from the top of the Western and Sirhowy Valleys down through the middle of the coalfield and into the Tondy Valleys, giving the reasoning for the creation of the Steel Company of Wales on the latter's doorstep at Margam in 1933.

The Tondy Valleys also produced some of the best house coal in South Wales, its properties being a good volatility rating,

high heat output and low ash content making it particularly suited to open hearth fires. As a result, it was sent by rail all over South and West Wales for distribution through station yards and later coal concentration depots. In later years, almost all other coal produced in the Tondy Valleys was prime coking coal used in steel production at Margam Steelworks.

Large quantities of coking coal, which needed to meet stringent ratings in terms of its chemical content to be classed as prime, had long been used in the manufacture of steel at the Steel Company of Wales, Port Talbot, Guest Keen & Nettlefolds at Cardiff, Richard Thomas & Baldwins at Ebbw Vale and from 1961 the Spencer Works at Llanwern. These plants were all nationalised to become British Steel in 1967. These requirements gave rise to the need for coal preparation plants. There, in addition to washing the coal, it was mixed with that supplied from other pits and blended to produce the prime coking coal used in the production of best quality steel. There were two main coal preparation plants involved in this process. That at Hafodyrynys where coal was blended from Blaenserchan, Tirpentwys and Llanhilleth with the indigenous product. The other at Ogmore Vale Central Washery coal was blended from surrounding pits and later from the Garw Valley. The blended coal from both was conveyed to Margam Steelworks in fully fitted block trains of 21ton Minifit wagons from the early 1960s.

For power generation, a low volatile coal was required, low in ash and plasticity. This was found across the coalfield but especially in later years, in opencast sites from where it was conveyed in block trains, including Merry-Go-Round wagon trains. The larger power stations were to be found at Aberthaw and Uskmouth, with smaller ones at Treforest (Maesmawr), Gelli Las (Tondy) and Carmarthen Bay (Pembrey).

Until the mid-1960s, many stations had yards where house coal was received by coal merchants for delivery to consumers

first by horse and cart, then by lorry. With rail modernisation and the introduction of Multiple Aspect Signalling, British Rail found that it was far too costly to link such yards into the new signalling system. To overcome this, Coal Concentration Depots were established at central points, such as Cardiff, Newport, Barry, Bridgend, etc, with considerably improved wharfage for merchants to handle all house coal traffic, which was very much on the decline as natural gas, fuelling domestic fires and central heating, replaced coal.

The market for anthracite and patent fuels took off in the 1960s with the setting up of smokeless zones especially around London. This coal traffic was conveyed in hopper wagons with bottom doors in either full or part train loads. Individual wagons were formed into full trains at either Margam or Severn Tunnel Junction, with the anthracite and boiler fuels originating from the Neath, Llanelly and Cynon Valleys and the patent fuel at the Phurnacite Plant at Abercwmboi.

Large volumes of steam coal were exported or conveyed coastwise from the ports of Newport, Cardiff, Barry, Port Talbot and Swansea, the smaller docks and wharves at such places as Aberthaw, Porthcawl, Llanelly and Burry Port becoming consumed by their larger neighbours. Coal was exported all over the world, especially for steamship and railway use. Coastwise, shipping conveyed power station coal to Battersea on the Thames and other water connected plant.

Collieries and mines varied considerably in size, ranging from drift mines to deep mines and in later years to opencast working. The latter is the modern method on a par with roadstone and other mineral extraction. It uses large excavating machines to cut into the coal seam strata, similar to quarry workings. The coal product extracted is mostly used by power stations, fed by rapid bottom-door discharge rail hopper wagons. In earlier years, coal has been produced throughout the coalfield in a variety of sizes, ranging from large (especially for locomotive and

ship use), through sized product such as nuts, peas and beans to small coal, with patent fuel as ovoids. In later years, most coal was washed before sale to get rid of the impurities, with resultant detriment to the rivers nearby. Slag and other waste from the mining process were deposited in tips of varying size around the collieries. This unsightly legacy of coal mining has often been removed in later years by reclaiming usable coal left in the tip by the washing process and then subsequently landscaping the former tip area.

In 1913, the South Wales coalfield produced 57 million tons, of which 37 million tons were exported through the South Wales docks. Barry alone shipped 11 million tons. This is the greatest quantity of coal loaded at any port in Britain.

Whatever its size, whatever its shape and wherever it was going, the railways moved it. Coal movement was what the railways in South Wales were set up for, none more so than those in the Tondy Valleys, which were one of the few which began life on the broad-gauge railway, before switching to the standard gauge in 1872.

Topographically, the Llynfi Valley has a much broader width than the defiles of the other two and centres on Maesteg. Here, the early development of the Maesteg and Llynfi Ironworks created a need for locally sourced ironstone and coal, similar to developments elsewhere in Tredegar, Pontypool and Ebbw Vale, though the

ironworks at Dowlais and Merthyr were on a much larger scale.

In the early 1970s, the Western Region of BR carried out tests to find the amount of coal passing to consumers by road. Previously it had been practise to charge low rates on movement of raw coal to washeries as higher rates were charged on the final movement to consumer but when the volume of the latter passing by road was studied, it was decided the initial movement to a washery should bear its full cost and the rates were increased, sometimes substantially. It was this that led the NCB in South Wales to link collieries with washeries underground in the 1970s to avoid the increased cost of the overland transit. Where this was impossible or uneconomic to achieve, the rail movement to a washery had to bear the increased rate which radically affected the viability of the coal.

TONDU VALLEYS COLLIERY DETAILS

The following details respective to the Tondy Valleys has been sourced from the 1931 List of Collieries On or Connected with the Great Western Railway:

Abbreviations used:

H House Coal. C Coking Coal. S Steam Coal. G Gas Coal. M Manufacturing Coal. W Washery. O Coke Ovens. B By-Product Plan

Colliery	Coal	Plant Invoicing Stn	Colliery Proprietor
Western	HS	Nantymoel	Ocean Coal Co. Ltd., Cardiff
Wyndham	HS	Ogmore Vale	Cory Bros, Cardiff
Penllwyngwent	HS	Ogmore Vale	Cory Bros, Cardiff
Cwmfwch or Aber N° 3	HS	Ogmore Vale	Cory Bros, Cardiff
Rhondda Main CHMS	W	Ogmore Vale	Cory Bros, Cardiff
Cwmogwr	H	Blackmill	Cwmogwr Coll. Co., Blackmill
Gelli Las	HM	Tondy	Gelli Las Coll.Co., Bridgend
Raglan CGHM	W	Llanharan	Raglan Colls. Ltd., Swansea
Wern Tarw	GHM	Llanharan	Meiros Colls. Ltd., Cardiff
International	CHMS	Blaengarw	Glenavon Garw Colls, Port Talbot
Ocean N° 6 or Garw	S	Blaengarw	Ocean Coal Co., Cardiff

Colliery	Coal	Plant Invoicing Stn	Colliery Proprietor
Glengarw	HS	Blaengarw	Glenavon Garw Colls,Port Talbot
Ffaldau/Oriental	CHS	Pontycymmer	Cory Bros, Cardiff
Danybryn	S	Pontycymmer	Braund Bros, Pontyrhyll
Avon	S	Abergwynfi	Ocean Coal Co., Cardiff
Coegnant	HMS	Maesteg	Norths Nav., Cardiff
Caerau	HMS	Maesteg	Norths Nav., Cardiff
Maesteg Deep	HS	Maesteg	Norths Nav., Cardiff
St.Johns	HMS	Maesteg&Cwmdu	Norths Nav., Cardiff
North's	BOW	Tondu& Maesteg	Norths Nav., Cardiff
Rock Fawr	M	Tondu	T.J.David, Porthcawl
Glenrhondda	HM	Treorchy	Glenavon Garw Colls,Port Talbot

MANPOWER OUTPUT & MANAGERS
Nº2 MAESTEG AREA 1957

	Manpower		Annual Output	
	Face	Overall	% on 'face	Tons
Aberbaiden.	246	565	44.	98,456
Avon.	323	638	51.	150,466
Bryn.	148	326	45	78,302
Caerau.	364	764	48.	150,182
Coegnant.	370	778	48.	138,120
Duffryn Rhondda.	534	1106	48.	23,039
Ffaldau.	393	793	50.	262,963
Garth Tonmawr.	102	204	50.	46,674
Garw.	284	601	47.	168,174
Glengarw.	141	315	45.	60,642
Glenhafod.	124	256	48.	76,880
Glyncorrgwg.	219	669	33.	106,438
International.	161	364	44.	81,960
Llanharan.	392	926	42.	19,730
Newlands.	314	669	47.	145,003
North Rhondda.	124	257	48.	75,832
Penllwyngwent.	217	446	49.	103,975
Pentre	142	287	49.	76,252
St. John's.	462	985	47.	246,518
Wern Tarw	260	573	45.	99,064
Western.	376	769	49.	215,492
Wyndham	404	878	46	208,830
Totals.		6100	13169	3,017,292
Averages for the Area.	277	599	46.	137,150.
Averages for the Division.	293	654	45.	152,482.

Nº2 MAESTEG AREA 1961

Area General Manager: W.B. Cleaver. Assistant AGM: R.G. Davies.
 Area Production Manager: R.G. Llewellyn. Deputy Planning: C. Wheatman.
 Deputy APM Operations: C.J. Davies.
 Group Managers: R. E. Petty (South), V. H. Evans (Afan), C. P. Jones (Maesteg), V. C. Jones (Garw), R. A. Evans (Ogmore).

South Group:	Llanharan. Newlands. Wern Tarw. Glyncorrwg North Rhondda (closed) Manpower - 1,634. Output: 309,771 tons.	Afan Group:	Avon Duffryn Rhondda Garth Tonmawr Manpower – 2,468 Output - 601,783 tons
Maesteg Group:	Bryn. Caerau. Coegnant St. John's. Manpower - 2,720. Output - 768,562 tons.	Garw Group:	Ffaldau Garw Glengarw (Closed) International Manpower – 1,905 Output - 446,898 tons
Ogmore Group:	Penllwyngwent Wyndham Western Manpower - 1,993. Output - 505,887 tons.		
Manpower for the Area	10,720.	Output for the Area	2,632,901 tons.



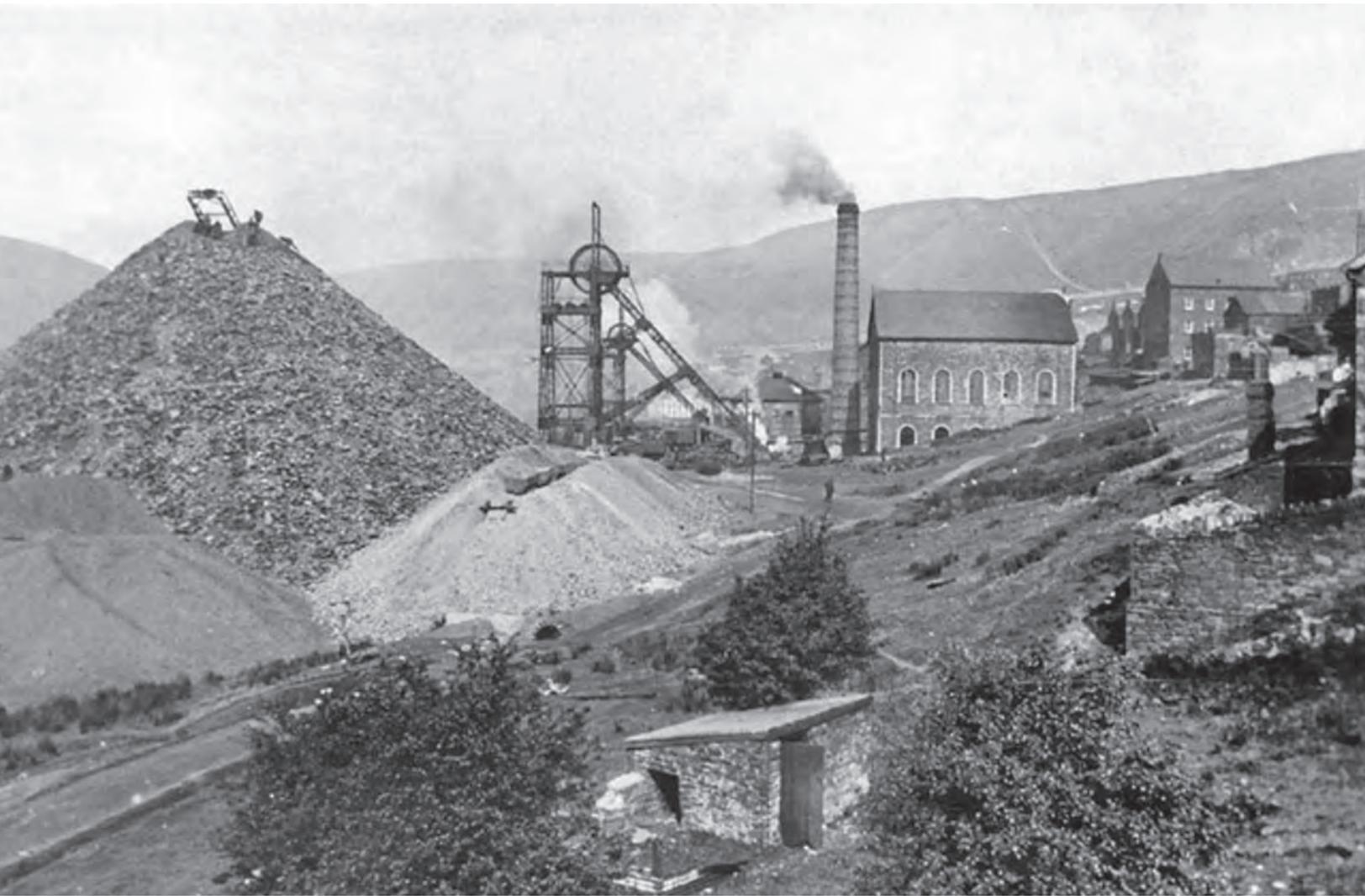
A panoramic view of the Wyndham Western Colliery with three quintessential Winding Gear towers, each at the head of a lift shaft giving access to the coalface.

A view of the NCB loading screens and network at St. John's Colliery, Cwmdu, with *Pamela* shunting.



Avon Colliery sits atop Abergwynfi on 6 August 1964. The former station site and all the associated track work recovered (centre) since the passenger services had been diverted to Blaengwynfi from June 1960.





An early view of Britannic colliery, Gilfach Goch.

CHAPTER 4

PASSENGER SERVICES

Dates of Operation

Llynfi	1864 - 1970
Ogmore	1873 - 1958
Garw	1887 - 1952
Gilfach	1881 - 1930
Porthcawl	1865 - 1965

Passenger services in the Tondy Valleys began in 1864. An inaugural broad-gauge passenger train was run from Bridgend to Maesteg on 25 February 1864 while regular broad gauge services to Maesteg and to Porthcawl ran in earnest from 1 August 1865. Some of the Porthcawl services ran through to/from Coegnant while the others started at Tondy. The L&O had its original terminus in Coity Road. In 1866 its services were extended into the Bridgend station of the South Wales Railway.

When the Llynfi and Ogmore companies amalgamated in 1866, a decision was made to convert the Llynfi system from broad to standard gauge to match the Ogmore, which then only provided freight services. For this purpose, the L&O Co. exchanged their broad-gauge passenger locomotives with standard gauge engines from the West Cornwall Railway which was being built to broad gauge. This decision also necessitated standard gauge facilities being provided at Bridgend station. For this purpose, a new platform and station building (which lasted until 1968) were built alongside the SWR broad gauge facilities on the up side. The Maesteg service was extended to Cymmer

Afan from 19 July 1880 and finally to Abergwynfi from 3 May 1899.

Passenger services from Bridgend to the Ogmore Valley commenced on 3 May 1873 and those to Gilfach on 24 May 1881. The Garw Valley service developed in stages from Brynmenyn to Pontyrhyll on 2 May 1887, to Pontycymmer from 28 May 1889 and to Blaengarw on 2 September 1902. GWR Board minutes offer no clue as to the reason for this peculiarly staged introduction of services.

Following the abandonment of the Broad Gauge in South Wales in 1872, Bridgend station was rebuilt and facilities were provided for the Valley trains to arrive and depart using the north face of the Up Main Line island platform. During this period trains mostly served four destinations, Abergwynfi, Nantymoel, Blaengarw and Gilfach Goch. At times, to ease route capacity these ran as a combined train from Bridgend, detaching at Tondy (Abergwynfi portion), at Brynmenyn (Garw portion) and at Blackmill (Gilfach portion). All this, when the distance from Bridgend to Tondy and Brynmenyn was only 3 and 3¾ miles respectively.

At Bridgend, when services were worked individually, in order to minimise wrong direction, run round movements over the Up Main Line, on arrival of the valley services, the locomotive at the east end (i.e. off the first arriving train) would run round by the above means but the remaining locomotives would uncouple from the train they had brought in, move forward and attach to the train in front for the return working. The

Abergwynfi service was last in and first out in recognition of it serving the most populous valley and thus minimise connection times with main line services.

The Abergwynfi services mostly ran independently, whilst the Ogmere Valley services would consist of three portions – to Nantymoel, Blaengarw and Gilfach Goch. The train engine was always for the Ogmere, being the senior branch and the most populated valley of the three, the other two portions being dropped off at Brynmenyn and Blackmill respectively.

The actual junction at Brynmenyn preceded the station which as a result was located in the 'V' between the two branches, with loops on both the Ogmere and Garw branches, each line having a platform (four in total). The Garw portion was uncoupled by a Porter/Shunter/Crossing Keeper and then left outside the station to be collected by the branch engine when the main train had drawn forward into the Down Ogmere platform.

Similarly, Blackmill station was also situated in the 'V' of the Junction of the Ogmere and Gilfach branches. In this case, the station had a platform face on one loop of each branch only. To enable trains in opposite directions to cross on either branch, both branch loops were signalled for bi-directional running. However, with only one platform, it was not possible to cross two passenger trains. As at Brynmenyn, the Branch (Gilfach) portion was left outside the station until the awaiting branch engine was attached. Services to Gilfach were withdrawn in 1930, though did resume to Tremains during the war years.

For services in the Bridgend direction, both at Blackmill and Brynmenyn, the branch service arrived first, its engine detached and moved clear, allowing the Ogmere portion when its station duties were completed to draw forward, reverse into the adjoining platform and couple-up to

the branch portion. In such cases, on returning to Bridgend the two portions would be at the wrong end to return to the valley they had just arrived from. To compensate for this, it was necessary for both the Ogmere and Garw portions to consist of the same number and type of vehicles and thus be capable of alternating between the two.

The Tondu Valley passenger services were never intensive. The extent of single, as opposed to double, track sections (albeit with passing loops at various locations) and the volume of mineral trains required, contrived to preclude an attractive regular interval service on any of the routes, though the final Bridgend to Treherbert single car services did run at a two-hourly regular interval. There were also miners' services in the Llynfi Valley north of Llangynwyd, running at shift changeover times and school trains to/from Llangynwyd.

Furthermore, to avoid the Valley's punitive gradients, the railway in each case shared the valley floor with the corresponding river, and consequently some stations were not always as convenient for the community they served, compared to the alternative bus route which ran along the main streets.

Passenger Locomotives

The original broad-gauge engines worked both passenger and goods services and consisted of two domeless 0-6-0 saddle tanks (named *Ada* and *Una*) designed by Sir Daniel Gooch (then GWR Locomotive Superintendent) and delivered to the Llynfi Valley Railway on 4 April 1862 and a 4-4-0 saddle tank (*Rosa*) in 1863. With the amalgamation of the Llynfi and Ogmere companies and the decision to change from the broad to narrow gauge, these three broad gauge engines were exchanged with the West Cornwall Railway for four standard

gauge engines, a 2-4-0 tender engine, built by Robert Stephenson in 1853 and three 2-4-0 tank engines, the first built in 1855, the other two in 1860. The OVR, who were using Sharp, Stewart 0-6-0 tank engines for their freight services, ordered three Black Hawthorn 0-6-0 tanks with outside cylinders for the start of their passenger services in 1873. When the GWR began working the L&O, they soon scrapped most of these engines and introduced their own standard designs.

By the turn of the twentieth century, allocation details for 1901 show that services were in the hands of a Metro 2-4-0T, a 3500 0-4-4T (probably working the Porthcawl service) and three 2021 Class supplemented by the Buffalo 1076 Class. In November 1908, a 4400 Class 2-6-2T arrived from Newport where it had been working the Blaenavon service and took up the working of the Porthcawl passenger service, being joined by a second in April 1912, both remaining until the early 1920s. Four new 2-6-2Ts of the future 4500 Class arrived by the end of 1910 for the main Valley Passenger workings, although the Metro and 3500 Classes together with five 2021s remained on the allocation. A Stella Class 2-4-0 arrived in June 1919, remaining until August 1921, to work the daily Porthcawl to Cardiff service and return. This was replaced in January 1920 by the allocation of Bulldog No 3381 *Birkenhead*. One engine of this class was to have a regular presence at Tondy until 1939.

By 1920, Tondy still had two of the 4400 Class for the Porthcawl working but only one remaining 4500, though still with four Metro 2-4-0Ts, all engaged on passenger work with assistance when required from the allocation of Buffalos. By the end of 1924, the second of the 4400s had disappeared, the class not returning to the area until December 1931. The allocation for 1930 showed only one 2-6-2T available, though the 1929 build of new 5700 Class

pannier tanks would make itself felt in the area during the year, supported by the still strong allocation of Buffalos and 2721 Class.

From 1932, two 44XXs were again allocated for the Porthcawl service and by 1934, the allocation of the larger 45XX 2-6-2Ts had increased to two, the allocation of 5700 Class panniers being increased to no fewer than 19 by 1940, these taking over the Ogmore and Garw services from the previous 2721s.

The 5600 Class 0-6-2T was introduced into the area in 1941 and worked both passenger and freight. The Llynfi Valley services were still mostly in the hands of the 45XX 2-6-2Ts and 57XXs with the two 44XXs on the Porthcawls. From 1946 a newer and heavier design of 2-6-2T, No 3100, arrived to work the Porthcawl-Cardiff Residential, a duty it shared in some years on alternate days with Ebbw Jct.'s 3103. Later, new 8497/98/99 became important passenger engines including main line duties but 8499 soon transferred to Ebbw Junction.

With the introduction of the Cardiff Valleys Regular Interval service in September 1953, 15 of the 4575 Class locos were modified for Auto-working. These gave a greater power output than the 64XXs normally employed on other Auto workings. The Regular Interval scheme did not embrace the Tondy Valleys but five of these 2-6-2Ts were allocated to Tondy and Auto-working was introduced on many Llynfi and most Ogmore and Porthcawl services.

The late 1950s saw the allocation of two larger 2-6-2Ts of the 5100 Class to work Llynfi Valley and excursion traffic, alongside the 56XXs and the newly arrived 9400 Class. The final year of steam in the area still saw one 41XX and two 56XXs available for passenger work at the depot. A 41XX was used on the 5-coach school train which brought pupils from the upper Afan and Llynfi Valleys to Llangynwyd from 25 April 1960.

A detailed account of each of the main passenger locomotive types now follows:

4400 Class

First introduced in October 1904, the 4400 Class commenced their long association with Tondy Shed and the Porthcawl Branch workings in particular, with the allocation of No 4406 on 7 November 1908, after a four-year spell working the Eastern Valley services from Newport. No 4400 (still as the original No 115 until the 28 December 1912 renumbering), also from Newport, joined No 4406 on 19 April 1912. These two remained working the Porthcawl passenger and freight services until the early 1920s. No 4400 went on trial to Ludlow for a month in August 1921 but returned to Tondy, who in the December lost its only 45XX as a firm transfer to Ludlow. No 4406 was first to leave when in November 1922 it was sent to Newport and the following March to Severn Tunnel Jct. which created a new deviation in the 44XXs' career, probably to work the Monmouth branch. It remained at STJ until November 1924 when it entered Swindon Works. No 4400 had left Tondy in November 1924 to work on the Moorswater branch where it was joined by No 4406 on release from Swindon in March 1925.

A gap then occurred in the 44's service at Tondy but 7 December 1931 saw a return in the form of Nos 4403 and 4404. The next 22 years, from 1931-53, saw the progressive allocation of Nos 4403/4/5/6/8 to the depot, maintaining a presence of two of the class throughout (see table). An allocation of two 44s was the order of the day at Tondy until 1953, when some of their larger sisters of the 4575 Class were equipped for Auto-Train working and transferred there in September.

The two small 44s on the Porthcawl branch were used one on the Passenger

turn, the other on the Goods. Due to the tortuous curvature of the line from Pyle, the practice was to turn these at Tondy in the afternoon and each night so as to equalise the tyre wear and rail impact. Additionally, they each faced opposite directions one bunker leading, the other chimney.

No 4408 was condemned from Tondy in January 1953. No 4406 was transferred to Laira in November 1954 marking the end of their days in South Wales. 4406 along with 4405 and 4410 were the last members of the class to be withdrawn on 12 September 1955.

Full details of the Tondy allocations were:

Nov 1908 – Nov 1922	4406
Apl 1912 - Nov 1924	4400
Dec 1931 - Apl 1934	4403
Dec 1931 – Feb 1933	4404
July 1932 – Nov 1932	4405*
July 1932 – Jan 1953	4408
Sep 1935 – Apl 1952	4404
Apl 1952 – Nov 1954	4406

* Transferred to Tondy while Nos 4403/4 were both in Works.

4500 Class

In 1906, it was the intention to build a further 20 of the 4400 Class but experience with their small wheel diameter of 4ft 1½in, indicated that a larger driving wheel would further enhance their versatility and in particular, their turn of speed. So, the 20 were built at Wolverhampton under Lot N3 with the larger 4ft 7½in Driving wheel. They were originally numbered 2161 to 2180 and renumbered 4500-4519 in 1912.

Two 4500s were mostly available at Tondy from 1918 onwards intended for the Llynfi Valley service, being the heaviest trafficked Tondy Passenger workings and until 1950 were usually sub-shedded at

Bridgend for early morning starts. The full Tondy allocations of the non-auto fitted members of the 4500 and 4575 Classes were:

1918 – 1921	4539
1918 – 1920	4537
1929	4503
1929 – 1931	4541
1930 – 1931	4509
1932 – 1935	4522
1932 – 1943	5533
1936 – 1953	4557
1938	4518
1944 – 1953	5556

4575 Class Auto Fitted

In 1953, fifteen of the 4575 Class (all built in 1927/8) were modified for Auto-Train working with the introduction of regular interval services in the Cardiff Valleys on 21 September, allocations were:

Cathays	4580 4581 4589 5511 5534 5568 5572*
Barry	4578 5527 5529
Tondu	5524 5545 5555 5560 5574

*5572 is preserved at the Great Western Society, Didcot.

Subsequent changes to the Tondy allocation were:

Most of the changes took place in September when the allocation was usually reduced at the end of the Porthcawl branch Summer service. Before September 1953, two 4400s and two 4500s were regularly allocated to Tondy principally for Passenger working. From 21 September 1953, the Llynfi, Ogmore and Porthcawl passenger services were converted to Auto-Train working. Tondy was allocated five Auto-fitted 4500s that had been recently modified for this purpose. This was reduced to four (5524 was transferred to Penzance) after the cessation of the Ogmore Vale services in May 1958.

On Saturdays, the Tondy Valleys Auto-Trains were formed of three trailers with the locomotive sandwiched between the first and second. At less busy periods, two would suffice and the locomotive would lead, chimney first, up the valleys in true South Wales tradition. On summer Saturdays, due to loadings, the Porthcawl branch was likely to be worked by conventional stock or even an Auto-train formed of 4 Auto-trailers but in Winter, near the end of steam working, one trailer would suffice.

In July 1960 four Auto turns existed at Tondy for three Auto 4575s. These were covered by Nos 5529, 5545 and 5555. The April allocation shows only 5545 and 5555, 5529 subsequently arriving in June for the summer season.

Nos 5545 and 5555 spent their entire Auto working lives at Tondy and both were transferred to Machynlleth in April 1961. No 5555 was condemned at Exeter in July 1963 whilst 5545 ended her days at Gloucester in November 1964 and was one of the last 4575s remaining in service.

Route rationalisation at Cymmer between the former GW and R&SBR tracks, resulted in the service from Bridgend to Abergwynfi being diverted to Blaengwynfi from 13 June 1960. This dispensed with the steepest part of the

5524	9.53-9.58	then Exeter	Condemned 6.60
5529	8.58-9.59 & 6.60-8.60	then Bath Road	Condemned 8.60
5534	3.59-1.60	then St Blazey	Condemned 9.60
5545	9.53-9.60	then Machynlleth Neyland 9.63 Gloucester 11.64	4.61 Penzance 9.62 Slough 6.64 Condemned 11.64
5555	9.53-9.60	then Machynlleth 4.61 Exeter 7.63	Salop 9.61 Condemned 7.63
5560	9.53-9.55 & 8.60-9.60	Laira 4.62	Condemned 4.62
5574	9.53-9.55 & 6.58-12.58		Condemned Tondy 12.58

route into Abergwynfi and enabled the 4575s to be replaced with the less powerful 6400s. In the middle of August 1960, Nos 6408, 6410, 6419 and 6424 were allocated to Tondu and the remaining 4575s transferred away (Nos 5529 '5545' 5555).

With the closure of the R&SBR services on 3 December 1962, the Llynfi Valley service was then extended to Treherbert and dieselised at first with single railcar W55019 but following a service revision in January 1963 it was joined by W55026 and later others to provide an allocated two. By this time, the Porthcawl branch was also proposed for closure but remained steam hauled to the end. The final Tondu Auto working coincided with the closure of the Porthcawl branch on 7 September 1963 and the last Auto-Trailers W241/246 left Tondu in January 1964.

Auto Working Apparatus

Auto-Trailers had a cab at the leading end with a regulator pivoted above the end windows, the position of which was externally identified by a triangular plate. This was connected by means of cranks to a system of levers and rods underneath the trailer. At the other end, a similar arrangement caused a square-section rod to rotate transmitting this action to the regulator on the engine enabling its application remotely. The Trailer rodding fitted around an eye on the engine as a longitudinally sliding joint compensating for buffer and drawgear compression. This connection was provided at both ends of GW Auto-fitted locomotives.

The Trailer Driving Cab was also fitted with:

- A valve in the brake pipe in order to apply the automatic vacuum brake
- A standard handbrake
- An electric bell communication between driver, guard and fireman

A warning gong on the front of the auto trailer and

A chain to operate the whistle on the locomotive

It was a regular occurrence for the Shunter or Fireman when uncoupling the engine to forget to disconnect the whistle chain; on moving forward, a small 'chirp' from the whistle would be followed by a loud crack when the chain between Trailer and Engine snapped. It was common practice for regular crews to carry a small supply of 'S' hooks.

As a result of Auto-working, a train could be propelled safely, avoiding the need for the locomotive to run round its train at each terminus. The Driver transferred to the leading cab at the start of each journey, but the Fireman remained on the footplate. The Fireman, working alone for some considerable part of his turn of duty, was qualified as being 'Passed-out', a footplate grade below that of Driver.

Because of the rodding resistance, no more than four Auto-Trailers (two at either end of the locomotive) were worked in this way. At Tondu, regular formations consisted of no more than three trailers but formations of four operated on the Porthcawl services in Summer.

From 1935 to 1954, this method of train operation was referred to as 'Auto' in the Working Timetables but the Western Region then abandoned this term in favour of 'Rail-Motor'. The GWR, however, had said farewell to proper Rail-Motors (a coach with an integral steam powered bogie) in 1935.

Bulldogs

Also with long associations with the Porthcawl branch from 1920-39 were the Bulldog Class 4-4-0s for the 'Residential' (commuter) service to Cardiff. The Bulldogs were the most prestigious engines ever allocated to Tondu and would have earned considerable interest at the time. The full list of engines involved during the 20-year period was as follows:

Year	Engine	Arr	Engine	Dep	Year End
1920	3381 <i>Birkenhead</i>	Jan			1
1922	3315 <i>Quantock</i>	Mar	3315	June	
	3419	June			
	3352 <i>Pendragon</i>	Oct	3352	Dec	1
1923			3419	Jan	
	3381 <i>Birkenhead</i>	Mar	3381	Dec	
	3419	Dec			1
1924-26					1
1927	3311 <i>Bulldog</i>	Feb	3311	June	
	3337 <i>The Wolf</i>	Apl	3337	June	
	3330 <i>Orion</i>	Dec	3419	Dec	1
1928					1
1929			3330	June	
	3378 <i>River Tawe</i>	June	3378	Sep	
	3345 <i>Smeaton</i>	Aug			1
1930					1
1931	3419	Mar	3419	June	1
1932	3347 <i>Kingsbridge</i>	July	3345	July	1
1933					1
1934			3347	May	
	3406 <i>Calcutta</i>	July			1
1935/6					1
1937	3335 <i>Tregothnan</i>	May	3406	May	
	3406 <i>Calcutta</i>	Nov			2
1938			3335	Jan	
	3407 <i>Madras</i>				2
1939			3407	Feb	
	3407 <i>Madras</i>	Apl	3406	Apl	
			3407	Oct	0

3100 Class

In October 1946, No 3100, a large 2-6-2 Prairie tank with 5ft 3in driving wheels, was released from Swindon Works after overhaul and was allocated to Tondy for working the Porthcawl to Cardiff Residential service, which had been suspended during the war years. A two-day cycle was operated in some years during summer alternating with a similar Ebbw Junction (Newport) based 31XX (No 3103). One leg of the working in the late 1950s included:

7.55am Porthcawl to Cardiff
12.28pm Cardiff to Porthcawl SO

2.20pm Porthcawl to Cardiff SO
5.25pm Cardiff to Porthcawl
6.50pm Porthcawl to Newport

The working commenced with an early morning parcels to Abergavenny where it was used for banking duties before returning with the empty vans to Newport, a round trip to Brynmawr, then the midday passenger to Porthcawl and back to Cardiff for the late evening service to Cymmer SX and Bridgend SO which sometimes was extended to Swansea. By 1963, the last had been discontinued and was covered by a through Cheltenham-Swansea train.

In earlier years, when the service was Bulldog operated, it included a round trip from Cardiff to Swansea in the downtime between the morning and evening residential services. No 3100 spent the whole of her remaining life at Tondy until withdrawal in May 1957. She was replaced at Tondy by one of the newer 5101 Class, No 4144, which was similar in design albeit with 5ft 8in Driving Wheels.

Coaching Stock

The earliest trains were formed of four then six-wheeled stock but bogie stock was in use by 1910. Passenger stock working on the Tondy Valleys was always standard GW non-corridor design. Trains were normally formed of up to four coaches until 1962 but mainly two or three coaches, one of which would always be a brake vehicle for guards' use in their train working responsibilities and also for the carrying of parcels, perishables, mail, milk traffic, bicycles and children's prams. The formation of each train set and the trains covered by it were set out in a Coach Working Programme, issued either by Regional HQ or the Divisional Office for each service. In addition to detailing the trains worked by the set, it also showed any parcels and other vehicles attached to the set for one or more journeys. Spare vehicles were held for strengthening trains when required and additional sets of coaches were allocated to depots such as Tondy for excursion or relief train use. A small milk van (4-wheel slatted Siphon) was added to the Porthcawl trains in summer to convey prams but subsequently a VT (see below) with four compartments (Diagram D85) and a larger luggage area was used.

Prior to the introduction of Auto-trains in 1953, Tondy had a coaching stock allocation of 41 non-corridor vehicles. The vehicle types allocated were:

VT Van Third (Class) where a third of the vehicle consisted of a small Guard's

Compartment which contained a Vacuum Brake valve, an open area for the conveyance of Luggage, Parcels, mail, etc., the other two thirds of the vehicle having six compartments accommodating 60 passengers.

T Third (Class) where the whole vehicle was for passengers with nine compartments giving a total capacity of 90 seated passengers. (The GW abolished Second Class in 1910, a move that had been instigated by the Midland Railway in 1875. Third Class was not however re-designated Second until 1956, becoming 'Standard' in 1984.)

It was a safety requirement for all passenger trains to have a Brake Vehicle marshalled at each end of the train. This was so that in the event of an emergency, the Guard could apply the Vacuum brake. Dispensation was allowed on some short local services where this provision was considered excessive. It was not until 1962, however, that a braked vehicle at only one end of a train was deemed acceptable. The Tondy coaching stock allocation was marshalled into 12 sets as follows:

Set No	Formation				
410	T	VT	T		
411	T	VT	T		
412	VT	T	T		VT
413	VT	T	T (SO)		VT
414	VT	T			
415	VT	T	VT		
416	VT	T	T	T	VT
417	T	VT	T		
418	T	VT	T (SO)		
419	T	VT	T (SO)		
420	VT	T	T		VT
421	VT	T	T		VT

(SO) Saturdays Only, the vehicle standing spare at other times.

In 1953, Auto-Train working was introduced at the start of the winter timetable. At first, seven gas-lit Auto-trailers were re-allocated to Tondy for this purpose but by the following summer, the

allocation increased and electric lit Auto-coaches arrived, three for the Llynfi Valley, two for Ogmore services and two for Porthcawl. On Saturdays, the Porthcawl services were increased to four trailers and the Llynfi service reverted to conventional stock to compensate.

The first 7 Auto-Trailers at Tondy were (Diagram No in brackets): 22 (J) 36 (N) 37 (N) 128 (A10) 142 (A20) 143 (A21) 3338 (A2).

All these trailers were Gas-lit. 142 and 143 were ex-Cardiff Railway vehicles and earmarked for the Porthcawl workings. In 1954, Tondy received ex-Taff Vale Auto-Trailers 6423 and 2507. These (unlike their counterparts of GW origin) were designed to run in pairs and had through gangways between the two vehicles. In 1955, sister set 6422 and 2506 ex-Caerphilly Works overhaul replaced 6423 and 2507.

As a consequence, the former fleet of 41 vehicles was reduced to 19, sets 417-421 being withdrawn. The Garw services had ended in February so the fleet reduction was not entirely due to the introduction of Auto-working.

The Porthcawl branch was the last to be worked by Auto-train and the day the branch closed (Saturday 9 September 1963) the service was operated with trailers 241 and 242 (both Diagram A43). The locomotives involved were Nos 6419 working the morning turn and 6434 the afternoon and final Porthcawl passenger service.

A residential service from Porthcawl running non-stop from Bridgend to Cardiff arriving before 9.00am and returning around 5.25pm from Cardiff (General) operated from the early 1900s. This was a forerunner to the modern-day commuter service. Befitting its status, mainline corridor stock (denoted by K) was allocated consisting of five coaches formed, VTK TK CK TK VTK. C is a Composite vehicle with four third and three first class compartments seating 32 and 18 passengers respectively

In summer, two sets were supplied on a two-day cycle from Newport Ebbw Junction, one returning there during the evening off the 6.50pm

Porthcawl-Newport service, the other stabling at Tondy overnight and working empty to Porthcawl the next morning. At various times, the sets worked other mainline services but in summer there also existed a midday return service between Cardiff and Porthcawl. The evening Residential returned to Newport, in summer with day trippers. To balance the working, a late evening train ran from Cardiff to Cymmer SX and Bridgend SO, then returning the stock empty to Tondy, also covering the fact that the 6.55pm from Paddington to Fishguard Harbour did not call between Cardiff and Swansea. In the early 1960s, the service was downgraded and in 1963, the 5.30pm departure from Cardiff to Porthcawl called at Llantrisant, Llanharan and Pencoed en route to Bridgend, while the 7.48am from Porthcawl terminated at Bridgend and connected into an Up Paddington service.

Prior to the introduction of Auto-working in 1953, trains to and from Tondy and Pyle were normally of two or three coaches but from the opening of Pyle West Curve, trains from Swansea consisted of five and six coaches hauled by a 41XX, 81XX or 56XX although the morning services were latterly worked by a diesel unit based at Carmarthen.

Excursions The Porthcawl Branch saw a huge contrast according to season as might be expected of a small but well-known seaside resort. During the summer, the advertised service was supplemented at weekends and Bank Holidays. Longer distance excursions from the main line were constrained to be hauled from Cardiff by 43XX 2-6-0 engines, the largest tender engines permitted on the branch, with specials from the Valleys hauled by 41XXs, 56XXs and 57XXs, both the last double heading over the Vale of Neath from Pontypool Road or Aberdare. Due to the limited facilities and lesser demand, the operation was on a smaller scale than Barry Island. Nevertheless, the Great Western promoted these from as far

afield as Taunton, Bristol, Birmingham and the West Midlands, though some trains were simply extended beyond Cardiff for operational purposes. More frequent 'specials' originated from the Tondy Valley Branches, Vale of Neath, as well as the Cardiff and Newport Valleys. Given the beaches and resorts closer to hand however, few specials were run from Swansea or West Wales, though a booked service ran regularly between Swansea and Porthcawl via the Pyle West Loop. Though the Porthcawl branch was restricted to no larger tender engines than the 43XXs, strangely 42XXs and 72XXs were authorised.

Although a single line restricted to 25 mph, the short distance to the main line at Pyle meant a large number of trains could be handled. It was possible to accommodate the stock of eleven trains in the Goods Yard and Carriage Sidings, five and six respectively. The latter were the former approach sidings for the original coal hoists at Porthcawl Dock. On busy Saturdays, it was essential the morning Goods turn removed all Goods wagons from the sidings.

On arrival, the incoming crew of each excursion train would book off duty and be relieved by a set of Tondy men based at Porthcawl for the day. The Tondy crew would turn the locomotive via the triangle, top-up the tank or tender with water then berth the engine with the coaching stock in one of the sidings. During the day, the crew would revisit from time to time to tend the fire in readiness for the return departure and hand over to the original crew who now returned to duty having spent their off-duty period sampling the delights of the seaside town. The number of Tondy crews out-based at Porthcawl on these Saturdays would depend on the number of specials scheduled; two sets of men would be assigned if the number exceeded six.

Other excursions were organised from the Valleys for schools and social organisations, mainly to points east of Cardiff. Some involved trains of up to

twelve coaches supplied from Cardiff Canton and worked as far as Tondy by a Castle or Hall Class locomotive which, to avoid turning, would reach Tondy by the Llanharan Branch. A Class 5100 large Prairie 2-6-2 Tank, or a 56XX either single or double-headed, would work the Stock to and from the point of origin in the Valleys. Regular Football excursions would convey supporters to Ninian Park, Cardiff and Rugby fans to Cardiff General for the Arms Park for Home Internationals, normally formed of six coaches and hauled by a 41XX or 56XX engine, although sometimes on Saturdays the mid-morning Llynfi Auto train would be extended to Cardiff returning empty to Bridgend.

Carriage Servicing

Allocation and the cleaning of Tondy's coaching stock for timetabled and excursion trains was under the jurisdiction of Tondy's Stationmaster, together with Guards and Shunters. Locomotive Crews came under the auspices of the Shedmaster. The maintenance of passenger stock was carried out by carriage and wagon staff based at Tondy. Facilities for gassing coaches were provided at Bridgend and Tondy Velin Vach with rail gas tanks berthed at both locations. Station staff were responsible for going through the stock off excursion traffic into Porthcawl and removing any rubbish.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

To demonstrate the development and growth of the passenger services, a selection of Timetables are summarised below. These exclude short workings between intermediate points and are to Bridgend unless otherwise indicated. Some Garw and all Gilfach trains were run as combined portions with the Ogmores service and attached/detached at Brynmenyn and Blackmill respectively.

Service	1876		1886		1913		1924		1932		1947		1952		1957		1963	
	SX	SO																
LLYNFI																		
Maesteg	4		2															
	5		2															
Cymmer/Abergwynfi or Treherbert from 1963			3		7		6		9		10	11	10	11		10		9
			3		10		6		8							9		9
OGMORE/GARW																		
Nantymoel	2		2		5		5		5		5		5		6			
	3		2		4		5		7		7		7		8			
Blaengarw	2		2		5		5		2		4		3					
	3		2		4		5		4		7		5					
Gilfach	2		2		5		3											
	3		2		1		2											
PORTHCAWL																		
Tondu	3		4		6		2		4		5		6		1		2	
	3		4		6		2		4		5		7		1		2	
Pyle					9		8		17		7		7		9		5	
					9		8		18		7		7		11		7	
Main Line Destinations					4		4				1		6		7		7	
					4		4				1		6		8		7	

Tremains platform
Wednesday, 3 June
 1942 with 7775
 heading the 3.50pm
 to Nantymoel and
 Blaengarw and on the
 right, is Duffryn Yard's
 5656 on the 3.55pm
 to Port Talbot.

Tremains

In 1934, the War Office, convinced that hostilities with Germany were likely, authorised the construction of new and extensive Armaments Production facilities at Waterton and nearby Brackla to the east of Bridgend. In spring 1937, the GWR installed Up & Down Loops alongside the mainline, each provided with an island

platform with footbridge access at both east and west ends to/from the factory area. In addition, a Goods Yard with ten double-ended sidings was laid to the south of the mainline to the east of the passenger facilities. At the east end of this yard, access was possible to both Up and Down mainlines whereas at the west end it was to the Down main only.

Passenger services commenced from 1 September 1939. Initially these originated from the Tondy Valleys but by 1941, services from Gilfach Goch, Tonyrefail, Treherbert, Merthyr and Swansea had been added and the platforms extended to accommodate ten coaches. In the same period, production changed from two twelve-hour to three eight-hour shifts and the timetable amended to coincide.

Tondu Valley services replicated their traditional counterparts, those to/from Abergwynfi running independent of combined Ogmored/Garw trains with the latter dividing at Brynmenyn. It may be the Gilfach portion was added/detached at Blackmill as in days gone by but





A June 1956 image of Auto-fitted 5545 after taking water at the east end of Bridgend's Tondy Valleys platform. The train is formed of one of the ex-Taff Vale twin sets 6423 and 2508 with a corridor connection between the two trailers and has been allocated, fresh from Caerphilly works in BR Maroon livery. At least one of these sets (there were three) was allocated to Tondy for the Summer Timetable ostensibly for the Porthcawl branch each year from 1954 until their withdrawal in 1957. (John Wiltshire)

documentary evidence to verify this has not come to hand.

At the end of the conflict, the complex gradually altered to become a Trading Estate for light industry with the passenger services curtailed serving the Tondy Valleys only. These were withdrawn

at the same time as their respective valley equivalents; Garw in February 1953 and Ogmore in May 1958. The last Llynfi Valley service to Tremains Platform ran on Saturday 9 September 1961 – the 6.22am from Blaengwynfi and the 12.44pm return (both three coach Auto formations).



The mainline aspect of Bridgend on 15 October 1960 as 5041 *Tiverton Castle* runs in with 1A11, the 12.5pm Milford Haven to Paddington, as a Valleys connection waits on the right and the Barry Bay is extreme left. The main station buildings on the Down platform are the original South Wales Railway construction of 1850 and were incorporated in the remodelling of the station in 1979. The footbridge also still in existence is of classic GWR design and once boasted filigree date plates either side proclaiming the year 1884. Bridgend Goods Shed and Yard can be seen on the top right. (R.K Blencowe)

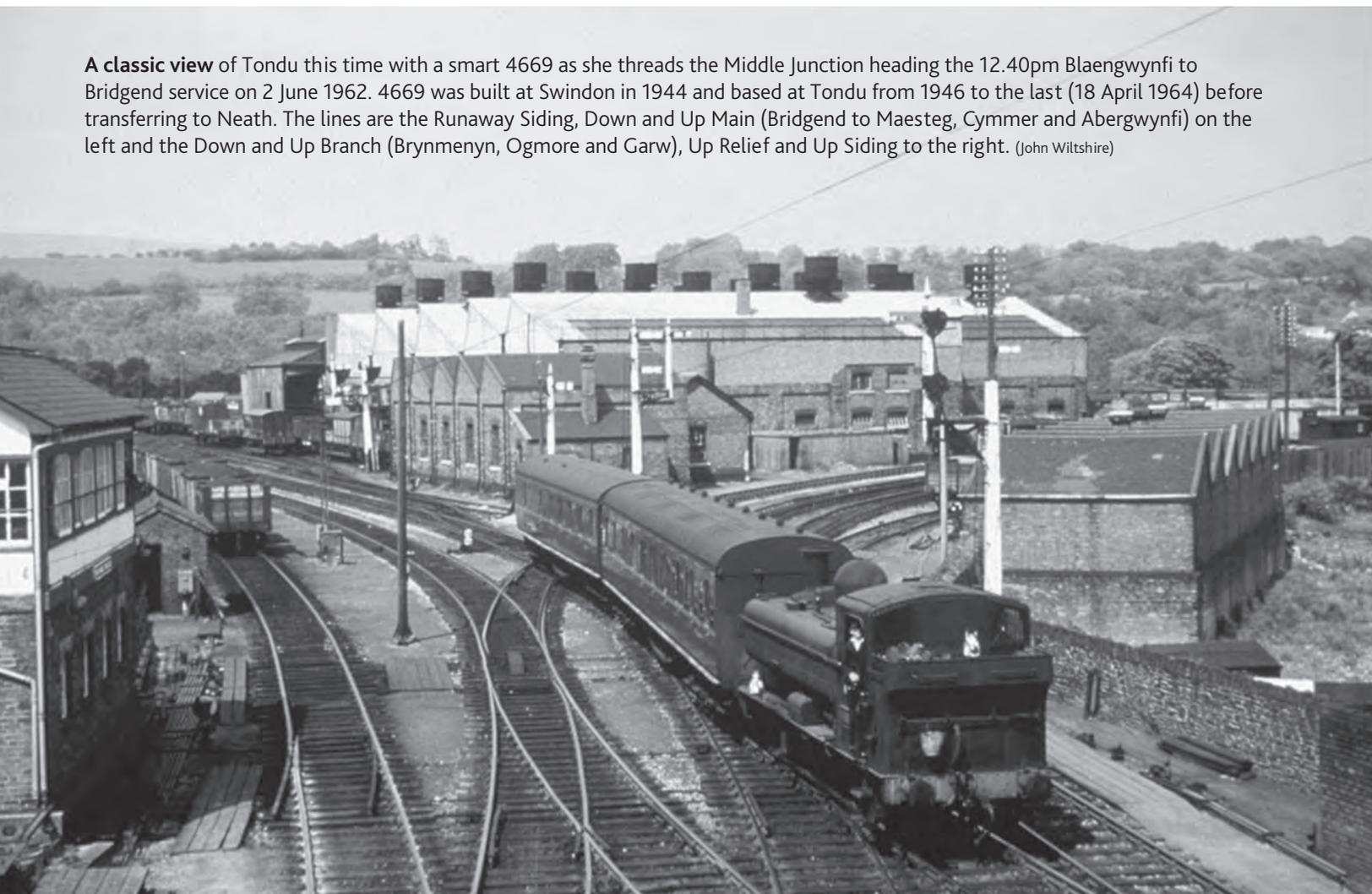
4581 waits with the 11.25am to Abergwynfi and the 11.09 to Barry is in the background on 11 September 1957.





W55025 approaches the Valley platform at Bridgend with a service from Treherbert sometime in 1964.

A classic view of Tondy this time with a smart 4669 as she threads the Middle Junction heading the 12.40pm Blaengwynfi to Bridgend service on 2 June 1962. 4669 was built at Swindon in 1944 and based at Tondy from 1946 to the last (18 April 1964) before transferring to Neath. The lines are the Runaway Siding, Down and Up Main (Bridgend to Maesteg, Cymmer and Abergwynfi) on the left and the Down and Up Branch (Brynmenyn, Ogmere and Garw), Up Relief and Up Siding to the right. (John Wiltshire)



An interested bystander converses with the driver of 4108 during the station stop at Tondy whilst working the 8.17am from Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 1 September 1962. (W.G. Sumner)



Nantymoel on a cold Christmas Eve 1957, 5545 stands at the top of the Ogmore Valley and is about to run round her three coach train ready for the return to Bridgend. (David Russell)





A view of the southbound platform to Bridgend at Tondur with 9649 calling with an Abergwynfi to Bridgend service on 7 June 1962. Note the sidings south of the platform, all unused at this time. (S.Rickard/J&J Colln.)

8498 on the final leg of its journey with the 3.54pm Bridgend to Abergwynfi approaching Gelli on 30 March 1959. (R.Darlaston)



CHAPTER 5

COAL SERVICES

Collectively, the coal output of the Tondur Valleys amounted to roughly 3 million tons annually, from the early 1930s equating to some 60,000 tons per week. At the colliery end, this required the railway to manage and maintain a process that supplied empty and removed loaded, properly labelled, wagons, in concert with this demand. At the other end of this logistics chain was the need to satisfy the requirements of the consumer, be it power station, iron/steel works or ship.

Wagons

Initially, wooden bodied wagons were used and these needed extensive repair facilities with the main repair shops at Bridgend, Tondur Ogmor Yard, Tondur NCB and Maesteg. There were three types of wagon: those with an end door for use at dock coal tips; those with side doors for the conveyance of household coal; and those with no doors which could be used where unloaded by rotary tippers. These were replaced in the 1950s by 16ton metal bodied grey liveried unfitted wagons, many of which were built at Chepstow. Trains composed of these unfitted wagons, needed a proportion of vacuum fitted wagons, next to the engine referred to as a 'Fitted Head', to enable greater braking capability. These trains were able to run at a higher category and in the 1960s, fabricated vacuum heads were provided by using spare vans loaded with concrete sleepers. The next development from the early 1960s was the introduction of vacuum braked flat-bottomed wagons of both 16ton and 21ton size plus 21ton bottom-door discharge hopper wagons. Rapid loading and discharge 33ton Merry-Go-Round wagons were also introduced in the mid-1960 for use as complete trains between collieries and power stations. Finally,

air braked wagons were introduced of both hopper and box wagon design. Many of the box wagons (MEA) were conversions of 4-wheel Merry-Go-Round (MGR) wagons, this work carried out initially at Margam wagon shops. Fully fitted trains (continuous brake throughout) dispensed with the need for a brake van or guard.

Blending

Blending of coal types formed a high percentage of South Wales coal exports until the end of the 1950s. This was achieved by means of marshalling/tipping the loaded wagons at holding sidings, tip roads and on coal hoists. Then on arrival at destination, loaded wagons had to be uncoupled and tipped singly. The coal was discharged by tipping through the doors fitted at one end of the wagon (the other end was fixed) so wagons also needed to be presented right way round, though many coal hoists had wagon turntables. From the 1960s, coal preparation plants were introduced by the NCB where different coals were blended before loading to rail wagon for use as prime coking coal at steelworks.

Coal Wagon Ownership and Development.

Prior to 1942 coal wagons were owned by the coal owners and empty wagons had to be re-sorted according to individual colliery. Because of the time and effort involved in such segregation in wartime, this was abolished by Government diktat in 1942 and was never re-introduced, though it was still practised in some places (e.g. Barry Docks) until the end of the 1940s. Wagons were 'pooled' between owners and it was common for trainloads of empties to be described as 'pools'.

From Nationalisation in 1948, coal wagons for traffic purposes were owned by the railway, with only internal user wagons retained by the National Coal Board. With the benefit of now being able to manage the entire fleet of coal traffic wagons, British Railways began to modernise the fleet, beginning with the replacement of the previous wooden bodied wagons with steel bodied and fitting many with automatic vacuum brakes which added another facet to coupling/uncoupling. Parallel to this was the development of axleboxes from grease to white-metal oilpad lubrication and finally roller-bearing.

Previously, private owners had their details inscribed on the wagon sides and only that company's traffic was ever carried in them. Almost all were wooden bodied with a carrying capacity (payload) of 10 tons. However, at the instigation of Sir Felix Pole, General Manager of the Great Western Railway, in the 1920s, that company introduced 20ton steel bodied wagons to enhance haulage efficiency and by 1939, over 5,000 of these higher capacity wagons had been built for use by collieries. There was however a lot of resistance to their use by both collieries and customers, due to length and weight issues and many of the wagons ended being used to carry loco coal from collieries to GW loco depots. The GWR also invested £2m on alterations to 160 quayside coal tipping hoists in the South Wales ports to accommodate the larger wagons and North's Navigation was one of the first users.

In the late 1950s 16ton grey metal body wagons built at Chepstow had their first run to Tondy often on Canton freight turn H17 and replaced wooden body wagons which were then stored in such places as the remaining sections of the PTR between Cwmdy and Pontyrhyll.

In the early 1960s, the Western Region of BR, conscious of the severe gradients in the South Wales coalfield and the amount of time expended on stopping to pin down and pick up brakes, introduced 5,500 21ton Bauxite vacuum-fitted mineral wagons (Minfits) each branded

'TO WORK WITHIN SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE ONLY'.

The wagons were put into use on main flows from colliery to steelworks and power stations but wagon sorting discipline at yards and terminals was often poor and many became common user until this was stamped out in the late 1960s under service and yard replanning when they were all concentrated on flows to BSC plants at SCOW (Port Talbot), Llanwern, Cardiff GKN and South Wales Power Stations. They could never be used on shipment coal for which unfitted 16tonners were mandatory and could only be used on one flow out of the Cardiff Division which was Oakdale Colliery to John Summers Hawarden Bridge, from where they were returned empty in trainloads. 16ton common user vacuum fitted wagons were used mostly in other parts of the country but from the mid-1960s became more common in South Wales for use on flows into England and Scotland, especially on traffic from the Phurnacite Plant at Abercwmboi.

The introduction of vacuum-fitted wagons enabled coal trains to run at higher categories with improved speeds and increased loads, since before this the only means of stopping a mineral train was the locomotive brakes and a vigilant Guard applying the handbrake on the brake van at the very end of the train with anything up to 600 tons in between. At the commencement of a steep falling gradient, individual wagon brakes were pinned down. The brake lever had to be pegged to keep the brake gear in place by a Brakesman until the driver was satisfied he could maintain control of his train. This was achieved by the resistance caused by the applied brakes. Critical sections in the Tondy Valleys were Avon Colliery to Abergwynfi, Caerau to Nantymoel (1 in 36), Blaengarw to Pontycymmer (1 in 34) and Nantymoel to Ogmores Vale (1 in 32). On reaching a more favourable gradient, the wagon brakes then had to be released, all of which added to the train's overall journey time.

Freight Timetables

The basis of timetabling was the Point to Point Times (see Appendix), issued by either Headquarters or the Divisional Office. To these needed to be added starting and stopping allowances and those for pinning down brakes on inclines and then picking up. Until the 1960s when greater numbers of vacuum fitted wagons were available for use in South Wales, almost all loaded coal trains ran as Class K, later Class 9, but the presence of vacuum heads (formed next the engine with automatic brakes) enabled them to be raised to higher categories, the ultimate being Class 6 for a fully fitted train, which precluded the need for pinning down (as many) brakes on inclines. Tondu had several sets of banana vans loaded with concrete sleepers for this purpose.

The fundamental principle in timetabling is that as each train progresses, the Driver should be given clear (green) signals in order not to be brought to an unscheduled stand. The time intervals between trains are known as Headways (the safe distance that trains must be kept apart) and are governed by the signalling facilities. Headways govern the number of trains that can run in each hour. For example, a five-minute headway will give a theoretical capacity of twelve trains per hour.

In the Tondu Valleys with semaphore signalling, the distance of the Block Section (crudely the time distance between consecutive Signal boxes) determined the headway. However, the Signal boxes were not equidistant and therefore the headway was governed by the longest section. Because of the number and proportion of Single Line sections, capacity was often at a premium. Another factor impacting on freight train capacity on the Tondu Valleys was train length determined by the length of any passing loop on the section of line, as follows:-

	Yards	Wagons (at standard 21ft. lengths)
Blackmill (Ogmore)*	990	141
Blackmill (Gilfach)*	882	126
Caedu	4000	571
Ogmore Vale	2673	381
Hendreforgan	1029	147
Llangeinor	1344	192
Llangynwyd	1024	146
Cymmer*	657	93
Cefn Jcn	555	79

*Not two passenger Trains

Gradients in the South Wales Valleys also played a crucial part in the working of Freight trains. Details of the Tondu Valleys Point to Point Times, Engine Loads and Gradients are included in appendices at the end of this book.

Tondu Control

The first control office was introduced in 1907 by Cecil Paget of the Midland Railway to counteract poor punctuality of coal trains at Rotherham. To monitor the execution of the plan on an ongoing basis, a Control Office was located at Tondu from 1910, the second on the GWR. By 1922, Tondu had 58 engines and employed in excess of 500 staff. Eleven omnibus telephone circuits were fed into the switchboard in the Tondu Control office. The switchboard was similar in design to that at Newport, but an essential feature was that intermediate stations were not precluded from speaking to each other when the circuits were not required by the controller.

The Tondu Controller had precedence in all cases in the use of any circuit when required to cut in or respond to a call. A special type of telephone was introduced, fitted with ringing buttons which would enable an operator at an out-station to call any other place on the link except the control office by giving a code ring while a second button was used to call the controller only. None of the calls in the first example affected the call apparatus in

the Controller's office so that his attention would not be distracted by the use of the circuit by other places on the circuit. The controller would only attend to calls directed to him which were denoted by the dropping of an indicator on the switchboard applying to the particular circuit on which the call was being made. The controller's equipment ordinarily allowed for this visual indication only, but a call-bell was also fitted which the controller could switch into use when required.

Omnibus telephones did not afford discreet calls between two places, indeed it was common practice for all points to listen in at any one time. Whether this facility was used for discussions purely for railway working is open to conjecture.

The main function of Tondu Control Office was to manage the day-to-day running of the railway on a real-time basis within its geographical boundaries. By keeping in touch with signalmen, yard inspectors, checkers, shunters and foremen as well as weighbridge dispatchers at collieries and quarries, the controller remained alert to variances between the plan and its actual delivery. When a delay occurred, or the service was disrupted, the Control became the focal point for the implementation of contingencies to secure a return to the planned arrangements as quickly as possible. For the most appropriate measures to be taken, the Controller needed to be fully familiar with the section of railway under his control including all routes, signalling facilities, key locations, load limits, line speeds and the services running. The District Control Offices at Swansea, Cardiff and Newport together with Tondu Control, managed all train activities in South Wales where of prime significance was the coal movement throughout the coalfield and the neighbouring ports. In 1963, with the abandonment of District Offices, a centralised Control was set up at Cardiff but Tondu Control remained separate, possibly because of the difficulties in establishing adequate

telephone communication, which was the usual determining feature at that time. It remained separate until merged with Margam Train Operating Processing System (TOPS) Office in 1976.

In the 1950s, Tondu Control was responsible for liaising with 24 collieries in the immediate area of Cefn, Garw, Ogmore, Llynvi, Gilfach and Heol y Cyw as well as Llantrisant. There were also other dispatch points including quarries, wagon repair works, coke works, domestic coal yards, etc. The Control Office maintained regular communication with the colliery weighbridgeman. They were critical to the coal traffic movement in updating the execution of the plan and at mid-afternoon were originally responsible for arranging amendments, alterations and additions for the following day arising from fluctuations/ variations in the process. From the late 1960s, this role was taken over by the NCB Supplies Co-ordinator at Tondu and Ystrad Mynach who would detail such alterations to the BR Control Office for the whole coalfield but was transferred back to the areas with the introduction of TOPS in 1976.

Colliery Procedures

At the pithead, the Weighbridgeman would provide hand-written despatch advices to the checker. These would identify payload and destination of each wagon usually and conveniently in batches according to destination. These formed the basis for each train's composition and marshalling together with the labelling of each individual wagon. The Shunter would provide a list detailing every wagon (in train order) for the Guard who ensured the total weight was within the laid down limits according to locomotive type and braking capability dictated by the gradients over the route involved.

Destination Procedures

At each destination, the Checker would record the wagons received on each train. These 'Yard Inward Sheets' and the

colliery despatch advices would be sent to the prescribed Goods Office where the clerk(s) would reconcile one against the other, forming the basis for invoicing the Colliery Company. The Goods Clerk would also monitor details of wagons becoming defective en route (TIC being the telegraph code word) necessitating their being removed from the train for repairs. Defective wagons ('Cripples') were entered into a register known as the 'TIC' book. Occasionally, loaded wagons would be reported at intermediate points without labels and again the Goods Clerk maintained a record of 'Wagons on Hand' awaiting requests for 'Proof of Delivery' so the wagon could be re-labelled and conveyed to its final destination.

Freight Targets

Hundreds of freight trains were run each day in South Wales according to the demands of the collieries, quarries, docks, steel works, etc. 'Target' numbers were an important feature of train operations which in most cases were also applied to the passenger workings although not in the case of the Tondy Valleys.

'Target' is actually an acronym for Trip As Required Goods Engine Turn and the target numbers were the means by which specific trains, under the direction of Control, could be easily identified, since they were not necessarily shown in the working timetables in great detail apart from an entry referring to their departure times from various points. When train departure or passing times were reported, the Target number was used for ease of reference. In 1957 in South Wales there were more than 250 targets in use.

Freight Targets consisted of a single letter followed by one or two numbers painted on a metal disc (black letters on a white background) e.g. U10. Passenger targets consisted of two letters. In South Wales, the target was carried on the right-hand lamp bracket on the buffer beam whichever end (smokebox or bunker) was leading. The letter (usually the home shed of the

locomotive) denoted the starting point of the working, e.g., B Barry, C Cathays, R Rhymney, T Treherbert, J Abercynon, A Aberdare and U Tondy. The number related to an engine diagram which detailed the actual working and might have been a single or series of journeys. Those for Tondy based on the 1957 WTT are shown in an appendix at the end of this book. With the introduction of Block Train Working at Tondy to SCOW Port Talbot in 1962, the prefix D replaced the traditional U on the series of revised targets.

Reconciling the Target with the Engine Load between each location, it is possible to establish the maximum loading capability of each service covered within the individual Targets. Not surprisingly, the total of the 1957 Timetable Plan amounts to just over 300,000 tons capacity per week composed of the loaded wagons from each colliery, together with the corresponding movement of inwards empty wagons. Extending this over a working period of 50 weeks (since the coalfield shut down for the traditional Miners' Fortnight Holidays in August), we can see that the annual figure equates to the three million tons of coal raised within the Tondy Valleys.

The basic principles, here based on the 1957 timetable, can be reflected back to the early thirties when the total annual coal output was of a similar tonnage. The Target numbers did not alter, though some of the contents did, along with minor changes to arrival and departure times. Comparison with the 1924 timetable, however, shows a reduction of some 30% in actual train working, though this is not a direct result of the amount of coal mined but the absence of the more capable Class 5700s and 4200s. A Buffalo Class 1076 had a Tractive Effort 22% less than a 5700, which in turn was 40% less powerful than a 4200. In 1924, Tondy had only four of the latter which would have been allocated to mainline duties as a priority. The comparison also shows that Saturdays were part of the working week and almost the same number of trains ran as on weekdays.

The 1957 allocation of locomotives for Tondy shows eleven Class 4200s, whereas the Targets indicate a requirement for twenty turns, catered for by engines performing more than one turn in the 24 hours. In examining these closely and in particular the times on and off shed, some can be linked thus underpinning the maxim that once a locomotive is in steam, it should be used for traffic purposes for as long as possible so long as replenishment of coal and water is recognised. Perhaps the optimum productivity can be demonstrated by the combination of Tondy Targets U5, U51 and U58. This constitutes a two-day cycle so needing two class 4200s from Tondy's allocation working opposite one another. The first 4200 commences its cycle on Target U5 at 08.25 Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the other doing likewise Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, with re-coaling at Tondy and Llanelli in between. In addition, it is likely the shed foreman at Llanelli might take advantage of having a 'foreign 4200' available to him from 09.28 am until 02.00 the following morning.

Applying this to the 1957 Freight Timetable, a total requirement emerges for eleven Class 4200s and fifteen 5700s, four of the latter working continuously from early Monday mornings until late Saturday nights as Pilots in and around the Tondy Yards. In addition to the Tondy workings detailed in the appendix, there were several incoming services worked by foreign engines, summarised as follows:

- 3 from Cardiff Newtown or Pengam (H Targets)
- 1 from Llandeilo Junction (Llanelli)
- 1 from Swansea Docks
- 1 from Duffryn Yard (Port Talbot)

From a locomotive point of view, the services from Cardiff provided the greatest variety of traction as mentioned earlier. Those from Swansea and Llanelli were invariably 42XXs as was that from Port Talbot but occasionally this witnessed the rarest of steeds in the form of a Robinson

ROD 2-8-0. There were also two services to Coity Junction from Barry via the Vale of Glamorgan, all on a daily basis M-S.

Freight turns from Cardiff Canton (e.g. H15) normally travelled out via the Llanharan to Tondy route and returned via Bridgend to avoid turning at Tondy. However, H2 target ran main line to Bridgend where it dropped goods shed traffic and turned on the triangle at Tondy. This service was later reduced to Mondays only. The foreign locomotive never went on shed and almost anything could turn up, even Britannias, the turn being used by Canton to run-in engines after depot repair or those received back from Caerphilly or Barry Works. The H15 train arrived on the avoiding line and would be pulled back by the Tondy Ogmor Pilot. After the brake van was returned to the engine it would take water in Tondy station before going to Tondy South for its return train.

Shunting Trucks

Tondy Ogmor Yard was allocated a special shunting truck, only constructed in large numbers by the Great Western. These first appeared in 1895, built to diagram M1 and No 41812 was allocated to Tondy from this early date. It measured 14ft over headstocks with a 7ft wheelbase; plate guards were fitted in front of the wheels to prevent accidents to men riding the running boards, fitted the length of the wagon at axle box level. Shunting Trucks had no bodies, merely wooden flooring above sole bar with handrails either side and a floor-mounted asymmetrical toolbox which had the depot name stencilled on either side.

The tool box was equipped with spare head, tail and side lamps, shunting poles and brake sticks, spare coupling links and most importantly two re-railing ramps. The design of the ramps was again unique to the Great Western in that they were 'Y' shaped, i.e. having two arced arms that fitted either side of the rail with the tail resting on the railhead. Other British railways used a design that consisted of two separate left and right-hand arms. The much heavier

weight of the Great Western version far outweighed the lighter alternative which was far more time consuming to use whilst deciding which arm fitted which side of the rail. The Shunting Truck would remain attached to the Ogmere Yard Pilot and was a much-appreciated asset by the shunting staff. They were commonly referred to as Chariots, Gigs or Runners.

Breakdown Crane

To cater for the more major mishaps, Tondy was provided with a six-wheeled Breakdown Crane No 210 and a four-wheeled match truck. The Crane was built at Swindon in 1894 and capable of lifting 12 Tons. The Breakdown Crane and associated Breakdown Gang were responsible for the Main Line from Llanharan to Pyle and Porthcawl, east as far as Southerndown Road on the Vale of Glamorgan Line and the Tondy Valleys. Sister Crane 205 is preserved at Didcot Railway Centre. For heavier lift requirements, recourse was made to the Cardiff Canton higher capacity crane.

The original purpose-built Breakdown vans were No 48 Tool and No 49 Staff with gas lighting. They were replaced by DW 150219 Tool and DW 150040 Staff

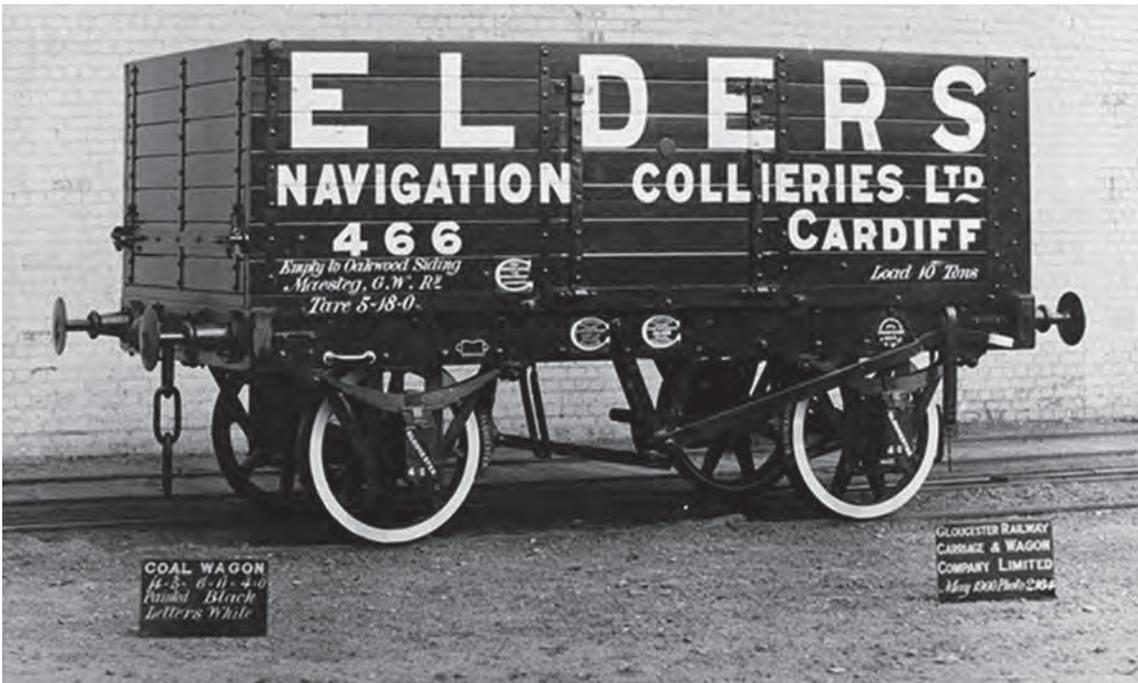
on 13 May 1961 and 2 November 1962 respectively. No 48 was demoted to a cleaners' store until Oct 1962. Both Nos 48 and 49 left Tondy in February 1964 and their replacements transferred to Margam diesel depot on 23 April 1964.

Brake vans

Tondy had an allocation in excess of 20 Brake vans many of which spent much of their entire lives based there (again the Home Depot was stencilled on the sides). Brake vans were referred to as Toads and initially Tondy had GWR design unfitted Toads but these were replaced by BR design brake vans when vacuum fitted wagons were introduced. In order to ensure the allocation of Brake vans was maintained, in the event of a return working having no traffic to convey to Tondy as part of the day-to-day working arrangements, it was essential the Brake van remained with the locomotive to get home, described in railway terms as EBV (engine and brake van). The GWR Toad had only one veranda with a door providing access to the cabin. Consequently, the cabin was larger, more comfortable and less draughty than their BR counterpart, but the hand brake was located outside in the cold.

The Great Western Railwaymen's Coal Association Wagon No. 1 built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Company, painted lead grey with white lettering and stencilled 'Empty to Wyndham Colliery Ogmere Vale, Loaded to Middle Yard Tondy'. What better recommendation than from the locomen who used this coal every day and who obviously knew a good thing when they saw it.





A 10ton Coal Wagon built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Company in May 1900 for Elders of Maesteg. The livery was white lettering on Black bodywork and stencilled return to Oakwood sidings, GWR Maesteg.

The traditional means of coal tipping demonstrated here. Sir Felix Pole (General Manager, GWR) introduced large numbers of 20-ton, Steel bodied wagons in 1924 to maximise productivity much to the disquiet of the Coal Factors. The view here shows the first tipping of one of these wagons, in this case at Port Talbot Docks. A fleet of these wagons were allocated to North's Navigation, Maesteg, and would also pass through Port Talbot but unfortunately is not the participant here. (Swansea Museum)





Up and down coal services to and from Margam meet at Tondy Middle on 22 February 1964 as 5243 heads north with a train of empty 21ton Minfits, used for the steelworks traffic, while 4283 heads south with D01, a train of probably domestic coal for Margam Yard.

In the final years of coal traffic in the Tondy Valleys, several trips were worked to produce low volatile coal which could normally be used in power stations. Here Type 3 diesel 37412 heads north through Tondy platform for Ffaldau Tip with MGR empties, which will be loaded while the train awaits and then be transported to Aberthaw B station, in 1996. (M.J. Back)



Ogmore Yard with 3690 and Shunters' Truck 41812. Built and allocated to Tondy in 1895, the Chariot, Gig or Runner depending on locality, conveyed a Tool Box equipped with spare head, tail and side lamps, shunting poles, brake sticks, spare coupling links but most importantly two re-railing ramps.

CHAPTER 6

TONDU DEPOT

Tondu was the locomotive depot, works and main traffic centre of the Llynvi & Ogmore system. J. Routledge was locomotive superintendent in charge of *Ada* and *Una*, two Gooch designed domeless 0-6-0STs delivered on 4 April 1862 at a cost of £5,800 for the LVR. These were joined in 1863 by *Rosa*, a 4-4-0ST. At first, these locomotives used sheds at Bridgend and Maesteg and work commenced on the construction of a new shed at Tondu on 23 October 1866 which was completed in the following year. The three Broad Gauge engines were exchanged for Standard Gauge West Cornwall locomotives all built by Robert Stephenson, a 2-4-0 tender engine of 1853 and a trio of 2-4-0Ts, the first built in 1855 and the other two in 1860.

To commence services in 1865, the OVR ordered four Sharp, Stewart 0-6-0Ts and added a further one after amalgamation in 1869 with the LVR. The final order before the GWR took over workings was for three Black Hawthorn 0-6-0Ts with outside cylinders (unlike the rest) which were delivered in 1871, 1872 and 1873. Services required nine of the twelve locomotives to be available daily.

This motley collection (GWR Nos 919-926) did not last long under GWR ownership. The Stephenson engines were all scrapped by 1875, followed by two of the Sharp, Stewart tanks in 1876/8. By 1885 the Black Hawthorn tanks and all but two of the Sharp, Stewarts had gone. These were finally withdrawn in 1888 and 1892 respectively. While a dozen engines were sufficient in 1873, the numbers of Tondu engines rose to around fifty by the first half of the twentieth century.

From the Grouping in 1923 when the GWR absorbed all the previously private

companies in South Wales, Tondu became part of the Newport District for Locomotive management. Tondu shed was at the extreme boundary of the Newport District, the largest on the GWR and ultimately on BR. This meant that engines requiring a repair that did not justify a visit to main works at Caerphilly or Swindon would go to Newport Ebbw Jct. factory for attention.

The LVR Engine shed and Repair Shops were located in the centre of the triangle north of Tondu Middle Junction. Further north on the opposite side of the line were similar installations for the Ogmore Valley Railway. As the traffic increased and consequent locomotive requirements grew, these combined facilities became totally inadequate. The GWR set about the construction of a new shed which was opened in 1889 on the site of the former LVR premises in the triangle. The OVR shed and repair facilities were closed and converted into a nest of nine single ended sidings accessed from Ogmore Junction. These became known as Ogmore Yard.

The shed was a standard Dean Roundhouse Depot (William Dean being the GWR Chief Mechanical Engineer at the time) with walls of brick and a Northlight pattern slate roof. In 1953, this was replaced with a new higher roof of corrugated asbestos cladding.

The shed was 185ft square. In light of this, the term roundhouse seems a contradiction but the name derives from the layout inside which consisted of a 44ft.8½ins. diameter turntable giving access to twenty short sidings, most capable of accommodating one tank engine or small tender engine. The remaining allocation was stabled in the two single ended sidings immediately

outside. Two sidings were extended under cover beyond the main shed and used for locomotive repairs. Access/ egress was available by means of an inwards and outwards line to/from Tondy North Junction to the shed yard and a similar arrangement to/from Tondy Ogmor Junction. Locomotives usually entered the shed at the north end but departed at both the Ogmor Junction and north end. Abutting on to the shed on the south side was a small repair shop with a wheel drop fed from the turntable as mentioned above, a large office for the clerks and Shed foreman, then finally, adjacent to the Maesteg lines, another repair shop with direct access from Tondy North. The locomotive crews had a long single storey concrete cabin at the Ogmor Junction end adjacent to the down main. The stove was at the shed end and seniority prevailed when sitting at the long table in the cabin.

Also accessed from Tondy North was the coal stage, a separate structure located just beyond the northeast corner of the shed. This measured 40ft x 20ft and mounted on top was a 40,000-gallon water tank. Loaded wagons were propelled up the sharp rise into the coaling stage. These would be unloaded into a small dram at right angles that when full was manually pushed on guide rails projecting out from the coal stage and then tipped into the locomotive bunker or tender waiting below. Overhead mechanical coaling devices could not be used at Tondy or any other GW Shed because soft Welsh coal, if dropped from a height, would shatter. Directly opposite the coaling stage, separated by the inward and outwards lines, was the sand house where sand was dried and prepared for filling the locomotive sandboxes to give greater adhesion when wet or greasy railhead conditions prevailed. Water for the shed was provided from the River Llynfi with an inlet to a pipe situated near Gelli Las.

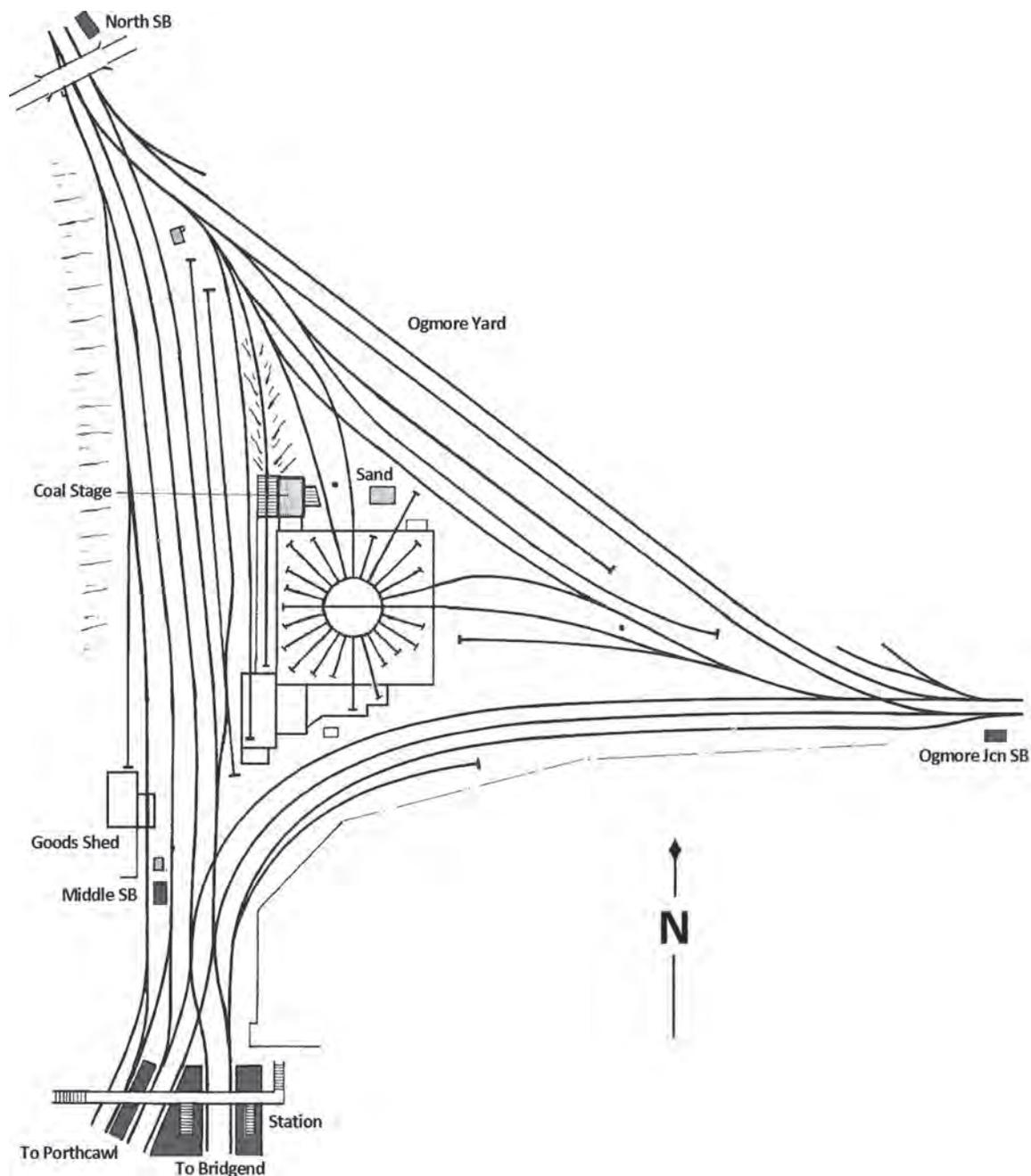
Tondy locomotives were scheduled for 18 or 19 hours work a day, the only critical

factor being replenishment of coal and water. Many stations and other locations had water columns but for the purpose of re-coaling, a locomotive would need to visit a loco shed.

The worst possible characteristic of the steam locomotive from a maintenance point of view is the inter-relationship between water and steel plates. This is greatly exacerbated when the water temperature fluctuates causing expansion/ contraction of the metal. Some of Tondy's locomotives ended their work in the early hours of Sunday morning and recommenced 24 hours later. As an expedient to reduce the effects of the corrosion, it was prudent for these locomotives, if scheduled to continue in traffic on Monday, to be kept in steam in the intervening period. To accomplish this, one or two Steamraisers would be employed to keep a small fire going in each engine.

Within the maintenance regime practised at Tondy, a steam locomotive required a boiler washout every 21 to 23 days, the whole process taking two days. The engine would have its fire dropped and be left to cool for as long as possible. A wash-out plug above the water level was unscrewed and a hosepipe placed inside to allow water to run through the boiler. When the water coming out was cool, the boiler could be emptied. All plugs were removed and high- pressure water used to remove salts and other deposits from around the stays between inner and outer fireboxes with the effluent discharged through four mud holes at the bottom. A Boilersmith then went into the firebox and smokebox to inspect the tubes, stays and rivets to determine whether any repairs were necessary. When satisfied all was in good order, each plug was carefully screwed home in its taper thread and finally the boiler refilled for lighting up.

Other maintenance requirements such as the boiler water gauge glass, axle lubrication pads, all the oil corks,



brake blocks, injector cones, ATC battery and contact shoe were examined by a fitter and if necessary, repaired or replaced during this period. A labourer cleaned the boiler tubes and checked the fire grate bars. The locomotive may also have been given a clean and polish especially if it was for passenger work, Tondy having had a good reputation for the presentation of its passenger engines. Usually, these maintenance requirements would be undertaken at the

home-depot whereas the major repairs (determined by the locomotive's mileage) such as running gear, cylinder or boiler attention would be undertaken at the Ebbw Junction Factory or the main works at Caerphilly, Barry or Swindon with specialist tooling and greater expertise. All these maintenance needs and prerequisite downtime necessitated an increase in actual locomotive allocation to that purely for traffic (diagram) requirements.



A 1951 view of the south end of the shed with the coaling road on the right, and a variety of engines in the yard, including 7725 and other Panniers, 56XXs and 42XXs. Judging by the number of locos in the yard on shed it must have been a Sunday. (Millbrook House Collection/Kidderminster Railway Museum)

A view of the shed from Tondy Ogmores Junction in 1960 with 9660 and an array of panniers and 42XXs on shed. An auto coach is in the siding alongside the shed with empty minerals in Ogmores Yard. (John Wiltshire)



A view from North Junction of Tondur Shed on 22 September 1962 in its final form with higher profile roof still retaining the northlight pattern and smoke vents but having corrugated cladding instead of slates. (R.S. Carpenter)



The 1957 Freight Timetable required a total of eleven Class 4200s and fourteen 5700s, four of the latter working continuously from early Monday mornings until late Saturday nights as Pilots in and around the Tondur Yards (25 locomotives).

For the same timetable, the corresponding requirement for the Passenger services were three 5700s, four 4575s, and one 3100 (eight locomotives). In order to allow for out-of-course working, delays or breakdowns, the Foreman had two locomotives in steam standing spare for such contingencies. Thus thirty-five locomotives were required for traffic purposes but each must then be allowed two days for boiler washouts and so a further four

locomotives were necessary on the allocation to accommodate this. Finally, to encompass major repairs and general overhauls when engines were sent to main works, a maintenance allowance of four locomotives (10%) was added to Tondur's allocation, making a full total of forty-three engines.

Daily Depot Procedure

Fire lighting would commence with the afternoon shift on a Sunday when the firelighter placed some coal over the engine grate, put a few pieces of wood just inside the firebox door, lit a clump of oil-soaked cotton waste and threw it in. He returned a while later to add more coal, but it was several hours before the

locomotive was able to move as the boiler began to sing softly and the pressure gauge needle lifted from zero. When dead, it took around three hours for a locomotive to raise sufficient steam and achieve its designated boiler pressure to be available to go off shed and start its working day.

The rostered crew reported for duty an hour before scheduled departure and prepared the locomotive. This entailed oiling round, building the fire, testing the brakes, injectors and sanding equipment, finally topping up the water tank, the standard allowance for which was 5 minutes per 2,000 gallons.

Crews were restricted in the total hours they might work and in the need for mandatory rest intervals between shifts. A crew's turn could be made up of several short trips or one long journey. If the turn was a long one, an engine might be re-manned several times during its working day. Occasionally, some long journeys required the crew to lodge overnight away from their home-depot (known as a Double Home turn). They would then work back with a train the next day. Other Tondy Crews would be assigned Shed Turns solely to move locomotives on the depot for coaling and watering, preparation or Ferrying Turns tripping locomotives to/from other sheds or shunting yards.

Based on the level of experience and route knowledge, crews at each Motive Power Depot were divided historically into 'links'. The top link had the most prestigious jobs such as the passenger and long-distance freight trains, whereas the bottom links involved Shed, Pilot, local trip workings and shunting turns. Drivers graduated on seniority, taking many years to progress through the ranks. Each link would consist of anything up to 30 sets of men. Additional Traincrew might be rostered as spare and located at strategic times as a contingency or to cover supplementary services, delays or staff absences.

Given Tondy's allocation of 44 Locos in 1957 for the workload identified

previously and allowing for Annual Leave, etc., 208 Drivers and Firemen (104 sets) were employed at the shed. To this must be added 92 Guards, 15 Cleaners, 15 Fitters and Mates, 12 Clerical and Supervisory staff, 3 Boilersmiths, 30 Shed Grade men.

A total of 375 staff were employed at the Depot, excluding Wagon Repairers, Artisans, Signalmen, Station Staff and Shunters also working in the vicinity of Tondy. All were under the control of a Shedmaster and Shift Foremen, who were responsible for booking all engines to turns or servicing each day.

The depot was coded TDU by the GWR, became 86F in the Newport Division under Nationalisation and finally 88H when placed in the Cardiff Valleys Division from 1960.

The Final Days

On Monday 11 July 1963, English Electric Type 3 D6852 arrived at Tondy from Landore for crew training purposes and the process of dieselisation at the depot had begun. All main turns were progressively covered by the Type 3s and finally on Saturday 18 April 1964, Tondy Shed closed. A 1400 Class 0-4-2T No 1422 was at Tondy as stationary boiler and was the last to leave on 13 November 1964 after being stored at north end in the former locomotive coal storage sidings during the summer. No 4213 arrived at Tondy in October 1962, was subsequently condemned and hence was not showing on the allocation lists, although it did not leave Tondy until towed away on 30 June 1964 to Cohen's at Morrision for cutting up. No 9780 arrived at Tondy in February 1963 and although intended for transfer to Swansea Eastern Depot at an earlier date, this did not take place so it had the dubious distinction with No 4663 of being the last engines to leave Tondy in steam for Swansea East Dock at 02.25 on Thursday 23 April 1964.

This however was not the end of steam at Tondy; a weekly engineer's train ran from Neath, the last steam-hauled run of



which was with No 4612 on 9 June 1965, working as far as Brynmenyn.

The Bridgend station pilot remained steam, at first supplied from Llantrisant and later from Radyr coming to Tondu daily at 16.30 for relief. This continued until Friday 23 July 1965 when it was worked by No 9682. From Monday 26 July 1965, Tondu provided drivers for four turns at Bridgend, using a class 08 which stabled at Tondu during the weekend. Some of the crew changeovers included bus travel.

On Saturday 17 February 1968, the remaining Tondu traincrew, except for some guards who remained until the end of the year, were transferred to the new Depot at Margam. On the same date, Tondu Ogmores Junction, now being used for the storage of Permanent Way Wagons, lost its 350HP Diesel Shunter D4027 on 25 March and the Bridgend Pilot now ran light to Margam at weekends. Tondu Shed was put up for sale and whilst there was an initial interest from British Tissues

to use it as a storage facility, without road access this did not materialise. The premises were completely vacated by 12 August 1968 with demolition of the Engine Shed in June 1970.

TONDU ALLOCATIONS

1901

In 1901, Tondu had an allocation of approximately 46 engines. Included were some which arrived during the year, hence the approximation. There were four Standard Goods 0-6-0s allocated which would have worked main line freight to the east and west of Bridgend, with coal for shipment, domestic and industrial use. There were thirteen Buffalo 1076 Class 0-6-0Ts, which were widely used on both passenger and freight across South Wales, even double-heading on longer distance coal trains. Exclusively for passenger work would have been a Metro 2-4-0T and a

Demolition of Tondu

Engine Shed took place in June 1970 with wagons berthed alongside to remove the rubble. Running lines to both Valleys have now been singled at the junction as part of the 1967 remodelling. The sidings in the Ogmores Yard behind the shed site would be removed in October 1968, with empty wagons for the collieries supplied from Margam Yard.

(Robin Lush)

35XX 0-4-4T and it is more than likely that the three 2021 Class allocated would have been used on passenger work. There were four of the previous West Cornwall engines still left. These had been exchanged with former Llynfi Valley Broad Gauge engines when the West Cornwall went Broad Gauge while the Llynfi went Standard. There was the usual complement of 1016, 1813 and 1854 Class saddle tanks, to be found at most South Wales depots where shunting and pilot working of freight (especially Coal) traffic was the main operation.

Full allocation details:-

Standard Goods 0-6-0	4	371, 514, 677, 802
Metro 2-4-0T	1	621
35XX 0-4-4T	1	3524
1016 Class 0-6-0T	3	1037/61/64
1076 Buffalo 0-6-0T	13	749, 955/61, 1574/82/93/94/96, 1607/26/37/38/40
1813 Class 0-6-0T	1	1845
1854 Class 0-6-0T	11	1708/11/12/17/26/32/34/93, 1856/62/84
2021 Class 0-6-0T	3	2062/70/2098 new from Oct.
2721 Class 0-6-0T	5	2741/60, 2763 from Mch, 2775 from Apl, 2782 New from Jan.
Ex-West Cornwall	4	1347/48/49/51

Engines allocated to Bridgend depot in 1901 were two ex-West Cornwall Nos. 1350/52.

1910

By 1910, the allocation of Tondy had increased to 59 engines, reflecting the increase in coal traffic in the area. The Standard Goods had been reduced to three but an Aberdare Class 2-6-0 had arrived in Dec.1908 and would remain until July 1910. An Aberdare became a constant allocation from February 1906 to Dec. 1922 and was used on trains of

house coal to Swansea, Llanelly and Carmarthen, returning with empties and also trains to Severn Tunnel Junction. Aberdares would also work in from West Wales (Neyland engines) on trains of empties, returning with loaded Coal and those from other South Wales depots on other freight workings to Tondy. Passenger working was now in the hands of the new 2-6-2 tanks, five of which would be received by the end of the year, plus the Metro 2-4-0T and 35XX 0-4-4T and the five 2021 Class allocated, assisted generally by the Buffalos.

Full details as follows:

Aberdare 2-6-0 Standard	1	2618
Goods 0-6-0	3	85, 502, 657
Metro 2-4-0T	1	980
3100 Class 2-6-2T	1	3106 (future 4406)
(45XX) 2-6-2T	4	2165/66/78. 2189 from April.
119 Class 0-6-0T	1	126
302 Class 0-6-0T	1	303
1016 Class 0-6-0T	4	1020/42/52/68
1076 Buffalo 0-6-0T	19	732/41. 963, 1151/53/78, 1242/63/64/80/92, 1572/79/90, 1602/10/13/43/49
1813 Class 0-6-0T	6	1830/39/42/46/47/52
1854 Class 0-6-0T	6	907, 1703/07, 1860/90/91
2021 Class 0-6-0T	5	2047/63/66, 2123/58
2721 Class 0-6-0T	5	2735/36/43/74/87
35XX 0-4-4T	1	3576
Ex-West Cornwall	2	1350 (from July) 1397 (Jan only)

1920

By 1920, the Tondy allocation had fallen to 46-48 engines, a reduction of about 14 on the 1910 position, which must reflect a reduction on the coal trade in the area. The main line freight work was now solely

covered by an Aberdare, with support only from the Buffalos, so it can only be presumed that inwards working was covering much of the outward services and the depot was now becoming largely concerned with colliery servicing, shunting and tripping to and from Tondu. Between June 1919 and August 1921, a Stella Class 2-4-0 was allocated, arriving from Newport, to work the daily Porthcawl to Cardiff service and this was added to in January 1920 by the allocation of Bulldog No 3381 *Birkenhead*. This class was to have a presence at Tondu until 1939, one engine being the allocation until the late 1930s when there were two. The Pyle to Porthcawl service was now covered by two of the 4400 Class while a 45XX was available for the L&O service, which must still have relied heavily on Buffalos. The first 4500 Class 2-6-2Ts had been allocated to Tondu in 1919 (Nos 4519/39). No 4519 went into Swindon Works during 1919 and was then moved to Newport leaving only No 4539 at Tondu in 1920. The other Valley services would have been worked by the six Metro tanks allocated and the additional 0-4-4T. The history of these passenger engines at the depot is related in the section on Passenger Services.

The first of the 4200 Class 2-8-0T arrived at Tondu from Swindon Works in November 1921 (Nos 4258/94):

Bulldog Class 4-4-0	1	3381 <i>Birkenhead</i>
Aberdare Class 2-6-0	2	2649/61
Stella Class 2-4-0	1	3513
4400 Class 2-6-2T	2	4400/06
4500 Class 2-6-2T	1	4539
Metro 2-4-0T	4	621, 972/79, 3589
119 Class 0-6-0T	2	120/26
850 Class 0-6-0T	2	850, 2013
1076 Buffalo Class 0-6-0T	20	905, 954, 1153/85, 1234/40/63/ 80/96,1552/ 93/96 1610/12/15/ 22/26/43/49, 1152 from April 1846 (from July)
1813 Class 0-6-0T	1	1846 (from July)
1854 Class 0-6-0T	6	1703/08/24/ 26/67, 1860
2021 Class 0-6-0T	4	2027/49, 2143/50
2721 Class 0-6-0T	7	2724/26/32/ 42/97, 2734 from July, 2773 from June
517 Class 0-4-2T	1	1434
Bridgend Allocation		
Metro 2-4-0T	2	463/69
1076 Buffalo 0-6-0T	3	1144, 1273, 1647

A view of Tondu Shed from North Junction in 1921 with the coal stage alongside. The engine Shed was erected by the GWR in 1889, replacing the former L&O Railway Shed which stood on the same site. It was a standard 'Dean' roundhouse with brick walls and a northlight pattern roof. The period Coaling Stage had a single tip built out from the Coal Stage proper. The offices were on the station side adjacent to the wagon repair bay. For locomotive repairs, two roads were used extended from the turntable. (Lens of Sutton)



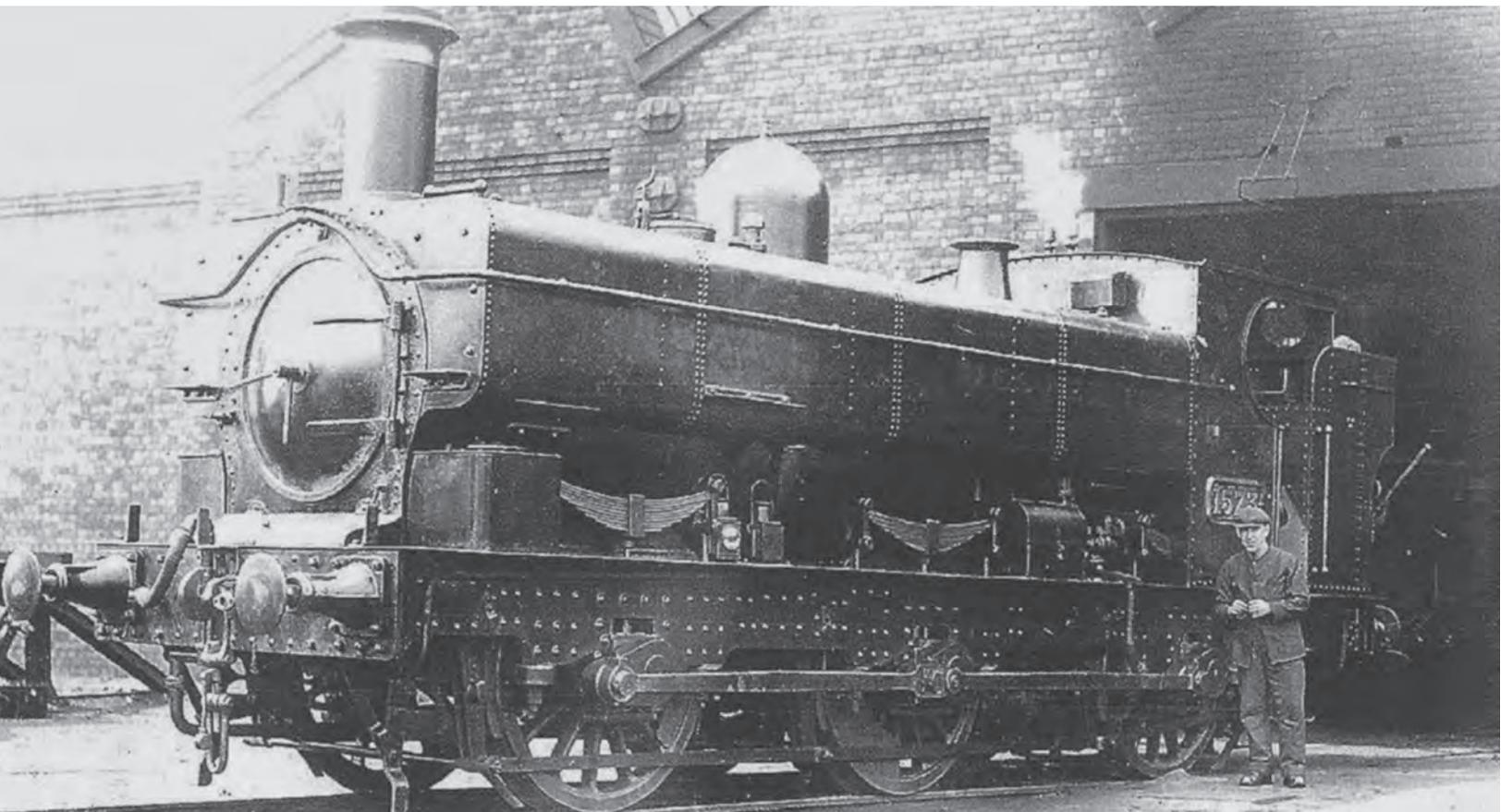
1930

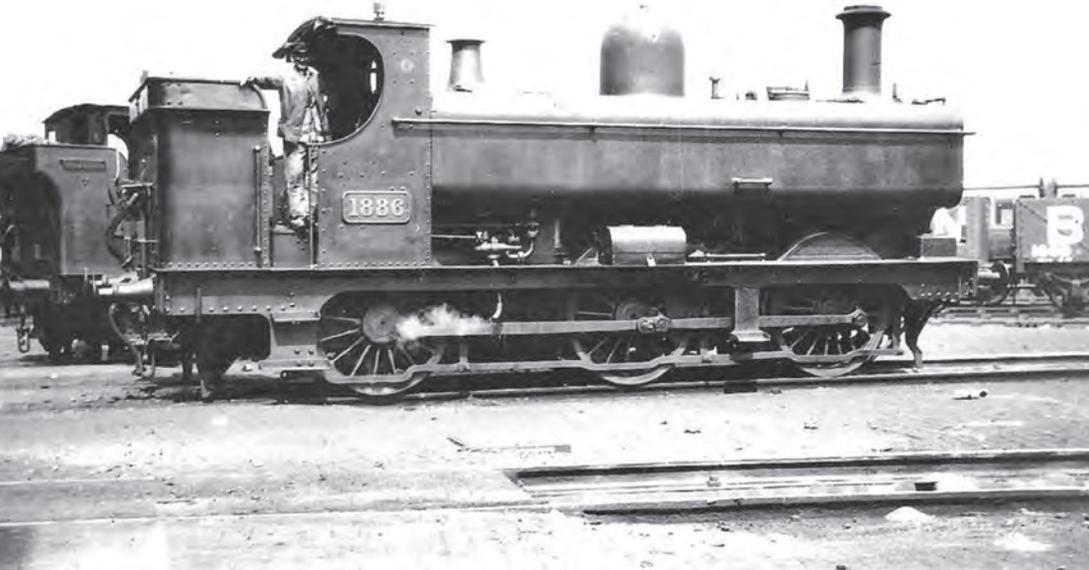
By 1930, the overall allocation of Tondy had changed little from 1920 with about 40 engines allocated. Within this there had been some fundamental changes, especially on the passenger engine side. Though a Bulldog was still in residence for the Porthcawl-Cardiff working, the allocation of 44XXs for the Porthcawl branch had disappeared (to be resumed in 1931), so this working must have reverted to veteran saddle or pannier tanks. With only one 2-6-2T available for the Llynfi Valley working, this and the Ogmre working must also have relied heavily on veteran 0-6-0Ts, though some new 57XX panniers were on the horizon for allocation later during 1930, to fill what must have been a recognised gap. There were still only four 42XXs allocated, a large allocation still being at Barry, which would soon be replaced by 56XXs to enable more 42s to be released elsewhere:

Bulldog 4-4-0	1	3345 <i>Smeaton</i>
4500 Class 2-6-2T	1	4509
4200 Class 2-8-0T	4	4233/39/64/75
850 Class 0-6-0T	1	1966
1016 Class 0-6-0T	1	1021
1076 Class Buffalo	11	730/32/34, 1153/ 85, 1267/90/96, 1561/73, 1645
1661 Class 0-6-0T	1	1665
1854 Class 0-6-0T	8	907, 1707/52, 1875/84/86/ 87/89
2721 Class 0-6-0T	9	2727/35/36/43/ 45/63/67/74/93
5700 Class 0-6-0PT	7	5708, 5707 July, 7720 July, 7721 Aug, 7722 July, 7748 March, 7747 July

By 1934, the position for passenger engines had improved with 44XXs Nos 4403/08 for the Porthcawl working and 4500 Class 4522 and 4575 Class 5533, the latter two allocated to Bridgend for the Llynfi.

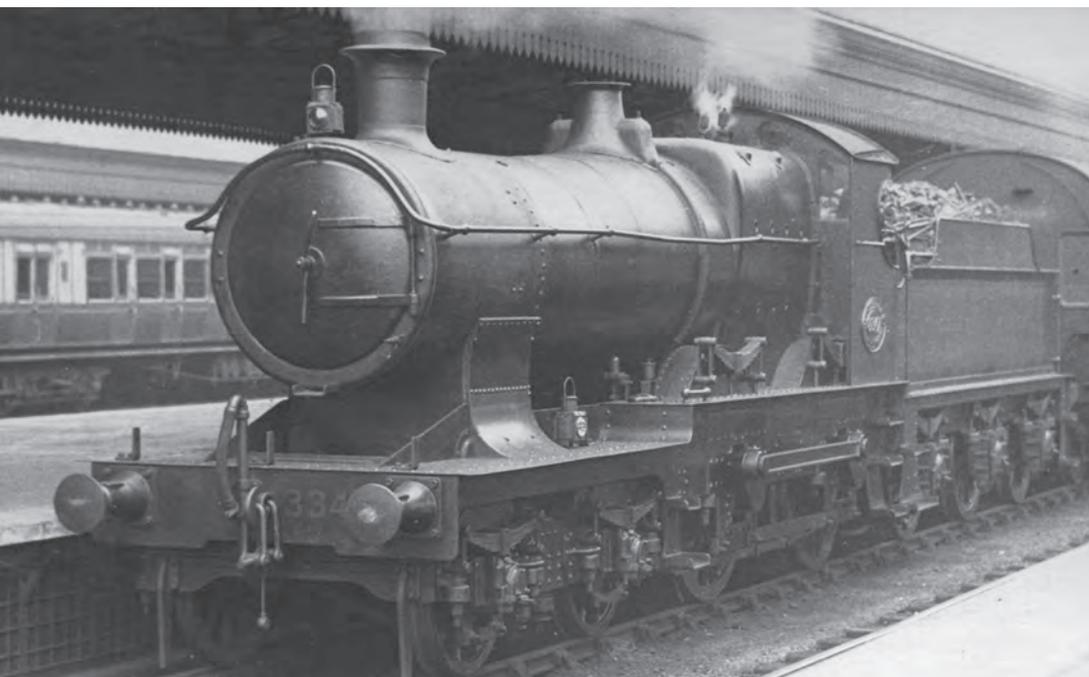
Tondy had a large fleet of the 1076 Buffalo Class which began life as saddle tanks and were fitted with pannier tanks in the 1910s and '20s. No.1573, seen here standing at the mouth of the shed in August 1932, was so fitted in May 1913 and was withdrawn in June 1935. (Stephenson Locomotive Society)



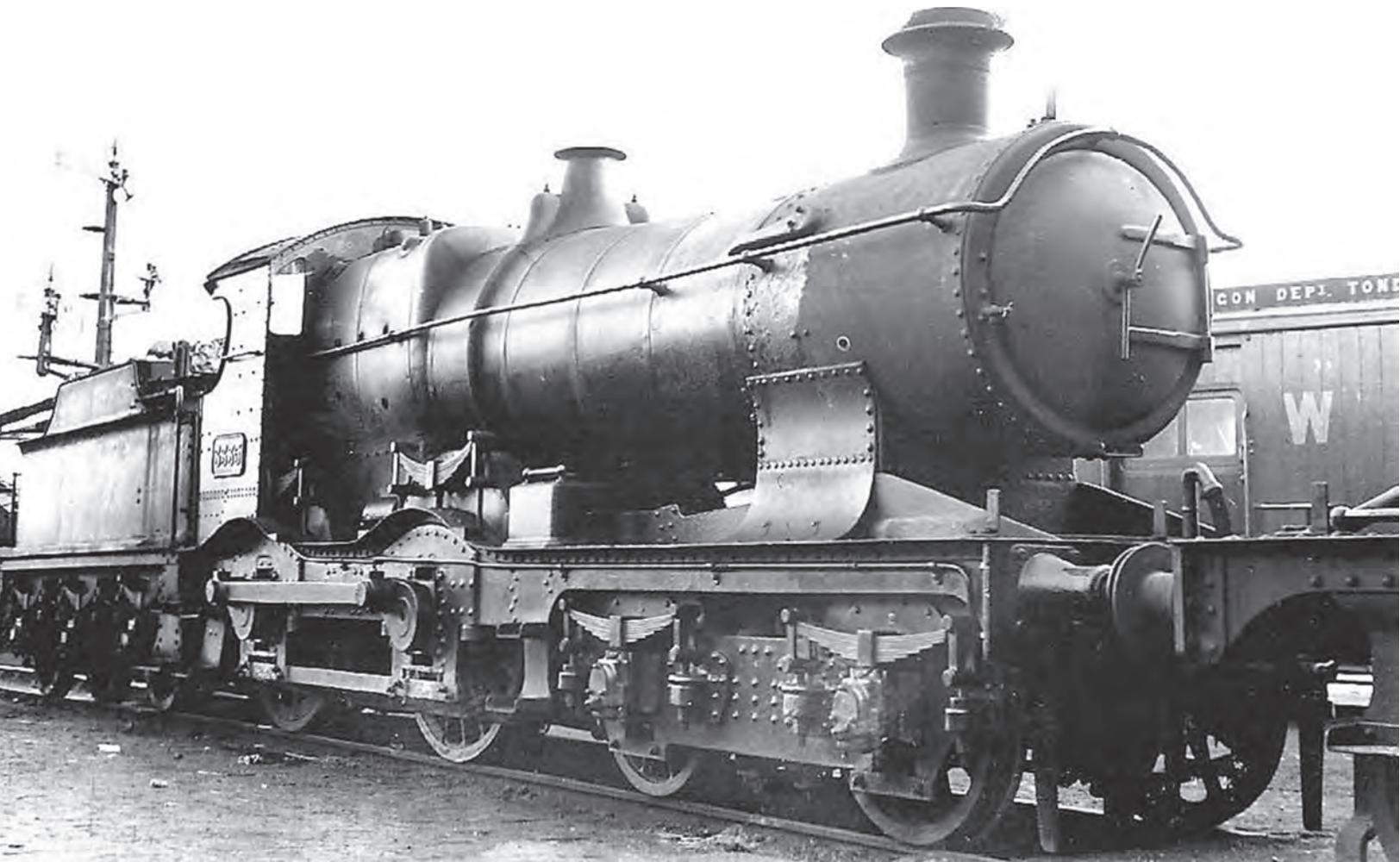


The 1854 Class was widely used in South Wales for shunting and tripping until 1950. Introduced as saddle tanks from January 1890, they were converted to pannier tanks during the 1910s and '20s. 1886 received panniers in September 1914 and was superheated in October 1921, but the elements were later removed. She is seen at the shed on 6 May 1935, being withdrawn in June 1945. (F.K. Davies)

1856 was another of the 1854 class allocated to Tondu in the mid-1930s and is seen in the yard on 6 May 1935, working regularly in the yards and serving the collieries. The third of the class to be built as a saddle tank in February 1890, she was converted to pannier tanks in May 1919, having been superheated in February 1919 although the elements were later removed. She lasted until November 1945. (F.K. Davies)



Bulldog 4-4-0 3347, formerly *Kingsbridge*. There is some doubt as to the location but she was based at Carmarthen in 1921, the date of this photograph, and it is possible the view is at Cardiff. 3347 was based at Tondu from July 1932 until May 1934.



Bulldog 4-4-0 3335, originally named *Tregothnan*, photographed at Tondy on 17 October 1937, having had her name removed in 1930 at the request of the Traffic Department apparently due to potential passenger confusion with destinations. At Tondy, her main task was the morning Business Train from Porthcawl to Cardiff and evening return which was hardly likely to conflict with her name on these duties. She is seen standing adjacent to the Breakdown Crane 210 and its associated 6-wheel brakedown vans DW 48 Tool and DW 49 Staff, both with gas lighting. (R.J. Buckley/Initial Photographics)

1940

By January 1940, the composition of the allocation of some 41 engines had changed significantly. The last Bulldog had departed in 1939, when wartime conditions had meant the suspension of the Porthcawl to Cardiff service. The large fleet of Buffalos had completely disappeared and though the couple of 1854 Class and ten 2721 Class that remained (three at Bridgend) were now some 50 and 40 years old respectively, there were now nineteen of the newer 5700 Class of 1929 vintage, which were really the new Buffalos. Presuming the three 27XXs at Bridgend had some passenger duties,

the main thrust of the Llynfi passenger working would have fallen to the two 2-6-2Ts, with the two smaller ones (44XX) for the Porthcawls, leaving the Ogmores and Garw services in the hands of the 57XXs. Local freights were now in the hands of the six 2-8-0Ts allocated, ably assisted by the pannier tanks:

4500 Class 2-6-2T	1	4557
4575 Class 2-6-2T	1	5533
4400 Class 2-6-2T	2	4404/08
4200 Class 2-8-0T	6	4222/38/51/ 70/75, 5202 (4200 also in Jan.)
655 Class 0-6-0T	1	2701 (Bridgend in Jan.)

1854 Class 0-6-0T	2	1725, 1856
2721 Class 0-6-0T	9	2723/29/35/ 67/69/73/88, 2761/2 (Bridgend in Jan)
5700 Class 0-6-0T	19	3636/40, 3712/ 72/79, 5707/ 33/49/88/92, 7703/25/46/ 75/78. 8716/ 40/48/78

1950

The post-Nationalisation scene still saw two of the veteran pannier tanks allocated, though both would be condemned during the year. The number of engines allocated remained much the same as in the previous decade at forty-two. The Porthcawl service to Cardiff had been restored in 1946 and with it had come one of the rebuilt 3100 Class 2-6-2Ts No 3100 which was destined to stay at Tondy for the rest of its existence and one of the much-valued large prairies 4144. There were still four other 2-6-2Ts, the two 4400s for the Porthcawl service and a 4500 and a 4575 Class for the Llynfi. The main change since the 1940 analysis had been the introduction of the versatile 5600 Class to the depot during 1941, when four were progressively allocated, all still

remaining at 1950, though they would drop to two by 1952. These engines were quite at home working local passenger or freight and importantly, excursions on the main line, either singly or in pairs. Other than this the allocation had become dominated by the 5700 Class panniers, which also had great versatility in the work they could perform.

Details were as follows for January 1950:

3100 Class 2-6-2T	1	3100
4500 Class 2-6-2T	1	4557
4575 Class 2-6-2T	1	5556
4400 Class 2-6-2T	2	4404/08
4200 Class 2-8-0T	6	4217/18/41/ 73/76, 5202
5101 Class 2-6-2T	1	4144
5600 Class 0-6-2T	5	5633, 6642/49 (from Feb.)/ 75/85 (to May)
1854 Class 0-6-0T	1	1870 (Cond. Oct.)
2721 Class 0-6-0T	1	2761 (Cond. Mch.)
5700 Class 0-6-0T	26	3627/52/68/74/ 95/99, 3772, 4634/43/69, 5707/56/97, 7725/46/52/ 70/98, 8712/21/ 48/77, 9649/60 4662 from Oct. and 9682 from Nov.1950



Outside her home shed on 24 March 1957 rests Tondy's 3100. Allocated in 1946 with the restoration of the Porthcawl Cardiff residential service, she was withdrawn from Tondy in May 1957 after hitting the stop-block at Porthcawl damaging her frame on the evening service from Cardiff and was, prematurely, cut up at Swindon.



4144, a Tondy top link passenger engine which arrived new at Tondy from Swindon Works in September 1946 in company with 3100. Viewed in the shed yard on 13 June 1962, a regular performer on the Valleys and on main line services to Porthcawl. With a Tractive Effort between a Saint and a Hall, the 5101 Class 2-6-2T was a prized possession at any shed and was a superb passenger engine. They were used in large numbers in the Birmingham area and in more limited numbers in South Wales, at both main line and Valley depots, especially at Rhymney following the introduction of the Cardiff Valleys Regular Interval service where they handled the 6-coach uphill climb from Cardiff with ease. They also worked 10 coach excursions from the Eastern & Western Valleys to Barry Island and Porthcawl. Tondy was fortunate to have just one in the post-war years, rising to three by the early 1960s, as they had little work to justify their allocation, other than the Porthcawl-Cardiff services. (Transport Treasury)

A new acquisition in September 1960 was 4108, which was transferred in from Truro and is seen at the mouth of the shed on 13 May 1962.





4236 stands in the shed yard in June 1955 having just received a Light Casual repair at Caerphilly, but having been completely repainted. The 4200 Class 2-8-0Ts were the heavy freight workhorses of the Depot and worked both on the main line and in the Valleys services to the collieries. Introduced from 1910 through to 1940, during which several improvements had been made, they were the GWR's answer to colliery and main line working requirements across South Wales. At 81ton 12cwts, they were referred to as Big Boys at Tondu depot and were only exceeded by the 7200 Class, introduced from 1934, which weighed 92tons 12cwts, none of which were allocated to Tondu. (RCTS)



The 5205 Class varied from the earlier series up to 5204 in having raised frames to accommodate larger diameter cylinders and outside steam pipes, plus curved drop ends. Here, standing in the yard with the depot breakdown vans behind, 5262 of Severn Tunnel has come to shed off an inwards freight working c1950. (RCTS)



The favourite Big Boy at Tondy was 4222 which had a long-term association with the depot. Here 5913 *Rushton Hall* stands behind 4222 on 23 September 1956 having failed on the main line and been sent to Tondy for repairs. 4222 illustrates the majestic presence these machines had; this one was a Tondy favourite arriving in August 1936 and there at the last on 20 April 1964 when it was transferred to Llantrisant. For days on end, 4222 had been observed from the classroom window standing as Yard Pilot in the Headshunt at Velin Vach, then on 6 July 1963 her place was taken by a brand new D6852, marking the end of an era. (Leslie Nicolson)

4408 was based at Tondy from July 1932 until January 1953 working the Porthcawl turns as above. She is seen here inside Tondy shed on 9 September 1951. (H.C. Casserley)

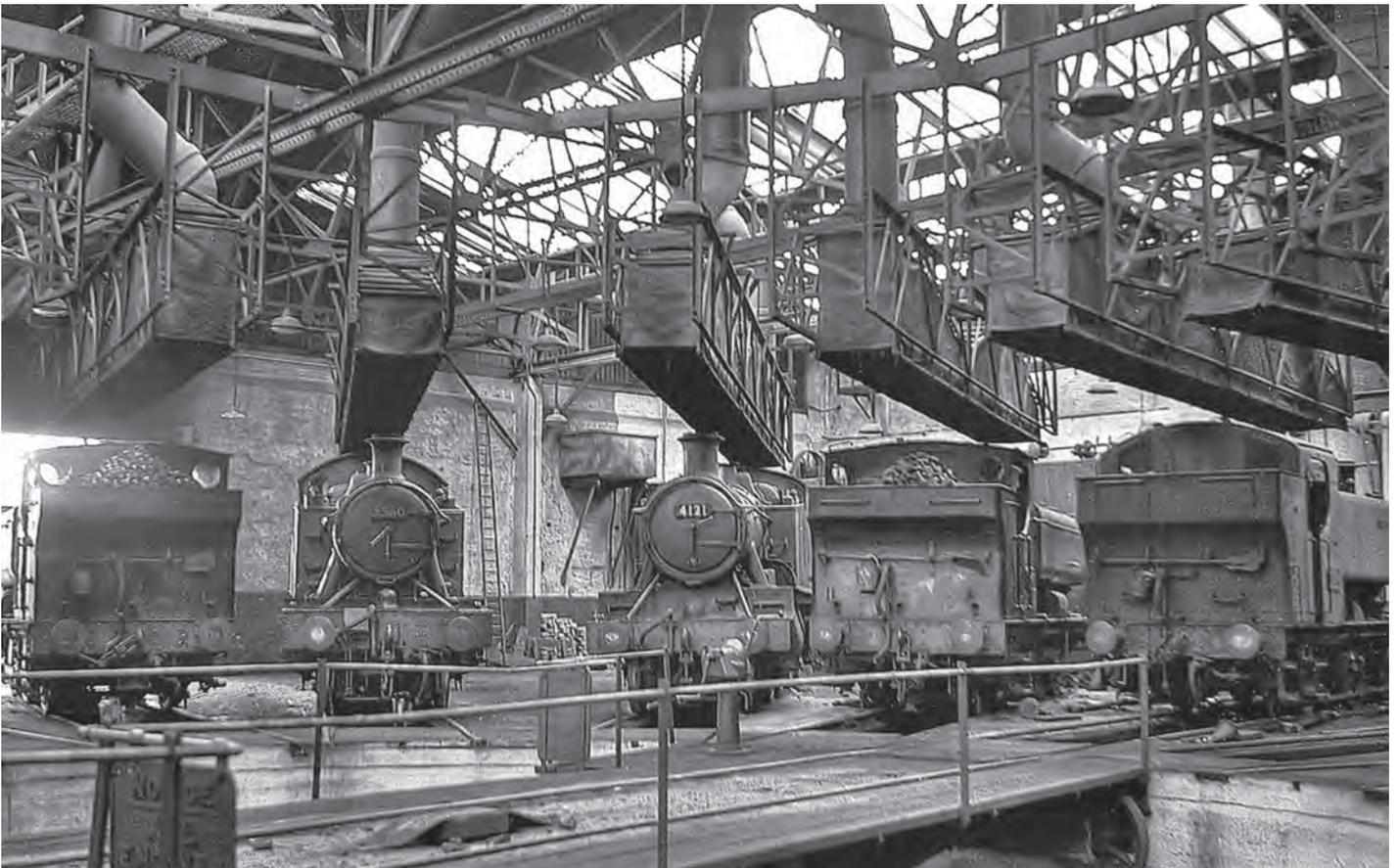




4404 in the shed yard at Tondy, coaled up for its next duty, on 29 August 1948. 4404 was a Tondy engine from September 1935 until April 1952. From an early date, the Porthcawl branch was worked by two small Prairies of the 44XX or 45XX series. There were two passenger turns; one however worked the Target U1 to Porthcawl with goods shed traffic before taking up passenger duties. Due to the tortuous curvature of the line from Pyle, the practice was to turn these at Tondy in the afternoon and each night so as to equalise the tyre wear and tear. Additionally, they each faced opposite directions, one bunker leading, the other chimney. This class of eleven engines became associated with branch line working where tight curves were involved. Initially much of their work was in the West Country, but over the years they became involved with working the Tondy to Porthcawl line, the Much Wenlock branch from Wellington (Salop) shed and the Princetown branch from Laira. Two of the class were allocated to Tondy for long periods as shown in the text and were a target for enthusiasts and photographers. (Transport Treasury)

6676 in the yard on 30 March 1958. On 26 February 1963, this engine was in charge of a train of 31 loaded coal wagons from Wyndham Colliery (Target U8) which ran out of control allegedly due to greasy rails approaching Ogmores Vale. The whole train derailed, 6676 ending up on its side. Driver Lawry and Fireman Harvard escaped unhurt. The engine was recovered and stored at Tondy until 10 December 1963 when it left for cutting up at Cashmores of Newport. The 5600 Class was widely used in the South Wales Valleys for both passenger and freight traffic. They were especially profuse in the Cardiff Valleys at former pre-grouping companies' depots, such as Barry and Cathays but were also based in smaller numbers at former GWR depots which relied mostly on the 4200 Class for freight work. Tondy had a small allocation of these engines which were used both on Valleys passenger, excursion work, colliery and main line freight. (Transport Treasury)





A 1960 view from the turntable and the surrounding roads with five locos from four classes but only 4121 & 5560 discernible. As with other glass-roofed roundhouses, the shed was quite light enabling photographs of the interior to be taken with ease. This view shows the smoke vents and overhead rigging to good advantage. (John Wiltshire)



4406 at rest inside Tondy's Roundhouse sometime in 1952. (M. Roberts/ Kidderminster Railway Museum)

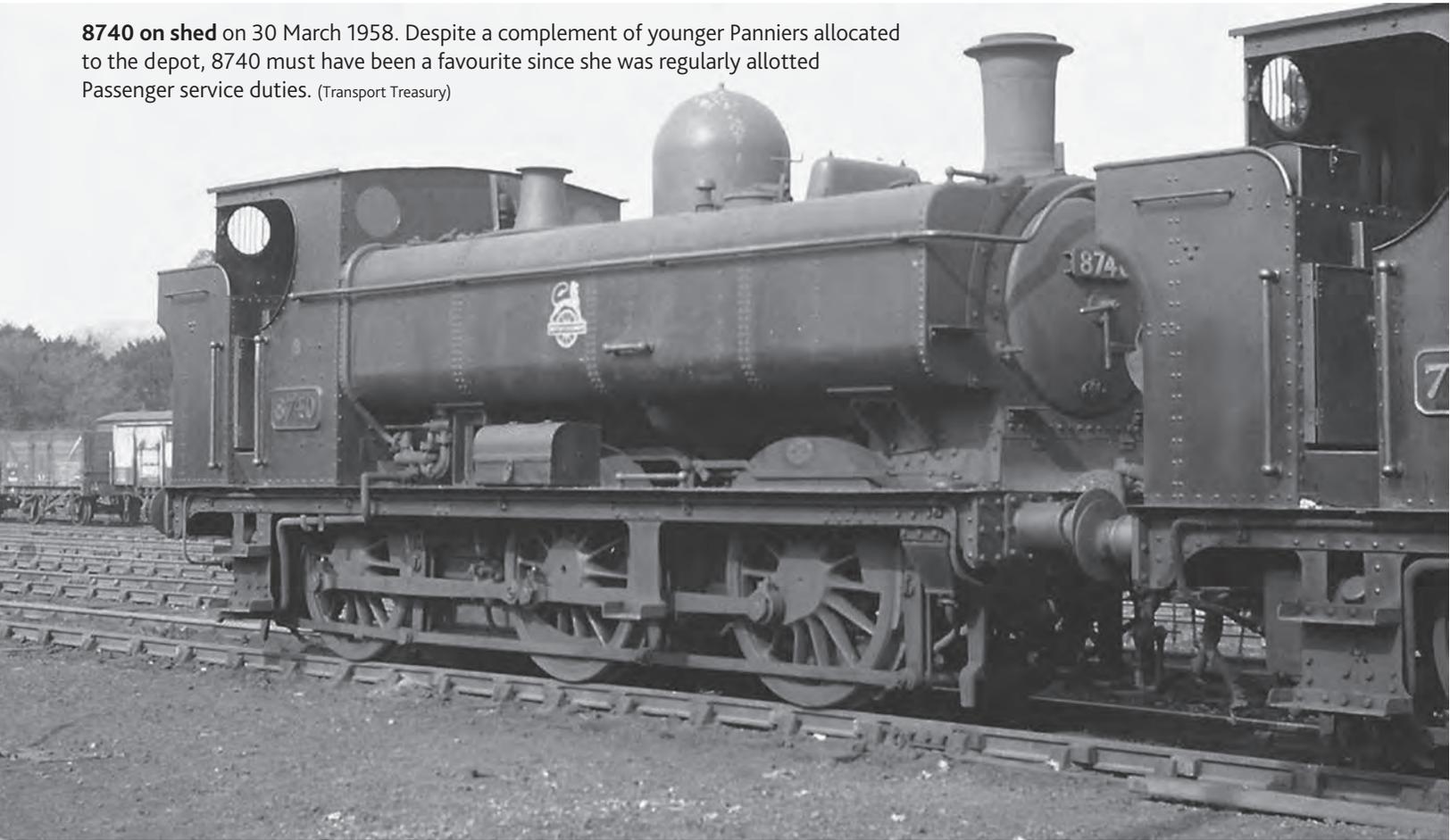


Several of the 56XX class had been based in the Wolverhampton Division for many years but in the 1960s were brought back to South Wales. Here two of Tondy's acquisitions, 6657 formerly of Leamington and 5690 of Chester, stand together next to the breakdown crane in January 1964. (Hugh Davies Collection)

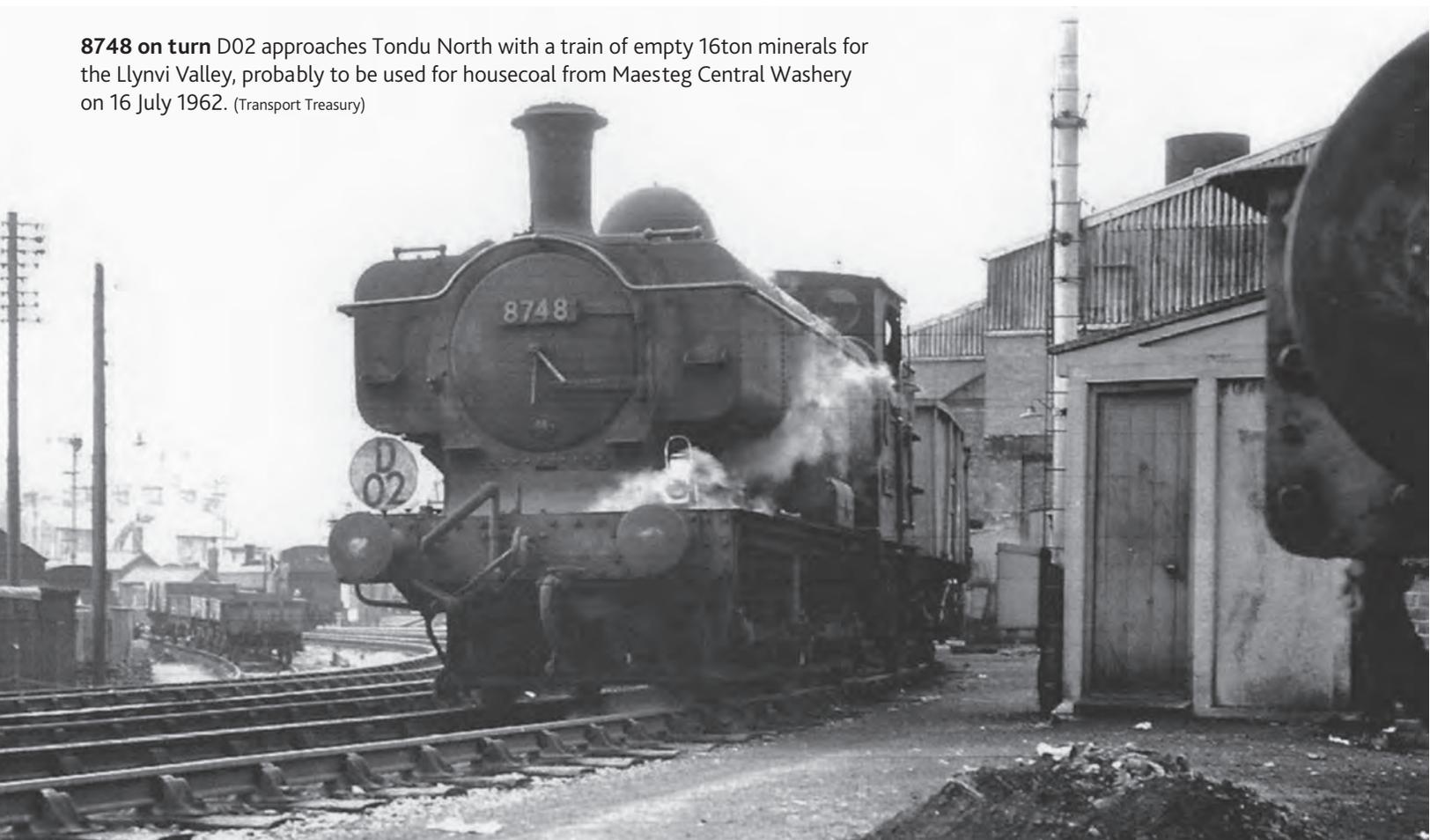
A long term resident at Tondy was one of the early members of the 5700 Class No. 5707 which is seen here in the yard one Sunday during 1955. The ubiquitous pannier tank 5700 Class was to be found in wide use across South Wales working on passenger, freight and shunting duties. They were the descendants of earlier saddle tank engines which had been converted to pannier tanks mostly in the first two decades of the century, but from 1929 the new design of the 5700 Class was introduced, so successfully that 863 57XX Pannier Tanks were built in nine number series. The earliest were distinguished by a flatter cab roof and were in the 57, 67, 77 and 87 series, while later builds in the 36, 37, 46, 67(later), 87 (later), 96 and 97 had a round top cab, which gave a more modern appearance. Their tractive effort of 22,515lbs. belied their enormous potential power on inclines where they would out-perform several more powerful classes. (RCTS)



8740 on shed on 30 March 1958. Despite a complement of younger Panniers allocated to the depot, 8740 must have been a favourite since she was regularly allotted Passenger service duties. (Transport Treasury)

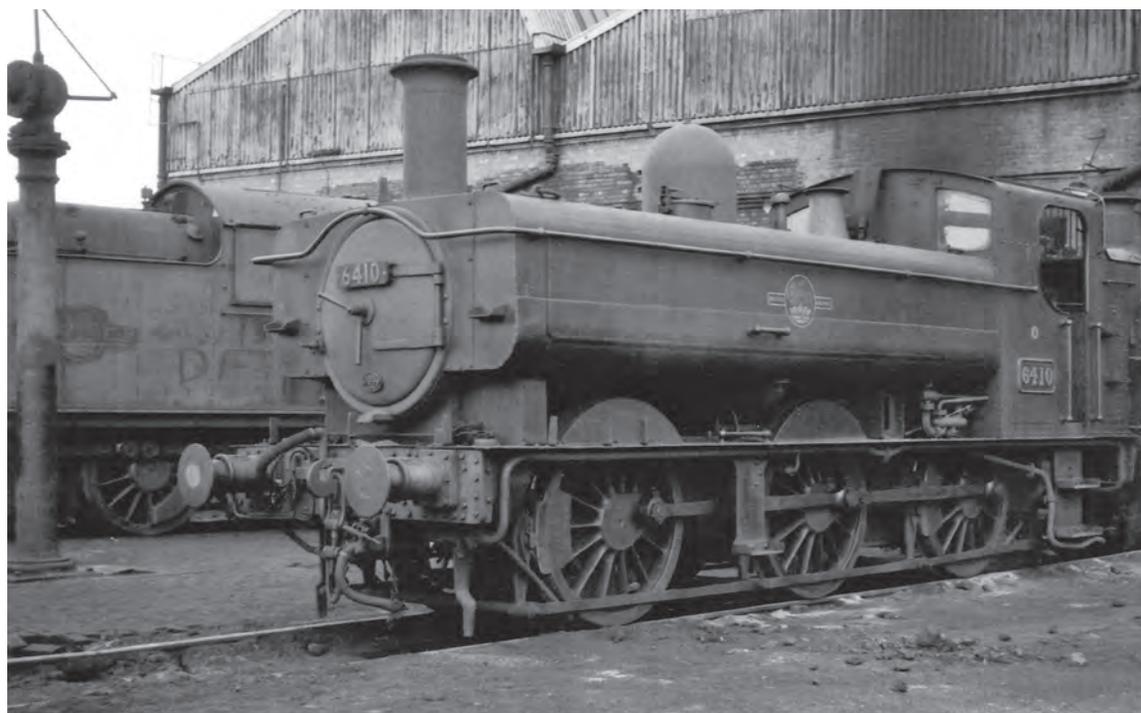


8748 on turn D02 approaches Tondy North with a train of empty 16ton minerals for the Llynvi Valley, probably to be used for housecoal from Maesteg Central Washery on 16 July 1962. (Transport Treasury)





5545 against a stop-block in the yard on 23 September 1956. Perhaps because the number 55-45 rolled easily off the tongue, this was Tondu's favourite Auto fitted engine. The cab was compact but roomy compared to a Pannier (although the latter were theoretically more powerful) and the controls of a 55XX were so responsive; the Driver sitting on top of the tank could operate the Reverser with his knees and the Regulator with his foot. These engines in non-auto form had been allocated to the depot over many years but in 1953 a batch were converted for auto working and used in the Cardiff and Tondu Valleys. Auto working was introduced into the Tondu Valleys in September 1953. To provide greater power for such workings which had previously been in the hands of the 2021 and 6400 Class panniers, a group of 4500 Class engines were converted for auto operation and allocated to Barry, Cathays and Tondu depots where they operated trains of two, three and four coaches, obviating the need to run round at the end of journeys. With the curtailment of services to Abergwynfi, remaining auto operations (Nantymoel services had been withdrawn in 1958) were able to be hauled by the less powerful 6400 Class which were allocated to Tondu, the 4500 Class all being transferred away. (Leslie Nicolson)



6410 stands outside the shed sometime between September 1960 and November 1962 when she was condemned.



The GWR shedcode for Tondy was TDU. The practice was to stencil this on the footplate side frame immediately behind the front buffer beam or on the top of the front step plate. In 1950 the former LMS system was used whereby a cast iron plate was affixed to the bottom of the smokebox door. Tondy became 86F, the 8 denoting Western Region and the 6, a Newport District shed. Reorganisation from 1 January 1961 saw the transfer of Tondy Depot to the Cardiff Valleys District and Tondy now became 88H.

1960

The introduction of auto working on the Llynfi, Ogmere and Porthcawl branches in September 1953 had seen the arrival of five Auto-fitted 4575 Class 2-6-2Ts, replacing the non-auto examples previously allocated. These had been reduced by one following the closure of the Ogmere Valley service in May 1958, leaving three but these were supplemented by the arrival of 41XX 2-6-2T N° 4121 from August 1958 which worked the standard Porthcawl-Cardiff service and express freight to Cardiff Newtown, as well as any specials composed of larger formations.

4121 may have been a late permanent replacement for No 3100 which had been withdrawn in May 1957 after hitting the stop block in Porthcawl and damaging its frame earlier that year on the evening service from Cardiff. It was used for some months as Tondy Ogmere Pilot before leaving for Swindon (its temporary replacement was 5171 from Ebbw Junction). On arrival at Swindon

Works, there was some doubt as to whether 3100 should be withdrawn as she was only 19 years old, something which had not apparently been appreciated according to a note on the Allocation Ledger. She was placed in the Stock Shed (later with No 3101) for some time but was eventually cut up. It may have been that the book-keepers were confused into thinking that she was a member of the 3150 Class in pronouncing her withdrawn.

Though there were still two Auto-fitted 4575s present at 1 Jan 1960, they were both transferred to Machynlleth in August, being replaced by four 6400 Class Auto engines for working to Blaengwynfi and Porthcawl. The 5700 Class panniers still dominated the allocation but three of the newer 9400 Class had also been allocated for mixed traffic duties:

5100 Class 2-6-2T	2	4121/44
4575 Class 2-6-2T	2	5545/55
4200 Class 2-8-0T	9	4218/22/36/ 43/51/63/ 69/74, 5208
5600 Class 0-6-2T	3	5629, 6673/76
5700 Class 0-6-0T	18	3616/68/90, 3781, 4669/75, 7735/32/53 8710/12/21/ 40/48, 9609/49/ 60, 9738
9400 Class 0-6-0T	3	8453/97, 9451

1964

The final allocation for the depot on Monday 13 April 1964, when English Electric Type 3 diesels were performing many of the freight duties throughout the Cardiff Division, was still 23 engines. There were still ten of the 42XX Class for Coal working to and from the Valley collieries, two of the 64XX auto engines for the Porthcawl service but the 9400s had gone. Tondy was one of the first South Wales sheds to be completely dieselised. The Class 37s were serviced

at first at the newly opened Landore depot and subsequently at Margam. The class 08 were at first serviced at Neath Court Sart but subsequently also at Margam:

4200 Class 2-8-0T	10	4214/22/33/ 43/73/83/95, 5208/26/43
5600 Class 0-6-2T	2	5692, 6657
5700 Class 0-6-0T	8	3738, 4652/ 63/69/75, 9609/48, 9780
6400 Class 0-6-0T	2	6419/34

RE-FUELLING

Coal was only available at Tondy Shed although a small supply was provided at Porthcawl for the duration of the Summer timetable. Water Columns for the replenishment of locomotives within the Tondy Valleys were available at Tondy Shed and Station, Bridgend Shed and Station, Porthcawl, Pyle, Hendreforgan, Nantymoel, Pontycymmer, Maesteg, Abergwynfi, Blaengwynfi and Treherbert. 2½ minutes were required to refill a locomotive with 2,000 gallons of water from a column.



The date is 16 May 1964, a month after Tondy depot closure on 13 April. Three condemned 42XXs stand in the north corner of the yard with 4262, bereft of numbers, buffered up to condemned 0-4-2T 1422 which had been used as a stationary boiler at Tondy since 18 December 1957 and was last to leave on 13 November 1964 after being stored at the North end for the summer. With branch line closures, these locos had become quite rare in South Wales, though in the 1950s they had been found in small numbers at Pontypool Road, Newport, Cathays, Llantrisant and Fishguard. They did however appear often at Caerphilly and Barry Works. (D.K. Jones Collection)

Monday 18 April 1964 and the start of the final week of steam working at Tondy. 4669 has just berthed a train of Hyfits in the Up Siding (probably from Bridgend Paper Mills at Gelli Las). Meanwhile, 6657 and 5692 stroll past light engine on the Up Main with the Shed alongside and the south end of the Coaling Stage just beyond. The following week, 4669 was transferred to Neath (Court Sart) and the two 56XXs (the last of their type at Tondy) to Radyr.



CHAPTER 7

LLYNFI (OR LLYNVI) VALLEY

BRIDGEND - TONDU - CYMMER - TREHERBERT

As the Tondy Valleys were GWR from 1873, the GW principle of describing lines as DOWN (from Paddington) and UP (to Paddington) was observed. The line from Bridgend up the Valley to Abergwynfi was therefore the DOWN. This was unlike the practice of the private companies in the other South Wales Valleys where (in concert with the gradient) the service UP the Valley ran on the UP line.

Insofar as South Wales was concerned, tank engines normally ran chimney-first up the Valley – the only usual exception to this rule was the Brecon & Merthyr where tank engines (like their tender counterparts in the working) were turned at Newport and Brecon as the gradients were similar in either direction. The rule ensured that water in the boiler gravitated over the crown of the firebox as an additional safety measure if the water level was running low. In the event of running too low on water, the heat from the fire would melt the fusible plug in the top of the firebox and in what little time remained, the fire needed to be doused. ‘Dropping a plug’ was regarded as a driver’s cardinal sin.

The Llynfi Valley services originally terminated at Abergwynfi but following re-modelling at Cymmer in 1960, were switched to Blaengwynfi. These then were extended to Treherbert following the closure of the R&SB line in December 1962. We are therefore including this extension in the Llynfi Valley Location Analysis.

BRIDGEND

The original Llynvi Company passenger service from Bridgend to Tywith (Nantyffyllon) was Broad Gauge and operated by arrangement to/from the South Wales Railway platforms. When the Standard Gauge Ogmre Valley Railway joined with the Llynvi to become the Llynvi & Ogmre Railway in July 1866, provision needed to be made for Standard Gauge trains to also work into Bridgend. This resulted in separate mixed gauge platforms being required for the L&O trains and these were provided on the same site as the GWR station in April 1868. However, when the GWR abandoned the Broad Gauge in 1872, the station was rebuilt and the L&O requirement built into the new layout. The GWR absorbed the L&O in 1873.

The earliest available drawing of Bridgend Station from 1881 shows that the former L&O trains, by now operated by the GW, arrived and departed over a single line at the north face of the Main Line Eastbound Island platform. This remained the practice throughout the life of the Valley services. Even after the line to Tondy was doubled in 1901, the L&O approach to Bridgend was single to/from the controlling signal box which was No 2 Box to 1886 and thereafter Bridgend Middle.

Run-round facilities were provided by using the bi-directional Up Main Line through the station. However, the normal service pattern was an Ogmre/Garw arrival followed in quick succession by a

Llynfi train. Only the incoming Ogmores engine was run round. The incoming Llynfi engine uncoupled and attached to the return Ogmores train, with the Ogmores engine which had run round attaching to and working the return Llynfi train. It was the normal practice for the Llynvi Valley train to arrive second to make a better connection with the main line in view of the greater number of places served and to leave again first. This practice became standard until the introduction of Auto-working with 55XX engines in September 1953, when of course the formations were fixed.

The run-round movements were carried out between Bridgend No1, located at the east end of the Down platform and No 2 on the Down side at the west end of the platforms. In 1886 the boxes were renamed East and Centre. In 1897, the East box was moved to a new location at the junction of the main and Vale of Glamorgan lines to the east of the station and in 1899 the Centre box was replaced by a new Bridgend Middle box on the other side of the line.

Parallel to the Valleys platform line were two sidings, one a loop with a stop-blocked spur on which a wagon turntable was located with a short northward facing stabling siding attached. The other siding

ran parallel to the loop siding and was connected into it. These sidings were probably used by the L&O as their Goods depot until amalgamated with the GWR in 1873 when they would have used the GWR Goods depot on the downside of the main line. The second siding had gone by 1910 but the other remained and was much used for holding spare coaching stock.

By 1890, the Valleys side of the Island platform had been extended westwards to afford greater accommodation for the L&O and Garw trains. The width of the Up Main Line platform remained as it was, with a trailing short siding to accommodate an engine and van to remove/add tail traffic from/to an Up train. This remained the layout until August 1966 when the trailing connection out of the Up Main was removed, the Up Main platform extended and the Valleys platform shortened.

Rationalisation of the signal boxes in the area took place in 1899, the previous four boxes now replaced by three, Bridgend East located east of the station and controlling the Main Line approach as well as the Vale of Glamorgan access, Bridgend Middle, just west of the station, and Bridgend West, located in the V between the Valley and Main Lines.

Bridgend c1905.

On the left a Vale of Glamorgan train headed by a Barry Railway J Class 2-4-2 tank No 87 whilst centre is a double-headed London bound express with Bulldog 3422 *Sir John Llewelyn* piloting a Duke Class. On the right a Tondy Valleys service with an 0-6-0 Saddle Tank in charge. (Lens of Sutton)





Bridgend with an unidentified Bulldog Class 4-4-0 at the head of an up express c1905. (Lens of Sutton)



The 'Quarter Milepost' on Bridgend's Down Main Platform indicating 192½ Miles from Paddington. This was by the original GWR South Wales Mainline through to Neyland via Gloucester. With the South Wales & Bristol Direct Line through Badminton and the opening of the 7,668-yard-long Severn Tunnel in 1886 the distance was reduced by 25 miles, though the mileposts were never changed. (Stuart Davies)



An aerial view of Bridgend station with the large Goods Shed in the top right hand corner.



The 'Running-In Board' on Bridgend's Down Main Platform taken 2 July 1950 with reference to all the Branch connections available which, apart from the Vale of Glamorgan, are covered in this book. (R.K. Blencowe)

Bridgend Engine

Shed (which became a sub-shed to Tondy) opened in 1866 and closed in April 1950. Until that time up to two 0-6-0 Tanks and two small Prairie Tanks had been based at the depot to cover the passenger workings, the Prairies for the Llynvi services. It was normal for the early morning starting trains from Bridgend to be covered from here, including on the Vale of Glamorgan after the closure of the Barry Railway Coity shed. (Stephenson Locomotive Society)

Bridgend Engine Shed

West of the station, to the north of the Valley lines, a small one road engine shed was located, for the use of the Valley engines and from 1906 when the Barry Railway shed at Coity closed, those off the Vale of Glamorgan (VoG). There was no turntable provided. South of the engine shed two long sidings were located for goods and other traffic. Though little used compared with Tondy, the depot remained in existence until 1950. Connections in and out of the depot were controlled from No 3 SB which from 1886 became Llynvi & Ogmores SB, located at the intersection of the Valley and Main Lines, at the very bottom of the V. A Private Siding for use by Charles Sheppard ran west of the engine shed, the agreement dating from August 1882.

By 1910, the increase in traffic had led to the Valley line being doubled between Bridgend Middle and Brynmenyn. Another siding had been provided alongside the engine shed on the north side for the additional engines now using the depot. Further siding accommodation had been provided west of the engine shed known as Newtown Yard, in the form of two loop sidings with road access alongside for loading and unloading wagons, with a short private siding and a long extension at the west end.

The wagon turntable on the private siding west of the engine shed was removed by 1919 and by 1930 the siding agreement was in the name of Sheppard & Son Ltd. By the mid-1950s, an additional siding had been provided south of the Valley lines at their intersection with the Main Lines at



Bridgend West. The engine shed closed in April 1950, all duties then being absorbed by Tondy depot.

1960s Rationalisation

Rationalisation of track and signalling began in 1965 with the introduction of Multiple Aspect Signalling in the area. Bridgend East, Middle and West signal boxes were closed on 12 September 1965. Other sidings and some running lines in the area including the parallel siding north of the Valleys platform were taken out of use on 15 August 1966, the east end spur beyond the crossover having been taken out of use the previous 6 September 1965.

By now, R.S. Hayes Ltd. Wagon Repairs had set up business in Newtown Yard and remained there until the withdrawal by the Railways Board from wagonload traffic in 1976 led to the closure of that yard in 1977. The PS of Sheppard & Sons closed in July 1966 and was lifted in 1967.

From 12 August 1962, the Up and Down Branch lines were singled between Tondy and Bridgend, using the Down line as the Up and Down Branch while the former Up line became an Up and Down Siding. From 1983 the siding line was taken out of use, leaving just a single line. The one remaining siding in the former Newtown Yard area north of the running lines was taken out of use at the end of 1983, while two of the three sidings south of the Valley running lines had gone by 1981. From 1965, the

junction between the Valley platform line and the Main Line at the east end of the station was named Bridgend Llynvi Jcn.

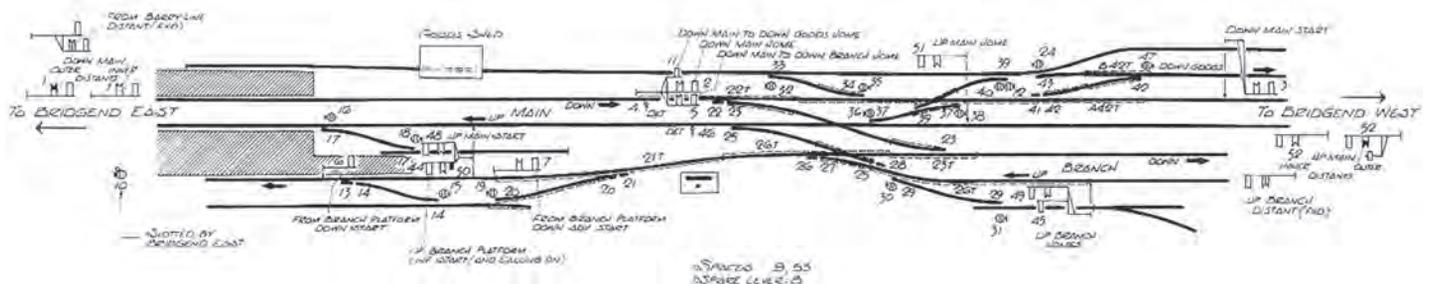
As the Valleys platform was now redundant, the station facilities were rebuilt in 1979 and the disused Valley platform mostly filled in, its track truncated at the west end, though the connection remains to this day but unused. The connection at Bridgend East into the Up Main Line was removed and the crossover there moved half way down the layout between the main platforms, linking into the junction for the Tondy Valleys. This revision of the layout (the east end crossover was located on a sharp curve) enabled line speed through the station to be increased for non-stop trains.

As part of the rebuilding and following public pressure, the station buildings on the down platform were retained, as being part of the original South Wales Railway station dating from 1850, constructed of Quarella Sandstone, quarried nearby. The Up side timber buildings were replaced with a modern stone-faced structure housing a buffet and waiting room.

Trains to and from Maesteg were re-introduced from 30 September 1992, with an hourly service to and from Cardiff Central and again used the Main Line platforms as they did when the Broad Gauge service prevailed!

Bridgend Middle Signal Box Track Diagram. It was Bridgend Middle that controlled access to the Valley platform and controlled train running on the Valley line out to Coity Junction SB.

BRIDGEND MIDDLE SIGNAL BOX



Bridgend acting

Station Pilot 2769 of the 2721 Class on 10 April 1948. Tondy had always had a strong allocation of these originally saddle tank engines since the beginning of the century with between 6-9 allocated. However, during the 1940s most were withdrawn, with the last one going in March 1950. She is here either attaching or detaching a van to/from an up main line train. (Peter Pescod/Transport Treasury)



Fast forward to 1 June 1962 and the 10.5am Parcels from Cardiff to Neyland stands at the down platform conveying the daily van from Calne to Porthcawl conveying Bowyers sausages. Tondy's 9660 hurries along the up platform to detach the van which will be formed last on the train and will then run round it and convey it to Porthcawl. (R.S. Carpenter)



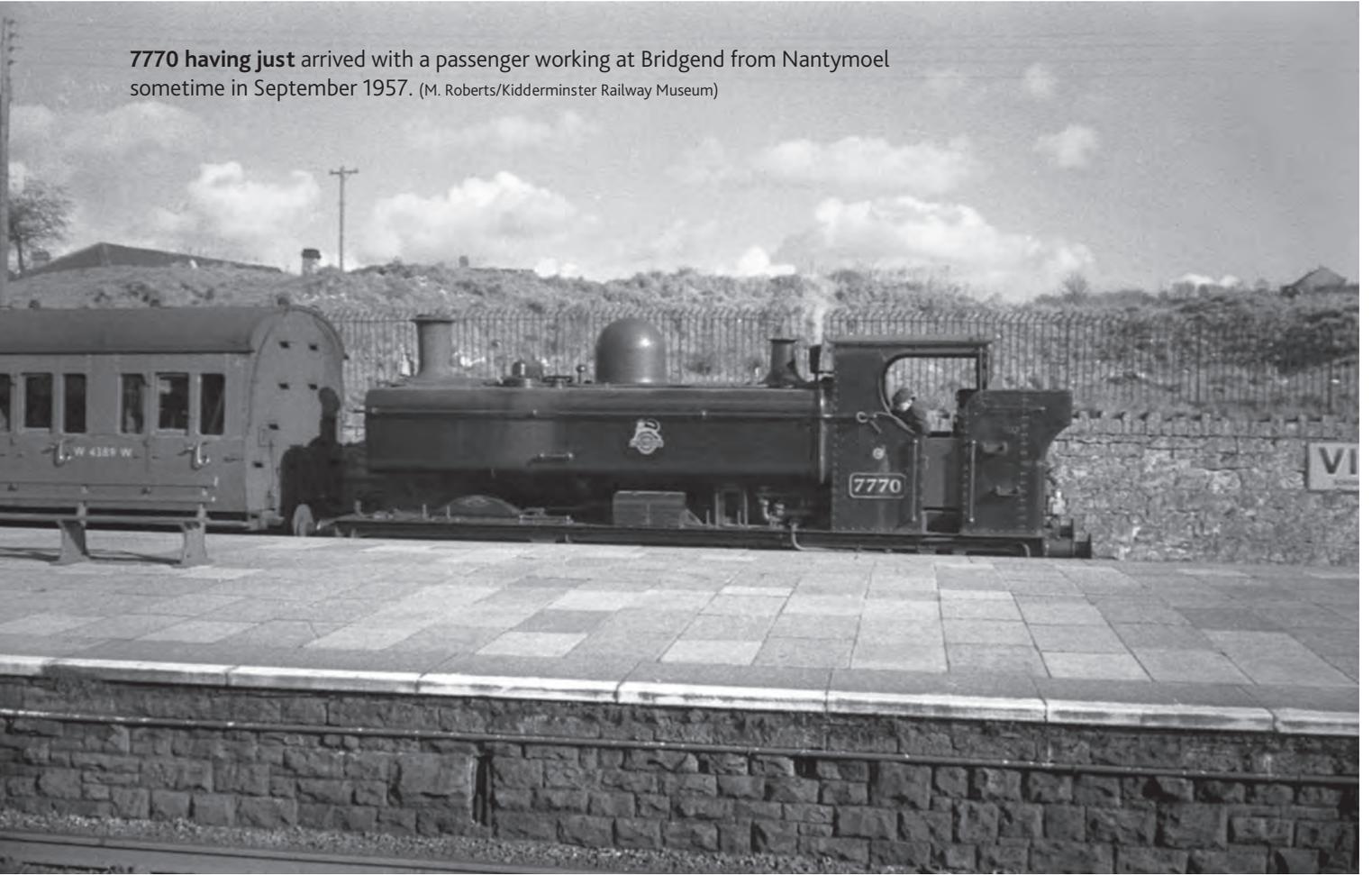


4581 at the head of an Auto working standing in Bridgend's Valley Platform in September 1957. (M. Roberts/Kidderminster Railway Museum)



Bridgend with 4406 standing at the head of empty coaching stock consisting of a pair of ex-Taff Vale Railway Auto-Coaches on 18 September 1954. 4406 was not auto fitted and this photo was taken just after the arrival of some of her larger 4575 class sisters that were modified in 1953 for widespread Auto working at Tondu which saw the demise of 4406. (B. Moone/Kidderminster Railway Museum)

7770 having just arrived with a passenger working at Bridgend from Nantymoel sometime in September 1957. (M. Roberts/Kidderminster Railway Museum)



5555 at the head of a late morning Bridgend-Abergwynfi service 23 November 1957. (John Hodge)





The gradient from Cymmer to Blaengwynfi was easier than to Abergwynfi and enabled the replacement of 4575 small Prairie tanks with the less powerful though also Auto-fitted 64XX Pannier Tanks. Auto fitted 5555 is seen at Bridgend in August 1960 one month before all the 4575s left Tondy for the last time. She is standing on the back road alongside the Valleys platform road. The yard below was used by a company for car repairs and the street along the top was Llynfi Street. (D.K. Jones Collection)



7753 at Bridgend in August 1960. Following track rationalisation at Cymmer passenger services were diverted to Blaengwynfi from Monday 13 June 1960 and Abergwynfi Station closed. (D.K. Jones)



Auto-fitted 5545 satiates her thirst at Bridgend on 13 July 1959 and to do so her two-coach train fouls the Up Main Line at the east end of the Valleys platform. Her tanks had a capacity of 1,300 gallons and if empty would take approximately 3 minutes to fill but this would have to be fully agreed by the Bridgend East signalman in that position. (H.C. Casserley)

6435 with Auto Trailers W241 W242 on 8 June 1963 with the West Glamorgan /Monmouthshire Railway Societies' special from Bridgend to Blaengwynfi, Porthcawl and Swansea via the Swansea District line and Felin Fran, then returning to Tondy by means of the Swansea District Line & Ogmore Vale Extension Line. (F.K. Davies)





Basic services between Bridgend and Treherbert were undertaken from December 1963 using one of the two single power cars, initially W55019/26, one of which is seen here waiting to depart from Bridgend in 1964. The building behind is the original Llynfi & Ogmere Booking Office used as a Per Way office in 1964. The street behind is Llynfi Street.

In 1957/8, Tondy were allocated two of the 4100 series of the original 5101 Class, the first of the type ever allocated there. These were very useful for working heavy excursion trains but were generally employed on weekdays working two or three coach Valley services. Here No 4121 takes water at the east end of the Valley platform before running round its train to form its next departure to Blaengwynfi in August 1960. (S. Rickard/J&J Collection)



The old and the new at Bridgend, W55019 & 3738 in May 1963. W55019 arrived at Tondy on Saturday 1 December 1963 from Plymouth Laira to commence the dieselised Llynvi Valley service the following Monday. The programme was revised in January and supplemented by W55026. During the winter, battery problems were encountered with monotonous regularity until the solution was found by stabling the Railcar at weekends in the Wagon Repair shop alongside Tondy shed. (F.K. Davies)



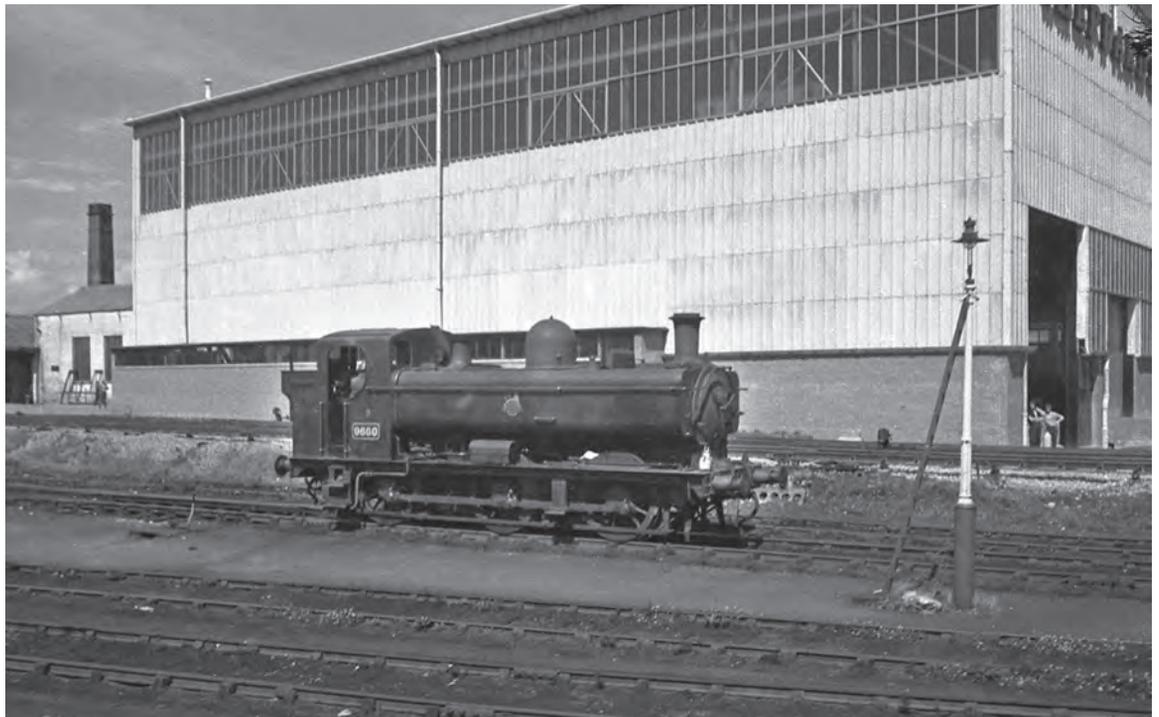


7209 just to the east of Bridgend on the Down Main on 23 November 1957. At the top of the picture the Barry Railway crosses from Cowbridge Road Junction to Bridgend & Coity Goods avoiding Bridgend station and giving direct access to the Tondy Valleys network. (J. Hodge)



7746 stands in Bridgend West Yard alongside the construction of R.H. Sheppard's new Foundry with Bridgend West Signal Box just in view, 1956. (M. Roberts/Kidderminster Railway Museum)

9660 at rest in Bridgend West Yard alongside the newly constructed R.H. Sheppard's Foundry, September 1957. (M. Roberts/Kidderminster Railway Museum)



5560 and her auto train accelerate through the Down Main at Bridgend on the 16,17,18 or 20 September 1957. The two auto coaches are 253 and 259 (converted brakes) which only came to Tondy in 1957 and 5560 was only at Tondy until 5 October 1957. The train shown only ran in the Winter timetable in this case the one that started 16 September 1957. It was off the 3.30pm from Abergwynfi and after taking water ran empty at 4.25 to Pyle then 4.45 to Porthcawl, 5.10 to Pyle and 5.30 to Porthcawl then 5.45 to Bridgend to form the 6.15pm to Abergwynfi. (M. Roberts/Kidderminster Railway Museum)

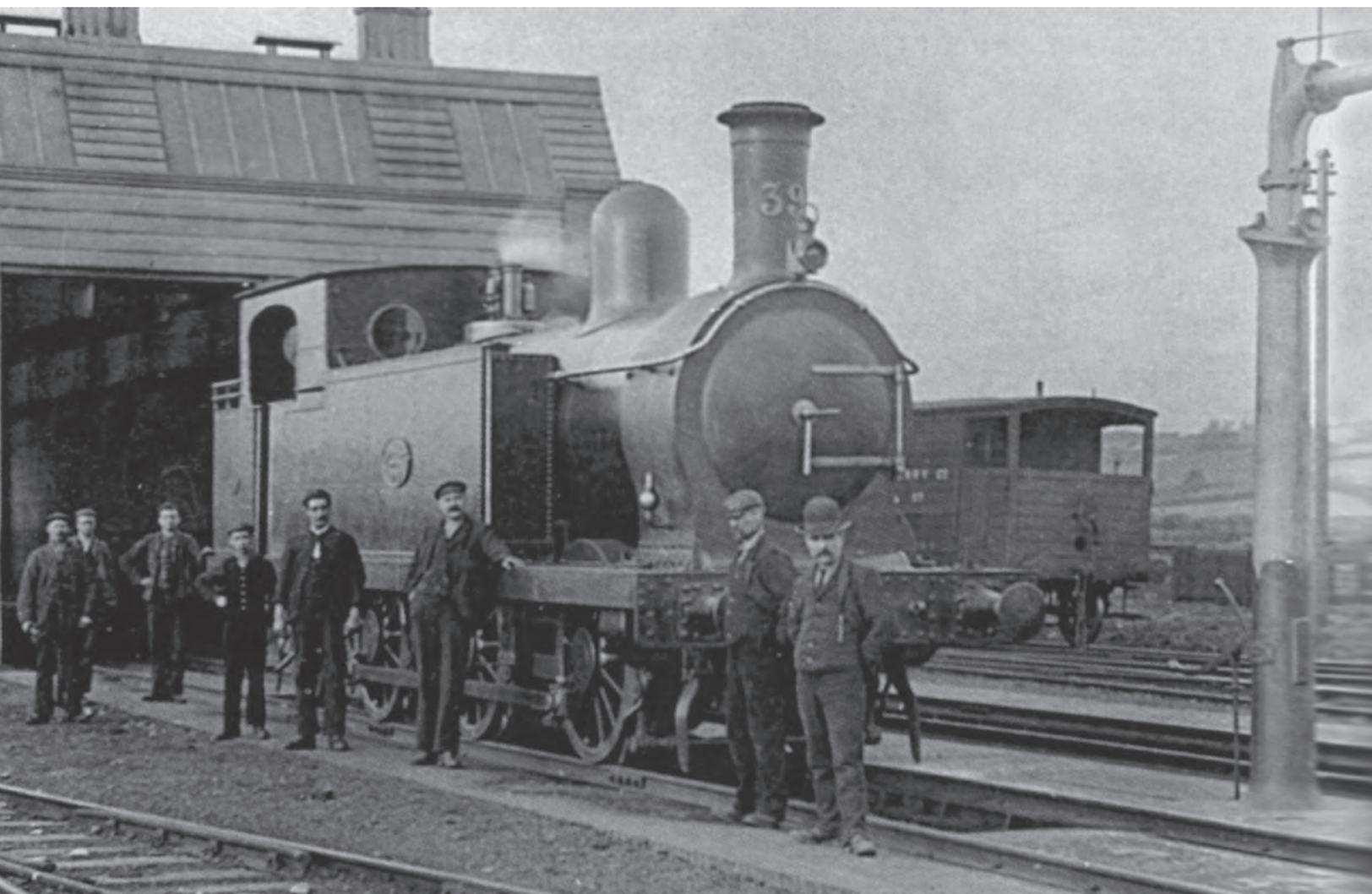


COITY JUNCTION

A mile north of Bridgend station on the route to Tondy was Coity Junction where the Llynvi & Ogmere met the Barry Railway on its branch from Cowbridge Road Junction on the Vale of Glamorgan line. Approaching Coity Jct. the L&O line ran parallel with the Barry Railway's 5 long loop sidings and two running lines, dating back to 1897 when the VoG company was formed. The sidings were for the holding of transfer coal traffic from the Tondy Valleys pits to Barry Docks for shipment. The Barry Railway had an engine shed at the south end of these long loop sidings until 1906 when it was closed and converted into a Goods Shed and

Yard for traffic off the Barry Railway for the Bridgend area. The Goods depot, known as Bridgend & Coity, was closed in the mid-1960s under rationalisation of Goods traffic but the yard was retained as a Coal Concentration depot for the area with improved wharfage for coal merchants. One siding was retained as a running line to serve the one-track depot, much of the house coal received being from the Tondy Valleys. By the early 1970s most of the trackwork in the yard was removed with two of the long loop sidings. By the end of April 1984 all remaining sidings and trackwork had been taken out of use and removed, leaving just plain line on the Tondy branch through the previous Coity Junction.

With the opening of the Vale of Glamorgan Railway (for accountancy purposes even in those days, a subsidiary of the Barry Railway) on 1 December 1897, an Engine Shed was constructed as part of the Yard complex at Coity Junction. Barry Railway Class B1 0-6-2 Tanks 42 & 43 were stationed at Coity from 1897 and joined by 39 (seen here) & 108 in 1900. They all remained until 1906 when it was considered the traffic could all be handled from the Barry end and the shed was closed and converted to handle Goods. (Lens of Sutton)





The Barry Railway through the Vale of Glamorgan divided just outside Bridgend at Cowbridge Road Jct., one fork leading to the GWR Passenger Station, the other to the Tondy Valleys at Coity Junction, where the Barry had a Goods Yard and loco Shed. The latter was converted to a Goods shed in 1906 and ultimately used for storage purposes, seen in this 1951 view. (SL5)

Coity Jct. Signal Box and Level Crossing as seen on 4 June 1960 as Tondy's 8740 runs past with the 4.52pm Abergwynfi to Bridgend service. Seven chains to the south was the double-track connection to the former Barry Railway and seven long exchange sidings. The whole complex through to Cowbridge Road Jct. was closed on 18 December 1963, leaving only the up and down Tondy Valleys line operative. Note 8740's cab roof, battered after years of overhead coaling. (Michael Hale/GW Trust)





Coity Sidings SB
c1970. The original Coity Junction SB was renamed when the through line to Barry was closed. The box then lasted until 30 November 1977.
(D. Whittamore/KRM)

A panoramic shot showing the Engine Shed and well laid out double-ended exchange sidings still intact at Coity on 16 April 1960. The Barry's anticipated level of traffic it could "tap" from the Tondy Valleys and the Great Western was never realised. Only with the opening of the CEGB power station at Aberthaw in 1960 did a reasonable level of freight/mineral traffic use the Vale of Glamorgan. Its main advantage was to relieve congestion on, or as a diversionary route for, the Main Line at times of engineering work or other blockage.



The Tondy end of Coity Sidings viewed on 7 June 1969. The through route to the Vale of Glamorgan had been closed in December 1963 and the remaining yard used as a Coal Concentration Depot from 1964. (Garth Tilt)



Coity Yard is serviced on 12th May 1983 by Class 37 276 during the final years of operation. (Acton Wells Junction)



South End and Station

A plan of the approach to Tondy station on the L&O line for 1875 shows sidings on both sides of the line, on the west side serving colliery workings and

passing under the Porthcawl branch to serve installations which will be dealt with under that section. Brogdens SB was opened to control access to these sidings in 1886 which also saw the L&O platforms at the triangular Tondy

station lengthened southwards and the line doubled as far as Brogdens SB. A further two sidings were added east of the line in 1899 and 1901. In the latter year, Brogdens SB was closed and the line doubled to Coity Junction. The colliery workings west of the line were developed into North's Navigation Colliery, the Private Siding Agreement (PSA) dated 4 December 1906. Access to this complex was now from Tondy South SB which replaced Brogdens in 1901 and was located at 2m.34ch. from Bridgend.

North's Navigation Colliery developed into a substantial undertaking

with coke ovens and a washery which continued in being until the end of May 1963 when the PS agreement was terminated. Tondy South SB closed at the end of June 1962 (presumably when production ceased at the colliery) but re-opened in August 1962 before finally closing in May 1963, this due to the site clearance after closure of the colliery.

On 12 August 1962, the line between the south of Tondy platforms and Bridgend was singled; by this time all the sidings on either side of the line had been removed.

A view on 25 August 1962; though little has changed at Tondy itself, the line from south of Tondy to Bridgend was singled from 13 August 1962 but a loop was left at Tondy to preserve the use of both platforms. (Bluebell Archive)





With the introduction of the service through to Treherbert in 1963, a new notice was displayed under the canopy to say, 'Trains to Treherbert This Platform, Trains to Bridgend Other Platform', most trains were now worked by a Single Power Car from which this picture has been taken.



5555 with an Abergwynfi to Bridgend service at the southbound platform on Christmas Eve 1957. (D. Russell)

6419 draws into Tondy with the 8.50am Bridgend to Cymmer Afan on 1 September 1962. The parcel van will have been attached at Bridgend off the Cardiff Neyland Parcels train and is destined for Maesteg where it will be detached by the pilot and taken to the goods shed for loading with products from the Revlon factory. (W.G. Sumner)



6419 draws into Tondy with the two-coach 9.52am Cymmer Afan to Bridgend on 1 September 1962, as an up train of empty minerals passes on the northbound line. The building on the opposite platform was Tondy Control office. (W.G. Sumner)

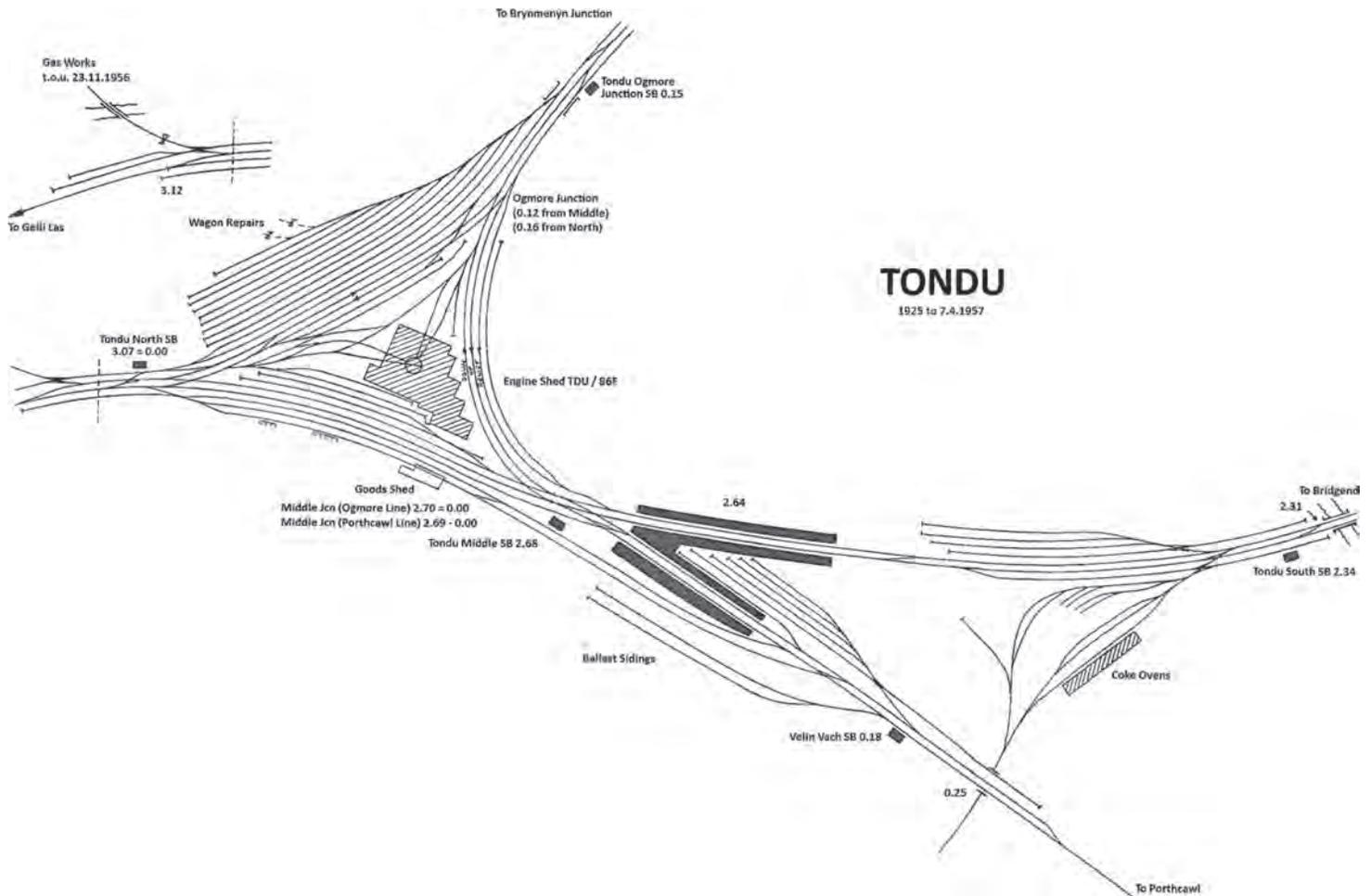


On passing through the station, two Tondu stalwarts meet, 8740 with a Goods for Coity sidings and 5545 with the 11.32am Abergwynfi Auto on 5 September 1957. (M. Hale/GWTrust)



4144 at the up Llynfi platform with the 4.52pm Blaengwynfi-Bridgend two coach service, 10 November 1962. (W.G. Sumner)





North End

The first available diagram of the area is for 1875. At Tondy station, the L&O line converged with the line from Pyle and the two lines then diverged to run to the Llynfi and Ogmore Valleys at Tondy Centre SB which was replaced in 1886 and became Tondy Middle. A triangle of lines was formed by the L&O Engine shed and Repair Shops, North of which was a similar installation for the Ogmore Vale Company. To the southwest of the signal box were long loop sidings serving the line to/from Pyle. By 1881, a holding loop had been installed running alongside the L&O line along the west side of the triangle of lines.

In 1889, Tondy engine shed was opened in the triangle and the previous sheds and

repair facilities north of the triangle were closed and converted into a nest of nine holding sidings stopblocked at the west (Tondy Ogmore Yard) end and feeding out northeast towards Brynmenyn.

West of the triangle complex was Tondy North SB which controlled access to the Triangle and the single line running northwest into the Llynfi Valley.

In 1906, the Coytrahen Park Colliery branch was opened leading off northwards from Tondy North. The PSA began in June 1906 and was terminated in November 1929, but the site was then transferred to T.J. David, before finally being terminated and closed in May 1930. A tramway operated by the Park Colliery Co. also existed from their installation north of the Coytrahen Colliery, running on bridges over both

the Llynfi line and the River Llynfi feeding into Tondy Ironworks. This closed by July 1930.

Through running lines between the Llynfi and Ogmore branches along the north side of the triangle were provided by the GWR after the Grouping and remained in being until April 1957 when they were downgraded to sidings. At the north end of the nine holding sidings in Ogmore Yard, a Wagon Works was opened in May 1931 by Wagon Repairs Ltd. with one siding running through the repair shop. An additional siding was added outside the shop in 1950/1 and the installation lasted as such until March 1968 when it closed.

Considerable changes were made to the area during the 1960s. The engine shed closed in April 1964. Tondy North SB closed in November 1967, all the nine holding sidings in Ogmore Yard in October 1968, being recovered by the following July. The North and Middle junctions were remodelled onto a single line

basis in November 1967, with four loop sidings remaining for refuge and holding purposes. The previous Tondy Middle SB, now renamed Tondy, controlled all operations in the area with Tondy Ogmore Junction SB also still open. This situation remained in being until 8 October 1993 when Ogmore Junction SB closed, the Llanharan branch having closed in 1984.

On 30 September 1992, the passenger service to Maesteg was restored with an hourly service to and from Cardiff Central. Tondy SB now controls the single line to Maesteg by means of a token. Such has been the success of this service that there are plans to double the frequency, necessitating a second platform at Tondy, repeating some of the original infrastructure. The Garw and Ogmore branches are now out of use and a loop exists on the Porthcawl branch at Tondy for passing purposes with a single line thence to Margam, creating a main line diversionary route.

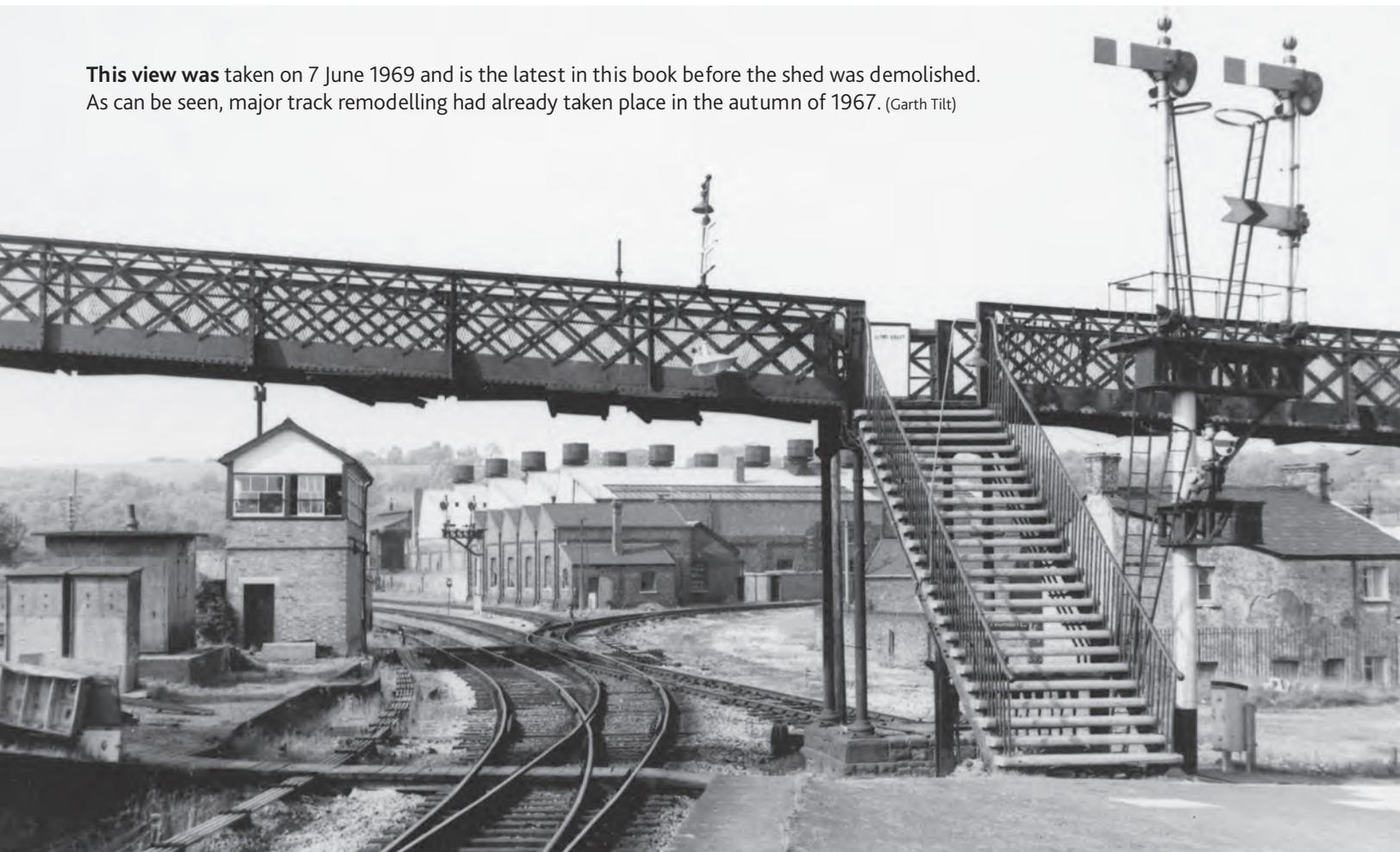
The 1.35pm Bridgend to Cymmer Afan leaves Tondy behind 9660. In the Porthcawl platforms 6410, having worked the morning duties to Porthcawl, has disentangled itself from the Auto Coaches alongside and runs round in order to position them in the carriage sidings, 30 June 1962. (E. Wilmshurst)



4144 departs from Tondy with the 12.45pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi service on 21 August 1962, the two-coach train a very undemanding task for a large prairie tank. (Gerald T. Robinson)



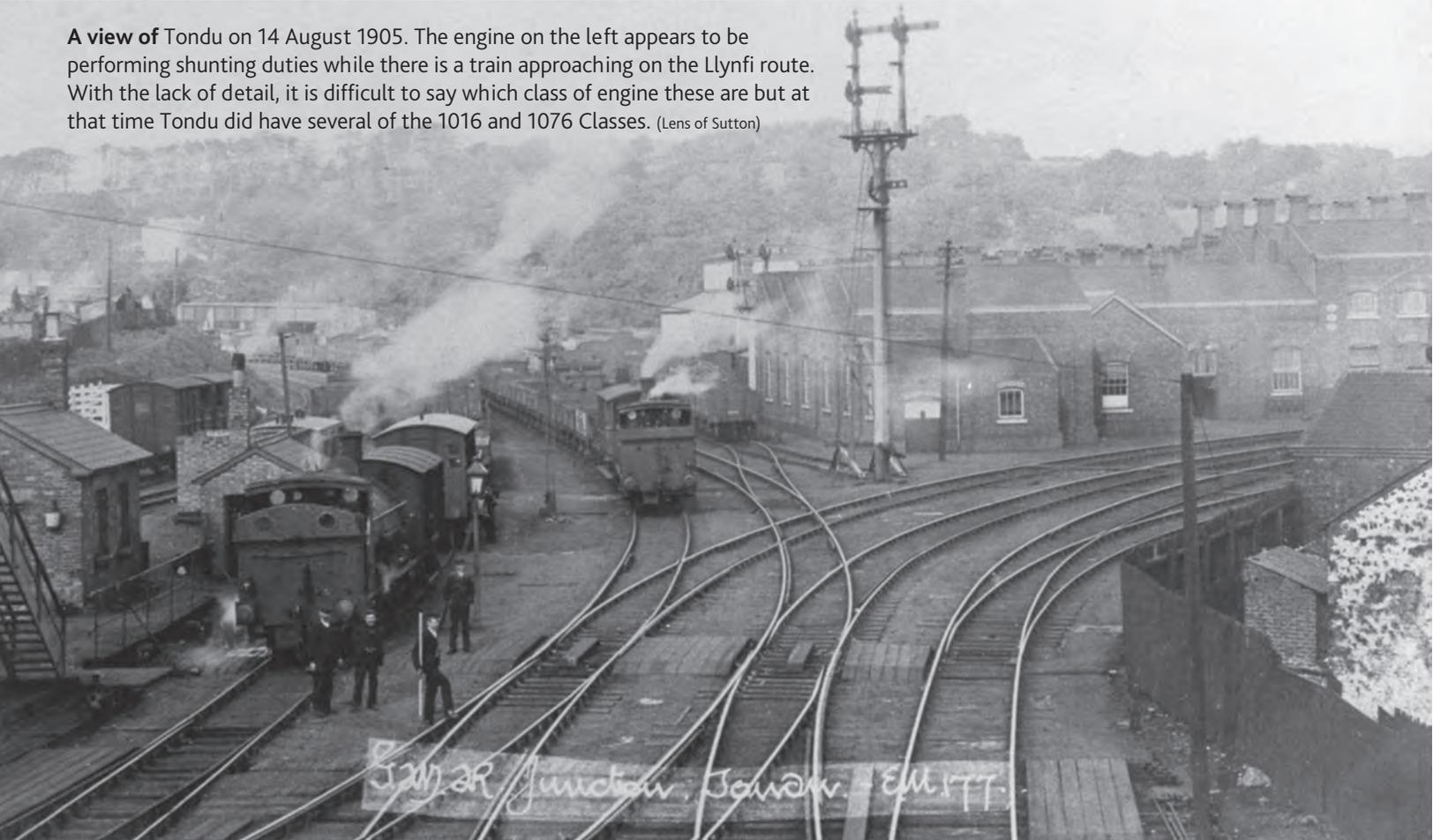
This view was taken on 7 June 1969 and is the latest in this book before the shed was demolished. As can be seen, major track remodelling had already taken place in the autumn of 1967. (Garth Tilt)

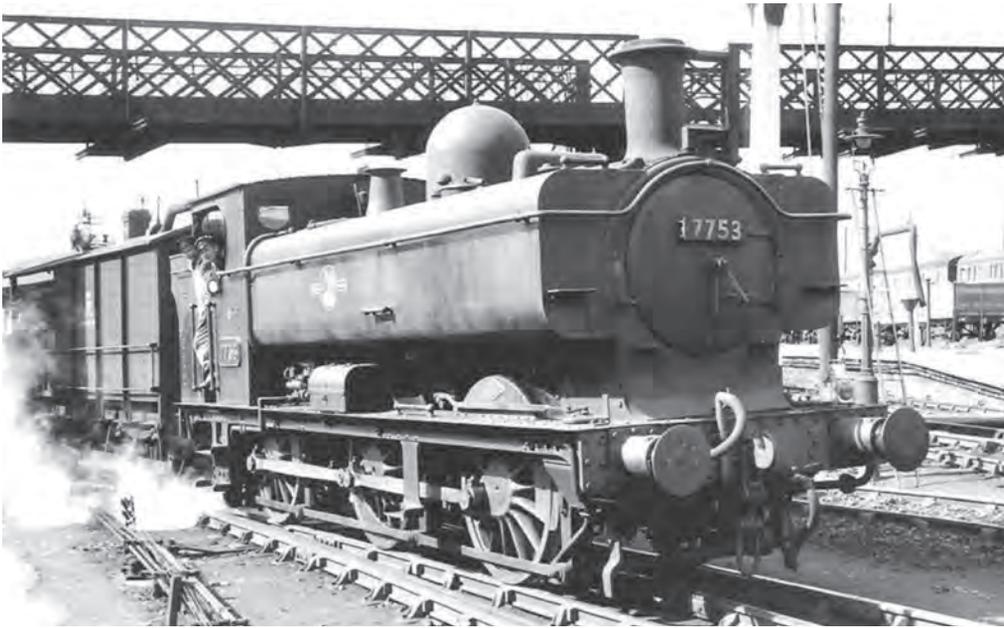


A classic view of Tondu Middle Junction looking north. The signal box is on the left, the engine shed upper centre. The Llynfi Valley route runs north to the left of the engine shed and the Garw and Ogmored routes to the right. In the foreground, the Bridgend route is to the right and the Porthcawl and Margam route to the left. The view is from the footbridge which spanned the north end of the station platforms. As a result of the layout and curvature, from Tondu Middle Box it was possible to see Tondu South, Tondu North, Tondu Ogmored Junction, Tondu Velin Vach and Brynmenyn Junction Signal boxes (the last being two signal sections away from Middle) and Ynysawdre and Tynycoed Junction before they closed. (Lens of Sutton)



A view of Tondu on 14 August 1905. The engine on the left appears to be performing shunting duties while there is a train approaching on the Llynfi route. With the lack of detail, it is difficult to say which class of engine these are but at that time Tondu did have several of the 1016 and 1076 Classes. (Lens of Sutton)





7753 at Tondy runs EBV through the Bridgend line platform on 11 May 1958 whilst working an engineering train. Brake Vans were referred to as 'Toads', stemming from their telegraphic codename. (A. Swain)

A view of Tondy dated 1938 showing the lines swinging right to Brynmenyn from where they split into the Ogmore and Garw Valleys, with the Llynfi Valley lines on the left with various sidings alongside. The locomotive shed in the top right with the Coal Stage prominent. (Lens of Sutton)



The Tondy allocation of 56XXs were used on football excursions to Ninian Park at Cardiff for all Cardiff's home matches. Here 6673 returns through the long evening shadows with its six coach train seen leaving Tondy for the Llynvi Valley on 24th May 1960.

8740 brings a train of minerals into Tondy on the Up Main on 5 September 1957.



A May 1963 view of the tracks behind Tondy Middle box. The mineral wagons in the centre all contain best Welsh Large Steam Coal, which may be en route to the engine shed or for local coal merchants. This area was the original Goods Yard with a shed for sundries traffic but after this was concentrated at Bridgend Goods, the yard siding was used for domestic coal traffic, with the line nearest the Signal Box converted into a through running road from Velin Vach, termed the Up Avoiding Line. (B.W.L. Brooksbank/Initial Photographics)





4121 traverses Tondy Middle Junction with a service from Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 21 August 1962. A mineral train waits to follow from the Ogmore/Garw direction behind a 42XX. (Gerald T. Robinson)



New Type 3 37303 heads a Maesteg Washery to Port Talbot Steelworks train of 21ton Minfits across the junction and onto the Margam route on 30 November 1979. The signalman has already restored the bracket signal for the Margam route to danger. Empty 21ton Minfits are stored on the Avoiding line behind the box. (S. Warr)

April 1989. With the signal 'Off' for the Llynvi Branch, 37699 heads a train of 20-ton MDVs through Tondy. This had been an everyday sight for over 25 years starting with 42XX power following the introduction of these wagons running in trainloads to steelworks and power stations from the early 1960s.



16 September 1988. 37695 with 7B26 15.00 Llynfi Junction-Alexandra Dock Junction, washed small coal for either Llanwern or Uskmouth, approaching Tondy with the signal off for the Bridgend route.





The Token machine in Tondu Middle for the single line section to Cefn Junction. There were 28 individual tokens for each section shared between the two instruments at either end; this accommodated any imbalance of movements in the train timetable. Once one was removed, electrical circuitry prevented the extraction of a second token. Failure to have possession of the Token for the section concerned was a cardinal sin for the Driver. The Token had a notch in its end that was cut in one of four positions; the maximum number of Token sections that could be controlled from any one signal Box was therefore four and perversely, the Token for the section between Tondu and Cefn Junction may well have fitted into the Token Machine at Cornelly for the Single Line to Porthcawl. Each token had the two limits of the Single Line emblazoned on it. (Stuart Davies)



A backing signal outside Tondu Middle SB on 29 May 1954. Tondu Middle was the signal box that controlled the junction north of the station. It was originally called Tondu Centre; the name being changed when the box was rebuilt in 1886. With the closure of Tondu Ogmores Junction in 1982, Tondu Middle was left as the only box in the area and was renamed Tondu. (P.J. Garland)

A view of the Bridgend line platform in 1996 at the same location as the original platform viewed from the north end. The former station buildings and sidings have been converted into a car park used also by connecting bus services. (M.J. Back)



A view approaching Tondy from a train on the Llynfi Branch in April 1993 with a 5mph speed restriction across the junction to facilitate the exchange of tokens. The bracket signal shows that access to both the Bridgend and Margam routes is at equal permissible speed. By now there are no sidings left on the right-hand side of the picture. The Runaway and Avoiding Lines (behind the Signal Box) are now removed but the refuge siding is still in situ on the centre right with the Garw branch running behind. (M.J. Back)



TONDU NORTH TO GELLI LAS and LLANGYNWYD (Excl.)

Departing from the Tondu complex at North box, the single line made the first of its many crossings over the River Llynfi. A plan of the line for 1874 shows a long siding running north which reached Bettws Colliery Jct. from where a tramroad ran to the Llantwit Colliery, passing over the Llynfi River in the process. There was a SB at Bettws Colliery Jct. just over a mile north of Tondu North SB, in 1884, which was probably closed by 1890. The Llantwit Colliery is referred to as Bettws Colliery in a PS agreement to Lewis & Evans dated September 1884, but this only lasted until 1890. The approach siding was also known as Glan Nant Siding, where a ground frame replaced the previous SB in about 1890 and remained in use until 1941, Bettws Colliery apparently being in use throughout that period.

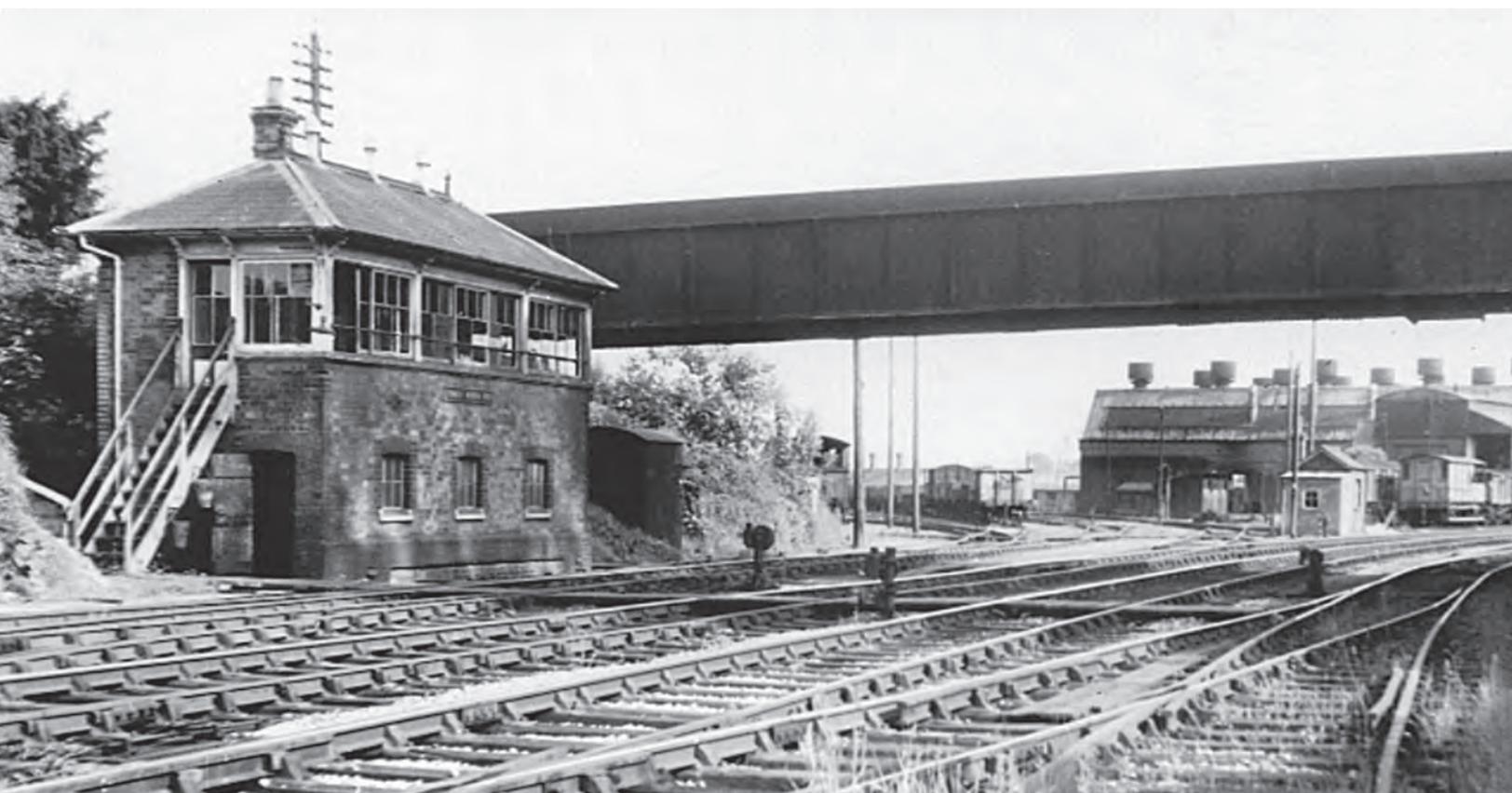
Half a mile further north at Gelli Las was Llynfi Power Station where a running loop and five reception loop sidings were located north of the single running line, with various sidings extending north and south. The PSA for the station in the name of the South Wales Power Station Co. was dated 29 August 1945, though the sidings were brought into use in

January 1943. The power station was closed by the CEBG in April 1979. The sidings had been taken out of use in April 1976, though access still remained as the last train of stock coal left on 9 September 1977.

Half a mile further north, on the south side of the line, was a siding leading to the Brynllwarch Colliery, opened in late 1942 and closed in 1946, owned by the Bettws Colliery Co. Shortly after closure the site was taken over by Bridgend Paper Mills, with a PSA dated June 1947, at which time the ground frame controlling access to/from the single line was known as Ely Paper Mills GF. The PS passed to Associated Tissues in September 1963 and to British Tissues (Bridgend) in November 1968; it was last used in about 1980.

Under a quarter mile further north, a plan for 1875 shows a short siding north of the line named Jenkins Siding which was a loading point for coal brought down by a long tramroad from Maes y Bettws Colliery, crossing the river in the process. This would have continued until 1897 when the installation closed. Half a mile further north, the 1875 plan shows another siding this time leading south to the Gelli Seven or Gelli Siriol Colliery, which again survived to 1897.

At the North end of the Tondu triangle was Tondu North Junction which gave a second access to the locomotive depot in addition to Ogmogre junction. The Box closed on 12 November 1967 and the view here on 4 June 1965 hides the fact the shed no longer has an allocation of locomotives having closed in April 1964. (Michael Hale/GW Trust)



After a hard day's work, 5243 gets the signal at Tondy North onto the Main Line and will then reverse onto Tondy Shed in January 1964. (Hugh Davies Collection)



Gelli Las on August Bank Holiday Monday 1963 with a train of empty stock for Blaengwynfi to work an excursion to Porthcawl. 3616 is working the train but is out of view, having been attached at Tondy at the front whilst, making a unique appearance, Standard Class 4MT 80133 is bringing up the rear. This loco and five others were allocated to Swansea (Eastern Depot) for working over the Central Wales Line to Shrewsbury following the electrification of the London, Tilbury & Southend line. She was transferred to Neath, from where she worked on the Vale of Neath through to Pontypool Road in March 1963 and stayed until August 1964 becoming something of a legend in South Wales as a result. 80133 started the day with the 9.55am excursion from Swansea to Porthcawl then empty stock at 11am to Blaengwynfi moving to the rear at Tondy. (3616 was attached at the front because the loop at Blaengwynfi would not accommodate the eight coaches enabling 80133 to run round.) She worked another excursion for Porthcawl from Blaengwynfi at 12.55pm returning at 8.15pm from Porthcawl taking the empty coaches from Blaengwynfi (at 9.35pm) to Treherbert for stabling before returning light engine back to Neath. 3616 again assisted the return excursion because of its load from Tondy to Blaengwynfi and ran light engine back home. The Swansea excursionists returned on the 8.30pm service train, specially strengthened. (F.K. Davies)





Between Tondu and Gelli Las on the Llynfi route, a well presented 9660 heads the three-coach 1.25pm Tondu to Cymmer Afan on 28 September 1951. (W.A. Camwell/SLS)

The Warwickshire Rly. Soc. South Wales Railtour No1 with Class 120 3 x Car Unit passes Gelli Las Signal Box on 14 October 1967. (Garth Tilt)



Passing the site of the Llynfi Power Station at Gelli Las with Bridgend Paper Mills in the background, Type 3 37698 heads south with 8B60 14.20 Llynfi Jct. to Cardiff Tidal Sidings on 20 April 1989.

LLANGYNWYD

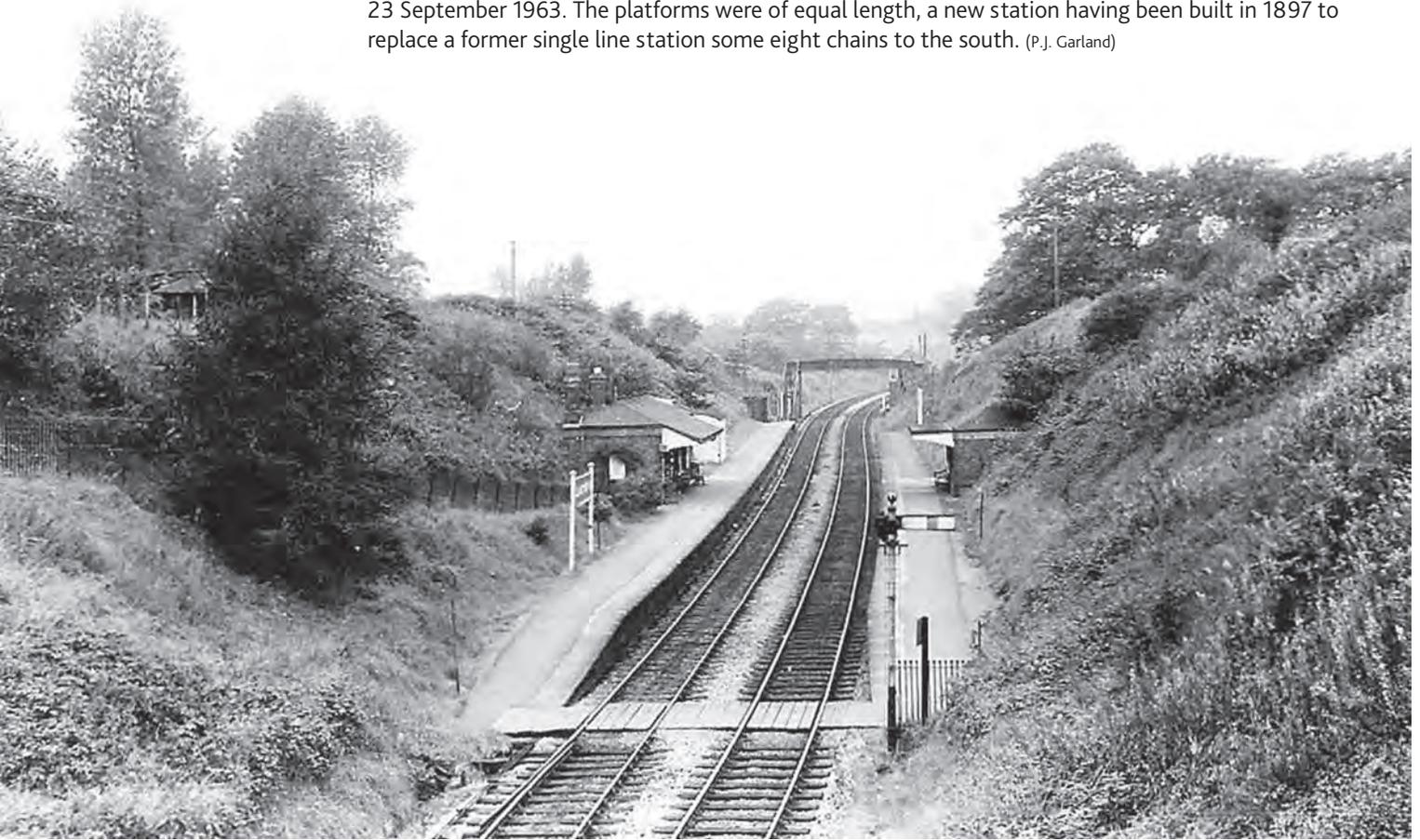
South of the station known as Llangonoyd until March 1935, the single line crossed the River Llynfi at just over six miles from Bridgend. Just before the river bridge was a siding leading off northwards, skirting the river, to Gelli Blig Colliery Sidings from where a tramroad ran north to Lletty Brongu Colliery, with a PSA taken out in the name of J. Humby in 1873. The Lletty Brongu Colliery developed into the Llynvi Valley Colliery with sidings and tramroads extending north over a considerable distance to pass under the Port Talbot Railway line. Loading facilities for the coal brought down by the tramroads were adjacent to the single main line, the junction at which was operated by the Llynfi Valley Colliery GF, located at exactly six miles from Bridgend which was finally removed in 1948/9 with the demise of those coal workings.

Llangonoyd was originally a single platform, 16 chains north of the above

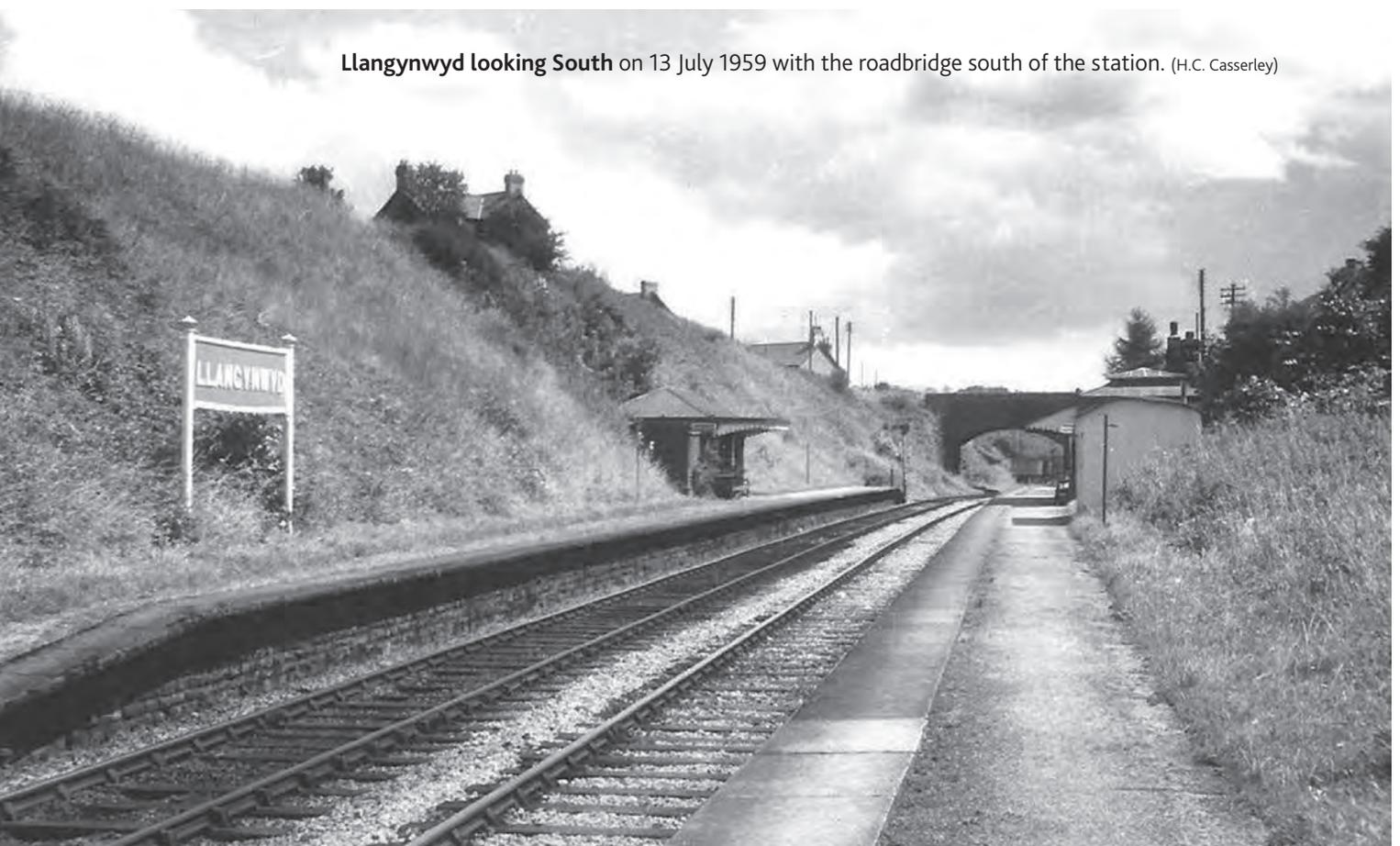
junction, the platform being on the south side of the line, with a short mileage siding on the north side, accessed by a ground frame. In 1895 new signal boxes were opened at Llangonoyd South and North in preparation for a new double-line two platform station in 1897, 10 chains north of the old one, the section of double line being 42 chains in length. Both boxes were closed in 1909 when a new box was opened just north of the station on the north side. In March 1935, the station was renamed Llangynwyd. In July 1957, the mileage siding at the site of the old station was extended by 66 feet and a loading ramp provided, the siding being taken out of use in March 1964. In May 1965, the line was again singled, the Down (northbound) Line being retained for use with the south platform and the signal box closed on 17 May.

The station finally closed after the last school train on 14 July 1970.

A view of Llangynwyd taken from the overbridge at the south end of the station looking north on 23 September 1963. The platforms were of equal length, a new station having been built in 1897 to replace a former single line station some eight chains to the south. (P.J. Garland)



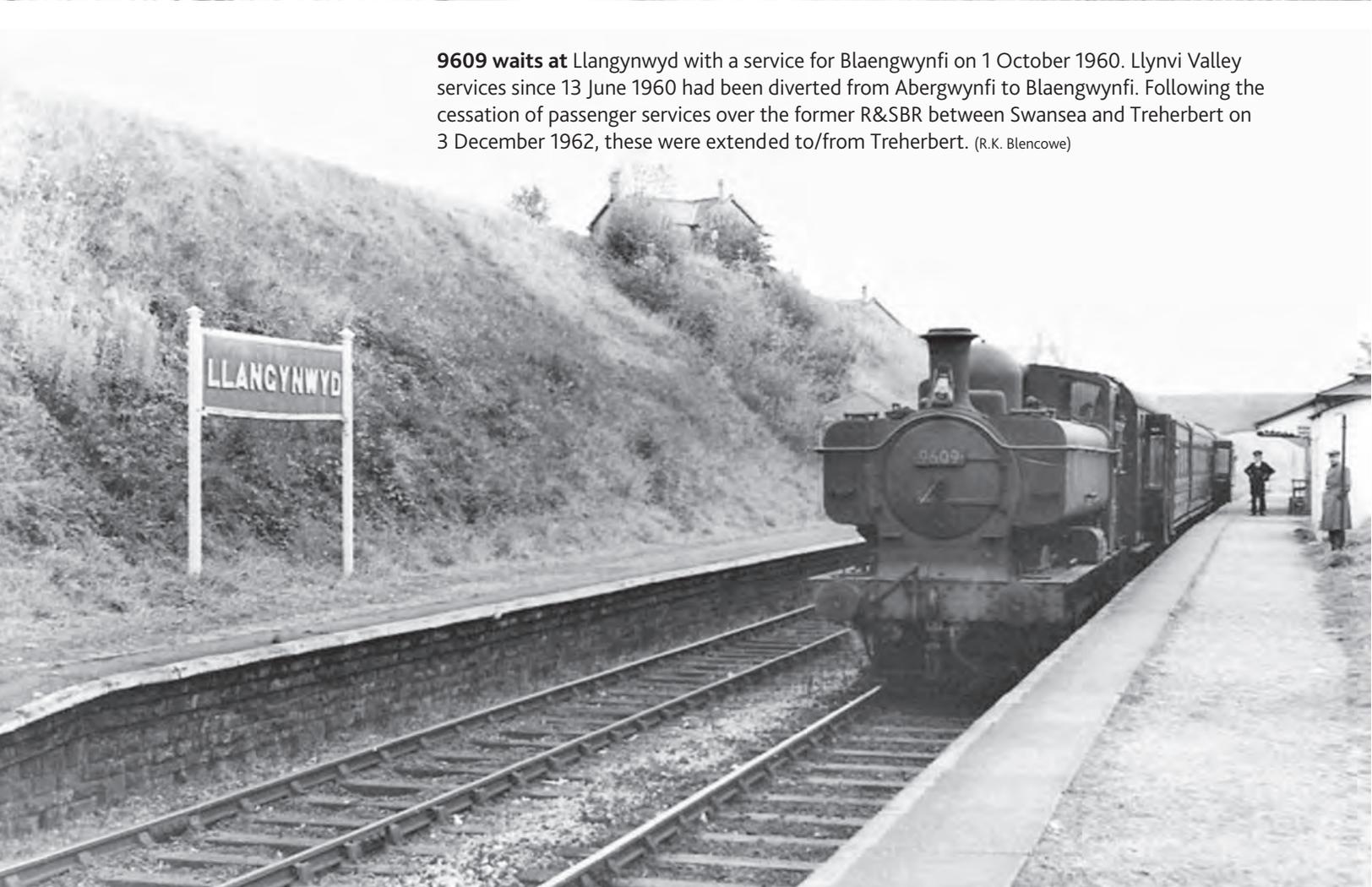
Llangynwyd looking South on 13 July 1959 with the roadbridge south of the station. (H.C. Casserley)



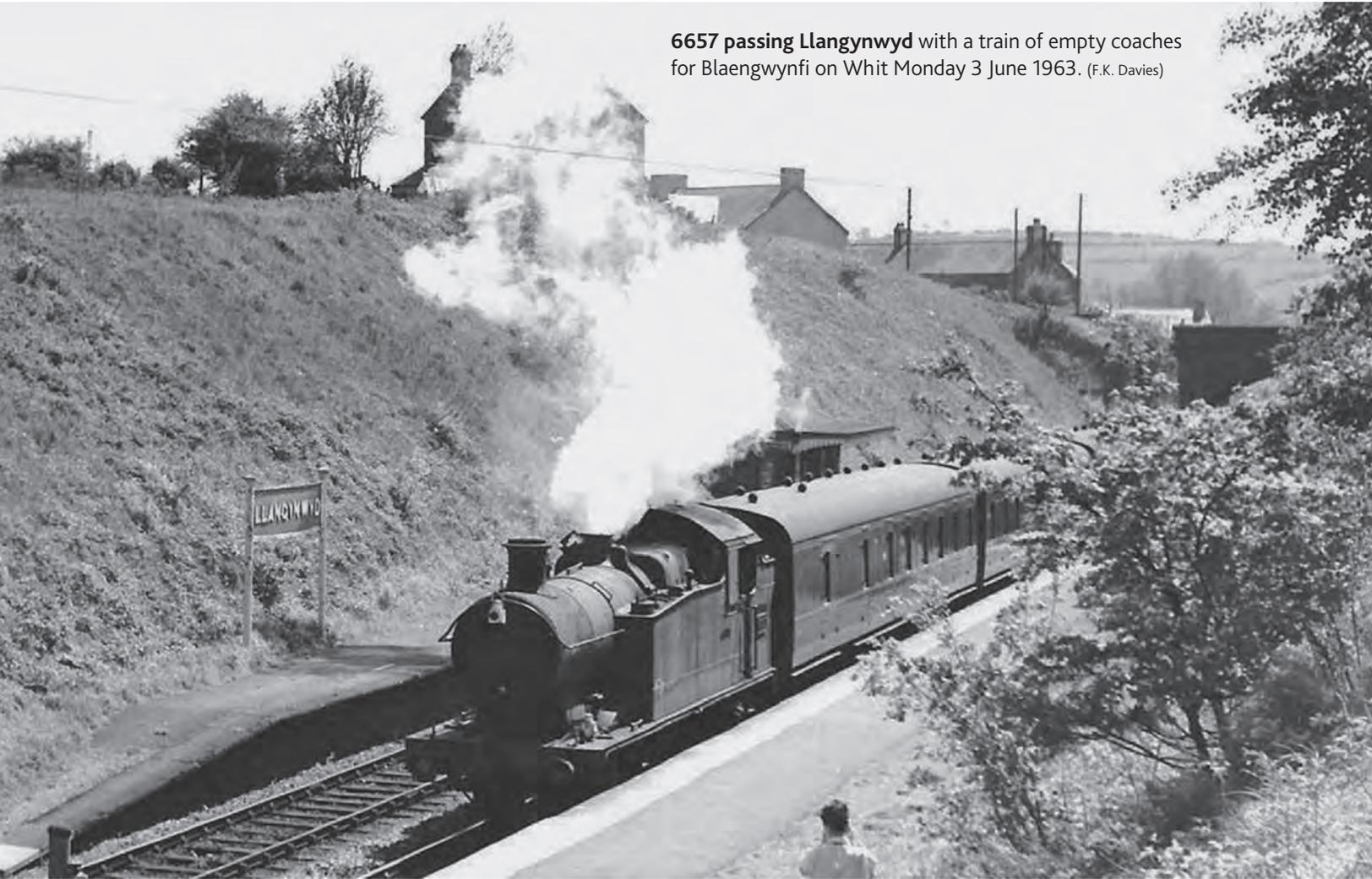
4121 with the 1.40pm Bridgend to Abergwynfi arrives at Llangynwyd on 14 July 1959. (H.C. Casserley)



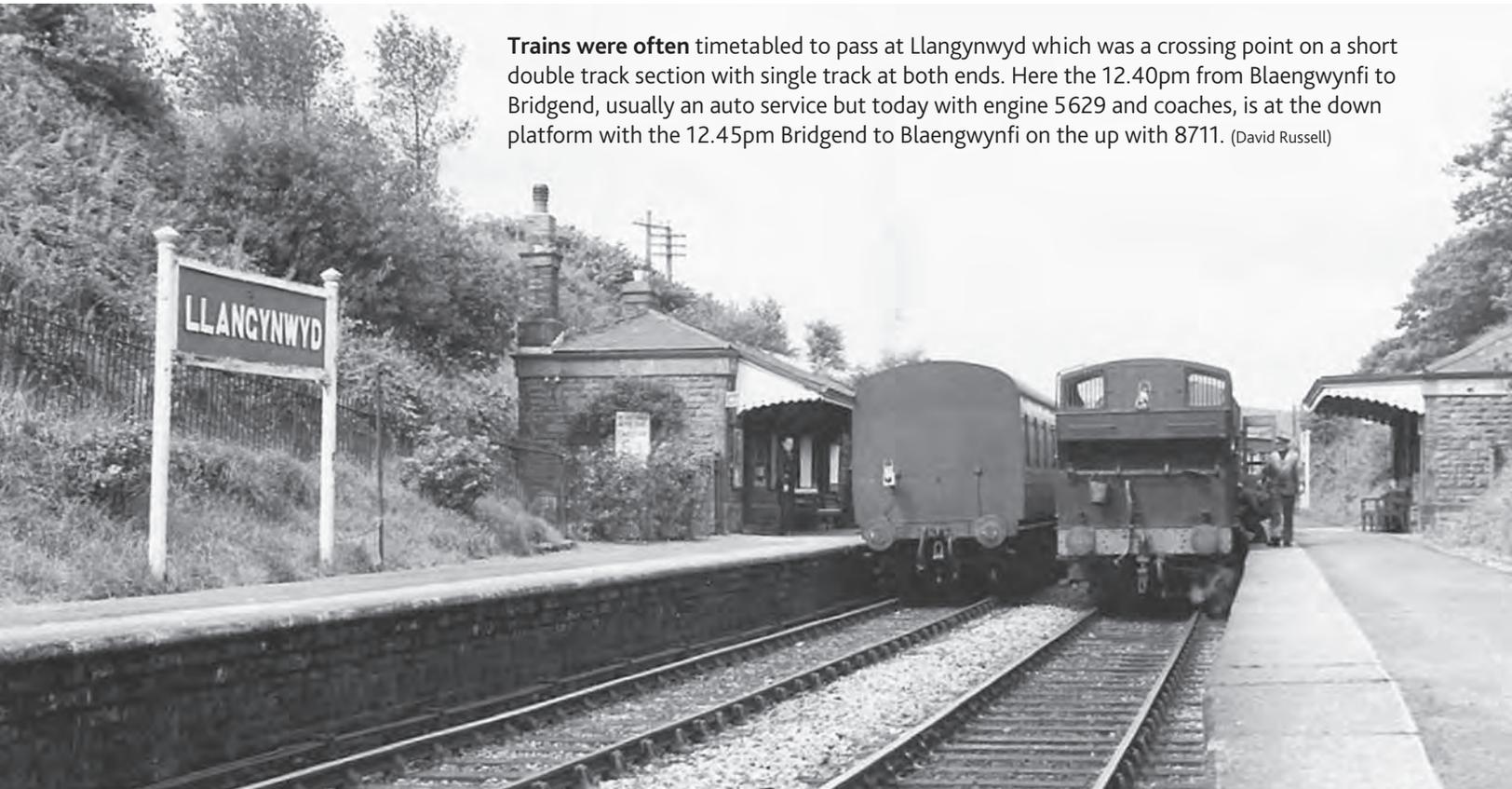
9609 waits at Llangynwyd with a service for Blaengwynfi on 1 October 1960. Llynvi Valley services since 13 June 1960 had been diverted from Abergwynfi to Blaengwynfi. Following the cessation of passenger services over the former R&SBR between Swansea and Treherbert on 3 December 1962, these were extended to/from Treherbert. (R.K. Blencowe)



6657 passing Llangynwyd with a train of empty coaches for Blaengwynfi on Whit Monday 3 June 1963. (F.K. Davies)



Trains were often timetabled to pass at Llangynwyd which was a crossing point on a short double track section with single track at both ends. Here the 12.40pm from Blaengwynfi to Bridgend, usually an auto service but today with engine 5629 and coaches, is at the down platform with the 12.45pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi on the up with 8711. (David Russell)



9711 on the 12.40pm from Blaengwynfi has time in hand waiting at Llangynwyd on 19 August 1961 with the tail end of the 12.45pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi worked by 5629 preparing to join the single line as it departs in the up direction. (David Russell)



Saturday 20 June 1970 and W55023 calls at Llangynwyd with a service to Cymmer on the last day.





On 5 September 1957 7746 heads north through Llangynwyd with a light load. (M. Hale/GWT)

Pannier 7778 with an up train of empty minerals as it runs through Llangynwyd on 13 July 1959. (H.C. Casserley)





Due to its location about half way between Bridgend and Abergwynfi, Llangynwyd was regularly timetabled for trains in opposite directions to cross. To facilitate this, Auxiliary Token exchange apparatus was provided (the only Signal Box in the Tondy Valleys so equipped). This consisted of three posts in each direction, one for depositing a Token, one for collecting a Token and the third providing a lamp for illumination. On the left in this view looking North on 23 September 1963 can be seen the post with a protruding arm and safety net for depositing the Token and on the right a post with slot which accommodated the token and its carrier for collection.

Even rarer however was the footbridge as seen here, solely for the use of the Signaller to enable him to cross to the Down Line when the Up Line was already occupied in order to manually exchange tokens. (P.J. Garland)





Despite its unique Signalman's Bridge and Auxiliary Token exchange apparatus, the Signal Box at Llangynwyd was one of the smallest as seen in this view taken on 23 September 1963. The frame consisted of just 13 levers. (P.J. Garland)

A view on 6 August 1964 looking towards Maesteg with SPC W55026 for Treherbert. (Garth Tilt)



TROEDYRHIEW GARTH

Just a few chains north of Llangynwyd is Troedyrhiew Garth, where the contour of the river involved the single line in crossing it twice in close proximity. Between the two river bridges the 1875 plan shows Cwmdu Colliery sidings going off northwest, leading into the large mining complex of the Garth Pit and Coke Ovens, with outlets both onto the Llynfi and the now nearby Port Talbot Railway line as it approached Pontyrhyll. By 1897, this complex had become the Garth Merthyr Colliery and by 1904 the Garth Colliery. By 1928, they had become the Garth Celtic Colliery (or Celtic Garth) and were also referred to as the Celtic Collieries Ltd. A note exists from November 1931 that the Celtic Lower Colliery had been purchased by Dunraven Estates 'until the sidings are again used for traffic'.

Troedyrhiew Garth station was opened between 1875-97, a single platform on the north side of the single line, located at 6m.70ch. from Bridgend. The

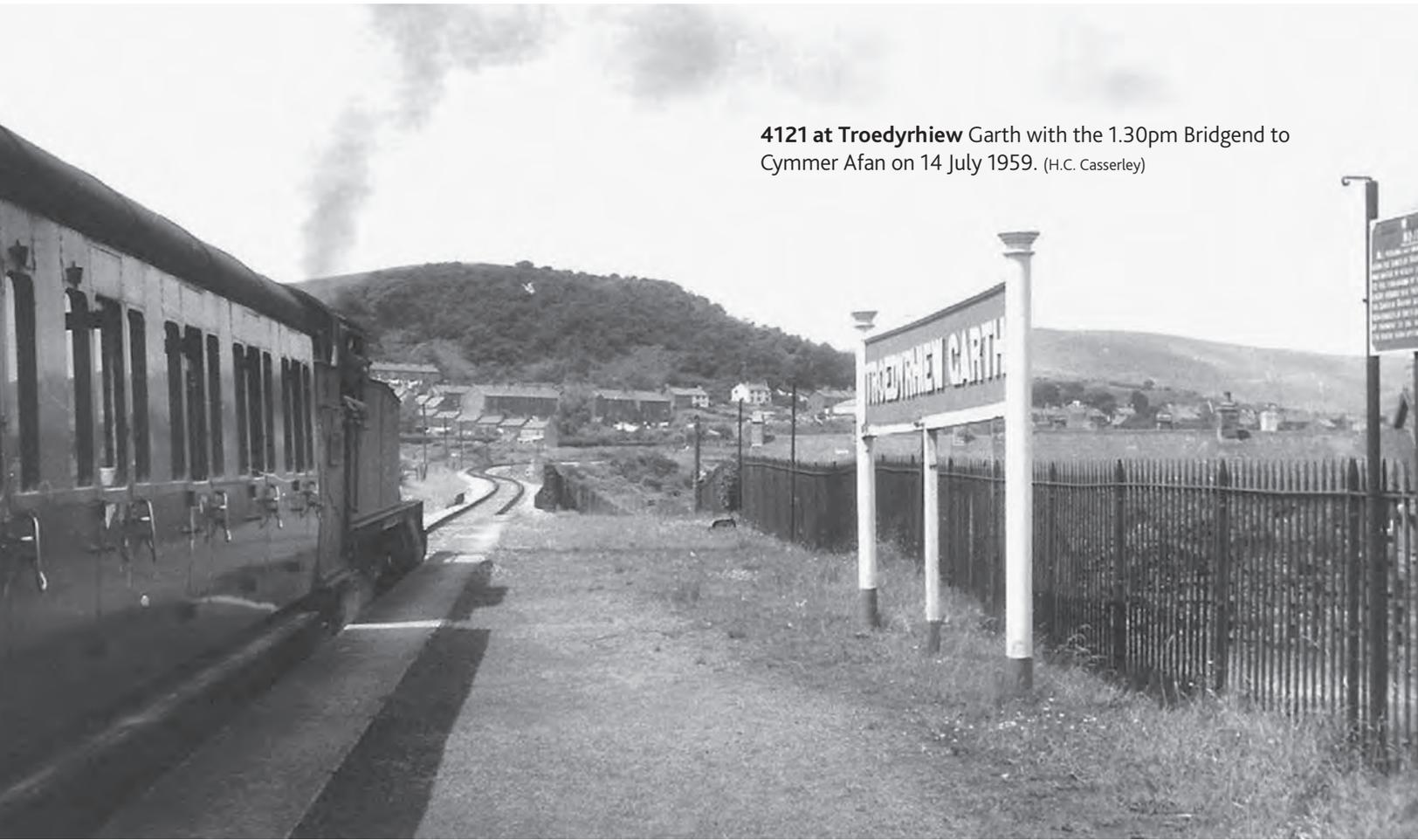
platform was lengthened in 1905-7 but was shortened again in March 1938. A temporary siding was installed just south of the platform with ground frame control in 1905 but there is no record of when it was removed.

Three chains north of where the station would be built, the 1875 plan shows a siding leading south into the Llwydarth Tinplate Works with a PSA dated April 1885 in favour of that Company, transferred in 1888 to the Llwydarth Iron, Steel & Tinplate Co., then to the Maesteg Tinplate Co. (W.H. Edwards) in 1891. The Tinplate Works appears to have closed in 1898, the site being taken over in 1903 by W.O.P. Treherne, then in 1928 by R.S. Hayes, back to Treherne in 1931 before the Private Siding Agreement was terminated in September 1938. The siding later served as a Goods Yard until August 1947 and was finally taken out of use in November 1963, no record being extant of any use in the intervening period.

The station was known as Garth to the locals.

Troedyrhiew Garth looking south, 14 July 1959. Despite the formal name published in the Timetable and presented on the Station name board, most people referred to it as Garth. (H.C. Casserley)





4121 at Troedyrhiew Garth with the 1.30pm Bridgend to Cymmer Afan on 14 July 1959. (H.C. Casserley)



Garth looking towards Tondy on 20 June 1970. (Garth Tilt)

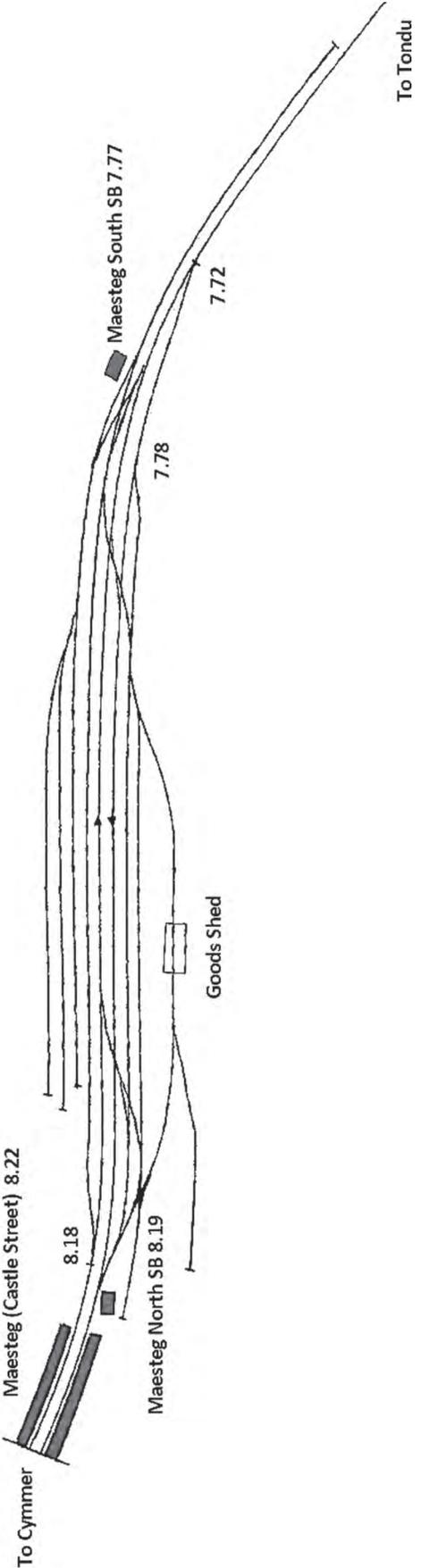
W55025, working a service from Bridgend to Treherbert, runs into Troedyrhiew Garth on 25 April 1970.

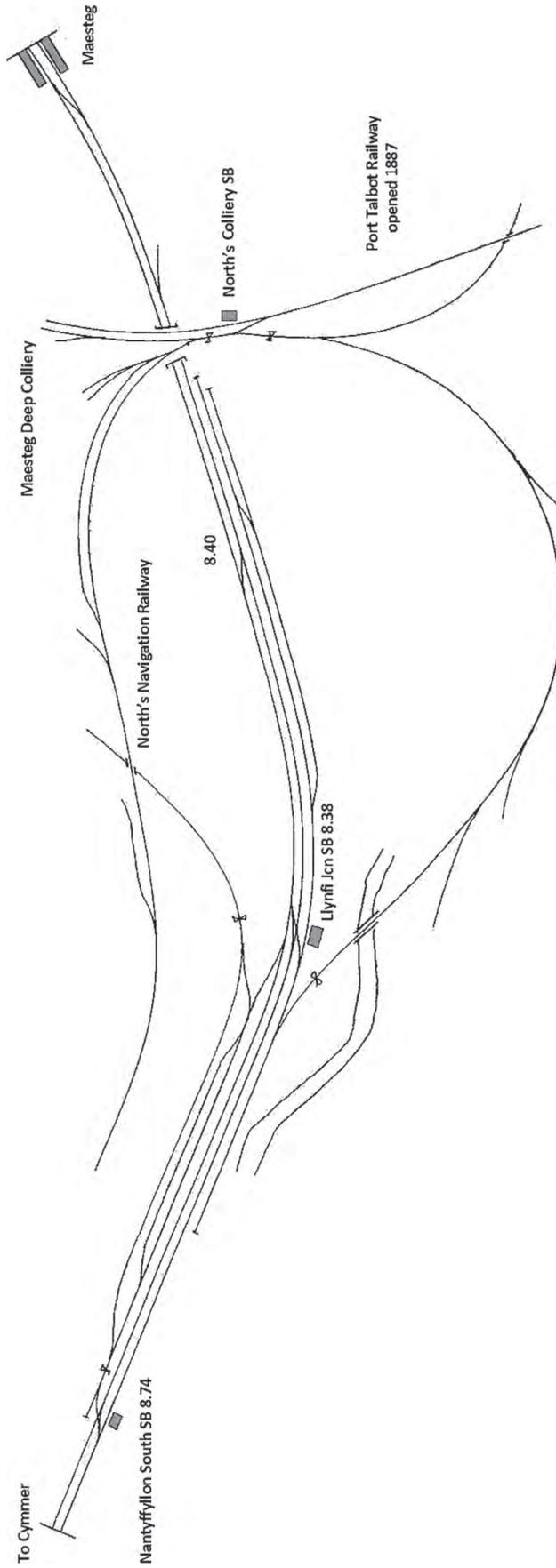
4144 makes its station call at Troedyrhiew Garth with the 4.52pm Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 10 November 1962. (W.G. Sumner)



MAESTEG

MAESTEG (CASTLE STREET) 1957





Broad Gauge passenger services between Bridgend and Maesteg began in February 1864, with a line beyond for coal extending to Duffryn Colliery, Tywith (Nantyllyon from 1903), from where coal traffic could run through to Porthcawl Harbour. The abolition of the Broad Gauge in 1872 and the consequent alterations to layout are shown in the 1875 plan which exists for the Maesteg area.

The 1875 plan of the southern approach to Maesteg at about the 7¼ mp from Bridgend shows Oakwood colliery on the north side of the single line and Maesteg Merthyr Colliery on the south side with Cae David Colliery further north on the south side. The next plan for 1897 shows only Oakwood or Maesteg Merthyr on the north side, indicating that the two had been amalgamated by then, with no reference to Cae David, though it apparently survived until 1904.

Oakwood Colliery was opened in 1868 by W. Davis, changing in 1874 to the Maesteg-Merthyr Steam Coal Co. There was a huge explosion at the mine in January 1872 killing eleven, the only staff underground at the time. In 1884, ownership passed to T. Roberts & Co. then in 1893 to James Barrow and Ebenezer Lewis.

The 1897 plan shows a much larger Oakwood mining complex on the north side of the line with Sir Alfred Jones of the Elder Dempster Co. in ownership from 1900 through Elder's Navigation Collieries Co. With almost 500 men employed, most of the coal produced was used for their steamship line, with much being shipped (probably from Cardiff or Barry Docks) to their coaling stations in the Canary Islands and Sierra Leone. After Sir Alfred's death in 1909, the company became Elders Collieries Ltd., changed its name to Celtic Collieries Ltd. in 1915 and joined the Cambrian Combine in 1916. In 1920, North's Navigation Collieries (1889) Ltd. purchased the Oakwood and Maesteg Merthyr (Garth) collieries but they had little future. Oakwood was closed in 1928 and Celtic Collieries went into receivership in 1930.

Access to the sidings serving the colliery was by ground frames at both ends, these also shown as removed in 1930.

Within the next half mile collieries were on both sides of the line; on the north side Oakwood Colliery and on the south Cae David Colliery (which is shown closed by 1904), while a few yards further along on the south side was a siding for the Llynvi Valley Gas Company, the original PSA dated January 1885.

The Llynfi Gas Works siding survived into the 1950s or '60s; though the GF was not removed until July 1964, a previous notice stating that the sidings were recovered in March 1959. The single line crossed the river yet again immediately north of the Gas Works siding and soon the 1875 plan shows a connection on the north side of the line into Maesteg Iron Works which opened in the 1820-30 period. The ironworks closed in 1885 as it could not be adapted to the production of steel. Just beyond the ironworks entrance was the passenger station.

Until 1885, when the line was doubled between Llynfi Junction (to the north) and the station, the single line station consisted of a single platform with a one-track Goods Shed on the south side of the line. North of this was a one-track small Engine Shed built in August 1861. It was a stone built one-track straight dead-ended shed with a gable style slate roof and included a 23ft 6in turntable. It was closed in Oct. 1897 and demolished in 1905. There would have been a SB to control movements, but its location remains undefined.

On 1 June 1885, the line between Llynfi Jcn. (north of the station) and the south end of the station was doubled and a second (up) platform added. The Goods shed remained but the engine shed by now had gone. A loop siding remained on the north side of the platforms with two shorter sidings stop-blocked at the north end. The location of the SB remained undefined.

In mid-1897, Maesteg station with its inadequate facilities was closed and a new station opened a few hundred

yards north on a curve in the tracks. This allowed Up and Down goods lines to be provided alongside the two main lines at the previous site, which was now provided with two new SBs, Maesteg North at 8miles 19ch. just south of the Down platform and Maesteg South at 7miles 77ch., the two boxes being at the extremities of the new goods lines. The Goods Shed was extended at the end of 1904. This then became the shape of things to come for over the next half a century until the rationalisation of the 1960s. However, on 1 July 1924, the station was named Maesteg Castle Street, the North box also taking that name.

Just to the north of Maesteg Castle Street station, the GW line was spanned by an elliptical-arched bridge which had been originally constructed by North's Navigation Railway Co. in 1867 to link the Maesteg Iron Works with the Llynvi Iron Works. It was later widened to additionally accommodate the Port Talbot Railway and was faced on the north side only with red brick. The bridge was demolished in 1987 as part of a road widening scheme.

The Goods Shed closed in 1964 under the concentration of Goods traffic and facilities with traffic collected and delivered from Cardiff Newtown. Most of

the connections between the goods yard and the main lines were removed. The station closed in 1970 with the cessation of the Bridgend to Treherbert service. The Up Goods was removed in 1969 and in 1971 the double running lines were singled between Llynfi Jct. and Maesteg South. The Up Main was removed and the Down Main became the Up and Down Single line with Maesteg Castle St. and Maesteg South boxes closed on 9 May 1971. The Down Goods and Reception lines were both truncated to form two Coal Yard Sidings with access from the north end. There was still much domestic rail-borne coal in the area and the former goods yard was re-planned in 1971 as a small coal concentration yard for the area lasting as such until 1981.

The line north of Maesteg closed in sections as the individual collieries ceased production as detailed below. The line through Maesteg was by now reduced to just a single running line with trains operated by Key Token to and from Tondy. This situation greatly facilitated the re-opening of the line for passenger trains to Maesteg in 1992 with an hourly service to and from Cardiff Central, which has since developed into a through service to/from Cheltenham.

Maesteg South Signal Box looking towards Tondy on 7 August 1964.
(Garth Tilt)



Class 37 D6893, working the 4.15pm from Cymmer on the Up Main with a train of coal, passes 9716 on 7 August 1964. (Garth Tilt)



Whilst awaiting the right of way and D6893 to clear section at Llangynwyd, our Pannier 9716 witnesses the passage of a Single Power Car heading for Treherbert on 7 August 1964. (Garth Tilt)



A view looking towards the station on 7 August 1964. (Garth Tilt)



Three views of the 6.15pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi on 2 July 1960, trains having been switched to run to Blaengwynfi from Abergwynfi on 13 June. The first shows the three-coach train powered by Tondy's 5555 passing the Goods Depot on the down side and approaching the water column with the up loop and down loop plus goods yard sidings partly visible. (E. Wilmshurst)





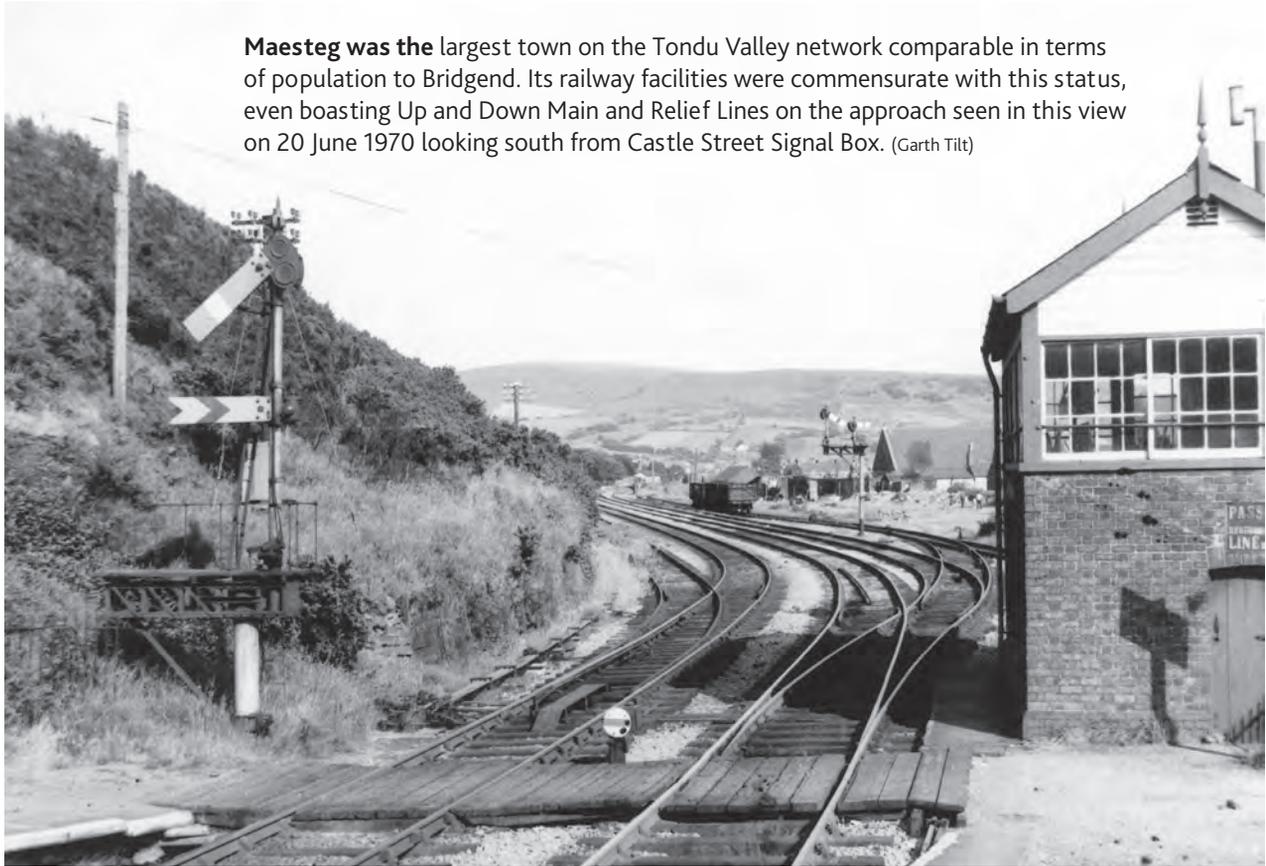
5555 approaches Maesteg Castle Street with the 6.15pm from Bridgend for Blaengwynfi on 2 July 1960. The situation at this time was somewhat confusing; Abergwynfi was still shown with a passenger service in both Public and Working Timetables. Withdrawal of traffic on 13 June must have been at very short notice when instead, trains from Bridgend now ran from Cymmer Afan up to the head of the valley to the neighbouring station of Blaengwynfi terminating right outside the mouth of the Rhondda tunnel. (E. Wilmhurst)



An elevated view of the south end of Maesteg showing the track down to Maesteg South SB with the North box controlling entrance to the up loop and Goods Yard on the right. The evening sun provides lovely lighting for 5555 as it runs into the down platform with the 6.15pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi. At the up platform is the SLS Special to the Tondu Valleys with members taking advantage of the station stop to photograph the down working. (Hugh Davies Collection)

The 41XXs were the largest passenger engines based at Tondy, and unless there were any excursions to be worked, they spent their time working the Llynfi Valley services. Here 4121 runs into Maesteg with the 12.45pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi service on 27 September 1960, the three-coach train being well within the engine's capability. The Up Bracket signal at the end of the up platform has arms for the up loop (the lower arm) and up main, the distant arm slotted with Maesteg South SB. (H.C. Casserley)

Maesteg was the largest town on the Tondy Valley network comparable in terms of population to Bridgend. Its railway facilities were commensurate with this status, even boasting Up and Down Main and Relief Lines on the approach seen in this view on 20 June 1970 looking south from Castle Street Signal Box. (Garth Tilt)





A closer view of the down platform which housed the booking office, waiting room, toilets and staff accommodation, including the Station Master's office.
(Jeff Stone)

4144 stands at the platform as the train takes its one or two-minute respite at Maesteg en route to the top of the Valley.
(W.G. Sumner)





Following the closure of the Abergwynfi route the additional power provided by the 55XX 2-6-2Ts for the auto trains was no longer required and they were all transferred away with 64XX panniers taking over the auto working to Blaengwynfi. Here 6419 works the 12.40pm Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 10 November 1962, with the first view waiting at the up platform and the second passing Maesteg Castle Street SB as it leaves the station. In January 1961 Tondy shed was transferred from the Newport District to the Cardiff Valleys and the previous 86F shedcode became 88H which can now be seen carried. (Both W.G. Sumner)





The return working from Blaengwynfi for 4144 was the 4.52pm service to Bridgend. A good dozen passengers leave the train before it continues its journey to Bridgend on 10 November 1962. (W.G. Sumner)

From 3 December 1962, the Llynfi Valley service was dieselised with single (Bubble) Power Cars W55019 and from January, additionally W55026. When either of these required servicing at Cardiff Cathays, a two-car unit was substituted. Here at Maesteg on 3 June 1963 such an occasion is recorded with a service for Bridgend. (Garth Tilt)





W55025 at Maesteg Castle Street with a service to Bridgend in 1964. Railcars had been introduced on the Llynfi Valley service from 3 December 1962 with W55019 transferred from Plymouth. A further revision to the service from 14 January necessitated two programmes with W55026 also transferred from the West Country (plus W55025 later). (Lens of Sutton)

The single power cars W55019/26 worked most services but three car sets covered the schoolchildren trains. When required for maintenance or otherwise not available, usually two-car and sometimes three Car DMUs were substituted by Cathays Depot. W55025 runs into Maesteg on 7 March 1970 with a service from Blaengwynfi to Bridgend.





W55025 passes under the elliptical bridge just north of Castle Street with the 2.02pm Treherbert to Bridgend on 7 March 1970. Built in 1867 to connect Maesteg Iron Works with the Llynvi Iron Works, it later carried the tracks of North's Navigation Railway and the Port Talbot Railway. Widened during the days of the latter using red brick on the North face only, the bridge was demolished in 1983 for a road widening scheme. (RCTS)

LLYNFI JUNCTION

Llynfi Junction gave access to Llynfi Ironworks. Like Maesteg Ironworks, the Llynfi works had opened in the 1820-30 period and was the largest undertaking in the area. Linked to the tramway-fed Duffryn pit, the works was all located south of the River Llynfi, with sidings running north of the river to reach the Maesteg Iron Works and the single L&O line. The fact that the works, like the Maesteg Works, never converted to steel making, led to its early demise in 1885. In that year, a new SB was opened at Llynfi Jct. to cover the doubling of the line between Llynfi Jct. and Maesteg South on 1 June. In March 1886, the doubling was extended northwards to Tywith (Nantylfyllon). The original Llynfi

Jct. box at the $8\frac{3}{4}$ mp. had been on the north side of the line, with three sidings on the south side accessing the ironworks, the PSA dated 1 September 1859 in the name of the Llynvi Vale Iron Co.

The new box was opened in 1885 south of the river with only one long siding retained to serve what had now become North's Navigation Railways Forge Sidings, which by 1897 linked into the new Port Talbot Railway crossing the L&O virtually at right angles by means of a viaduct as it ran north to Pontyrhyll and Maesteg Deep Colliery. The area previously covered by the Llynfi Ironworks was now taken over by North's Navigation Colliery.

South of Llynfi Jct. SB a new ballast siding was added by 1918 alongside a long

siding stop-blocked at the south end which extended right through to well north of the SB for use by North's traffic, with connections both ways into the main lines at Llynfi Jct. box.

With the withdrawal of the passenger service in 1970, the line was singled. Llynfi Jct. SB was closed in November 1973 with an Up (southbound) Loop retained alongside the single line in the area of the previous box, the Loop now covered

at both north and south extremities by ground frames.

By 1981, Llynfi Valley Jct. provided the connection with Maesteg Washery and St. John's Colliery at Cwmdu and marked the interchange point between BR and NCB operational limits. In 1987, St. John's closed and the Washery followed. Occasional trains were operated from the Washery site conveying reclaimed spoil from adjacent Coal tips until 1993.

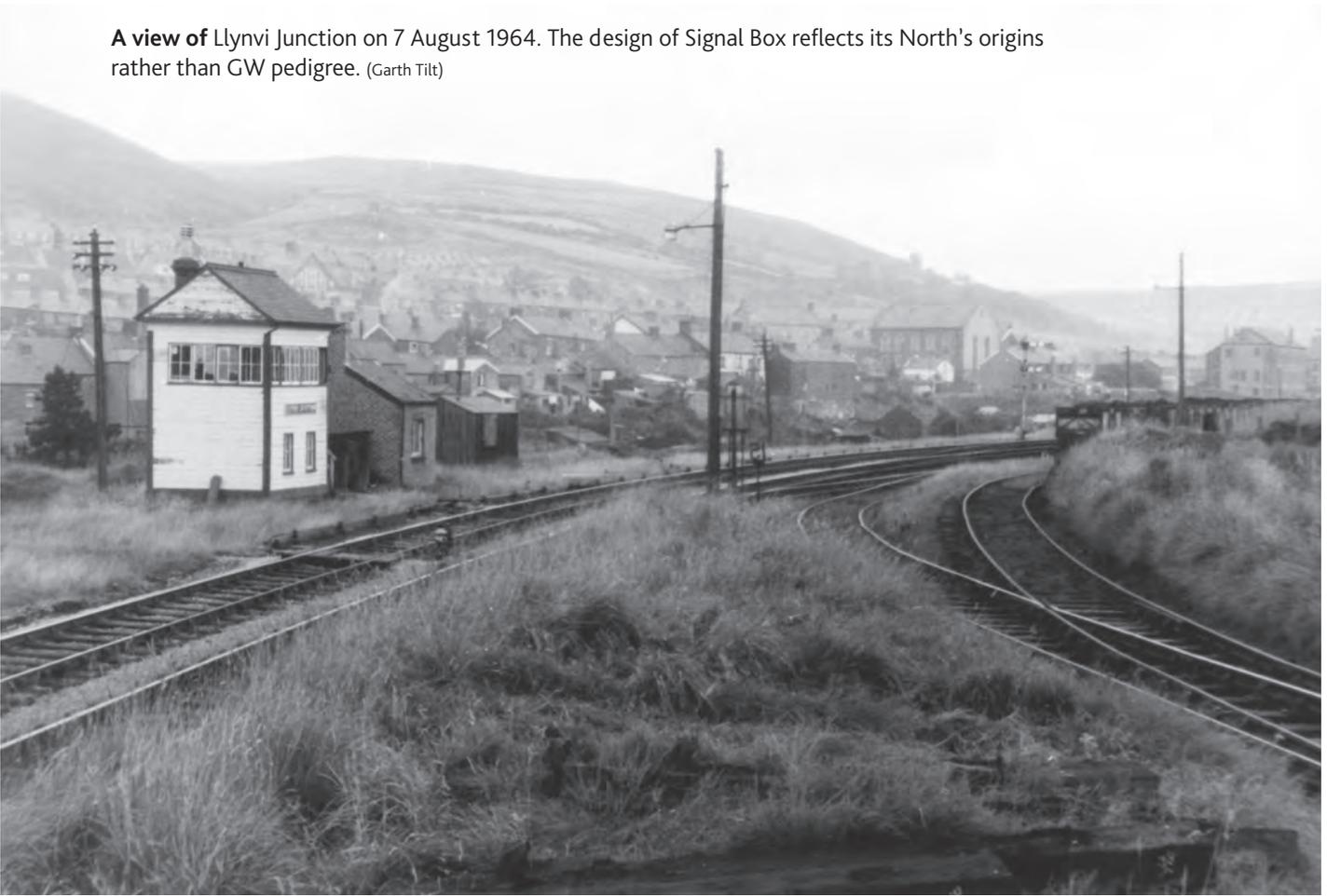
A view of the holding sidings at Llynfi Jct. in the 1950s with empty mineral wagons in the three sidings next to the running lines for supply to the collieries in the area.



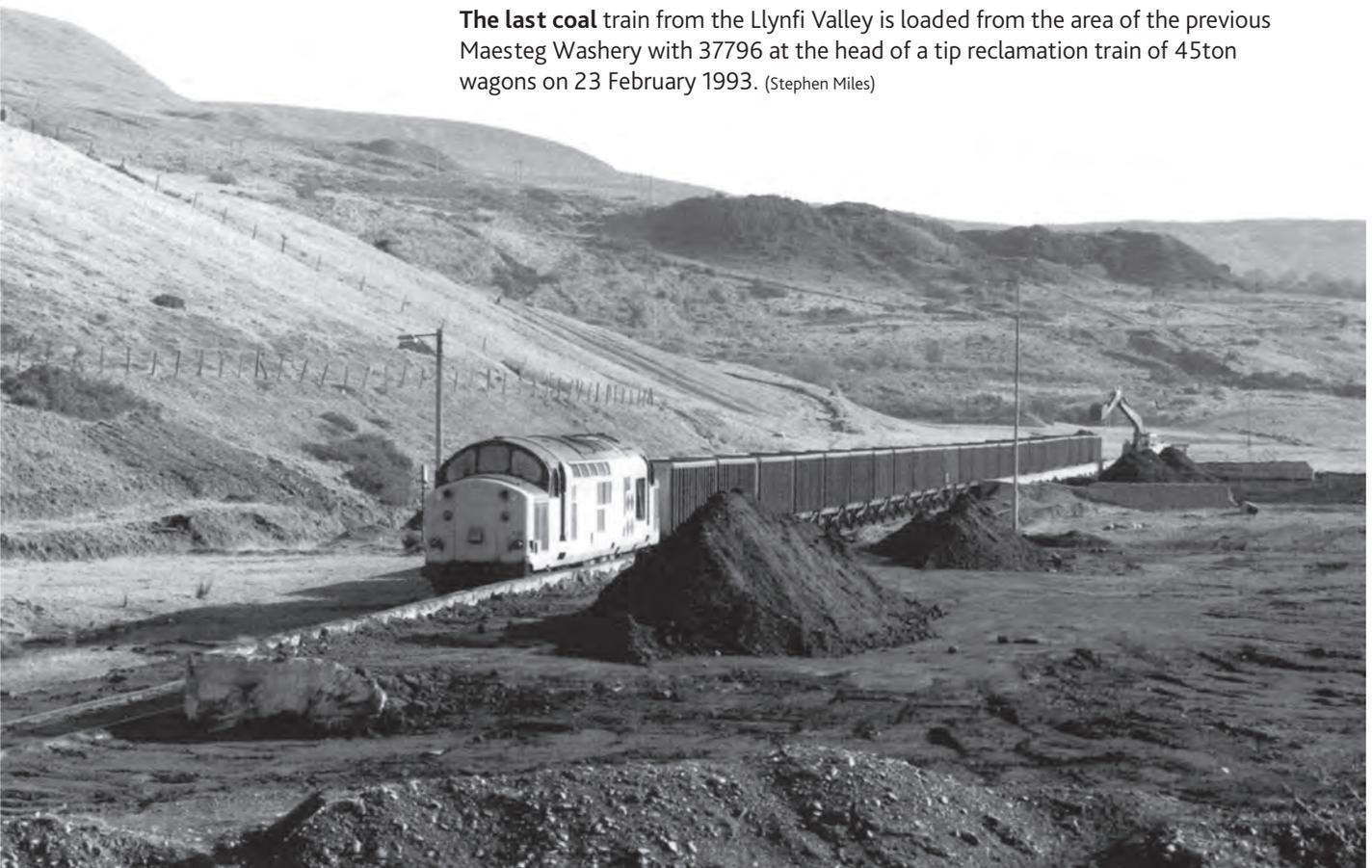
A view of Llynfi Jct. Signal Box is afforded in this view of Hunslet Works 3840 *Pamela*, built in 1956, as she collects empty mineral wagons in the exchange sidings for NCB use at Maesteg Central Washery with the BR line running alongside.



A view of Llynvi Junction on 7 August 1964. The design of Signal Box reflects its North's origins rather than GW pedigree. (Garth Tilt)



The last coal train from the Llynfi Valley is loaded from the area of the previous Maesteg Washery with 37796 at the head of a tip reclamation train of 45ton wagons on 23 February 1993. (Stephen Miles)



A loop is all that is left of the Llynfi Valley route by 28 September 1990 as Type 3 diesel 37692 heads south with 7B65 09.20 Maesteg Central Washery to Jersey Marine Steel Supply with reclaimed coal from tip clearance.

16 September 1988, 'Davies the Digger' loads 37695's train at Maesteg Central Washery at 15.55, the 7B26 15.00 Llynfi Junction-Alexandra Dock Junction Newport.



NANTYFFYLLON

Until January 1903, Nanttyffyllon was known as Tywith and was the original terminus of the Broad Gauge Llynfi Valley Railway, coal traffic from the nearby Duffryn Colliery being taken from there to Porthcawl Harbour. The name Tywith doubtless derives from the Tychwyth Colliery (also known as Victoria), tramroads from which are shown feeding into early railway sidings on a plan of the area for 1875.

The original line north of Tywith was abandoned when the new line to Caerau was opened in July 1878. The old line had led first to a platform at Coynant (probably a corruption of Coegnant) and then continued as sidings for about another half mile. On the north side, it intersected with tramroads from Ty Gwyn Bach Colliery and others with a PSA dated 1879 to the Llynvi, Tondy & Ogmere Coal & Iron Co., passing in 1884 to the Llynvi & Tondy Co. Ltd and finally in 1889 to North's Navigation Collieries Ltd., the PS terminating in 1892.

On the south side of the line were sidings leading to the Duffryn Merthyr or Maesteg Merthyr Colliery with its associated tramroads. In 1876, the PS covering these sidings was in the name of the Duffryn Rhondda Colliery Co., then passing to Messrs. Wright, Butler & Co, and then in December 1884 back to the Duffryn Rhondda Colliery Co. and Llynvi & Tondy Co. Ltd. The PSA was terminated in April 1892. The lines were removed beyond the site of Coynant station at 9m.63ch. in 1892, the area developed into a small Goods Shed and Yard called Caerau or Duffryn Goods, where a new Goods Shed was built in 1910. It remained in being until September 1956 when it was closed together with the branch back to the original junction with the main line. The actual junction was removed in December 1957.

A SB was opened in 1890 at Tywith South to access three new sidings north of the line owned by North's, joining other sidings from North's feeding into their Merthyr Deep Pit. Further sidings were added in 1900 to link the North's line with the GWR. The Tywith South box is believed to have been first called



North's Navigation SB, then Nanttyffyllon Jct. in 1898 and Nanttyffyllon South in 1903. It was destroyed by fire in July 1966, covered by a GF from March 1967, being finally taken out of use in May 1971.

The intersection of the old and new lines was originally known as Northern Extension Jct. opened in 1886 and renamed Nanttyffyllon North in 1903 also.

The original single line, converted to Standard Gauge in 1872, was doubled south to Llynfi Jct. in March 1886 and north to Caerau SB, south of Caerau station, in April 1898. The line crossed the River Llynfi twice in quick succession in the Tywith area and a passenger station was constructed, just south of the northernmost bridge, with two platforms by 1897, these being lengthened in 1921. The station was also renamed in 1903.

North's Navigation Colliery lines ran north of the entire area, from their Coegnant Colliery, opened from 1882 by the Llynfi Iron Co. and purchased by North's in 1889. New exchange sidings and Coegnant Sidings Signal Box were established in 1884.

The line to Caerau reverted to single in May 1971 and was completely closed beyond the north end of Nanttyffyllon platform (9miles 12ch. from Bridgend) on 19 July 1976, though it was not officially deemed closed until 7 March 1977.

In 1981, Coegnant Colliery ceased production and with this, the line was truncated further south towards Llynvi Junction.

St John's Colliery at Cwmdy on 20 April 1973.

Nantyffyllon South SB looking towards Tondu on 6 August 1964. Llynvi Junction is in the extreme distance. (Garth Tilt)



Nantyffyllon (originally Tywith until 1 January 1903) facing north with Nantyffyllon North Signal Box just beyond the Down Platform on 13 July 1959. (H.C. Casserley)



Two views of 4144 with the 12.45pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi at Nantyffyllon on 10 November 1962.
The first view is of the train arriving at the platform. (W.G. Sumner)



The two coach train proceeding away from the camera towards Caerau. (W.G. Sumner)



9649 with empty coaching stock from Cymmer Afan to Tondy on 10 November 1962 with Coegnant Sidings to the rear and the connection curving away into the Colliery. (W.G. Sumner)



Passing the photographer and 9649 heading south on 10 November 1962. Coegnant Colliery, winding gear and pithead, are in full view. (W.G. Sumner)



6419 leaves Nantyffyllon with the 12.40pm Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 27 September 1960. Just discernible to the left of the Auto-Train is the formation of the former Duffryn Goods Branch which was closed in 1956. (H.C. Casserley)



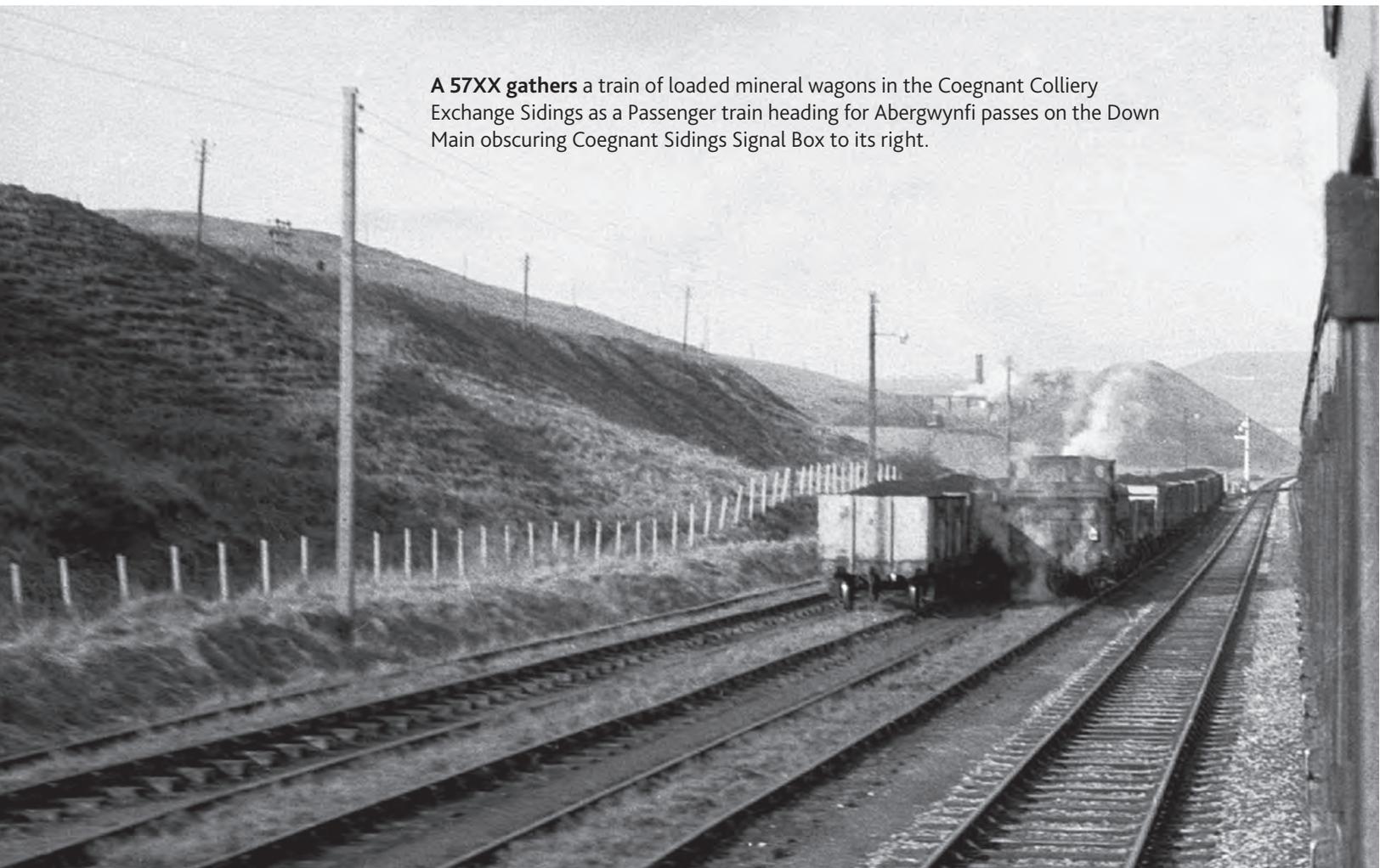
A distant view of 9649 approaching the camera north of Nantyffyllon with the 1.35pm Bridgend to Cymmer Afan on 10 November 1962. (W.G. Sumner)



Running on North's Navigation Railway parallel to the Main Line at this point albeit at grade, an NCB Hunslet 0-6-0ST takes a train of empties from the exchange sidings for Coegnant Colliery on 27 September 1960. (H.C. Casserley)



A 57XX gathers a train of loaded mineral wagons in the Coegnant Colliery Exchange Sidings as a Passenger train heading for Abergwynfi passes on the Down Main obscuring Coegnant Sidings Signal Box to its right.





CAERAU

The new single line from Tywith Jct. to Caerau and on to Cymmer was opened in July 1878 for goods and in July 1880 for passenger traffic. It was doubled as far as Caerau in 1898. The line again crossed the river just south of where Caerau station would be built, opening in 1901. Just south of the river bridge on the north side of the running line were three sidings for exchange of traffic with North's Navigation Colliery lines which ran south to Coegnant Colliery.

Caerau SB, opened in 1898, marked the end of the double line section from the south and the line through the single platformed Caerau station at 10m.10ch. The line was doubled for an extra 3 chains between Caerau SB and the river bridge in 1910. The layout continued thus until May 1971 when the double line between Caerau SB and Maesteg was singled.

The single-bore Caerau to Cymmer Tunnel was 1,594 yards long, at a cost of £47,422, and was driven from both ends. Work at the Cymmer end started in April

1875 and was driven by hand while from the Caerau end work started in August and was achieved chiefly by machine drills. Both sides met at perfect lines and levels on 29 May 1877. The tunnel was straight with a rising gradient towards Caerau of 1 in 226. The tunnel was lined throughout with Pencoed Brick. The line was opened through to Cymmer and Abergwynfi on 1 July 1878. During construction, an explosion of dynamite occurred on 27 April 1876, 176 yards from the Cymmer end of the tunnel killing 13. Most of the men were inside the tunnel at the time of the explosion.

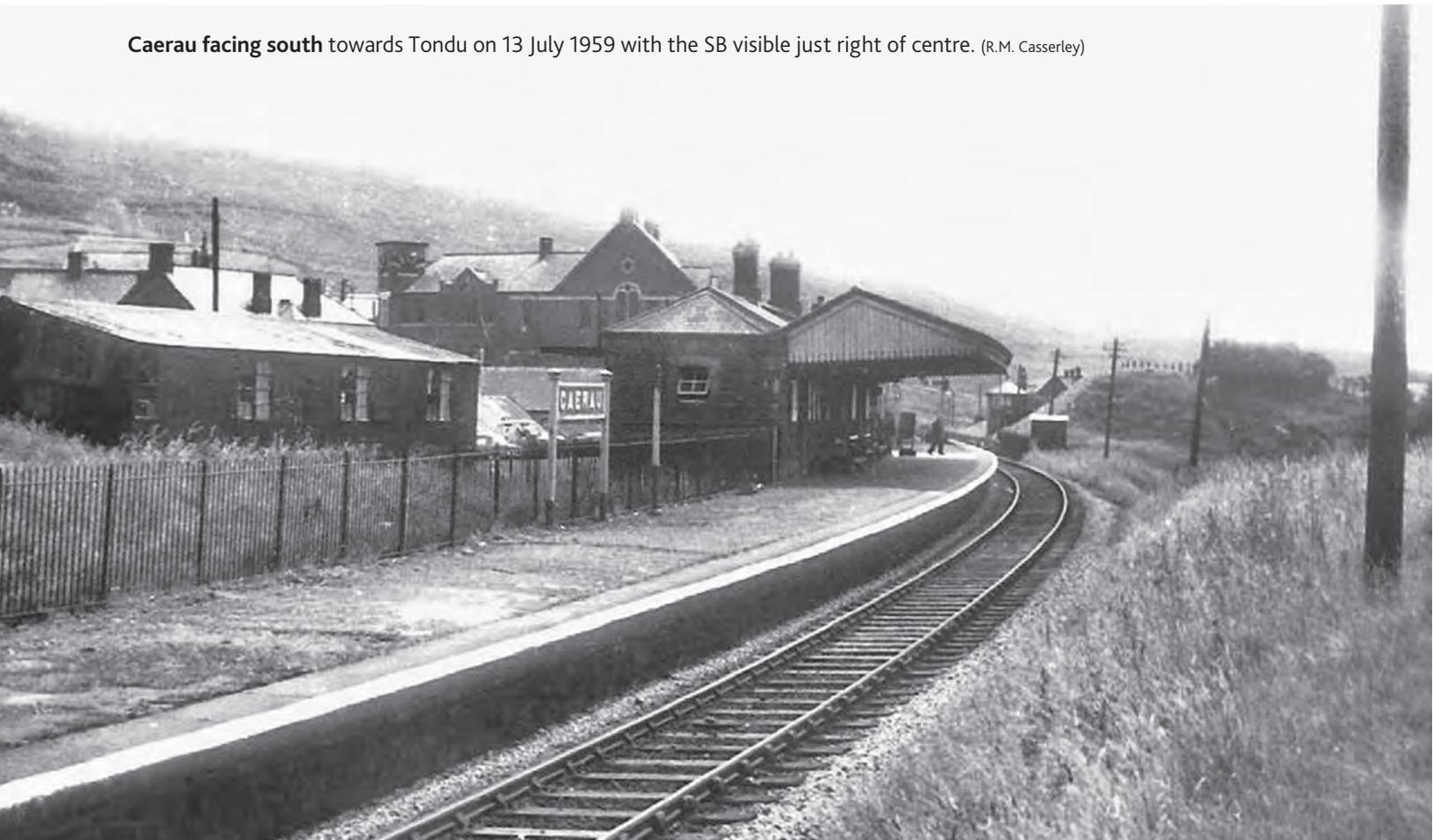
In August 1970 (the last passenger train having run on 14 July and the last freight on 25 June) the line was closed beyond the south entrance to Cymmer Tunnel at 10miles 17ch. Southwards, the line was closed to Nantyllyllon at 9miles 12ch. on 19 July 1976, though officially closed on 7 March 1977. Traffic from Caerau Colliery continued to travel via the Coegnant inlet to Maesteg Washery until the closure of Caerau Colliery on 27 August 1977.

Coegnant Sidings Signal Box and the connection to/from the former North's Navigation Network now under NCB auspices. 6 August 1964. (Garth Tilt)

The **single line** platform at Caerau facing north towards the tunnel between Caerau and Cymmer Afan on 13 July 1959. Note the two-way signal on the bank beyond the platform. (H.C. Casserley)



Caerau facing south towards Tondu on 13 July 1959 with the SB visible just right of centre. (R.M. Casserley)





A 1968 portrait of the north end of Caerau platform showing the proximity of the station to Cymmer Tunnel.

Just proving it was straight, light at the end of Cymmer Tunnel (1,595 Yards) on 6 July 1967 looking north from Caerau. (J. Marshall/ Kidderminster Railway Museum)

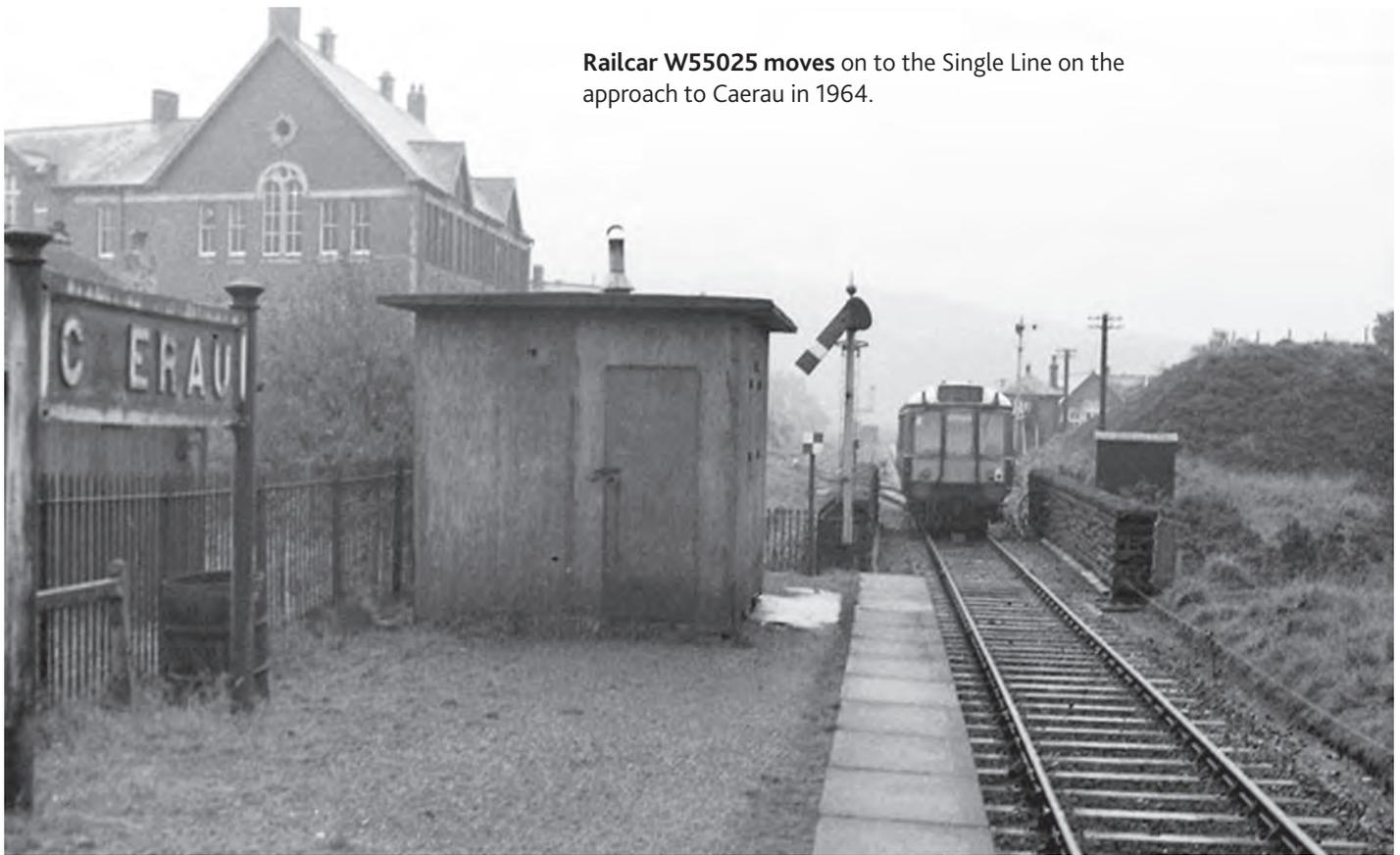




4121 departs Caerau with the 1.30pm Bridgend to Cymmer Afan on 21 August 1962. Note the bi-directional signals, the northbound signal having already been restored to danger. (Gerald T. Robinson)

Running into Caerau from the south and leaving the double line on which the train has run since Maesteg for the single line from Caerau box.





Railcar W55025 moves on to the Single Line on the approach to Caerau in 1964.

Looking towards Tondy from the platform at Caerau on 20 June 1970 with the Signal Box on the right. This was the limit of double track from Maesteg South with the adjacent exchange sidings serving Caerau Colliery, the upper limit of North's Navigation system which paralleled the Main Line all the way from Maesteg (Llynvi Junction). (Garth Tilt)



CYMMER AFAN

The word Cymmer (or in Welsh Cymer) means 'junction of two rivers' and it is here the River Corrwg tributary joins the River Afan to finally flow into the sea at Aberavon.

The GWR line through the Cymmer Tunnel from Caerau was opened in July 1878 for goods and in 1880 for passenger traffic. The goods traffic on a single line was intended to link into the South Wales Mineral Railway (SWMR), opened in 1863 which lay on the north side of Cymmer and was reached by a 150-yard viaduct over the river. Beyond the viaduct, the line became double as it joined with the SWMR but almost at once became single again as it reached an area of three sidings with the running line bisecting two loop sidings (one on each side of the single running line) and a stop block siding on the south side. The single line ran on to North Rhondda.

The single passenger line into Cymmer opened north of the Tunnel in 1880 and curved away from the above line eastwards in a half-moon into a single platform station. A connection off the goods line into the station acted as a Goods loop. Another loop siding was provided south of the platform and a short stop block siding at the east end of the platform.

In November 1885, the Rhondda & Swansea Bay Railway (R&SBR) reached Cymmer, the end of its line being a half mile or so west of the GWR station and Cymmer viaduct, with a platform on the south side of the single line and a loop siding on the north side, the end of the line stop blocked a few yards further on. Doubtless struck by the desire to join the GWR at its location, in 1886 a deviation line opened south of the original R&SBR platform, running under the viaduct to a single platform to the north of the GWR platform, though with a connection into the latter. Two stop blocked sidings were also provided for goods traffic north of the new R&SB platform.

In 1888, a new two track R&SBR station opened slightly to the north of the previous development, with three sidings, stop blocked at the east end, now lying between the R&SBR and GWR stations.

Both the GWR and R&SBR had their own SBs approaching their individual platforms from the west.

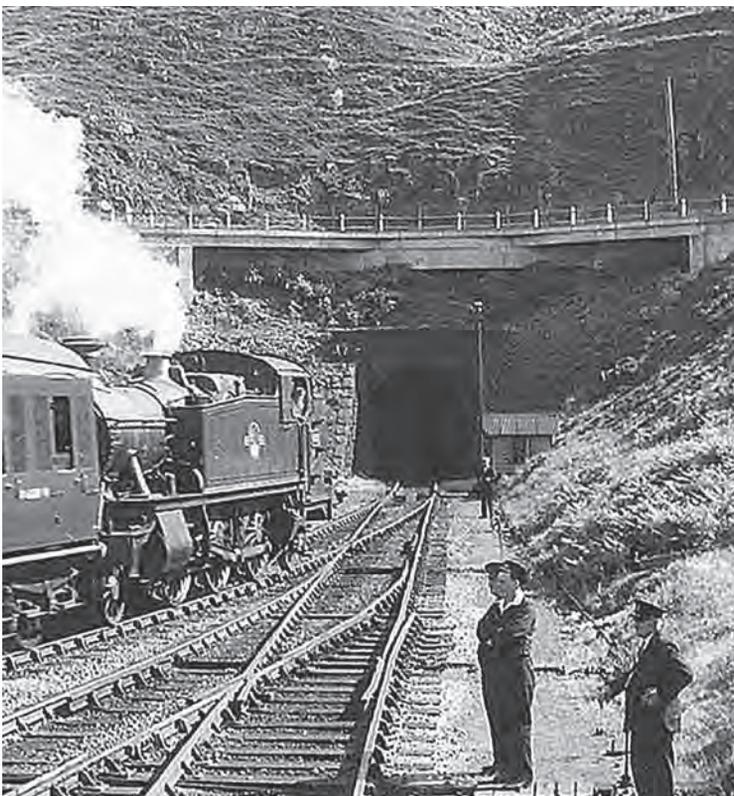
In 1886, the GWR opened its line from Cymmer to Abergwynfi and in June 1890, the R&SB was ready to open its virtually parallel line from Cymmer to Blaengwynfi. In July 1895, a PS was opened at Cymmer on the GWR route for Messrs. Leyson & Lilwall but its exact location is not known. In 1905, the two companies agreed to the removal of the connection from the R&SBR into the GWR platform.

The SWMR opened a station on its line at Cymmer for Workmen in March 1917 and for the general public in March 1918. In September 1926, the station was renamed Cymmer Corrwg. The GWR added three loop sidings to their yard on the curve between their station and the tunnel by 1914, making a small yard of four exchange sidings.

In January 1895, Glyn Cymmer Colliery opened, located between the viaduct and the R&SB lines, with connections into the GWR via the viaduct line, involving a reversal towards the tunnel to access the new GWR sidings mentioned above and also into the R&SB line near the viaduct. The two sets of siding connections were in the name of separate companies.

The R&SBR connection (and possibly the GWR connection also) was in the name of the Glyn Cymmer Colliery in 1895 and in 1896 passed to T.G. & T.T. Davies. In April 1903, it passed into the name of the Glenavon Rhondda Colliery Co. and in June 1916 to the Glenavon Garw Collieries Ltd., (as the GWR siding). Traffic through the siding connection with the R&SB ceased in May 1932.

In October 1896, the GWR connection PS passed into the name of R. Gibb, in January 1914 to the Gibbs Navigation Collieries Ltd., in August 1918 to the Glenavon Garw Collieries Ltd. but was terminated in June 1938. The site was then used by the Glyncymmer Wagon Works, the recognised owner in 1939, the site apparently closing by 1945. The siding connections into both the R&SBR and GWR lines were worked by ground frames throughout.



The entrance to Cymmer Tunnel as seen on 13 July 1959. The three tracks are the single running line (left), the lead into the four sidings (centre) and the track crossing the Glynccorwg Viaduct (right). The ground frame to operate the last two is on the right of the tunnel mouth. (H.C. Casserley)

Recently ex-Caerphilly Works 4121 heads towards the tunnel with a Blaengwynfi to Bridgend service on 2 July 1960 as rail staff prepare to operate the ground frame for an SLS special running from Caerau across the viaduct to the Glynccorwg line. (P.J. Garland/R.S. Carpenter)

6419 leaves the tunnel with the 8.50am auto service from Bridgend to Blaengwynfi on 21 August 1962.
(Gerald T. Robinson)



In this 1964 view a Tondy pannier with a U target is seen drawing empty wagons towards the tunnel probably to be taken across to the Glyncoerwg by the other Tondy pannier standing near the 5mph speed board at the end of the viaduct. A Type 3 diesel with a coal service probably from Avon Colliery Abergwynfi awaits the signal on the running line, which will not be cleared until the pannier's move is complete. Before September 1963 when the R&SB was closed, one of these panniers would have been supplied by Duffryn Yard. A bracket signal can just be seen in the cutting conveying the previous R&SB line into Cymmer.





4144 departs from Cymmer past the yard with the 2.33pm Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 21 August 1962. (Gerald T. Robinson)

A 1962 panoramic view of the area showing 4121 propelling a two-coach train back into Cymmer station as a pannier draws a loaded coal train into the yard which has been brought over from the Glyncothwy line. Wagons of concrete sleepers are also in the yard on 21 August 1962, no doubt in connection with the alterations to the layout north of Cymmer. (Gerald T. Robinson)



A 1965 view of the small yard but with no engines in sight, these presumably working somewhere on the Cymmer Corrwg to North Rhondda section. A train of empty mineral wagons is in the yard with others nearer the station.

Two Panniers draw a mineral train over the viaduct and into Cymmer off the Glyncorrwg line. Steam had ended at Tondy the previous April so the locomotives must have been based at Treherbert. A Class 37 would undoubtedly work the train southwards from Cymmer. 6 August 1964. (Garth Tilt)



Both concerns had SBs, virtually back-to-back, at the west end of their platforms (the R&SB the Down platform). These survived until a new box was opened in June 1960 alongside the previous R&SB box.

On 1 July 1924, the GWR changed the name of their and the former R&SB stations. The GWR changed from 'Cymmer (GWR)' to 'Cymmer for Glyncoirwg'

and then in September 1926 to 'Cymmer General' (rather a grandiose title for a single platform!), while the former R&SBR was changed from 'Cymmer (R&SBR)' to 'Cwm Cymmer' but in September 1926, changed it again to 'Cymmer Afan'. This naming lasted until January 1950 when both stations were known as 'Cymmer Afan'.



Cymmer Afan station nameboard on 19 August 1961.

A view of the north end of the station on 13 July 1959, with the R&SB platforms on the left and their SB centre with 4640 in the sidings between the R&SB and GW platforms; the GW signal box is on the right. (H.C. Casserley)





Until 13 June 1960, the former R&SB station at Cymmer consisted of two facing platforms, divorced from the GW Llynfi platform, but remodelling from that date converted the R&SB platforms into an island platform with a direct connection to and from the Llynfi line, the GW Llynfi platform becoming a bay with and the line stop-blocked at its north end. This view of the original layout of the R&SB platforms on 13 July 1959 shows the Refreshment Room in all its glory at the south end of the northbound platform, with the unusual canopy to the waiting area and facilities mid-way along the platform, but little facilities on the southbound platform. (H.C. Casserley)

The new Cymmer Signal Box commissioned on 19 June 1960, seen here c1965. (Lens of Sutton)





A miners' service to Duffryn Rhondda Colliery, a short distance south of Cymmer on the R&SB line, departs on a snowy day '21 February 1955' with engine 5789 of Duffryn Yard and former Taff Vale railway 331, an 8-wheel Brake Third built at Cathays in 1903, here renumbered as W201. It was converted by the TVR to an Auto Brake Third in December 1910, the GW re-converted it to a Brake Third in 1924 as 2488 and then downgraded it to Workmen's Brake Third in October 1949. It was renumbered W201 in October 1950 and remained in service until August 1959. (Ian L. Wright)



The former up R&SB platform at Cymmer on 21 February 1955 with former Taff Vale W201. In front are two other ex-Taff Vale railway vehicles 88 and 91 as W203 and W750 respectively forming a colliers' service to or from Duffryn Rhondda Colliery. (Ian L. Wright)

8710 starts away

from Cymmer General Llynfi platform with the 3.54pm Bridgend to Abergwynfi on 18 May 1959, showing part of the goods yard alongside the station with the depot crane in the forefront. (Robert Darlaston)

2.15pm at Cymmer

on 25 June 1955 and 7701 brings a Colliers' service into the station formed of pre-grouping stock. Another Pannier stands in the yard with another ex-Taff Vale vehicle either 88 or 91 as W203 and W750 respectively for working Colliers' Services to Duffryn Rhondda Colliery just over a mile from Cymmer. (John Wiltshire)





5545 arrives in Auto mode with the 11.25am Bridgend to Abergwynfi on 16 April 1960 at Cymmer General. (R.O. Tuck)

Duffryn Yard's 4640 hauls a train of mineral wagons into Cymmer General platform past the GW signal box, before setting back into Cymmer Yard on 27 September 1960. (H.C. Casserley)



In June 1960, the routes through the Cymmer Afan area were rationalised. A new connection was installed between the Bridgend route and that from Aberavon so that the former R&SBR Down platform became a bi-directional island. The former Down line became bi-directional for R&SBR line services, the new south face being for the Llynfi Valley services, again bi-directional. The Up R&SBR platform was taken out of use and the track lifted. The GWR route running eastwards from the former GWR station to Abergwynfi was truncated at the east end of the original GWR platform which became a bay but was little used subsequently.

The former R&SBR Blaengwynfi route was abandoned just east of the station and merged into the GWR route. Trains continued on the former GW line for just over a mile to a newly installed Gelli Junction, where the R&SBR route now diverged from the Abergwynfi line. Abergwynfi station was simultaneously closed in June 1960 with its passenger services diverted to Blaengwynfi 150 yards away. From Gelli Jct. the former Abergwynfi route (accessed by means of a GF and freight only) continued to Avon Colliery whereas the main route now became the former R&SBR line to Blaengwynfi and Treherbert. The scheme dispensed with the maintenance costs of Croeserw Viaduct (115 yards) and Gelli Tunnel (267 yards) on the former R&SBR route.

From 3 December 1962, former R&SBR passenger services were withdrawn, the

Bridgend services dieselised and extended to Treherbert. This continued until 1968 when on 26 February, concerns about the safety of the Rhondda Tunnel led to services being terminated at Cymmer with a connecting bus service to Treherbert. These were finally withdrawn on 14 July 1970.

Mineral traffic east of Cymmer ended when Avon Colliery (Abergwynfi) ceased production in September 1969. To the west, Duffryn Rhondda Colliery closed in 1967. The only other colliery by then in the area was Glyncorrwg on the SWMR and this too closed in 1970.

Traffic to and from both Duffryn Rhondda and Glyncorrwg had been worked via Tondy since closure of the R&SBR route on 29 July 1963.

As only the Bridgend passenger service now remained, the previous bi-directional main line through Cymmer platform now became a Branch Siding and the previous bi-directional branch now became the main as it fed directly into the Bridgend line. The last train from Duffryn Rhondda (with spoil) ran on 22 January 1970 and the last on the Bridgend line on 14 July 1970, after which the only traffic left was engineering trains engaged in removing the line and equipment. Cymmer station SB closed on 24 August 1970 and the entire lines through Cymmer officially closed on 14 December 1970. The SB was removed and re-sited at Bargoed, replacing the older structure there and continued in use until September 2013.

A view on 28 March 1964 from north of the station showing the former north-bound R & S B platform on the right, the island platform centre and the station siding on the left. The signal box is at the south end of the island platform. (Jeff Stone)





A view of the platforms at Cymmer following the remodelling on 13 June 1960, as seen on 27 September 1960. The track serving the previous northbound R&SB platform has been lifted and the Refreshment rooms marooned there. The former Down Platform had been widened and made into an Island with the track layout enabling R&SB Swansea/ Treherbert trains to use either face but the Llynvi Valley service had access only to the South face. The single platform at the adjacent Cymmer General became part of the new Cymmer Afan but was converted into a Bay Platform. Here a Brake van stands at the south end of the branch while its train engine works in the sidings below, and the new connection can be seen above the van. In this view there appear to be three Signal Boxes, on the left Cymmer General (GW) alongside Cymmer Afan (R&SBR) 'both decommissioned' and behind the latter the New Cymmer Afan. Even further behind can be seen a train of minerals coming off the viaduct from the Glyncorwg Branch. (H.C. Casserley)



A panoramic view of Cymmer Afan station and the layout to the south on 19 August 1961, with a DMU having departed from the southbound R&SB platform, heading for Neath or Swansea. The redundant former northbound R&SB platform is on the right with the newly created island platform centre and the yard on the Llynfi route in the background. (Robert Darlaston)

Since the complete closure of the line through Cymmer Afan, the previous R&SB Refreshment Rooms have been preserved, renovated and now form residential accommodation. (Stuart Davies)



A strange occurrence; W55019 stands at the Up (North) Face of the Island Platform at Cymmer in 1963; strange because this platform line was inaccessible from the Llynvi Valley direction. At this time, the Railcar worked a morning, afternoon and evening Colliers' service from Cymmer to Duffryn Rhondda Halt. It would regain the Bridgend line by reversing north of the station. (Robert Darlaston)





6419, with the 12.40pm Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 10 November 1962, pauses at Cymmer Afan's new Island Platform South face. The train has the signal for the new connection across to the Llynfi line, past the now closed GW box. (W.G. Sumner)



On 8 June 1963 the West Glamorgan Railway Society ran a special which included the Cymmer area, for which 6435 has been well turned out, but not the leading coach. The train is standing at the south face of the new island platform with the station siding, signals and signal box in view. (F.K. Davies)



Tondu's 9711 stands at the new island platform with a Blaengwynfi to Bridgend train on 19 August 1961. The signal is off for the new connection onto the Llynfi Valley line. The Goods Yard siding is alongside with wagons emptied after attention. (David Russell)

Cymer 18 June 1962 and 4121 draws forward having run round the stock ready to form the 4.58pm service to Bridgend. (Garth Tilt)





March 1969 sees W55026 with a service for Bridgend. A train of MGRs stand alongside

Type 3 D6915 heads north through Cymmer station along the south face of the island platform with 9J75, a train of empty minerals for Avon Colliery Abergwynfi, on 28 March 1964. The train will initially take the former R&SB (now single) line on from Cymmer to Gelli Jct. from where it will take the branch for Avon Colliery, the main line continuing to Blaengwynfi and Treherbert. (Jeff Stone)



GELLI

Mid-way between Cymmer and Abergwynfi/Blaengwynfi was Gelli Mill where the railway crossed the River Afan on both the GWR and former R&SBR routes. Between 1886 and 1894, Gelli Mill Colliery was accessed off the Abergwynfi line by a GF just north of the river bridge at Gelli Crossing.

The 1960 rationalisation, which made the former R&SBR route redundant,

dispensed with Croeserw Viaduct (115 yards) and Gelli Tunnel (267 yards). A new crossover was constructed at Gelli which now became Gelli Junction from the Abergwynfi line into the Blaengwynfi line. The passenger station at Abergwynfi then became redundant and all trains ran into Blaengwynfi. The GWR and R&SBR routes, although parallel for most of the way between Cymmer and Blaengwynfi, were at their closest point near Croeserw Viaduct.

Just north of Cymmer station on 16 April 1960 and track components are on site in readiness for the pending major track layout revision and the laying of a new loop connection at this location. The track on the left will be completely removed, having been truncated at the north end of the GW Abergwynfi platform. The R&SB track on the right will be added to by the creation of a loop line to serve the new island platform, the west face of which will be widened using land created by the removal of the up R&SB platform previously. (R.O. Tuck)





A 1960 view shortly after the remodelling of the layout at the east end of Cymmer. (P.J. Garland)

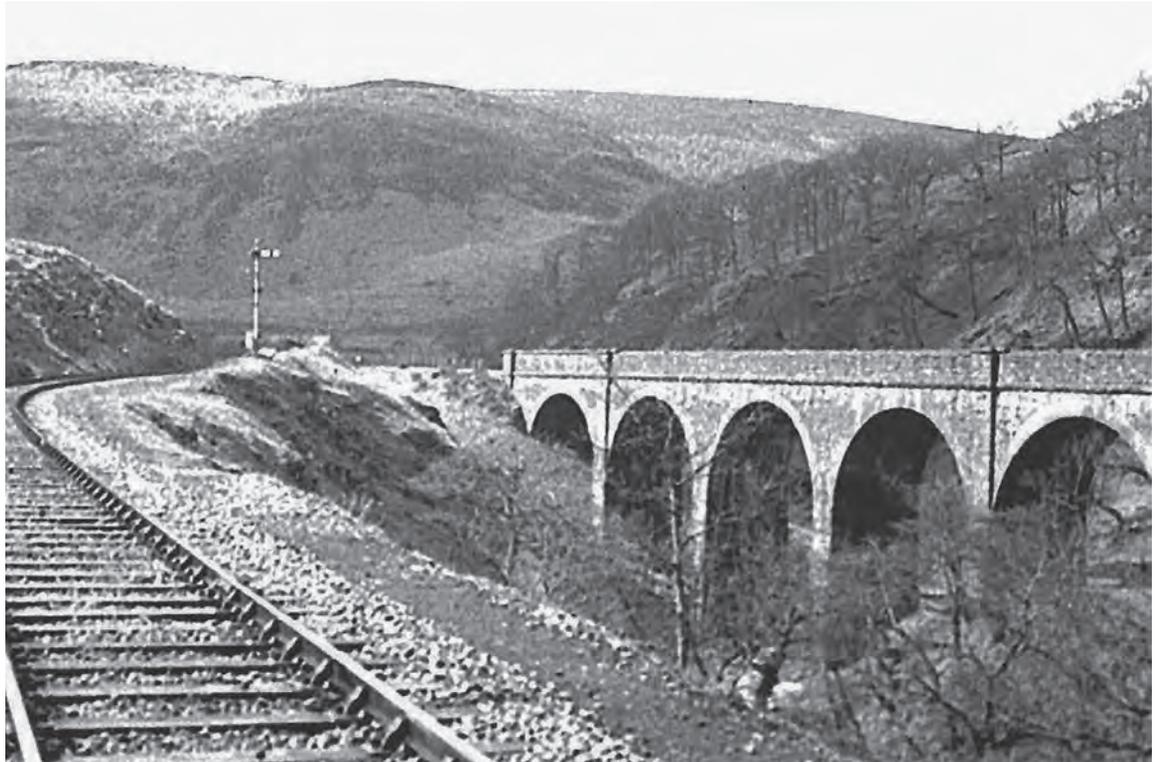
A short distance beyond the previous view, the former R&SB line was cut into the GW Abergwynfi line, in order that the R&SB line across the Croeserw Viaduct could be taken out of service and this can be seen centre left. The Abergwynfi line would then become the running line as far as the newly created Gelli Jct., this also avoiding the tunnel on the former R&SB line and reducing maintenance costs substantially. This view is dated 20 June 1970. (Garth Tilt)



Croeserw Viaduct on

13 April 1965, which previously carried the R&SB line beyond Cymmer. The line on the left is the former Abergwynfi line which became the running line as far as the newly created Gelli Jct. in the remodelling.

(Robert Darlaston)



Half a mile east of the previous view on the Abergwynfi line, Glenavon Colliery had once stood on the south side of the line but this closed in 1947 and the sidings were removed. Passing over the bridge over the River Afan just further east, two single power cars W55019/26 run attached on a Treherbert to Bridgend service on 3 June 1963. The 157 yard Gelli Tunnel on the former R&SB line ran through the hill behind the train, and had been taken out of use from June 1960. (F.K. Davies)





Passing the same location on 3 June 1963, Standard Class 4 80133 heads for Cymmer with an excursion to Porthcawl. The houses of the village of Gelli can be seen in the distance on the right. (F.K. Davies)

Leaving behind the last houses in Cymmer, Treherbert's 9666 rounds the bend towards Gelli and passes the area where Glenavon Colliery, closed in 1947, used to exist. The engine has left R&SB Jct. with the 7am service of empty minerals to Abergwynfi, and has run to Cymmer Yard where the train has reversed for the journey back up to Abergwynfi on 21 August 1964. (Gerald T. Robinson)



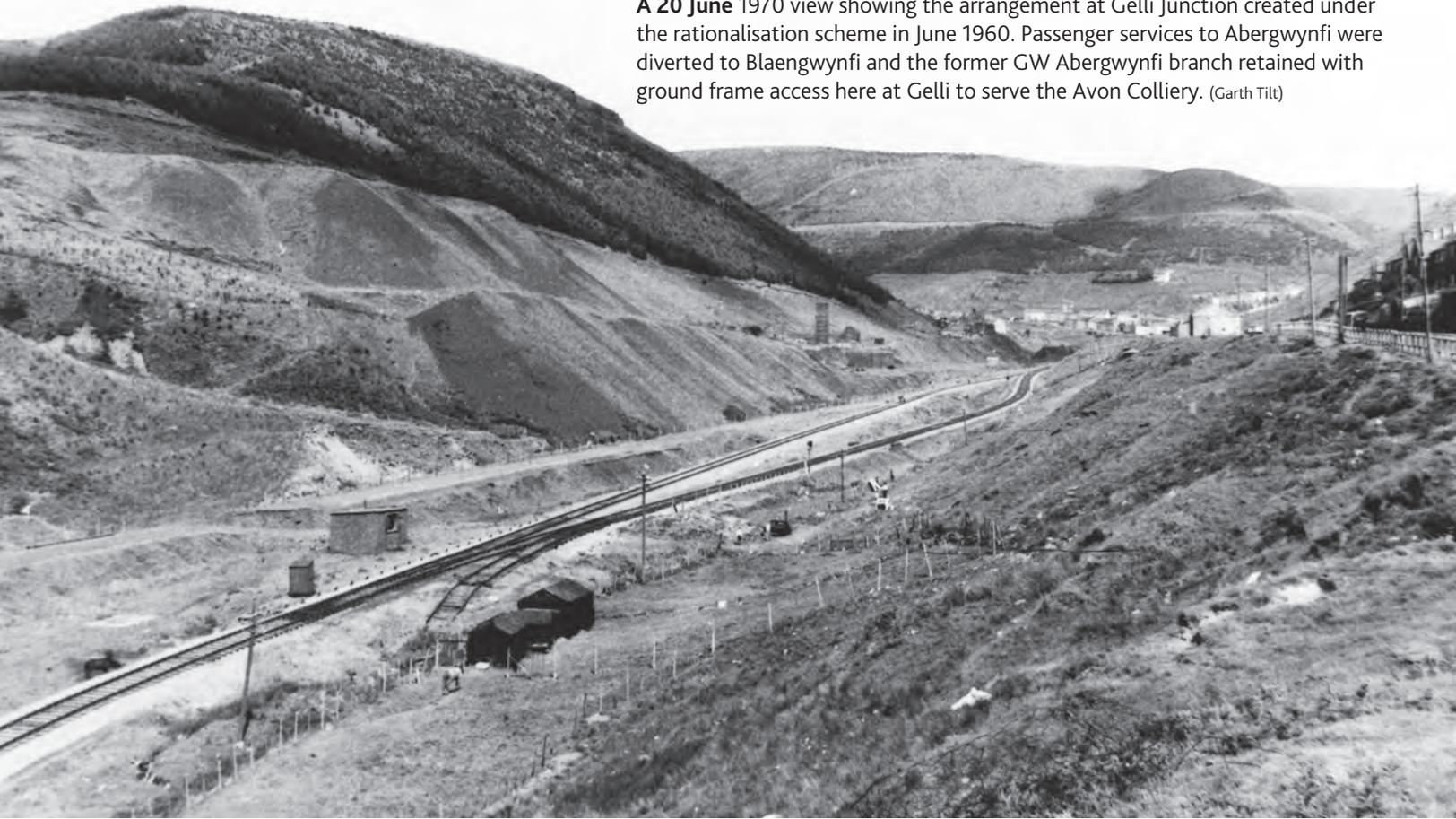
A more panoramic view from a higher vantage point on a sunny day shows Tondy's 6676 on the 11.25am Bridgend to Abergwynfi on 18 May 1959. The R&SB line can be seen above the train as it emerges from Gelli Tunnel. (Robert Darlaston)



There were two crossings of the River Afan at Gelli, involving four bridges until June 1960, when only the GW route remained, the former R&SB route being taken out of use. Here 4121 crosses the more northerly of the two at Gelli Crossing, parallel with the northern exit from Gelli Tunnel. This was an iron girder bridge as opposed to the previous stone bridge, with the 3.54pm Bridgend to Blaengwynfi two coach service on 5 August 1961. (Robert Darlaston)



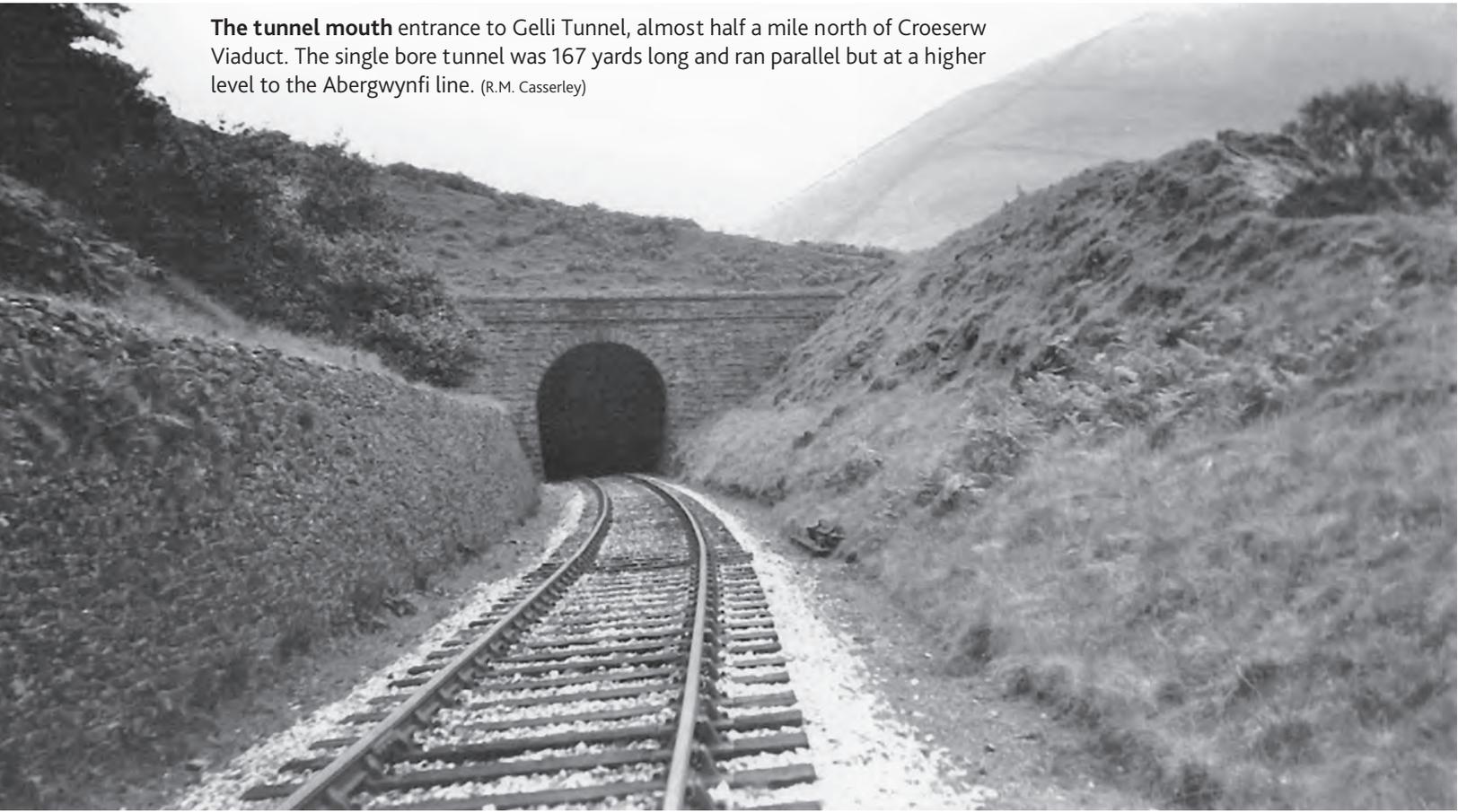
A 20 June 1970 view showing the arrangement at Gelli Junction created under the rationalisation scheme in June 1960. Passenger services to Abergwynfi were diverted to Blaengwynfi and the former GW Abergwynfi branch retained with ground frame access here at Gelli to serve the Avon Colliery. (Garth Tilt)



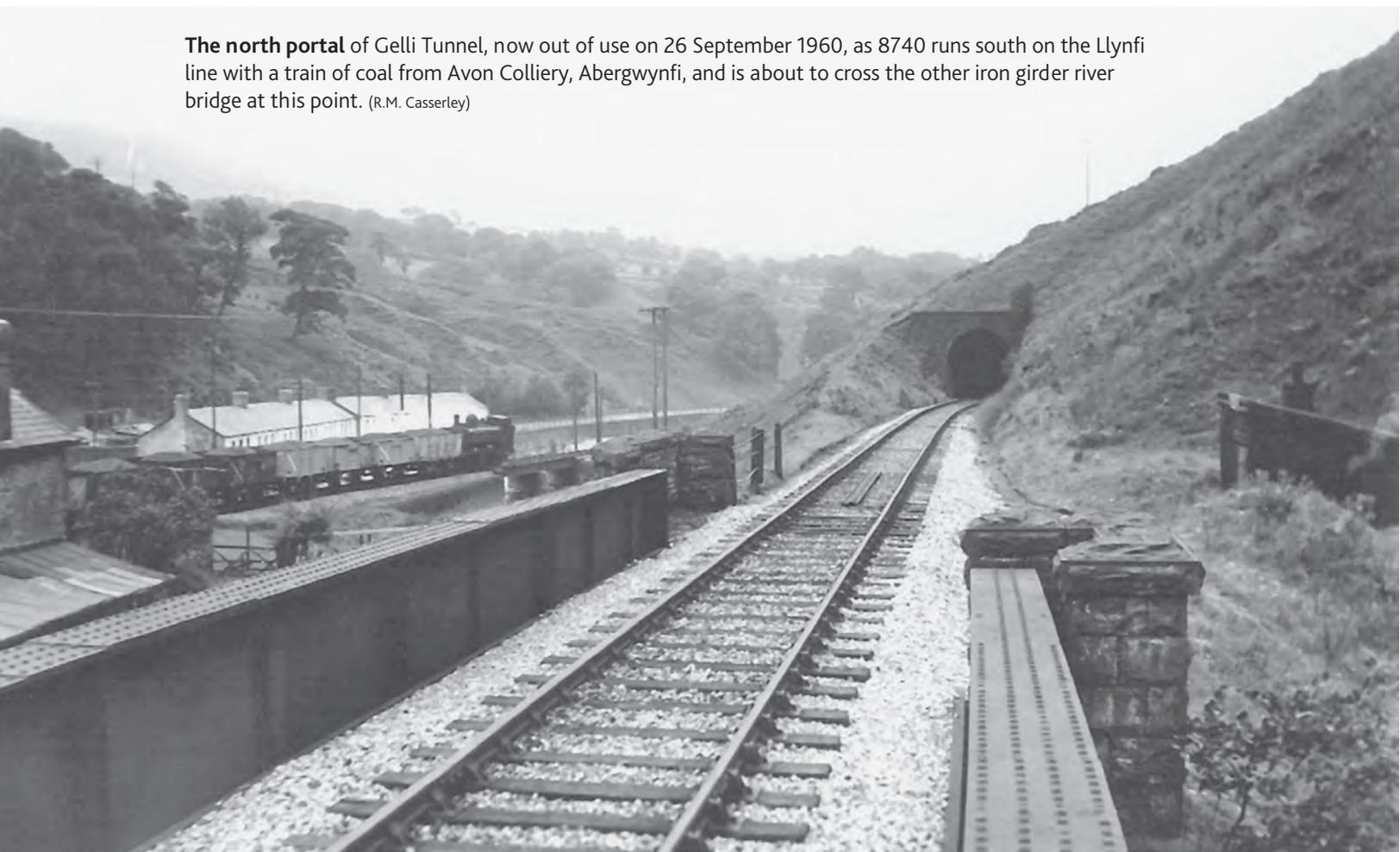
Another view at Gelli Crossing river bridge as a 57XX runs towards Cymmer with a coal train from Avon Colliery Abergwynfi on 5 August 1959. (Robert Darlaston)



The tunnel mouth entrance to Gelli Tunnel, almost half a mile north of Croeserw Viaduct. The single bore tunnel was 167 yards long and ran parallel but at a higher level to the Abergwynfi line. (R.M. Casserley)



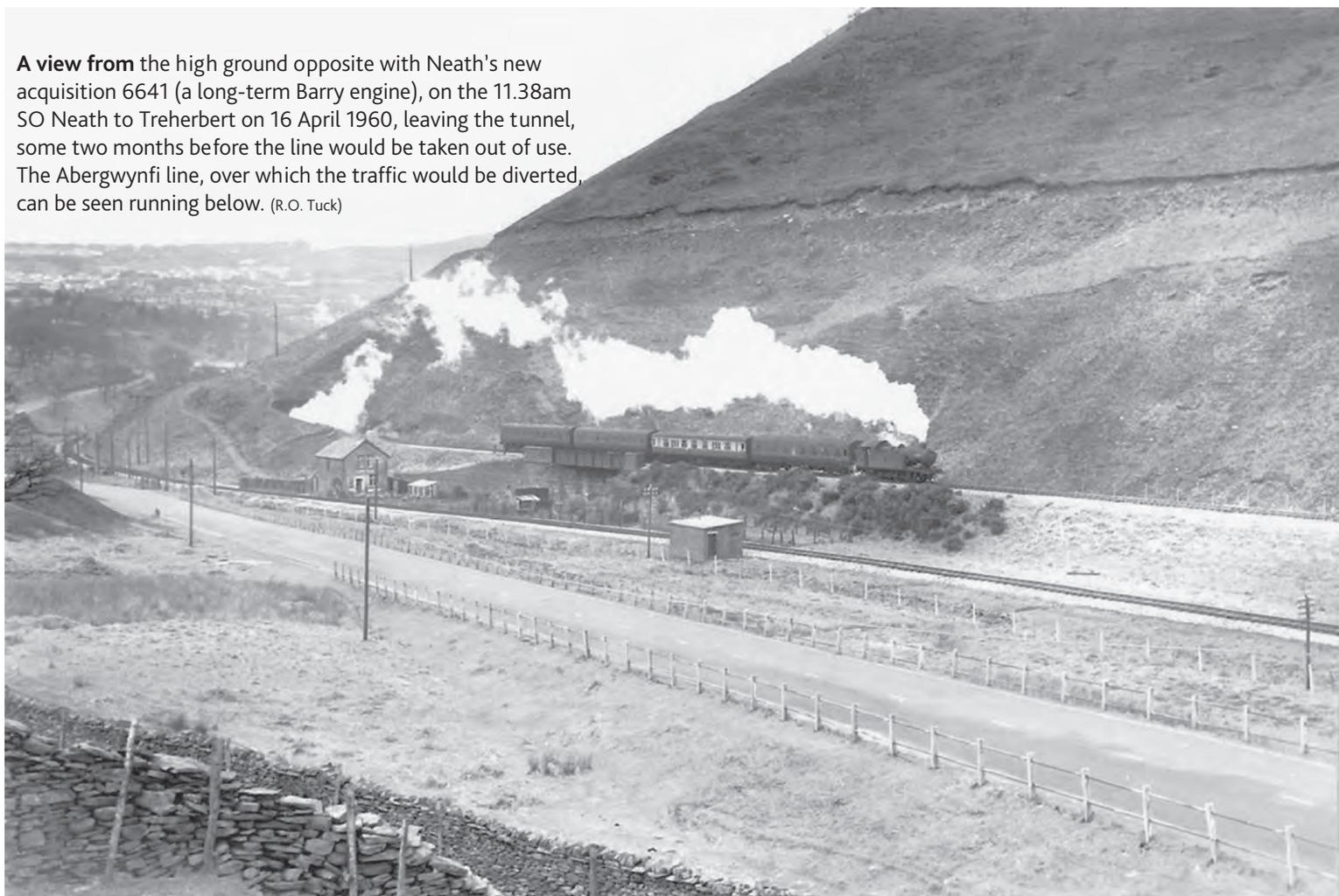
The north portal of Gelli Tunnel, now out of use on 26 September 1960, as 8740 runs south on the Llynfi line with a train of coal from Avon Colliery, Abergwynfi, and is about to cross the other iron girder river bridge at this point. (R.M. Casserley)





Treherbert Taff Vale 'A' Class 0-6-2T 365 attacks the 1 in 42 towards Blaengwynfi with a crowded return excursion from Aberavon Seaside to Treherbert and Pontypridd on August Bank Holiday Monday 1955. This locomotive was derailed less than a mile away on 18 April 1946, falling with a coach from Croeserw viaduct into the River Afan 100 feet below, while working a miners' train from Treherbert to Duffryn Rhondda. Apart from the driver, who suffered a broken leg, no one was injured but 365 required three visits to Caerphilly Works before surviving until October 1955. (Robert Darlaston)

A view from the high ground opposite with Neath's new acquisition 6641 (a long-term Barry engine), on the 11.38am SO Neath to Treherbert on 16 April 1960, leaving the tunnel, some two months before the line would be taken out of use. The Abergwynfi line, over which the traffic would be diverted, can be seen running below. (R.O. Tuck)





Two views from the same vantage point as 5545 works the three-coach auto service 12.40pm Abergwynfi to Bridgend approaching the river bridge on 16 April 1960, with the northern portal of Gelli Tunnel on the R&SB line visible above in the second view. (Both R.O. Tuck)





ABERGWYNFI

Between Cymmer Afan and Abergwynfi/Blaengwynfi, the former GWR and R&SBR lines ran in close proximity, virtually side-by-side in some places such as Gelli. Both lines were single with a reasonable amount of traffic on both, it was not a feasible proposition for the GWR to combine them into one route until the service rationalisation of the 1960s.

Just over half a mile east of Cymmer on the Abergwynfi line, Glenavon Colliery was opened in 1900, with sidings and screens on the south side of the line and just one loop siding on the north side. In

March 1919, the PSA passed to Glenavon Garw Collieries Ltd. and remained thus until the pit closed in 1947. The SB controlling access to the colliery sidings was Glenavon Colliery Sidings SB, opened in 1900 and closed in 1941 after which access was by means of a GF.

In the next half mile, the GWR route crossed the River Afan twice, the second time at Gelli where there was a level crossing over both the single line and the lead into colliery sidings of the Gelli Mill Colliery which opened in 1883 and closed in 1894 when all the associated track was lifted. The GWR line then ran on for some two miles before reaching Abergwynfi, the

4121 soon after leaving Blaengwynfi on the 6.20pm to Bridgend, photographed from the disused former R&SB line on 5 August 1961. (Robert Darlaston)

dead end station being 14miles 9ch. from Bridgend. The station was opened in March 1886 and consisted of a single platform with a loop siding, both located parallel with the line to Avon Colliery.

The colliery sidings extended for about half a mile north of the station, the area expanding through various stages. The earliest development was the Avon Hill Colliery opened in March 1880 in the name of Thomas Joseph, taking the name Avon Hill Colliery in May 1884 and closing at the end of 1898.

On the north side of the line, with a siding crossing the river, Treshenkin Colliery opened in 1889 in the name of T. Jenkin, becoming the Glenavon Rhondda Colliery Ltd. in 1899 before closing in 1911.

The original Avon Colliery was developed south (and west) of the Avon Hill colliery, the pits being sunk between 1877 and 1882, the colliery owned by the GWR and closed by 1903. The new Avon Colliery opened in 1910 was run by the Ocean Coal Co. Ltd. It was a substantial undertaking with sidings on both sides of the river.

Rationalisation at Cymmer (detailed above) enabled the closure of Abergwynfi station in June 1960 and diversion of its passenger services to Blaengwynfi. The Avon colliery however remained open until the end of the decade and finally closed in September 1969, which allowed the branch beyond Gelli Jct. (qv) to be completely closed from 29 September 1969 and taken out of use at the end of the year.

Tondu's large Prairie tank 3100 stands at Abergwynfi with a return service to Bridgend on 28 August 1961. With 3100 working Valleys services to Abergwynfi, one wonders what was working the Porthcawl-Cardiff business train on that day. (I.L. Wright)





5534 stands at Abergwynfi with a return Bridgend auto-service as 8710 climbs towards Avon Colliery some ½ mile beyond the station with a fresh supply of empty mineral wagons on 27 August 1959.



A view along the platform from the outer end, showing the station nameboard and signal box, as the train engine, 5555, prepares to run round the non-Auto formation of the 1125 ex-Bridgend on 24 December 1957. (D. Russell)

A comprehensive view of Abergwynfi with 5555, the local school and a selection of dwellings viewed from the bank behind the Avon Colliery line in the foreground. This was a fine 1950s day, probably a Monday to judge by the amount of washing on the lines, which will soon be dry in the heads of the valleys breeze. (Lens of Sutton)



8740 works hard on the approach to Abergwynfi with the three-coach 12.45pm from Bridgend on 16 April 1960 as she climbs between the hills. From Cymmer Afan, the Rhondda & Swansea Bay line ran mostly parallel with the Abergwynfi until the latter service was withdrawn and Llynfi Valley trains then ran to nearby Blaengwynfi on the R&SB line. The wagons in the second shot are in Blaengwynfi siding. (Both R.O. Tuck)





8740 stands at Abergwynfi platform with the 2.33pm to Bridgend on 16 April 1960. The first two views are from an elevated position to the rear of the train and the third a rear side view. (R.O. Tuck)



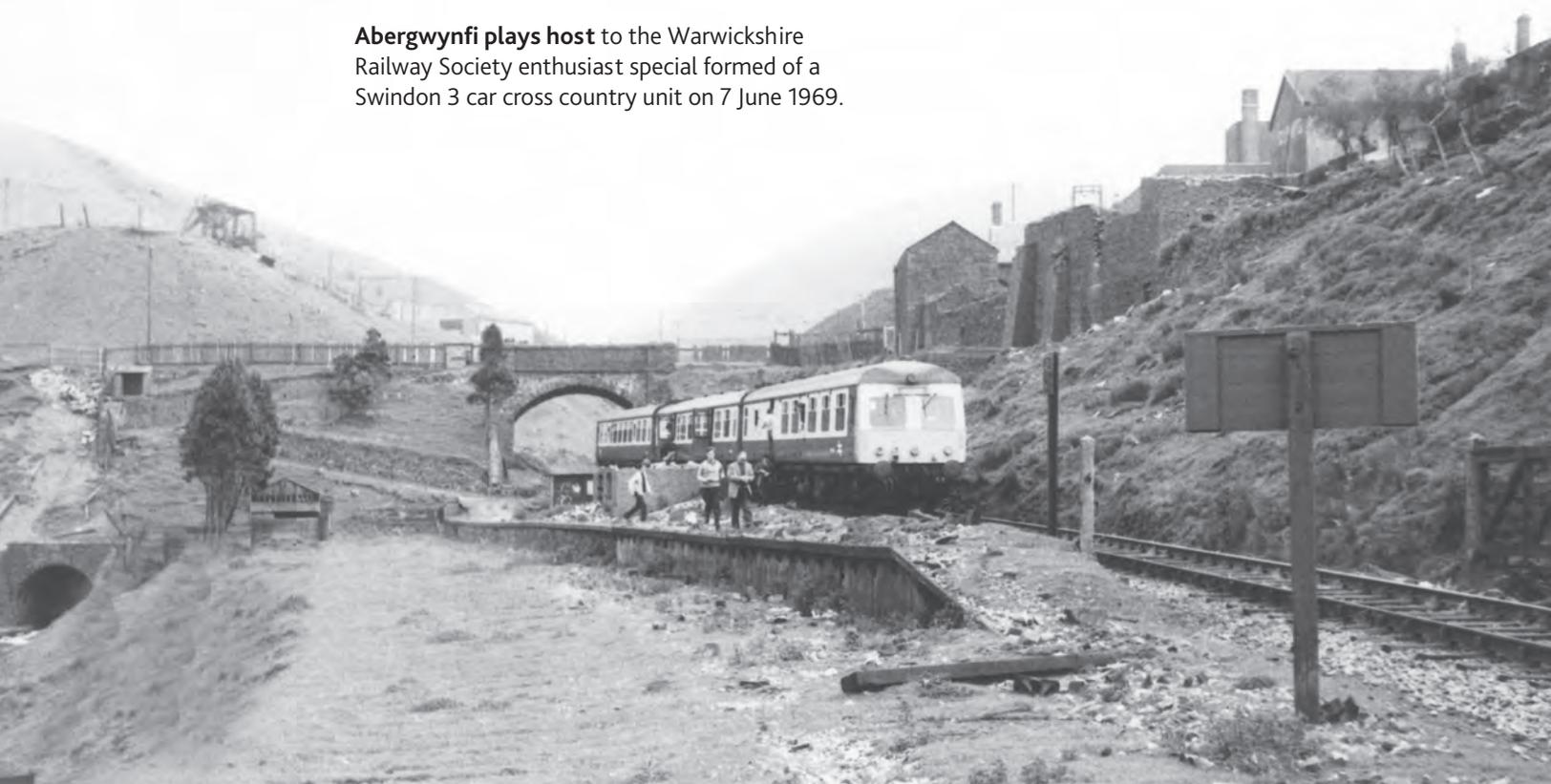
8740 leaving with the 2.33pm to Bridgend on 16 April 1960, down the 1 in 33 away from Abergwynfi, the first stop being at Cymmer in 6 mins. The fireman will have an easy journey as it is downhill all the way to Bridgend except for a short distance through Cymmer. (R.O. Tuck)



5545 with the 11.25am from Bridgend arriving at Abergwynfi on 11 June 1960. This was the last day of service; two days later, on Monday 13 June, the station was closed and the services from Bridgend diverted to Blaengwynfi.



Abergwynfi plays host to the Warwickshire Railway Society enthusiast special formed of a Swindon 3 car cross country unit on 7 June 1969.





Above and previous page below:
9678 and the Swansea Railway Circle special on 21 November 1964 at Avon Colliery.

BLAENGWYNFI

The R&SBR line from Cymmer to Blaengwynfi opened on 2 June 1890 and ran in close proximity to the GWR route to Abergwynfi. The line soon passed over the River Afan by means of the Croeserw Viaduct and through the 167 yard Gelli Tunnel, following the contour of the Afan River all the way to Blaengwynfi.

A drawing of Blaengwynfi for 1900 shows the New Glynccorrwg Colliery (closed in 1924) north of the line and of the river which was bridged with colliery sidings to serve it, near Blaengwynfi station. Corrwg Rhondda Colliery, opened in 1894, passed to the Glenavon Garw Colliery Co. in 1911 and closed in 1924.

The running line became double from Blaengwynfi West SB, at the start of the double line section, to just north of the station where the line entered the Rhondda Tunnel. Blaengwynfi West SB opened in 1906 as Blaengwynfi Sidings SB and closed in 1945. In that year, considerable

reductions were made in the layout; the double line was singled with Up and Down Goods Loops on either side of the single running line between Blaengwynfi West and the river bridge. Two long stop-blocked sidings which had previously been used in connection with the colliery working were also removed. A Carriage Siding (alongside the Down Goods Loop) shown in use by 1923, was removed in 1941.

Blaengwynfi East SB, at the south end of the Down platform, was known as the Station SB until 1906 and under the rationalisation of 1945 became Blaengwynfi SB.

Further rationalisation of the layout took place in 1964 when the Up and Down Goods loops were taken out of use, together with the two long sidings alongside the Up loop, no doubt reflecting the large drop in coal movement in the area by then. The northbound platform loop was also removed on 1 January 1968, leaving all trains to run over the southbound platform line and the single line beyond.



A panoramic view of the layout at Blaengwynfi seen here on 2 July 1960. It may have been more elaborate than Abergwynfi but at least the latter was closer to the community it served and didn't involve the uphill struggle to get there! The line to Abergwynfi is mostly hidden by the stone wall in the bottom centre of the shot. The wagons in the siding may well have been used in connection with the work on the alterations to layout at Cymmer Afan. (Stephenson Locomotive Society)

The south end of Blaengwynfi platforms as seen on 1 August 1958. The centrally positioned passenger shelters can be seen opposite each other on the up and down platforms and the signal box and water column on the south end of the down platform. The line to Abergwynfi can be seen running at the higher level from right to left of the picture. (Stephenson Locomotive Society)





Auto fitted 6410 is working in conventional mode as she stands at the head of a Bridgend service at Blaengwynfi on 5 September 1962. (W.A. Brown/P.A. Suter)





Blaengwynfi on 28 March 1964 looking towards Treherbert from the south end of the station. (Jeff Stone)

The train service was temporarily withdrawn between Cymmer and Treherbert on 26 February 1968 due to the condition of the Rhondda Tunnel and was never restored. The final day was 20 June 1970, the date of this photograph, but Blaengwynfi had not seen a train since the earlier date. (Jeff Stone)



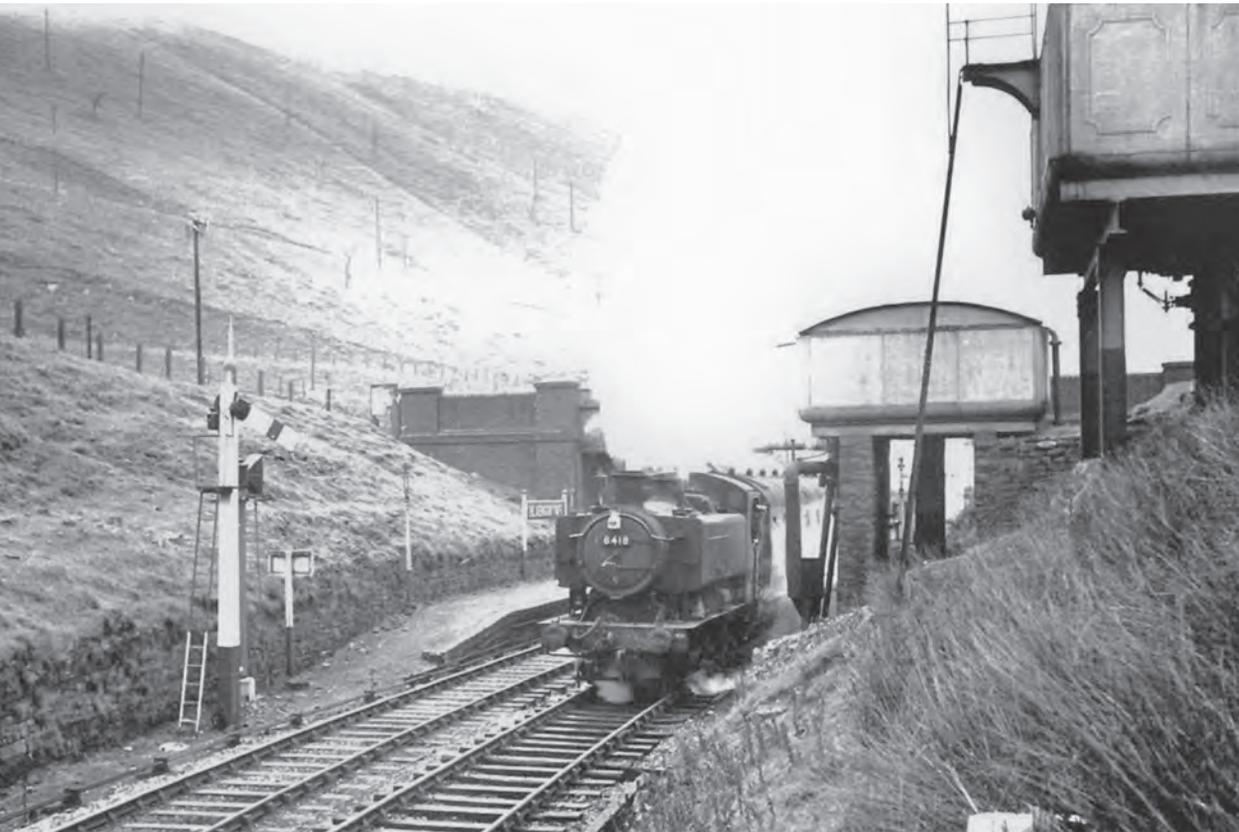


Prairie Tank 4144 has run round its terminating two-coach train on the up line and awaits departure back to Bridgend on 1 June 1962. The short stop-block siding outside the station can be seen holding two wagons on the day. (B.W.L. Brooksbank/Initial Photographics)

4108 cuts off its train and prepares to run round for the return journey on 1 September 1962. (W.G. Sumner)

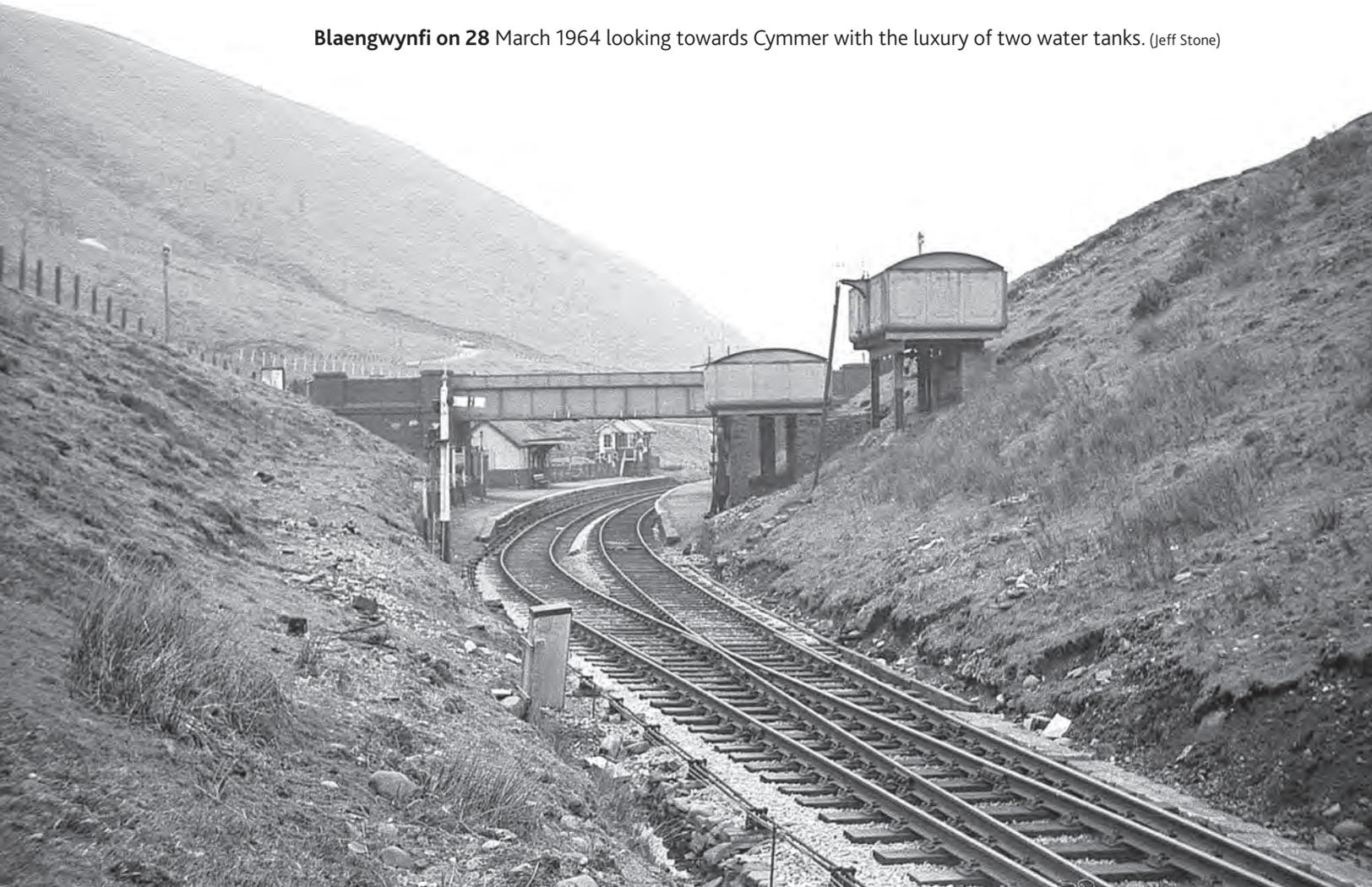


4108 at the head of the 8.17am Blaengwynfi to Bridgend on 1 September 1962, more than an easy run for such a powerful engine, downhill virtually all the way. (W.G. Sumner)

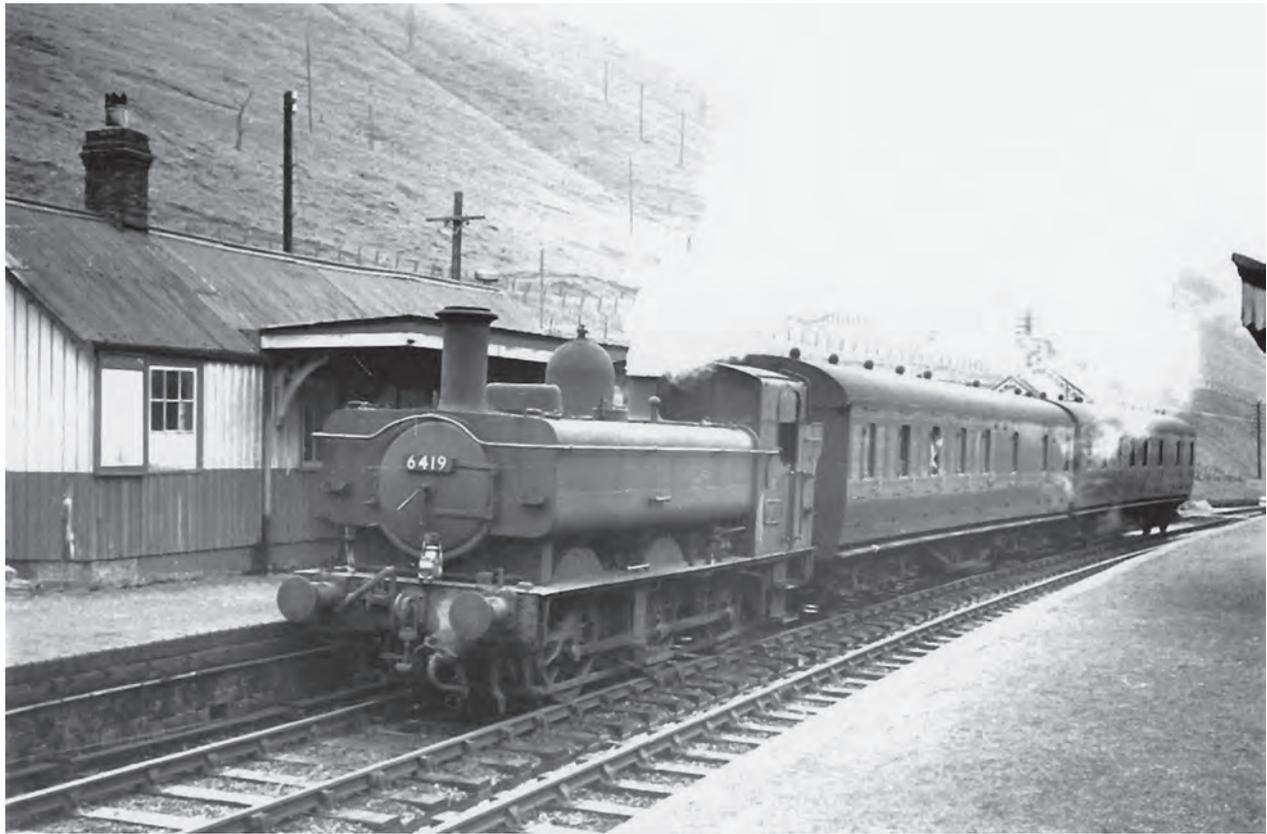


The 9400 Class were often to be seen in the area, especially on former R&SB services. Here 8418 is seen starting the 11.38am Neath to Treherbert away from Blaengwynfi, soon to plunge into the depths of the Rhondda Tunnel on 10 November 1962. Note the two water tanks at the north end of the platform.
(W.G. Sumner)

Blaengwynfi on 28 March 1964 looking towards Cymmer with the luxury of two water tanks. (Jeff Stone)



Auto fitted 6419 stands with her two Auto-trailers forming the 12.40pm service to Bridgend at Blaengwynfi on 10 November 1962. (W.A. Brown/P. A. Suter)



Diesel days and Blaengwynfi bathed in sunshine on 8 June 1963 as Single Power Car W55019 heads north with a service to Treherbert while an auto service on an enthusiasts' special runs south. (F.K. Davies)





A six car DMU train from Treherbert to Bridgend leaves the Rhondda Tunnel and makes the station stop at Blaengwynfi on 16 April 1960, the six cars probably required for school traffic on the return journey. (R.O. Tuck)



A close-up of the signal box at the south end of the down platform. The design was by McKenzie & Holland, a company much favoured for signalling equipment across South Wales, except the Barry Railway who favoured Evans O'Donnell. (Jeff Stone)



Blaengwynfi on 6 August 1964 as W55026 (left) 'working the 6.23pm from Bridgend to Treherbert' crosses W55019 on the 6.55pm Treherbert to Bridgend. (Garth Tilt)

RHONDDA TUNNEL

The Rhondda Tunnel was built by the R&SBR opening on 2 July 1890, by its engineer S.W. Yockney. It was 3,443 yards in length making it the longest

The signal is off and the buffer beam of the approaching train can just be seen emerging from the southern portal of the tunnel on 1 August 1958. Note the water tanks on the up side. (M.Hale/GWT)



tunnel in Wales and the seventh longest in Britain. The Rhondda Tunnel took three years to build and cost the lives of five workers in the course of its construction. At one time, in excess of a thousand men were employed on its excavation from both ends.

At Blaengwynfi the bell-mouthed tunnel was 767 feet above sea level and at Blaenycwm, the Rhondda Valley entrance, was at 1,000 feet. A gong was provided as a safety measure to warn workmen in the tunnel of an approaching train. The R&SBR did not commence Passenger services from Treherbert to Swansea Riverside until 7 May 1899.

The Rhondda Tunnel Capstone is now housed in the Afan Argoed Miners' Museum at Cynonville (not far from its home). Yockney also constructed Neath River Bridge (the only swing bridge on a skew and curve in Britain).



A three-coach Treherbert to Swansea service leaves the tunnel behind 6680. The engine will have shut off steam to run through the tunnel, hence no residue behind the train.
(Gerald T. Robinson)

Forming the 5.18pm Treherbert to Bridgend service on 6 August 1964 W55026 heads out of the wet and dingy Rhondda tunnel and enters Blaengwynfi.
(Garth Tilt)



The 'Capstone' of the single bore Rhondda Tunnel proclaiming its 3,443 Yards, opening on 2 July 1890 and its Engineer S.W. Yockney. The Tunnel was the longest in Wales and third in length to the Severn Tunnel (7,668 Yards) and Chipping Sodbury Tunnel (4,444 Yards) on the Great Western. Yockney also constructed Neath River Bridge (the only swing bridge on a skew and curve in Britain). The Capstone now lies in the Afan Argoed Miners' Museum at Cynonville (not far from its home). (Stuart Davies)



The southern entrance to the Rhondda Tunnel at Blaengwynfi viewed on 18 October 1968 with the Capstone just discernible. (WIMM/WRRC)

The Rhondda Tunnel was always regarded as a wet tunnel as these problems with leaks demonstrate on 2 March 1922. (Author's Collection)



BLAENYCWM

A drawing of the Blaenycwm area for 1875 shows the intended alignment of the R&SBR line north of the Rhondda Tunnel, which would open on 2 July 1890 to Blaenrhondda for Passenger and Goods and to Treherbert for Goods Only. Before this, a tramway existed serving the Graig Pit which the new railway would require crossing as it ran northeast towards Blaenrhondda.

A drawing of the R&SBR line for 1897 shows that for about 12ch. after leaving the Rhondda Tunnel, the line was single as far as Blaenycwm SB which opened in 1891 and was located 1m.34ch. west of R&SBR Jct. Beyond the SB, the line was doubled all the way to Treherbert in November 1891. Three sidings which would have served the Glen Rhondda Colliery (referred to in

1899 as Hendre Wen) are shown as having been provided as part of these works.

A further plan for 1915 shows the Glen Rhondda colliery in full production with its complex of sidings and screens alongside the R&SBR line with tramroads running north and south accessing other parts of the colliery and tips. A PSA had been made with the Glenavon Garw Collieries Ltd. on 25 March 1909, the sidings being enlarged in September 1939. The colliery closed in 1966, the PSA being terminated in February 1967.

The train service was temporarily withdrawn between Cymmer and Treherbert on 26 February 1968 due to the condition of the Rhondda Tunnel and was never restored. As there was no traffic east of Blaenrhondda, the line was taken out of use in August 1970 and officially closed by the end of that year.

Looking towards Treherbert, Mackenzie & Holland design Blaenycwm signal box with the mail collection apparatus, installed by the R&SB but doubtless long since disused. (Michael Hale/GW Trust)



W55026 passes Blaenycwm Signal Box on 7 August 1965 heading for Treherbert. The Driver hands over the Token for the single line section between Blaengwynfi and Blaenycwm through the Rhondda Tunnel. (Garth Tilt)



The view from Blaenycwm looking towards Treherbert with the Glen Rhondda Colliery on the right. 7 August 1965. (Garth Tilt)





Two panniers '9787 and 9666' work hard along the double line section which ran from Treherbert to Blaencwm with a train of empties from R&SB Jct. Yard to Cymmer Afan, for use on the Glyncoerwg line, approaching the single line section through the Rhondda Tunnel. The leading engine carries the TP1 target from Treherbert shed which undertook banking or piloting duties on the 1 in 55 to the Rhondda Tunnel and served Tydraw and Fernhill collieries. 21 August 1964. (Gerald T. Robinson)

BLAENRHONDDA

A drawing of the area in 1875 shows the planned alignment of the R&SBR running north of the Dunraven Colliery (also known as the North Dunraven or Blaenrhondda Colliery but best known as Tydraw, first sunk in 1859), a substantial undertaking feeding traffic into the Taff Vale Railway (TVR) via Treherbert with a system of internal tramroads linking the various parts of the colliery and also ferrying waste to the tips. North Dunraven Colliery was sunk in 1865 by Thomas Joseph of Aberdare on behalf of

the Dunraven United Collieries Ltd. but was not opened until 1872 by Edmond Hannay Watts. It was purchased in 1875 by the London & South Wales Steam Coal Co. Dunraven Jct. on the TVR was a splitting point for lines running into Dunraven Colliery and also Fernhill Colliery (sunk in 1871), which the new R&SBR line would need to cross. During the 1890s, both Dunraven and Fernhill Collieries became owned by George Watkinson & Sons Ltd. In 1913 both collieries, linked underground since 1890 and now working as one unit normally then known as Tydraw, were bought by Cory Brothers of Cardiff.

The new R&SBR line opened on 2 July 1890 for passenger traffic to Blaenrhondda and on the 16th to Treherbert. A drawing of the new station for 1890 shows a double line with facing short platforms and a SB located half way along the Treherbert-bound platform. Both platforms were extended towards Treherbert by April 1891, indicating some underestimating in the original layout, with a stop blocked siding at the south end of the Treherbert-bound platform. The line from Blaenycwm was originally single but was doubled by the end of 1891, the double line now continuing to Treherbert.

A plan for 1897 shows an R&SBR Engine Shed located on the north side of the line when the two companies serving Treherbert needed separate

facilities. Extensions were made to the sidings at Blaenrhondda c.1918 when a new SB was opened south of the station, 30ch. from R&SB Jct. to replace the box on the platform. By 1918 ownership of both collieries had passed to Fernhill Collieries Ltd. and were soon working as a combined unit.

In 1912, a Mileage Siding was opened in the V between Tydraw Colliery and the line to Fernhill, known as either Dunraven Siding or Blaenycwm Mileage Siding.

With the 1922 Grouping, the R&SBR engine shed was closed. The post-1922 layout remained in being until the rationalisation of the 1960s. Tydraw Colliery had closed in 1956 but Fernhill was linked underground to Tower Colliery at Hirwaun in 1966, before closing as a separate unit in 1978.

All the sidings around Blaenrhondda station were taken out of use in 1963. The line to the Blaenycwm Mileage Siding (by now not in use) and to Fernhill were taken out of use in 1966. This left the double plain line through the station which after closure of the Rhondda Tunnel in 1968 was served by some Cardiff services extended beyond Treherbert. When these were withdrawn, the whole section of line from north of the Rhondda Tunnel to R&SB Jct. was closed on 24 August 1970.

A totem station

nameboard for Blaenrhondda as on display at the Afan Argoed Miners' Museum at Cynonville. (Stuart Davies)



20 June 1970 and the last day of the Llynvi Valley service but it had been cut back to Cymmer on the condition of the tunnel since 1968. A handful of Cardiff to Treherbert services were extended to Blaenrhondda.





6605 on the 10.40am R& SB Jct. to Briton Ferry, seemingly composed of empty minerals, running through Blaenrhondda. (S. Rickard/J&J Colln)

9457 heads a Treherbert to Neath service as it calls at Blaenrhondda in June 1962. (SLS)



R&SB JUNCTION

Before the opening of the Rhondda & Swansea Bay line in 1890, there was a single line running through a small yard, leading to the Dunraven and Fernhill Collieries with a couple of loop and stop-blocked sidings north of the line leading into the Rhondda Merthyr Colliery, owned by the Rhondda Merthyr Steam Coal Co. These were shown under the name of L&H Gueret in 1890 but not listed in the records for 1902. Coal was brought down from Ty Newydd pit into the Rhondda Merthyr Colliery by tramroads. South of the line was the Bute owned Cwmsaebbran Colliery from where Coal had been first despatched by rail in December 1855.

By 1890 when the R&SBR line was opened, the yard had been more substantially developed into two sections. The R&SBR line curved north before joining the TVR line and in the area thereby created, a nest of four loop exchange sidings was provided. A new SB named R&SB Jct. was opened in 1890 on the south side of the line opposite these sidings. The previous group of sidings serving the Rhondda Merthyr Colliery remained but the colliery was closed in 1905/6 and the area used by Barnes Chaplin & Co. with a PSA dated April 1910. The connections into the former colliery sidings were removed in 1912 and the branch cut short south of the bridge carrying it across the river.

At the south end of the yard was a level crossing before the single track ran into the platform at Treherbert. North of the level crossing was a shed north of the line which may have been the TVR Goods shed with a mileage siding alongside. A coal stage is shown on the 1890 drawing on the south side of the line west of the LC, though the siding serving this leads off sidings marked Bute Sidings, indicating they were part of the Bute Colliery, still with a network of tramroads. The coal stage is not shown on a 1910 drawing.

The layout in the area remained much in this state until the rationalisation of

the 1960s. Then the R&SBR SB was closed in April 1964. With the closure of the Rhondda Tunnel in February 1968, the former R&SBR line was taken out of use through to Treherbert and finally closed at the end of 1970. By November 1972, the lines previously serving Fernhill and Tydraw Collieries had been cut back to end as two long sidings close to where R&SBR SB had been sited, with a couple of other sidings to their north. A drawing for 1989 shows these two long sidings had become one with the other as a loop, plus a third shorter siding to their north, this being all that remained north of the level crossing close to the station.

The WTT for Summer 1958 listed six services a day between R&SBR Yard and the line to Aberavon, Briton Ferry and Swansea, two worked by Treherbert and the remainder by Duffryn Yard, Neath or Swansea Eastern Depot. Most of this traffic would either have been shipment coal for Swansea Docks, domestic or coal for industries in the Neath and Swansea areas. Engines working out of R&SBR Yard serviced the collieries north of Ystrad Rhondda in the Rhondda Valley from Cwmparc northwards, including Gelli, Fernhill and Tydraw in 1958 but many more in previous years. Some of these were also serviced direct from Radyr. Coal brought into the yard from local collieries was cleared on services to Radyr Marshalling Sidings (especially for Guest Keens and shipment), Roath Branch Jct. (shipment), Cadoxton (shipment at Barry) and Stormstown (Coal for Phurnacite Plant), with balancing empties for supply to collieries, services being worked mostly by Treherbert but also by Radyr and Abercynon.

TREHERBERT

Before the arrival of the R&SBR at Treherbert in 1890, a drawing for 1875 of the Taff Vale Railway south of the future junction of the two railways shows a single TVR line running over the LC at the north end of the station into a single

platform beyond which a double line had been completed to Ystrad Rhondda by August 1871. A roundhouse engine shed was located south of the platform with a Carriage Shed beyond. Treherbert North SB was opened in 1882 controlling the LC, access to the station and engine shed.

A drawing for 1889 shows that the double line had been extended to act as an Up Goods line behind the platform line, running through to R&SB Jct. The single platform was extended southwards in July 1890 and had become an Island bay with a new Treherbert South SB opened where the bay line joined the main, the SB closing in 1901. South of the station complex now stood the Lady Margaret Colliery, also known as the Bute Merthyr Colliery with connections into the main line to the north and south.

In 1901, the platform had become a full Island, with a siding to the north. Further siding accommodation had been added south of the platform between the station and the engine shed.

The roundhouse engine shed was closed in 1931 when a new straight shed was opened on the north side of the line, plus a separate turntable. This enabled the four sidings south of the platform to

be extended to the level crossing north of the station. In order to control access to and from the new engine shed, Treherbert South SB was re-opened on the north side of the line, south of the platform.

The layout remained as such until the conversion of the Cardiff Valleys Regular Interval Steam service (introduced in September 1953) to diesel multiple unit traction in 1958. In 1957 a DMU fuelling and inspection depot was set up off the sidings south of the platform and with the end of steam traction, the engine shed was closed in March 1965, the R&SBR line services being the last to survive as steam hauled, Treherbert South SB was closed in September 1965.

A drawing of the area for 1967 shows the engine shed to have been removed and the sidings south of the station to have now become used for DMU storage. In 1972 the line on the north face of the Island was removed and the line singled southwards to Cwmparc. Treherbert North SB was closed in November 1972 and the DMU servicing depot closed in April 1989 with the work being transferred to Cardiff Canton, although stock is still stabled overnight at Treherbert and a small traincrew depot remains.

The 7.30am Neath

to Treherbert four coach service headed by Neath's 3685 approaches Treherbert on 21 August 1962 and passes the grandly named, 'Rhondda & Swansea Bay Junction Signal Box', just out of view to the left. The train will use the east face of the island platform, where the engine will take water and then run round the coaches before returning to Neath or Swansea depending on the connections available at Neath for the latter. At this time, services starting from Treherbert through to Swansea were worked by DMUs based at Treherbert, while those starting from Neath were still steam hauled.

(Gerald T. Robinson)



An excellent view on 5 March 1969 of the layout north of Treherbert, seen from the station footbridge, dominated in the distance at Blaenrhondda by Pen Pych. The years ahead would see much rationalisation of the track facilities at Treherbert.



A view of the northern end of the station on 4 January 1975 by when the track previously serving the town side of the island platform, used by former R&SB trains for arriving and departing, has been lifted. Double track has been retained as far as 24 miles 4ch. where the line now terminates with one long siding also retained. The two lines, now classed as sidings, merged at the north end of the station and immediately split again to serve the one platform retained and the yard. The two sidings were later remodelled into a loop and a head shunt to facilitate running round, which would be necessary with loco-hauled excursions.





A view looking north with Treherbert North SB on the left just before closure in 1964.

Treherbert's 5693 and crew set off for another trip over the scenic route to Swansea via the former R&SB in 1959. (Gerald T. Robinson)



A three car DMU arrives at Treherbert from Bridgend in December 1963. Track remodelling north of Cymmer Afan saw the diversion of the Abergwynfi services to Blaengwynfi in June 1960 and these were then extended to Treherbert in December 1963 with the withdrawal of the former R&SB services from Neath and Swansea to Treherbert.





Single Power Car W55019 stands in the depot siding at Treherbert after re-fuelling on 28 March 1964 and awaits its next turn of duty to Bridgend. Transferred from the Plymouth District in December 1963, this was the pioneer of the dieselised Llynfi Valley Passenger services. (Jeff Stone)

Both sides of the island platform are occupied in this 1963 shot at Treherbert as to the right, a train from Barry Island and Cardiff arrives and W55026 waits to depart left, with service 2T84 to Bridgend.



CHAPTER 8

GLYNCORRWG BRANCH SOUTH WALES MINERAL RAILWAY (SWMR)

The South Wales Mineral Railway (SWMR) dates back to the early 1850s when a group of English industrialists and local landowners promoted a line to link into the new South Wales Railway at Briton Ferry and exploit the mineral reserves around Tonmawr and Glynccorrwg. In keeping with all lines in South Wales, the line was broad gauge and was laid out by Brunel and completed by Brereton, over a distance of some 12 miles. The line was leased to the Glynccorrwg Coal Co. even before construction started.

In 1853, the SWMR obtained the necessary Act to make a railway from the South Wales Railway at Briton Ferry to Glynccorrwg and in January 1856, the SWMR leased the Glynccorrwg Coal Co. The first section of the line opened in September 1861 from Briton Ferry to Tonmawr and that between Tonmawr and Glynccorrwg on 10 March 1863, with a further Act in 1864 to extend the line to North Rhondda. Glynccorrwg and North Rhondda Collieries became the property of the Glynccorrwg Coal Co. Ltd. in January 1868, this becoming the Glynccorrwg Colliery Co. Ltd. in August 1869. In June 1872, the line was converted from broad to standard gauge in line with the rest of South Wales. In October 1877, the SWMR and the Glynccorrwg Colliery Co. Ltd. went into receivership and in 1880 the colliery company was reformed. In December 1907 an agreement was entered into with the

Port Talbot Railway (PTR) and GWR for them to work the line from 1 January 1908, when the receivership was discharged. The Colliery Co. agreed to bring all coal from the pits north of Glynccorrwg to the sidings at that point with their own engines and for all traffic originating at points north of Tonmawr to be conveyed via the Port Talbot Railway to Port Talbot. The agreement between the GWR and the Colliery Company was soon terminated however. In October 1908, the GWR was granted powers to run over the whole of the SWMR (including above Glynccorrwg), these backdated to be effective from 1 January 1908.

In March 1918, a passenger service between Cymmer and Glynccorrwg began, extending the existing service from Briton Ferry but only survived until September 1930, being then only for miners. In January 1923, the SWMR was fully absorbed into the GWR under the Grouping.

In July 1947, closure of the Tonmawr to Abercregan section of the SWMR saw all traffic from the Corrwg line diverted to run south of Cymmer over the Rhondda & Swansea Bay Railway (R&SBR). In October 1964 miners' trains between Cymmer Corrwg, Glynccorrwg and North Rhondda were discontinued, North Rhondda Colliery having closed in July 1960. Following the closure of the R&SBR line in 1962, coal from Duffryn Rhondda Colliery, combined with

traffic from the Corrwg line via Cymmer viaduct was then diverted onto the Llynfi Valley line to access Margam Yard. With the closure of Glyncorrwg Colliery in 1970, the line from Cymmer to North Rhondda was closed in June 1970 and all vestiges of the SWMR ceased to exist.

CYMMER CORRWG

Cymmer Corrwg lay at the junction (North Jct.) of the SWMR from Tonmawr with the Llynfi Valley Line over Cymmer Viaduct, opened in 1878, which crossed the River



The Token for the section between Cymmer Tunnel Ground frame and Glyncorrwg. Once released, this precluded any unauthorised movement between Caerau and Cymmer. (Stuart Davies)

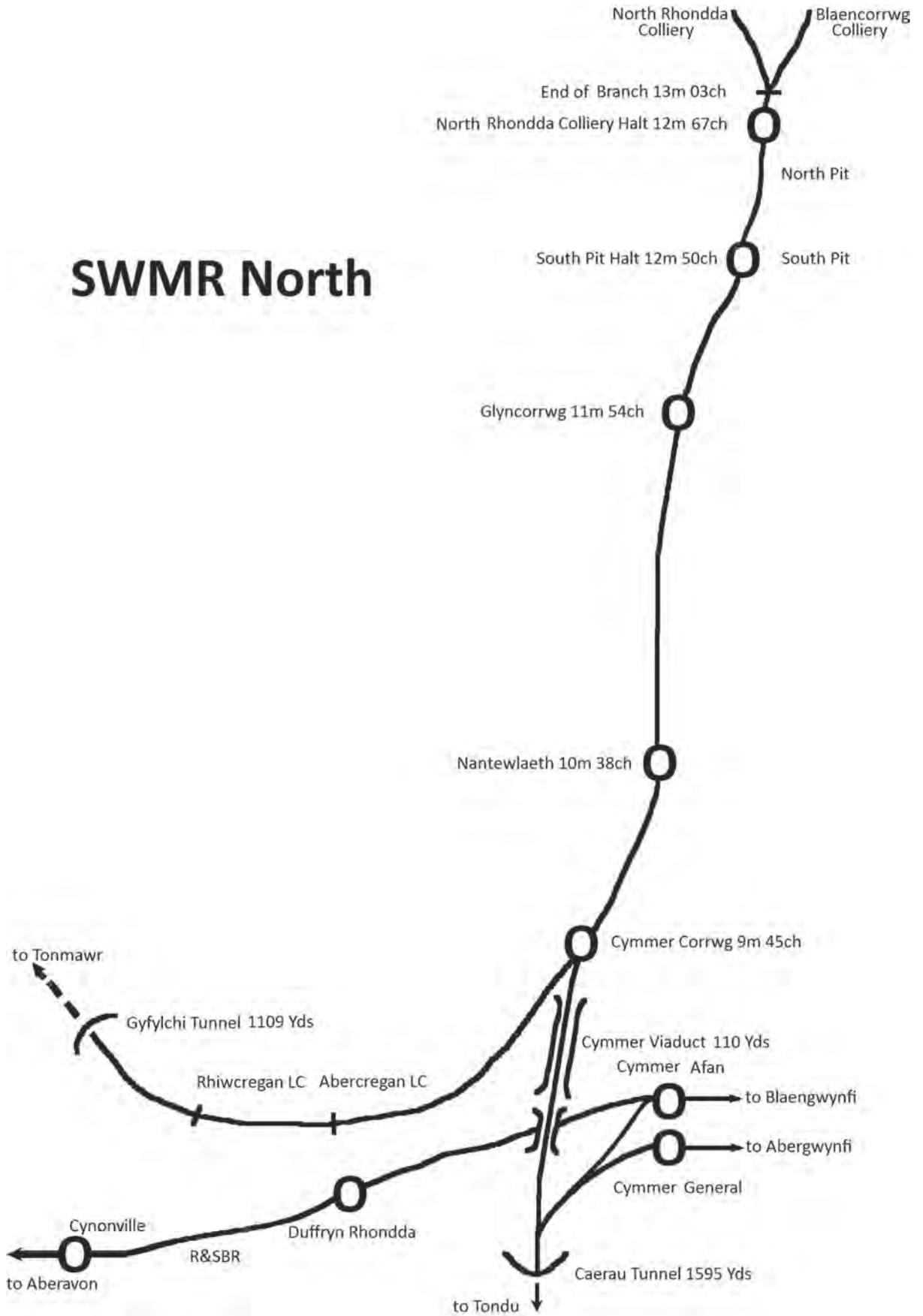
Afan, running from the north end of the Caerau to Cymmer Tunnel to join with the SWMR. The line over the viaduct was single but became double immediately before joining the SWMR which remained double for a very short distance before again becoming single and running through two loop sidings, one either side of the running line and a stop-blocked siding to the south, all the sidings dating from post-1881. A tramway had previously run from the north end of the viaduct to a nearby quarry.

A single-line passenger platform opened alongside the sidings at 9m.45ch. (SWMR) on 5 March 1917 for workmen, the facility being extended for public use in March 1918. By this time the siding to the north of the running line had been removed, leaving that to the south and the stop-blocked siding. The station was originally named Cymmer (SWMR) but on 17 September 1926 was renamed Cymmer Corrwg. Passenger services ceased in September 1930, but miners' trains continued until October 1964.

A view of Cymmer Viaduct on 28 March 1964 looking towards Cymmer. The Llynfi and Ogmere Railway Viaduct consisted mainly of iron with a wooden decking on large stone piers and was built in 1878 to link the railway with the South Wales Mineral Railway. It should have had nine stone arches, but the masons needed for the work were not available. The use of steel was not common until the early 1900s. (Jeff Stone)



SWMR North



Map showing the upper section of the South Wales Mineral Railway and its connection with the Tondy Valley network at Cymmer.



20 June 1970 and W55023 forms a backdrop to Cymmer Viaduct. It's just possible to see the Caerau portal, confirmation that Cymmer Tunnel was straight. (Garth Tilt)

On 2 July 1960, the SLS special returning from Glyncorrwg is captured for posterity as it passes over the Viaduct to access the GW line. (David Russell)



Looking towards
Glyncorrwg with
the Crossing Keeper's
cottage on the right.



Cymer Corrwg
– 9785 with a
Colliers' Train for
Glyncorrwg formed of
4-wheeled stock on
29 August 1951.
(Ian L. Wright)



The single platform
at Cymer Corrwg.
(Robert Darlaston)





9736 having just arrived at Cymmer Corrwg on 11 July 1950 with its train of 4-wheeled stock.



4640 runs round its Brake van with Cymmer Viaduct behind on 13 July 1959. (H.C. Casserley 96251)



The miners train to Glyncorrwg and North Rhondda about to leave Cymmer Corrwg on 29th August 1951. (Ian L. Wright)

NANTEWLAETH

The line above Cymmer Corrwg continued as a single line for about half a mile when Nantewlaeth Colliery was reached between the 10¼ and 10½ mp. The colliery was opened in 1917 by Gibbs Navigation Colliery Ltd. and consisted of a level and two pits, the two shafts sunk to a depth of 714 yards. The workforce was quoted as 205 by 1918. In 1925, ownership passed to Glenavon Garw Collieries Ltd. who installed new sidings, some to serve a New Slant now in production, employing 144 men, working the No 2 Rhondda seam, in addition to the 153 men underground and 93 on the surface employed in the two pits, producing coal from the Six Feet seam. In January 1938, the Ocean & United National Collieries Ltd. became

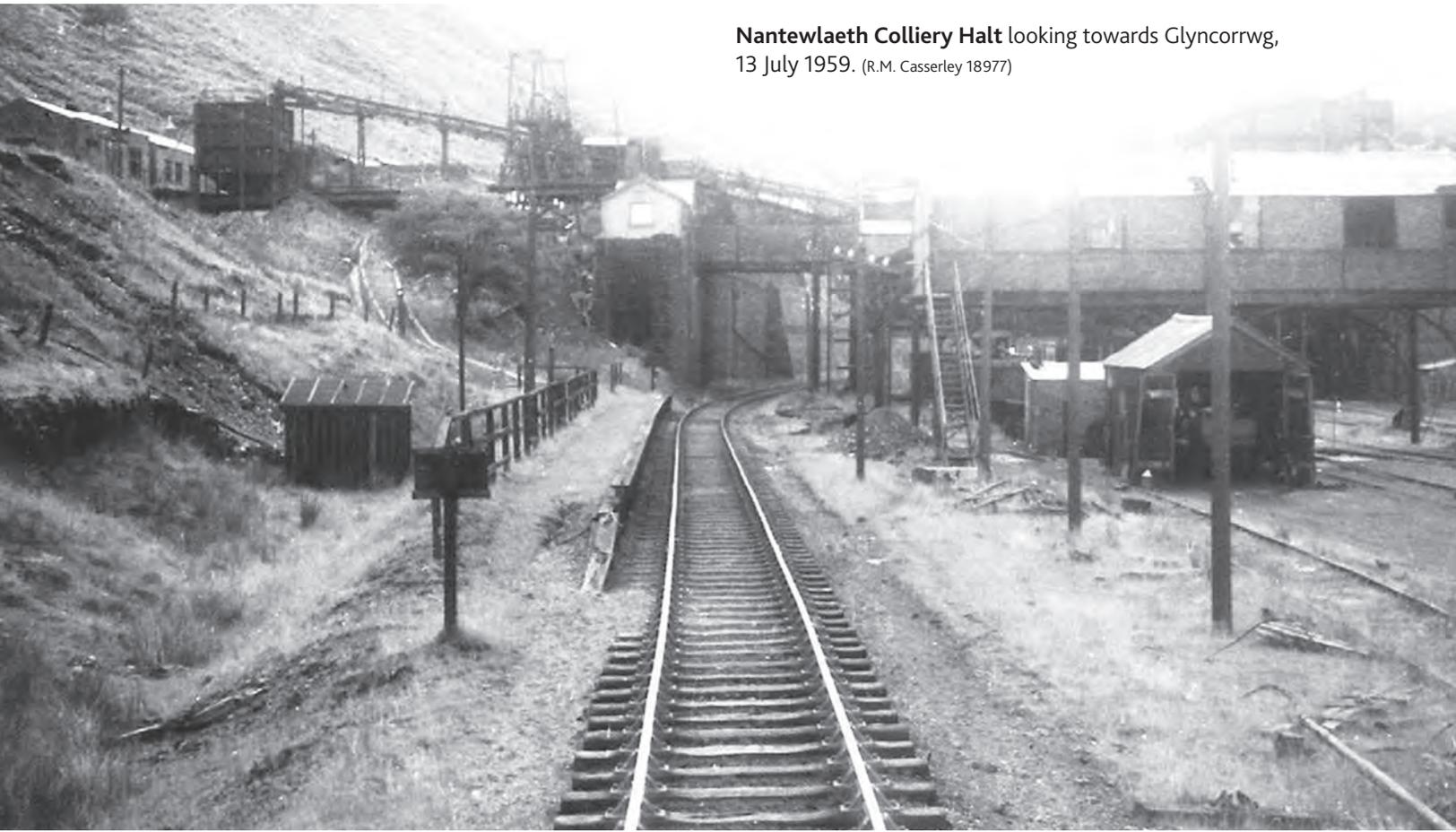
owners and remained as such until Nationalisation, a total of 496 men being employed in 1945 at the combined Pit and Drift. The installation did not last long after Nationalisation and was closed by the NCB in 1948.

When opened, the colliery had four sidings passing under the screens but by 1954 this had been increased by a further two which also accessed a Washery. A miners' halt was opened alongside the colliery in about 1940, remaining in use until the colliery closure.

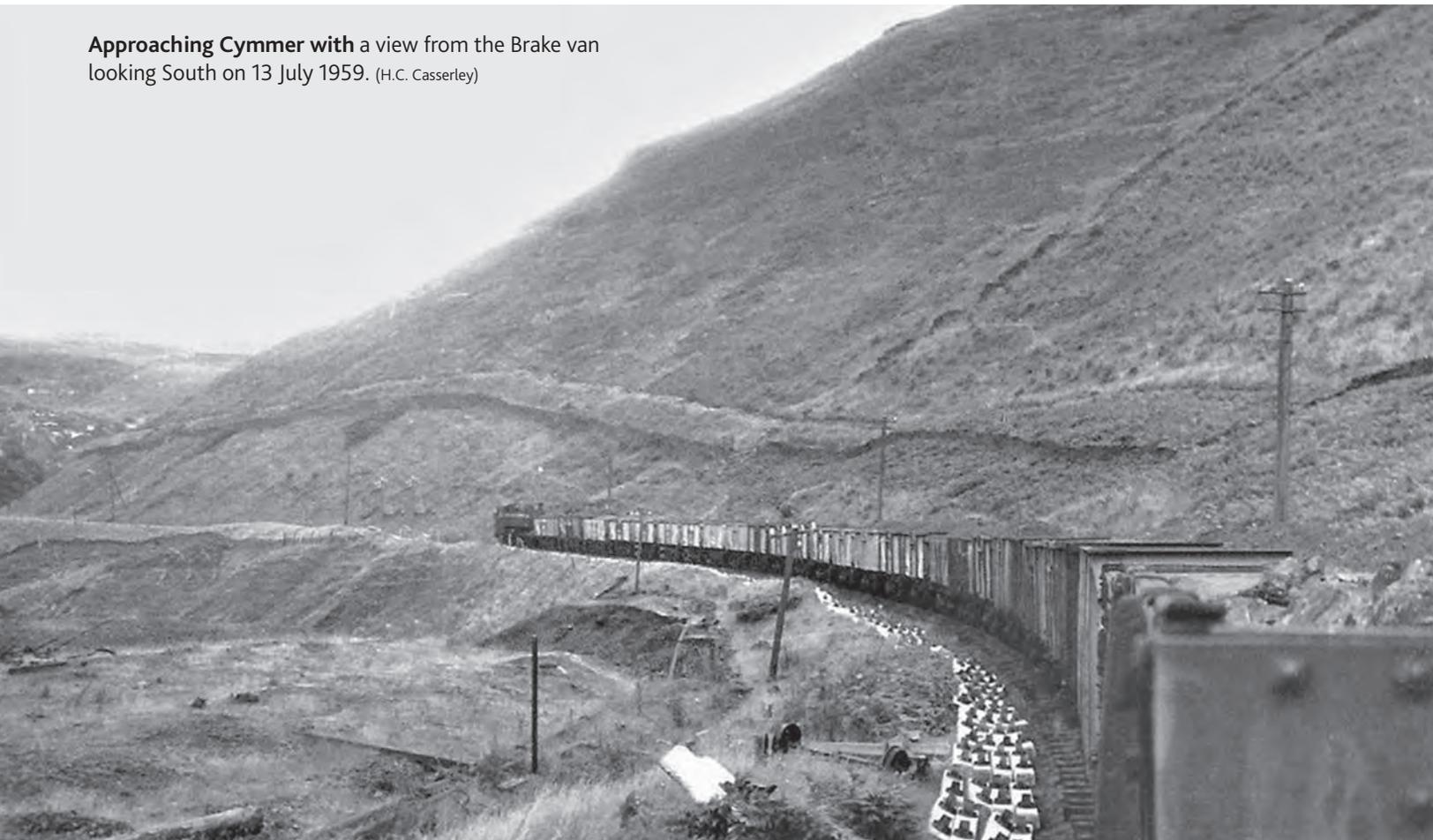
South of the colliery was a Briquette Works, the operational dates for which are unclear. Though the works may have opened at the same time as the colliery, additional trackwork is shown added by 1961 to the five tracks previously available. The outlet from the works is shown as removed in February 1966.

9786 with a
Glyncorwg Colliers'
service on 21 August
1962. (Gerald T. Robinson)





Nantewlaeth Colliery Halt looking towards Glyncorrwg,
13 July 1959. (R.M. Casserley 18977)



Approaching Cymmer with a view from the Brake van
looking South on 13 July 1959. (H.C. Casserley)

GLYNCORRWG

The single line track continued to run northwards alongside the River Corrwg until Glynccorrwg was reached just before the 11¾ mp. A plan for 1876 shows that between the 11½ and 11¾ mp there were two loop sidings on the north side of the running line, the one next to the line being long with its own scissors crossing with the running line. These were doubtless intended to take traffic from the Welsh Main Colliery, above Glynccorrwg, accessed across a level crossing and served by both a tramway and three loop sidings. It started production in 1874 and was apparently renamed Corrwg Merthyr Colliery in 1893, before being abandoned in 1896, employing 62 men in 1895. A small engine shed is also shown north of the LC across the river bridge.

A plan for 1913 shows the sidings on the north side of the running line to have been reduced to a short stop-blocked siding but now with three sidings on the south side for use to serve the new Ynyscorrwg Colliery

located across the river well south of the railway, sunk in 1912 and commissioned in 1913, with three loop reception sidings and another stop-blocked siding further south. The pit was sunk to access the No 2 Rhondda seam at 126 yards and was first owned by the Ynyscorrwg Colliery Co. of Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, with a workforce in 1918 of 393 underground and 99 on the surface. In 1921, the colliery is shown as owned by the Glynccorrwg Colliery Co., the workforce having risen to 410 underground and 131 on the surface, still all working the Rhondda No 2 seam. Ynyscorrwg did not survive the General Strike and closed in 1926.

In March 1918, a passenger service opened between Cymmer Corrwg, Glynccorrwg and North Rhondda with a single line platform provided just south of the LC and SB at Glynccorrwg, between sidings north and south of the platform used for traffic to and from Hendregarreg Levels to the north and Ynyscorrwg to the south. Though Welsh Main Colliery closed before the turn of the century, the tracks that served it also accessed the Hendregarreg Levels, in existence from about 1868 to 1870. The four levels were brought back into use from 1919-21 by Griffiths & Co. with the produce worked away through the siding at Glynccorrwg station, the private siding serving Hendregarreg (still also known as Welsh Main) being terminated in November 1935. The passenger platform was extended south in 1927 to form a south end bay.

Following the cessation of miners' trains between Glynccorrwg and North Rhondda in October 1964, the small engine shed at Glynccorrwg was closed in 1965 when the access track from the station was also removed. The SB located at 11m.58ch. between the north end of the platform and the LC was closed on 25 September 1968. The closure of Glynccorrwg Colliery in June 1970 ended all traffic and the whole line from the viaduct at Cymmer to North Rhondda was closed.



Glynccorrwg looking South; from here to North Rhondda Colliery Platform, the line was extremely steep and subject to a speed limit of 10 mph. There was an intermediate South Pit Halt for the South Rhondda Pit. The colliers' trains operated in Non-Auto mode but were propelled from Glynccorrwg. Three windows were inserted in the coach ends, with a brake setter to control the vacuum brake and a warning gong. (Lens of Sutton)

The diminutive Signal Box seen here on 13 July 1959 and conveniently the Queen's Hotel behind.
(Lens of Sutton)



Glyncorrwg seen on 11 July 1958. (H.C. Casserley 93832)



It is 3pm and 4684, having brought the afternoon Colliers' train into Glyncorrwg and berthed the coaches, now returns to more mundane shunting activities on 25 June 1955. Note that the 4 wheeled stock has now been replaced by clerestory bogie coaches.
(John Wiltshire)



For the afternoon shift, 9617 makes ready to propel its train out of Glyncoerrwg and head for North Rhondda Halt on 11 July 1958. (H.C. Casserley)



9617 starts to tackle the gradient leaving Glyncoerrwg station. (H.C. Casserley)

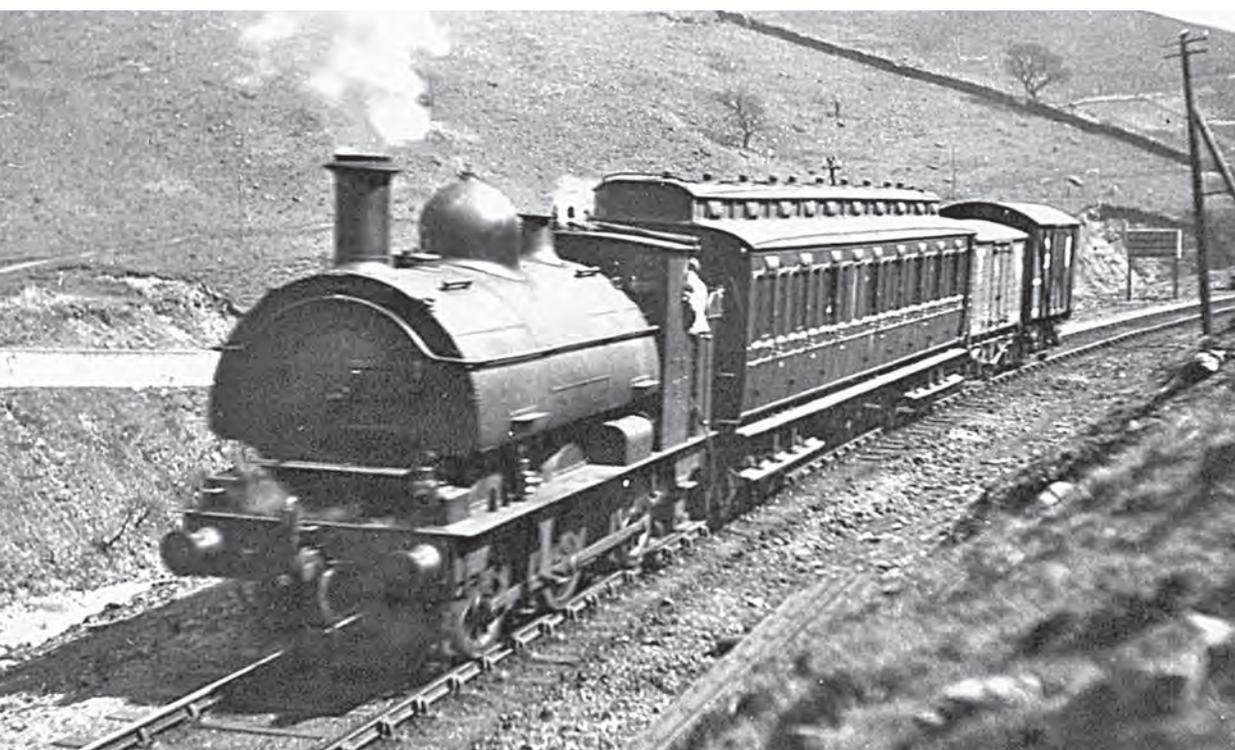


9617 propels its train for North Rhondda away from Glyncoerrwg on the single line. (H. C. Casserley)





Glyncorrwg Loco Shed on 2 June 1936. The Shed was closed in 1908 when the SWMR was worked by the Port Talbot Railway under the auspices of the GWR. From this time, the Glyncorrwg pilot was provided from Duffryn Yard, a feature that prevailed until 1962 when the R&SB Line was closed and the Corrwg branch thus isolated from its parent system. The building remained in existence until the 1960s and was used for servicing the branch locomotive until the end of steam. (SLS)



SWMR No 5 (645 Class GW 1546) on a mixed service train from Cymmer. The GWR contrived to absorb the R&SBR, PTR and SWMR in 1906 to stem expansion designs of the Barry Railway. On a more positive note, the GW provided some of its own locomotives as replacements although these were renumbered into the series of the local companies. (Lens of Sutton)



Glyncorrwg looking north on 5 September 1957 with a Clerestory and 'Cordon' Gas Tank Wagon for supplying the coaches. (M.Hale/GWT)

Glyncorrwg with the afternoon arrival of a Colliers' service from North Rhondda Platform formed of 4-wheeled stock. (SLS)





Glyncorrwg and 7744 with the afternoon arrival of a Colliers' service from North Rhondda, formed with three clerestory coaches. (SLS)

9736 working in the yard at Glyncorrwg with a three coach train berthed behind the Platform on 13 July 1959. (H.C. Casserley)





D9540 arrives at Glyncorrwg having propelled its Brake van from Cymmer on 15 June 1967. (Jeff Stone)

The Brake van is deposited in the yard so that D9540 can start shunting duties. (Jeff Stone)





A high level view of Glyncorrwg illustrating the community and railway infrastructure. (SLS)

SOUTH PIT HALT

Glyncorrwg Colliery was located a mile north of the station, a short distance south of North Rhondda Colliery. A plan of the area for 1876 shows that the single line SWMR ended at 12 miles 71ch. which was the entrance to Corrwg Fechan Colliery, later to become North Rhondda Colliery. Glyncorrwg Colliery was composed of the South and North Pits, which were sunk in 1904 by Glyncorrwg Colliery Ltd., the shafts respectively 403 and 417 yards deep. In 1908 537 men were employed at the two pits, the North working the No. 2 Rhondda seam and the South the Six Feet and Nine Feet seams. The colliery lay idle between 1912 and 1919 but only the South Pit was re-opened, with 144 men working the Red Vein seam. Details for 1923 show 216 men employed working only on the Six Feet seam. The Glyn Neath Collieries Ltd. became owners in 1927, with 384 men working the Nine Feet and Peacock Anthracite seams. In 1928, ownership passed to Amalgamated Anthracite Collieries Ltd. and by 1938

there were 995 men employed, though by 1945 this had dropped to 634. A serious explosion occurred in January 1954, caused by aluminium impacting on rusty steel, as a result of which the use of aluminium was prohibited at the coalface. Reconstruction and modernisation was carried out by the NCB following this and an increased workforce brought in from the surrounding area to produce increasing amounts of semi-anthracite or dry steam coal, for which there was a heavy demand. The pit had modern underground haulage of electric locomotives and large mine cars but closed in 1970, while many less modern pits remained open, engendering the thought that the closure may have been due to rail closure policy in the area. With large reserves still available, the re-opened Tower Colliery at Hirwaun accessed these underground in the Glyncorrwg area.

Two platforms were available, the first South Pit Halt at 12 miles 49ch. for miners' use only, the second North Rhondda Colliery Halt at 12m.68ch., for both workmen (opened 5 March 1917) and public (March 1918) use, the station

named Blaencorrgwg & North Rhondda. The Glyncorrgwg complex extended for 24ch. between the North inlet at 12m.64ch. and the South outlet at 12 miles 40ch. A plan for 1914 shows two long inlet sidings feeding down to the screens with two shorter main outwards sidings. By 1935, this had been revised to three inlet sidings feeding into four tracks through the screens, which then fed into two long outlet sidings.

By 1966, the layout had been further extended to allow for the two long inlet sidings to become seven tracks through the screens, feeding into four long outlet sidings. In 1955/6, the branch running line was re-aligned and South Pit Halt was relocated six chains to the south and enlarged. This involved negotiating a new private sidings agreement with the NCB as from January 1956, which was terminated at the end of August 1970, when the colliery closed.

Glyncorrgwg South Pit on a society visit with 9634 and a three coach train of 1921 Main Line & City Stock W3756 W3910 W3755 which worked the special between Caerau and North Rhondda on 2 July 1960. (Edwin Wilmshurst)



South Pit Halt – another view of the special worked by 9634. (Edwin Wilmshurst)

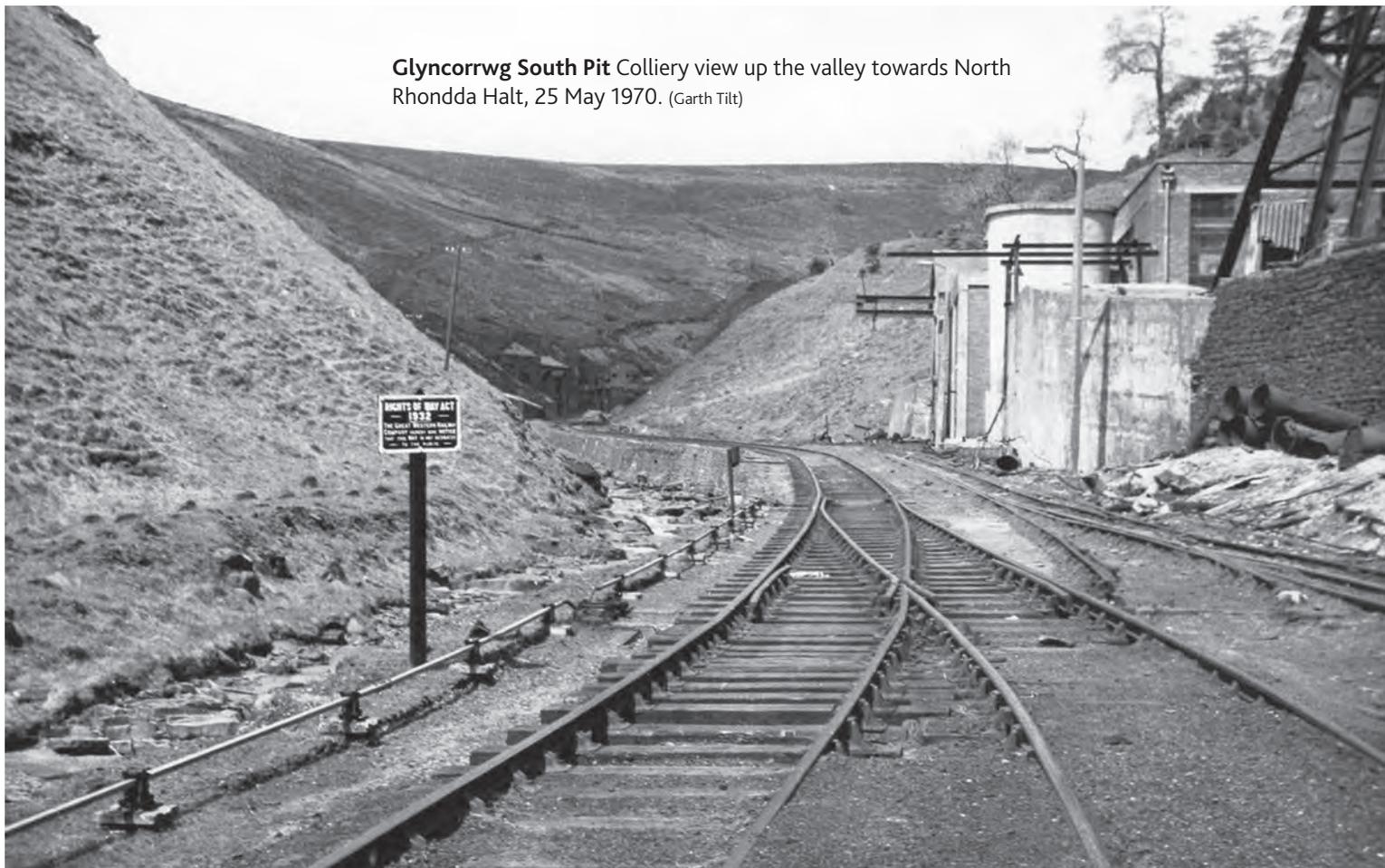
9634 at Glyncorrwg South Pit Halt on 2 July 1960. (Edwin Wilmshurst)



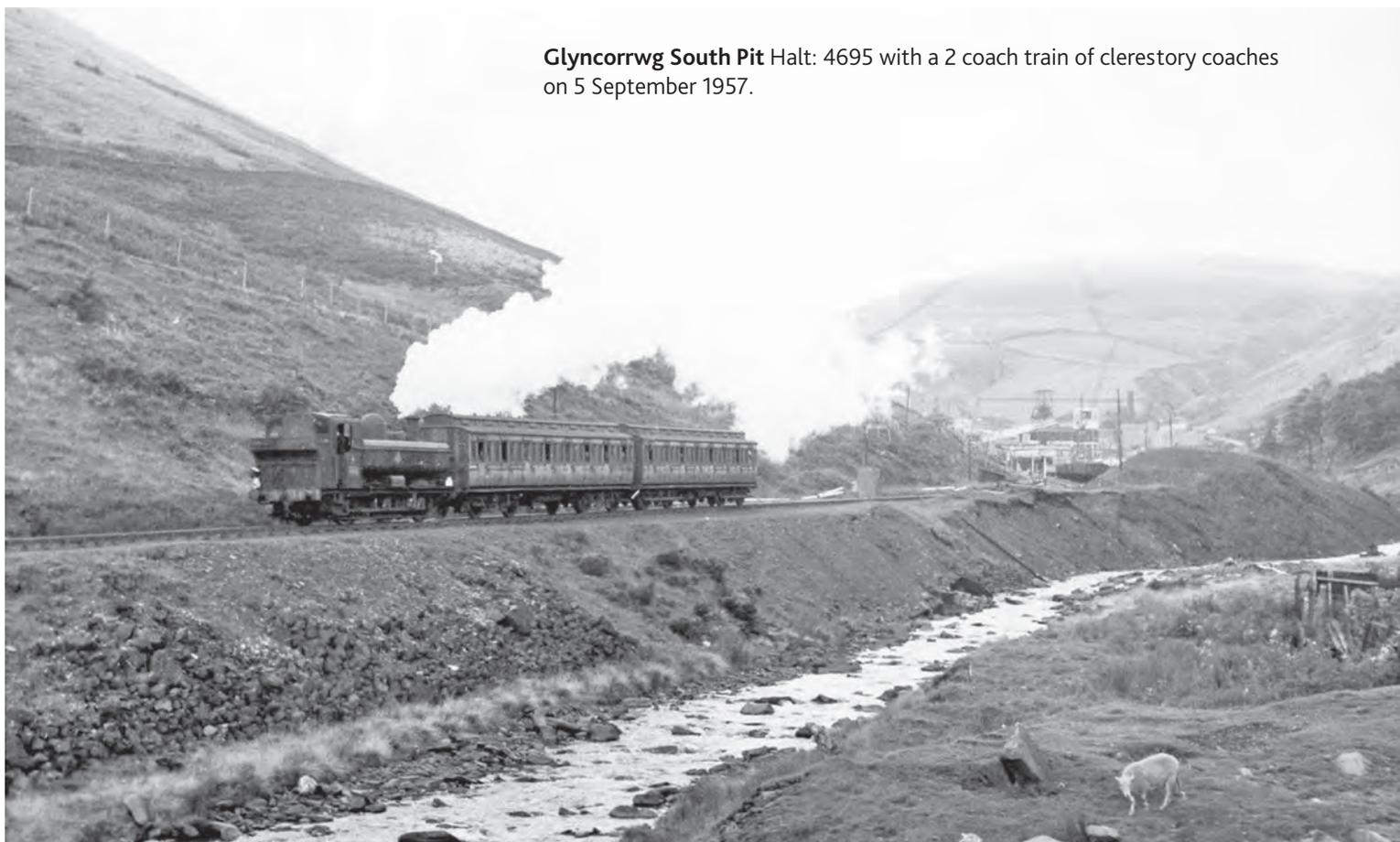
4684 forming its train at South Pit on 13 July 1962. (H.C. Casserley)



Glyncorrwg South Pit Colliery view up the valley towards North Rhondda Halt, 25 May 1970. (Garth Tilt)



Glyncorrwg South Pit Halt: 4695 with a 2 coach train of clerestory coaches on 5 September 1957.



NORTH RHONDDA

At the very end of the SWMR at North Rhondda, an 1876 plan shows the Corrwg Fechan Colliery which in 1890 was owned by the Corrwg Fechan Coal Co. Ltd. with the River Corrwg running right through the colliery sidings, which at that time consisted of two stop-blocked sidings of unequal length. A plan for 1914 shows Corrwg Fechan to have been renamed North Rhondda Colliery, alongside which was Blaencorrwg Colliery. North Rhondda was opened in 1908 by the North Rhondda Colliery Co. and consisted of two drift mines into the No 2 Rhondda seam. No 1 Drift was at the former Corrwg Fechan site and No 2 was about half a mile north-east of Glyncorrwg pit. At first they were not large installations, the 1918 figures being 74 at No 1 and 58 at No 2. In 1938, they were 88 and 18 respectively but by 1945 had increased to 134 and 104. Annual output was never significant if the 1948 total of 40k tons from 150 men

and the 1958 total of 100k. with 223 men are representative. The layout consisted of four sidings, with a small screen on the easternmost. North Rhondda closed on 29 July 1960.

To the west was Blaencorrwg Colliery, opened in 1914 by the Blaencorrwg Colliery Co. Ltd. employing some 150 men. Figures for 1923 show there were 65 men working underground and 45 on the surface, production that year being 27,000 tons, the number employed there rising in 1924 to 150. The seam worked was referred to as Rider coal and was abandoned in 1924. Reference exists to a No 2 Blaencorrwg working the No 2 Rhondda seam which was abandoned in October 1915. In 1925, ownership passed to the East Rhondda Coal Co. and in 1932 to the North Rhondda Colliery Co. Production ceased in 1956. The layout consisted of three sidings with screens spanning two. After closure, the site was used as a stockyard with a sawmill until the branch was closed in 1970.

9617 at North Rhondda Colliery Platform on 11 July 1958. (Hugh Davies)



The Driver has a determined expression no doubt recognising the stiff grade ahead as 9799 propels a supply of empties into the sidings at North Rhondda Colliery on 28 July 1957. (Hugh Davies)



Having placed the Brake van out of the way, 9799 propels a train of empties into the sidings at North Rhondda Colliery on 28 July 1957. (Hugh Davies)

9799 has placed the Brake van in the small headshunt at North Rhondda Colliery on 28 July 1957 before commencement of her shunting duties. (Hugh Davies)





Train of 4-wheelers at North Rhondda Halt on 16 July 1951. (Ian L. Wright)

North Rhondda Colliery 25 May 1970. (Garth Tilt)



CHAPTER 9

CLOSURE & RENAISSANCE

The 1963 Timetable which now required the use of two units to provide the service.

The Llynvi Valley has seen rail movements since 1829, initially albeit horse drawn with replacement by steam from 1861. A regular passenger service commenced between

Maesteg and Bridgend on 25 February 1864 and this was to last until the final working, on Saturday 20 June 1970, with the 21.25 Bridgend to Cymmer worked by SPC W55023. Tondy station then closed from 22 June but school trains, worked by a three-car set, continued to run between Cymmer and Llangynwyd until 14 July (08.21 from Cymmer and 16.25 from Llangynwyd). This marked the end of passenger services on the whole of the Tondy Valleys network. Then followed the final coal train from Llynvi Junction on 23 February 1993.

In the 1960s and '70s, passenger carryings on rail services throughout South Wales had been at a low ebb and the area had seen reduction in services and line closures. People were choosing to use their own cars or travel by the cheaper bus services, and over the last decades of the old millennium, roads had become more and more congested in the main cities and towns, whilst car parking spaces were more difficult to find and dearer. Where the lines were still intact, cases were being made for the restoration of rail passenger services, and following many deputations and meetings, on 28 September 1992, a passenger service was re-introduced with an hourly service from Cardiff to Maesteg via Bridgend and the Maesteg Branch was to witness a revival. The following illustrations record both the closure of passenger services in 1970 and the re-opening in 1992. Such has been the success of this venture that plans are afoot to increase the frequency to half-hourly necessitating the provision of a new passing loop at Tondy. Maesteg services have now been linked into the main line Cardiff to Cheltenham service, which very often means an upgrading of travel to a Class 158 from the previous Class 142 or 150.

BRITISH RAILWAYS
(WESTERN REGION)

PASSENGER TRAIN ALTERATIONS

BRIDGEND, CYMMER AFAN and TREHERBERT
WEEKDAYS ONLY (Second Class only)

Commencing on Monday, 9th September, 1963

The following revised services will apply:-

	am	am	am	am	S	E	pm	pm	pm	S	
Swansea (High St.) dep	7 20	8 20	9 20	10 20	1 0	1 0	3 20	5 10	6 35	9 10	10 20
Cardiff (Gen.) dep	5 45	8 0	9 20	10 52	1 0	1 0	2 44	5 30	7 46	9 10	10 20
Bridgend dep	6 50	8 37	9 20	11 25	1 38	1 38	4 10	6 23	8 26	11 0	11 0
Tondu dep	6 57	8 44	9 27	11 31	1 44	1 44	4 17	6 30	8 33	11 7	11 7
Llangynwyd dep	7 1	8 59	9 38	11 42	1 55	1 55	4 29	6 40	8 44	11 18	11 18
Troedyrihew Garth dep	7 10	9 2	9 40	11 44	1 57	1 57	4 32	6 43	8 46	11 21	11 21
Maesteg (Castle St.) dep	7 15	9 12	9 46	11 49	2 2	2 2	4 38	6 48	8 52	11 26	11 26
Nantyffyllon dep	7 19	9 16	9 50	11 53	2 7	2 7	4 42	6 52	8 56	11 30	11 30
Caerau dep	7 24	9 21	9 56	11 58	2 12	2 12	4 48	6 57	9 2	11 35	11 35
Cymmer Afan dep	7 30	9 27	10 2	12 03	2 17	2 17	4 54	7 3	9 8	11 40	11 40
Blaengwynfi dep	7 36	9 33	10 8	12 9	2 23	2 23	5 0	7 11	9 14	11 46	11 46
Blaenrhondda dep	7 45	9 42	10 18	12 18	2 33	2 33	5 10	7 21	9 24	11 51	11 51
Treherbert arr	7 48	9 45	10 21	12 21	2 36	2 36	5 13	7 24	9 27	11 54	11 54
Porth arr	8 31	10 28	10 51	12 51	3 51	3 51	6 1	8 1	10 1	12 1	12 1
Pontypridd arr	8 41	10 38	11 1	13 1	4 1	4 1	6 1	8 1	10 1	12 1	12 1
Pontypridd dep	am	am	am	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Porth dep	6 36	8 36	9 36	11 36	1 36	1 36	4 36	6 36	8 36	10 36	12 36
Treherbert dep	5 38	7 50	8 50	10 15	1 22	2 45	5 18	6 46	8 55	11 30	12 30
Blaenrhondda dep	5 41	7 53	8 53	10 19	1 23	2 48	5 21	6 58	9 0	11 33	12 33
Blaengwynfi dep	5 53	8 4	9 4	10 29	1 24	2 59	5 32	7 11	9 14	11 37	12 37
Cymmer Afan dep	5 59	7 13	8 15	10 36	1 29	3 6	5 39	7 17	9 20	11 43	12 43
Caerau dep	6 4	7 18	8 21	10 41	1 25	3 12	5 44	7 23	9 26	11 49	12 49
Nantyffyllon dep	6 8	7 23	8 25	10 45	1 29	3 16	5 49	7 28	9 31	11 54	12 54
Maesteg (Castle St.) dep	6 12	7 27	8 30	10 49	1 3	3 20	5 53	7 36	9 39	12 0	13 0
Troedyrihew Garth dep	6 16	7 31	8 35	10 54	1 8	3 25	5 57	7 40	9 43	12 6	13 6
Llangynwyd dep	6 20	7 34	8 38	10 57	1 11	3 28	6 0	7 43	9 46	12 9	13 9
Tondu dep	6 30	7 44	8 49	11 7	1 21	3 38	6 10	7 53	9 56	12 15	13 15
Bridgend arr	6 36	7 50	8 55	11 13	1 27	3 44	6 16	8 0	9 28	12 21	13 21
Cardiff (Gen.) arr	7 36	8 26	9 26	12 10	2 15	4 26	6 56	9 2	10 32	12 32	13 32
Swansea (High St.) arr	8 35	9 25	10 25	12 15	2 26	4 36	7 35	9 9	10 55	12 55	13 55

a Arrives 8.10 a.m.
c Arrival time. Depart for Treherbert 3.7 p.m.
d On Mondays to Fridays arr. 3.15 p.m.
E Except Saturdays.
B Through train from Barry runs Mondays to Fridays only.
p p.m.
S Saturdays only.

British Railways Board TRANSPORT ACT 1962

Withdrawal of Railway Passenger Service

BRIDGEND — TREHERBERT

The Western Region of British Railways hereby give notice, in accordance with Section 56(7) of the Transport Act 1962, that they propose to discontinue all Railway Passenger Services between Bridgend and Treherbert, and from the following stations and halts:

TONDU	MAESTEG	CYMMER AFAN
LLANGYNWYD	NANTYFFYLLON	BLAENGWYNFI
TROEDYRHIEW	CAERAU	BLAENRHONDDA
GARTH		

It appears to the Board that the following alternative services will be available:

EXISTING SERVICES BY ROAD

Western Welsh Omnibus Co. Ltd.

Service 212/213 Bridgend—Blaengarw
Service 222 Bridgend—Maesteg
Service 223 Maesteg Town Service
Service 224 Bridgend—Nantymoel
Service 226 Maesteg—Cardiff

Brewer's Motor Services

Caerau—Maesteg
Maesteg—Cwmfelln
Maesteg—Llangynwyd Church

Rhondda Transport Co. Ltd.

Service R20 Pontypridd—Blaenrhondda
Service R21 Pontypridd—Blaencwm
Service R22 Porth—Blaenrhondda
Service R23 Porth—Blaencwm
Service 120, 121 Cardiff—Treorchy
Service 160 Porth—Porthcawl
Service 161 Treorchy—Porthcawl

Red & White Services, Ltd.

Service 172 Aberdare—Bridgend—Porthcawl

Thomas Bros. (Port Talbot) Ltd.

Service T235 Port Talbot—Abergwynfi

JOINT OMNIBUS SERVICES

Rhondda Transport Co. Ltd.

Western Welsh Omnibus Co. Ltd.
Service 240 Pontypridd—Porthcawl
South Wales Transport Co. Ltd.
Llynfi Motor Services Ltd.
Service 220 Maesteg—Port Talbot

United Welsh Services Ltd.

South Wales Transport Co. Ltd.

Service 26 Swansea—Maesteg
Service 27 Swansea—Blaengwynfi

OBJECTIONS

Any user of the rail service it is proposed to discontinue and any body representing such users, desirous of objecting to the proposal may lodge objections in writing within six weeks of Saturday, 21st December, 1968; i.e. not later than Saturday, 1st February, 1969, addressing the objection to:

The Secretary,
Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Wales and Monmouthshire,
22 The Chambers,
68 St. Mary Street,
CARDIFF, CF1 1FD

If any objection is lodged, the closure cannot be proceeded with until the Transport Users' Consultative Committee has reported to the Minister of Transport and the Minister has given his consent (Section 56(8) of the Transport Act, 1962).

The Committee may hold a meeting to hear objections, such a meeting will be held in public and any persons who have lodged an objection in writing may also make oral representations to the Committee.

If no objections are lodged to the proposal the services will be discontinued on 3rd March, 1969.

J. BONHAM-CARTER
GENERAL MANAGER

PADDINGTON STATION, LONDON, W.2.
December, 1968

Following the truncation of the service at Cymmer, total closure was perhaps to be expected. This closure notice was published in the *South Wales Echo* in December 1968.



Two views on the last day of operation, Saturday 20 June 1970. W55023 calls at Maesteg with an Up service to Bridgend, and is then seen at Llangynwyd with a service to Cymmer. The same unit had the dubious distinction of working the last service from Bridgend at 21.25.

W55023 waits patiently to return to Bridgend from Cymmer on 20 June 1970. Due to Rhondda Tunnel being considered unsafe, the service to/from Treherbert had been truncated at Cymmer pending resolution of the problem; this was achieved by the inevitable complete closure. (Garth Tilt)



The new platform at Tondy under construction on 27 March 1992 giving a reasonable orientation of the former layout. (S. Miles)





The new Maesteg platform under construction a few yards south of its predecessor on 3 June 1992.

37308 and Inspection Saloon 9995609 pass Tondy (Middle) Signal Box on 3 June 1992.





Pacer 143 610 calls at Tondy with the 10.17 from Cardiff to Maesteg on the first day of the new service on 28 September 1992. (S. Miles)

Sprinter 150 281 waits to depart from Maesteg sometime in 1995. From a resourcing point of view, the Maesteg service was initially integrated with the Cardiff Valleys network where Pacers (Classes 143/144) and Sprinters (Class 150) worked turn and turn about. (M.J. Back)



Amserau Trennau/Train Times

SPECIAL NOTICE

BRITISH RAIL WISH TO
THANK CUSTOMERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT
OF THE NEW MAESTEG SERVICE

CUSTOMERS WHO USED THE SERVICE
ON SATURDAY 31st OCTOBER MAY HAVE
EXPERIENCED OVERCROWDING FOR WHICH
WE APPOLOGISE

PLANS ARE IN HAND TO INCREASE
SEATING CAPACITY FOR THIS LINE

MAY WE RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING
SERVICES TO EASE THIS TEMPORARY
PROBLEM

TONDU TO CARDIFF Dep. 06.45. 07.47. 08.36.
12.35. 13.35. 14.35. 15.27. 16.26. 17.36.
18.35. 19.35 Avo 20.35

CARDIFF CENTRAL TO TONDU Avo MAESTEG Dep.
06.45. 06.43. 07.10 08.22. 09.20 10.20 11.20.
12.20. 13.20. 18.20 Avo 19.18.

REGIONAL RAILWAYS 

As can be seen from this notice, capacity was outstripped by demand resulting in the temporary measure of additional services as far as Tondy. Current arrangements have one Signalling section Bridgend/Tondy and another between Tondy/Maesteg but the track layout has no passing loop hence the additional service as far as Tondy only. Capacity was addressed by increasing the platform lengths to accommodate four car units.

When the supplementary

Tondu service was operated, the unit recessed in the Up Goods, seen here occupied by 143 606 on 10 October 1992.



A smiling signalman

waits to collect the Token (Tondu/ Maesteg) from the Driver of the 12.21 Maesteg to Cardiff on 5 February 1993. (M.J. Back)





Since the advent of the all Wales franchise currently operated by Arriva, most of the Maesteg services work through to Cheltenham and receive Class 150s and Super Sprinters Class 158s. Here 158 826 is seen on such a service on 27 January 2007. (S. Warr)



A station was re-opened at Garth, which used to carry the full name of Troedyrhiew Garth but now goes under the commonly used shortened version. Pacer 143623 works the 11.18 from Cardiff Central to Maesteg which will form the 12.21 return on 5 February 1993. (Michael J. Back)



The new halt at Wildmill. (M.J. Back)



Above and below
Two views of the new station at Ewenny Road. (M.J. Back)



Ewenny Road in 2015. The east side of the formation taken over by trees as a Sprinter 150235 leaves the station for Garth. (Michael J. Back)



APPENDICES

POINT TO POINT TIMES (minutes): -

		FREIGHT		PASSENGER		
		Down	Up	Down	Up	
Llynvi	Bridgend to Coity Junction	4	5	2	2	
	Coity Junction to Tondy	10	10	3	3	
	Tondy to Llangynwyd	15	15	7	7	
	Llangynwyd to Maesteg	14	13	7½	7½	
	Maesteg to Llynvi Junction	2	5	2	1	
	Llynvi Junction to Nantffyllon	3	5	2	2	
	Nantffyllon to Coegnant	5	10	2	2	
	Coegnant to Caerau	5	10	2	1	
	Caerau to Cymmer	7	10	3	3	
	Cymmer to Abergwynfi	20	10	6	4	
	Abergwynfi to Glenavon Colliery	3	5			
	Garw	Tondy to Brynmenyn	5	5	3	3
		Brynmenyn to Llangeinor	10	10	6	4
Llangeinor to Pontyrhyll		7	10	4	4	
Pontyrhyll to Pontycymmer		10	10	4	4	
Pontycymmer to Victoria		3	4	2	1	
Victoria to Glengarw Colliery		6	4	2	2	
Ogmore	Tondy to Brynmenyn	5	5	3	3	
	Brynmenyn to Blackmill	5	10	3½	3½	
	Blackmill to Caedu	10	13	4	4	
	Caedu to Ogmore Vale	5	6	4	4	
	Ogmore Vale to Wyndham Colliery	8	5	3	3	
	Wyndham Colliery to Nantymoel	3	3	3	3	
	Blackmill to Hendreforgan	15	20			
	Hendreforgan to Gilfach	10	25			
Llanharan	Tondy Ogmore Jcn to Bryncethin	20	25			
	Bryncethin to Llanharan	20	20			
Porthcawl	Tondy to Cefn Jcn	12	10	11	10	
	Cefn Jcn to Kenfig Hill	5	6	5	4	
	Kenfig Hill to Pyle	10	10	4	4	
	Pyle to Cornelly	7	8	4	4	
	Cornelly to Porthcawl	10	12	8	8	

GRADIENTS

		>1 in 200	>½ MILE
Llynvi	Tondu to Llangynwyd	94	1¾
	Llangynwyd to Troedyrhiewgarth	95	¾
	Troedyrhiewgarth to Maesteg	60	1¼
	Maesteg to Nantyffyllon	45	1
	Nantyffyllon to Caerau	36	1
	Cymmer to Abergwynfi	121	½
	Abergwynfi to Glenavon Colliery	32	2½
Garw	Brynmenyn to Llangeinor	78	2
	Llangeinor to Pontyrhyll	80	1¼
	Pontyrhyll to Pontycymmer	57	1¾
	Pontycymmer to Blaengarw	34	1
Ogmore	Brynmenyn to Blackmill	61	2
	Blackmill to Ogmore Vale	49	2¾
	Ogmore Vale to Nantymoel	32	1½
	Blackmill to Hendreforgan	45	3½
	Hendreforgan to Gilfach	40	4
Llanharan	Tondu Ogmore Jcn to Bryncethin	65	2
	Bryncethin to Llanharan	126	1¾
Porthcawl	Tondu to Cefn Jcn	82	2½
	Cefn Jcn to Kenfig Hill	150	1½
	Kenfig Hill to Pyle	115	1
	Pyle to Porthcawl	101	3½

ENGINE LOADS

Based on a 50% mix of 10 and 12 ton wagons Engine Class	Down Empties			Up Loaded Minerals		
	1076	5700	4200	1076	5700	4200
Bridgend to Tondu	52	64	100	-	-	-
Tondu to Gelli Las	40	50	80	-	-	-
Gelli Las to Nantyffyllon	26	32	52	-	-	-
Nantyffyllon to Caerau	18	22	36	-	-	-
Caerau to Cymmer	60	75	100	-	-	-
Cymmer to Glenavon Colliery	15	19	30	-	-	-
Glenavon Colliery to Cymmer	-	-	-	24	24	35
Cymmer to Caerau	-	-	-	32	35	64
Caerau to Coegnant	-	-	-	35	35	54
Coegnant to Nantyffyllon	-	-	-	45	45	65
Nantyffyllon to Gelli Las	-	-	-	45	45	60
Gelli Las to Bridgend	-	-	-	50	55	80
Tondu to Brynmenyn	60	85	100	-	-	-
Brynmenyn to Pontyrhyll	34	42	68	-	-	-
Pontyrhyll to Victoria	24	30	48	-	-	-
Victoria to Glengarw	20	27	40	-	-	-
Glengarw to Garreg Sidings	-	-	-	30	35	45

Garreg Sidings to Pontycymmer	-	-	-	35	40	50
Pontycymmer to Brynmenyn	-	-	-	45	45	60
Brynmenyn to Tondy	-	-	-	50	50	70
Tondy to Blackmill	32	40	64	-	-	-
Blackmill to Caedu	30	38	60	-	-	-
Caedu to Ogmores Vale	27	34	54	-	-	-
Ogmores Vale to Nantymoel	22	27	44	-	-	-
Nantymoel to Rhondda Main Colliery	-	-	-	40	45	55
Rhondda Main Colliery to Blackmill	-	-	-	40	45	60
Blackmill to Tondy	-	-	-	50	50	70
Blackmill to Hendreforgan	11	14	22	-	-	-
Hendreforgan to Gilfach	10	12	20	-	-	-
Gilfach to Blackmill	-	-	-	35	35	60
Tondy to Wern Tarw	30	38	60	-	-	-
Wern Tarw to Llanharan	60	85 100	-	-	-	-
Llanharan to Tondy	-	-	-	25	31	50
Tondy to Cefn Jcn	40	50	80	-	-	-
Cefn Jcn to Porthcawl	60	80 100	-	-	-	-
Porthcawl to Cornelly	-	-	-	22	27	44
Cornelly to Pyle East	-	-	-	31	39	62
Pyle East to Tondy	-	-	-	30	42	55

TONDU FREIGHT TARGETS (1957)

Class of locomotive required is shown beneath the target number

№1 Pilot 0535 Off Shed
57XX 0540 South End and Banking
 0915 Tondy Gelli Las 0925 (Assist U3)
 1045 Gelli Las Tondy 1055
 2210 SX (2020 SO) LE Bridgend Tondy 2220 (2030 SO)
 2225 On Shed (2025 SO)

№2 Pilot 0555 Off Shed
57XX 0600 Ogmores Junction Pilot
 Brynmenyn Gas works siding
 continuous to 2200 Sats
 2205 On Shed

№3 Pilot 0525 Off Shed
57XX 0530 Velin Vach and North End Pilot
 cripples and loco Coal
 1630 SX Tondy Maesteg Pilot
 1730 SX Maesteg Tondy 1754
 continuous to 2000 Sats
 2005 On Shed

№5 Pilot 0555 Off Shed
57XX 0600 Velin Vach, Tondy Middle, North End
 Fountain and Brickworks sidings
 continuous to 2000 Sats
 2005 On Shed

Bridgend №4 Pilot 57XX	0545 Off Shed 0600 Bridgend West Yard and Station 2030 Bridgend Tondy 2040 2045 On Shed
Bridgend №6 Pilot 57XX	0745 Off Shed 0800 Bridgend Shunting/Private Sidings/Main Line Banking 2150 LE Bridgend Tondy 2200 2205 On Shed
U2 57XX	0535 Off Shed 0550 Empties Tondy Ogmores Vale 0620 0630 Ogmores Vale Wyndham Colliery 0635 0650 Wyndham Colliery Nantymoel 0655 0710 EBV Nantymoel Tondy 0735 0830 Tondy Maesteg 0850 0945 EBV Maesteg Caerau 0955 1100 Caerau Coity Junction 1240 Stop to put down wagon brakes approaching Llynvi Junction. 1325 Empties Coity Junction Tondy 1335 1350 On Shed
U3 42XX	0900 Off Shed 0915 Tondy Gelli Las 0925 (Assisted by No 1 Pilot) 1045 Gelli Las Tondy 1055 1205 Pilot Tondy Gelli Las 1215 1240 Gelli Las Tondy 1250 1335 Pilot Tondy Waterhall 1359 1430 Pilot Waterhall Tondy 1455 1515 Class H Tondy Coity Junction 1525 1630 Coity Junction Tondy 1640 1655 On Shed
U4 42XX	0645 Off Shed 0700 SX Empties Tondy Pontycymmer 0741 0751 Pontycymmer Blaengarw Reception Sidings 0803 0815 SX EBV Blaengarw Pontycymmer 0820 0835 Empties Pontycymmer Blaengarw Reception Sidings 0850 0905 SX EBV Blaengarw Tondy 0925 1005 SX Empties Tondy Pontycymmer 1046 1056 Pontycymmer Victoria 1059 1109 Victoria Blaengarw Reception Sidings 1121 1133 SX EBV Blaengarw Garreg Sidings 1136 1206 Garreg Sidings Pontycymmer 1211 1221 Pontycymmer Tondy 1302 1315 On Shed
U5 42XX	0825 Off Shed 0845 Tondy Bryncethin Brick Works 0855 0905 Bryncethin Brick Works Raglan Colliery 0915 0945 Raglan Colliery Wern Tarw 0955 1025 Wern Tarw Penarth Curve North 1143 1250 Penarth Curve North Tondy 1530 Stop to pin down brakes at Bryncethin Junction 1545 On Shed

U6 57XX	0650 Off Shed 0705 Tondy Maesteg 0737 0825 Maesteg Caerau 0835 0845 Caerau Cymmer Afan 0855 0905 Cymmer Afan Abergwynfi 0920 1215 Abergwynfi Cymmer Afan 1235 1355 Cymmer Afan Maesteg 1427 Stop to pick up/put down wagon brakes approaching Abergwynfi Cymmer Afan and Llynvi Junction. 1435 Maesteg Tondy 1500 1515 On Shed
U7 57XX	0835 Off Shed 0850 Tondy Blaengarw Reception Sidings 0937 0950 EBV Blaengarw Glengarw Colliery 0953 1015 Glengarw Colliery Pontycymmer 1025 1045 Pontycymmer Tondy 1126 1305 Tondy Pontycymmer 1346 1405 Pontycymmer Blaengarw Reception Sidings 1417 1430 EBV Blaengarw Glengarw Colliery 1433 1445 Glengarw Colliery Garreg Sidings 1450 1520 Garreg Sidings Pontycymmer 1525 1540 Pontycymmer Tondy 1621
U7R 42XX	1705 SX Tondy Raglan Colliery 1721 1850 Raglan Colliery Penarth Curve North 1952 Q to Grange Town 2055 SX Penarth Curve North Raglan Colliery 2229 2240 EBV Raglan Colliery Tondy 2250 U7R unscheduled to work as ordered by Control 2305 On Shed
U8 57XX	0445 Off Shed 0500 Tondy Pyle 0530 0540 Pyle Cornelly 0545 0555 EBV Cornelly Tondy 0617 0645 Tondy Nantymoel 0725 0815 Nantymoel Wyndham Colliery 0820 0845 Wyndham Colliery Blackmill 0910 0925 Blackmill Tondy 0940 1005 Tondy Coity Junction 1015
U8R 57XX	1155 Coity Junction Tondy 1205 1225 Tondy Wyndham Colliery 1300 1310 Wyndham Colliery Nantymoel 1315 1335 Nantymoel Wyndham Colliery 1340 1420 Wyndham Colliery Tondy 1455 1545 Tondy Coity Junction 1555 1715 SX Coity Junction Tondy 1725 1740 On Shed
U9 56XX	1000 Off Shed 1020 Tondy Blackmill 1035 Q on Sats 1050 Blackmill Ogmores Vale 1105 1115 Ogmores Vale Wyndham Colliery 1125 1145 Wyndham Colliery Nantymoel 1150

	1210 Nantymoel Wyndham Colliery 1215 Q on Sats 1300 Wyndham Colliery Tondy 1335 1415 Tondy Coity Junction 1425 1505 SX Coity Junction Tondy 1515 1530 On Shed
U10 57XX	0845 Off Shed 0900 To Bridgend shunting Tremains Yard Coity Junction and Brackla Hill 2105 On Shed
U11 57XX	1145 Off Shed 1200 Tondy Bridgend 1210 1218 Bridgend Llanharan 1238 1340 Llanharan Bridgend 1500 1625 Bridgend Tondy 1635 1650 On Shed
U12 42XX	0930 Off Shed 0945 Tondy Bridgend 0955 1040 Bridgend Coity Junction 1045 1135 Coity Junction Tondy 1145 1215 Tondy Blaengarw NCB Reception 1302 1315 EBV Blaengarw Pontycymmer 1320 1345 Pontycymmer Tondy 1426 Q to Coity Junction
U12R 42XX	1700 SX Tondy Blaengarw Reception Sidings 1747 1800 SX EBV Blaengarw Garreg Sidings 1803 1820 Garreg Sidings Pontycymmer 1825 1900 Pontycymmer Tondy 1941 to Coity or Margam if reqd 1956 On Shed
U13 57XX	1130 Off Shed 1145 Tondy Abergwynfi 1325 1420 Abergwynfi Cymmer Afan 1430 1440 Cymmer Afan Llynvi Junction 1555 Stop to pick up/put down wagon brakes approaching Abergwynfi Cymmer Afan and Llynvi Junction. 1615 Llynvi Junction Maesteg 1620 1630 Maesteg Tondy 1700
U13R 57XX	1835 SX Tondy Gelli Las 1845 X 1900 SX Gelli Las Caerau 1935 1945 SX Caerau Cymmer Afan 1855 2125 SX Cymmer Afan Maesteg 2155 Stop to pick up/put down wagon brakes approaching Llynvi Jct 2230 SX Maesteg Tondy 2300
U14 57XX	1315 Off Shed (1305 SO) 1320 SO To Pyle 1350 and Stormy 1443 SO Pyle Cornelly 1453 1515 SO Cornelly Pyle 1525 1610 SO Pyle Tondy 1649 1330 SX Tondy Blackmill 1345 X 1352 SX Blackmill Ogmores Vale 1410 1515 SX Ogmores Vale Tondy 1545

	1620 SX Tondu Pyle 1650 and Stormy 1740 SX Pyle Cornelly 1750 1805 SX Cornelly Pyle 1815 1900 SX Pyle Tondu 1930 1945 On Shed
U15 57XX	1410 Off Shed 1425 SX Tondu Llangynwyd 1440 X 1450 Llangynwyd Maesteg 1505 1520 Maesteg Nantffyffyllon Sidings 1525 1535 Nantffyffyllon Sidings Coegnant Colliery 1540 1545 Coegnant Colliery Caerau 1550 1600 Caerau Cymmer Afan 1605 1615 Cymmer Afan Abergwynfi 1630 1730 Abergwynfi Cymmer Afan 1750 1820 Cymmer Afan Llynvi Junction 1855 Stop to pick up/put down wagon brakes approaching Abergwynfi and Llynvi Junction. 1920 Llynvi Junction Maesteg 1925 1940 Maesteg Tondu 2010 2025 On Shed
U17 42XX	1420 Off Shed 1435 SX Tondu Gelli Las 1445 1510 Gelli Las Tondu 1520 1605 SX Tondu Nantymoel 1700 1710 Nantymoel Wyndham Colliery 1715 1830 Wyndham Colliery Tondu 1910 1925 Tondu Coity Junction 1935 2020 SX Coity Junction Tondu 2030 2045 On Shed
U18 42XX	1445 Off Shed 1500 SX Tondu Glengarw Colliery 1541 1551 Glengarw Colliery Blaengarw Reception Sidings 1603 1615 SX EBV Blaengarw Garreg Sidings 1618 1648 Garreg Sidings Pontycymmer 1653 1713 Pontycymmer Tondu 1756 to Coity or Margam if reqd 2220 SX Coity Junction Tondu 2230 2245 On Shed
U19 42XX	1200 Off Shed 1215 Tondu Pyle 1245 1300 Pyle Porthcawl 1317 1335 Porthcawl Cornelly 1345 1505 Cornelly Margam 1530 1740 Margam Cornelly 1805 1835 Cornelly Tondu 1910 1925 On Shed
U23 57XX	2310 SX Tondu Cymmer As ordered by Control 0030 MX Cymmer Afan Tondu 0140 Stop to put down wagon brakes approaching Llynfi Jct. U23 unscheduled to work as ordered by Control 0155 On Shed

MAIN LINE TARGETS

Note: Target numbers U51 to 60 are used here for reference purposes only

U51 42XX	1155 Off Shed 1210 Tondu Pengam Sidings 1501 Looped Tremains 1233/42 Pencoed 1252/1318 Llanharan 1336/1400 Return as ordered by Control
U52 41XX	1645 Off Shed (1735 SO) 1700 SX Class F Tondu Coity Junction 1713 1754 SX Coity Junction Bridgend 1800 1750 SO Tondu Bridgend 1800 1840 Bridgend Newtown Goods 1947 Looped Tremains 1846-54 2015 Newtown Goods Pengam Sidings 2020 Return as ordered by Control
U53 42XX	1705 Off Shed 1720 Tondu Coity Junction 1730 1810 Coity Junction Penarth Curve North 2045 Stop to pick up/put down wagon brakes approaching Barry Sidings Looped Cogan Junction 2012/25 Return as ordered by Control
U54 42XX	2155 Off Shed 2215 SX Tondu Coity Junction 2228 2300 Coity Junction Penarth Curve North 0127 Stop to pick up/put down wagon brakes approaching Barry Sidings 0036 Barry Sidings 0046W 0300 MX Penarth Curve North Bridgend 0513 0350 Barry Sidings 0400W 0535 Bridgend Tondu 0552 0607 On Shed W = Engine to take Water
U55 42XX	2230 Off Shed 2250 SX Coal Tondu Llantrisant 2357 Looped Tremains 2316/23 0018 Llantrisant Canton Sidings 0048 0110 Canton Sidings Newtown Goods 0120 0150 Newtown Goods Pengam Sidings 0155 0300 MX Cardiff Pengam Sidings Penarth Curve North 0314 0340 Penarth Curve North Tondu 0545 via Wern Tarw Stop to pin down brakes at Bryncethin Junction 0600 On Shed
U56 42XX	2005 Off Shed 2025 SX Coal Tondu Briton Ferry 2202 2240 Briton Ferry Swansea East Depot 2333 0020 MX empties Swansea East Depot Briton Ferry 0156 0218 Briton ferry Margam Sidings 0234 0255 Margam Sidings Tondu 0355 0410 On Shed

U57 42XX	2210 Off Shed 2230 SX Tondy Margam Sidings 0006 0030 Margam Sidings Skewen West 0104 0119 Skewen West Swansea Valley Jct 0137 0144 Swansea Valley Jct Landore Steel Works 0149 0230 Empties Landore Tondy 0523 0538 On Shed
U58 42XX	0520 Off Shed 0535 Tondy Felin Fran 0714 0833 Felin Fran Llandeilo Junction 0928 0200 MX Empties Llandeilo Junction Felin Fran 0255 0325 Felin Fran Margam Sidings 0438 0510 Margam Sidings Tondy 0643 0700 On Shed
U59 42XX	1830 Off Shed 1845 SX Coal Tondy Port Talbot Docks No7 Grid 2035 2145 SX Empties 2145 Port Talbot Docks Tondy 2320 2335 On Shed
U60 42XX	0445 Off Shed 0500 MX Tondy Newtown Goods W 0637 0651 Newtown Goods Severn Tunnel Junction 0820 1000 Severn Tunnel Junction Pengam 1057 W 1107 Pengam Sidings Margam Sidings 1427 Looped St Fagan's 1145/1209 Llanharan 1237/1300 W Looped Tremains 1320/30 Stormy 1352/1406 1925 On Shed W = Engine to take Water

SHED MOVEMENTS (1957)

To give an appreciation of Tondy Shed's activities a summary of engine movements is included here based on the 1957 WTT and associated engine diagrams. At this time, the only major change in the depot's work on a day-to-day basis was the absence of the Garw Passenger commitment following its withdrawal in 1952. This has been overlaid in italics based on the 1952 WTT to complete an insight of the position that prevailed at Tondy from the early 1930s.

The table shows the locomotive type allocated to each Target (where none is shown, such as the 'H' Targets worked by Cardiff Canton, these varied and after the removal of the Bulldogs, often provided Tondy with its only visit of named locomotives usually travelling

one way via Llanharan and the other via Bridgend to avoid having to be turned at Tondy). The H2 came via Bridgend with traffic for the Goods Shed there and turned on the triangle at Tondy. Excursion trains, frequently to Clifton Down and Windsor, also provided named locomotives.

The loco allocation detail is followed by the actual time Off Shed and return On Shed. Alongside the latter is then shown the locomotive's next scheduled working. Where none is indicated, the locomotive is allocated to the same work the next working day. In the interval between On and Off shed, servicing and re-coaling of engines took place. The sectional Appendix states that large Tank Engines including 72XX returning to the Swansea District should not be turned for the back working.

Loco	On Shed	Off Shed	Target	Forms
57XX	0015		5 SO ECS Blaengarw Tondu arr 2355	P9
57XX	0020		1 SX 23/50 Llangynwyd Tondu arr 2358	P6
55XX	0020		Auto 1 ECS Abergwynfi Tondu arr 0000	Auto1
41XX	0045		U52 Return as Ordered by Control	U58
57XX	0050		2 SO ECS Nantymoel Tondu arr 0030	P8
31XX	0050		3 SX ECS Cymmer Tondu arr 0030	P5
57XX	0105		6 SO ECS Blaengarw Tondu arr 0045	P10
42XX	0105		U53 Return as Ordered by Control	U7
57XX	0120		4 SO ECS Abergwynfi Tondu arr 0058	P7
57XX	0200		U23R MX 0030 Cymmer Tondu arr 0140	U13
42XX	0415		U56 MX 0030 Swansea East Depot empties Tondu arr 0355	U60
42XX		0440	U60 MX 0500 to STJ	
	0445		H2 MX 0250 Penarth Curve North Tondu arr 0425	H2
57XX		0445	U8 0500 to Cornelly	
57XX		0507	4 0527 ECS to Llangynwyd	
42XX		0520	U58 0535 to Llandeilo Junction	
57XX		0525	№3Pilot 0530 LE to Velin Vach	
55XX		0525	Auto 1 SX 0545 ECS to Nantymoel	
57XX		0535	№1Pilot 0540 LE to Bridgend	
57XX		0535	U2 0550 Empties to Nantymoel	
42XX	0543		U57 0230 Landore empties Tondu arr 0523	U51
57XX		0545	№4Pilot 0550 LE Bridgend West Yard and Station	
57XX		0555	№5Pilot 0600 LE to Velin Vach or North end	
57XX		0555	№2Pilot 0600 to Ogmores Junction	
55XX		0555	Auto 2 0615 ECS to Bridgend	
42XX	0605		U55 MX 0300 Cardiff Pengam Sidings Tondu arr 0545	U14
57XX		0605	1 0623 ECS to Abergwynfi	
Any		0605	H2 MX 0625 to Cardiff	
42XX	0612		U54 MX 0300 Penarth Curve North Tondu arr 0552	U12
31XX		0615	3 0635 ECS to Porthcawl	
57XX		0645	U4 SX 0700 Empties to Blaengarw NCB Reception	
57XX		0650	U6 0705 to Abergwynfi	
	0657		H2 MO 0340 Cardiff Tondu arr 0637	H2
42XX	0703		U58 MX 0200 Llandeilo Junction empties Tondu arr 0643	U5
		0705	H2 MO 0725 to Cardiff	
55XX		0710	Auto 3 0730 ECS to Porthcawl	
57XX		0745	№6Pilot 0750 LE Bridgend	
57XX		0800	5 0820 ECS to Bridgend for Cardiff	
42XX		0825	U5 0845 to Penarth Curve North	
57XX	0830		1 SDX LE Bridgend Tondu arr 0826	P6

Loco	On Shed	Off Shed	Target	Forms	
57XX		0835	U7	0850 to Blaengarw NCB Reception	
57XX		0845	U10	0850 LE to Bridgend Coity Jcn	
42XX		0900	U3	0915 to Gelli Las Assisted by Tondy No 1 Pilot	
42XX		0930	U12	0945 to Bridgend	
42XX	0950		SED	0630 Swansea East Depot empties Tondy arr 0931	SED
56XX		1000	U9	1020 to Nantymoel Q on Sats	
57XX	1008		1	LE Bridgend Tondy arr 1003	P6
42XX		1040	SED	1100 to Swansea East Depot	
55XX		1045	Pilot	SX 1050 to Brynmenyn	
57XX	1050		5	<i>LE Bridgend Tondy arr 1045</i>	P9
55XX	1100		Auto 2	SX ECS Bridgend Tondy arr 1040	Auto2
55XX		1100	Auto 2	SO 1120 ECS to Bridgend	
	1105		DYD	SO 0935 Margam Yard empties Tondy arr 1045	DYD
			DYD	SO 1115 EBV to Margam Yard	
57XX	1125		4	LE Bridgend Tondy arr 1121	P7
57XX		1130	U13	1145 to Abergwynfi	
57XX		1135	1	SO 1140 LE to Bridgend	
55XX	1145		Pilot	SX Pilot Brynmenyn Tondy	
57XX		1145	U11	1200 to Llanharan	
42XX		1155	U51	1210 to Cardiff Pengam Sidings	
57XX		1200	5	<i>SO 1205 LE to Brynmenyn</i>	
42XX		1200	U19	1215 to Porthcawl	
57XX		1205	1	SO 1225 ECS to Bridgend	
57XX		1255	4	SX 1300 LE to Bridgend	
57xx		1315	U14	SX 1330 to Ogmole Vale	
55XX		1315	Auto 2	SX 1335 ECS to Bridgend	
42XX	1320		U4	SX 1133 Blaengarw NCB Reception Tondy arr 1302	U18
55XX		1320	Auto 4	1340 to Porthcawl	
57XX	1335		5	<i>SO LE from Brynmenyn</i>	P9
55XX	1350		Auto 3	Porthcawl Tondy arr 1330	
57xx	1355		U2	Empties 1325 Coity Junction to Tondy arr 1335	U59
57XX		1405	5	<i>1415 LE to Brynmenyn</i>	
57XX		1410	U15	SX 1425 to Abergwynfi	
42XX		1420	U17	SX 1435 to Gelli Las	
42XX		1445	U18	SX 1500 to Blaengarw NCB Reception	
42XX	1446		U12	1315 Blaengarw Tondy 1426 Q to Coity Jct	U12R
57XX	1510		5	<i>LE Brynmenyn Tondy</i>	P9
57XX	1520		U6	1215 Abergwynfi Tondy arr 1500	U6
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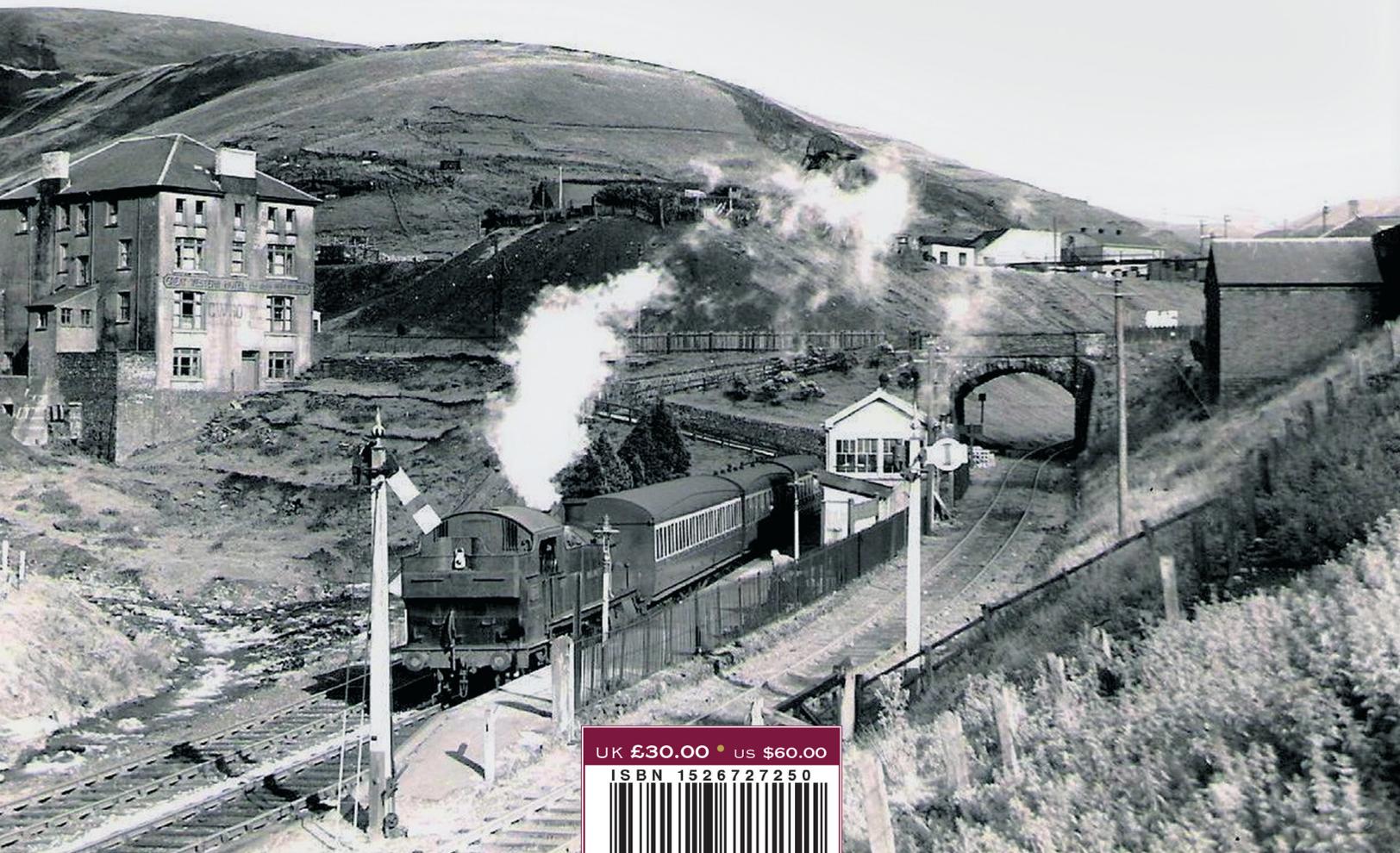
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