

Monday 19 June

RAILWAY 77

Blaenau Ffestiniog	1137
Llandudno	1250 1617
Blaenau Ffestiniog	1732

We drove over to Blaenau. It is a depressing place! Even today, when the rain was not falling, it just felt grey. A huge amount of money has been spent on leisure attractions - zip wires in caverns and quarries - and on public art, but too many of the shops are closed, those that are open need a coat of paint, and many of them are inaccessible. We parked beside the station, found a café opposite, then wandered along the main drag. We found Siop Lyfrau'r Hen Bost, new and second hand books, at 45 Stryd Fawr, LL41 3AA, and Julie could get in. While she talked Welsh books with the manager, I scoured the second hand railway bookshelves - yes, I know I am not supposed to be buying any more railway books. They also had a second hand department which she couldn't get in to, but I found a hardback Gerald of Wales Everyman edition dating to 1908 - they charged me the huge amount of £2.50. Happy Peter!



Back to the station and one of TfW's new units arrived to take us down the line. The first line to the town was the Festiniog, which opened for slate in 1836 (and for passengers in 1865). The FR kept a monopoly for decades, and very sensibly supplied all the slate wagons which kept the quarries using them. In 1879 the LNWR opened the Conwy Valley line, the first standard gauge line, and the GWR arrived in the town from Bala and the east in 1882. A proper interchange station was opened in 1982 when the FR reopened into the town. It has to be said that both parts of the station hardly shout "welcome". Guard was welcoming - whether he knew we were coming I'm not sure, and we had plenty of space (I had used the app and booked assistance). The ramp actually hides away behind the loo button.

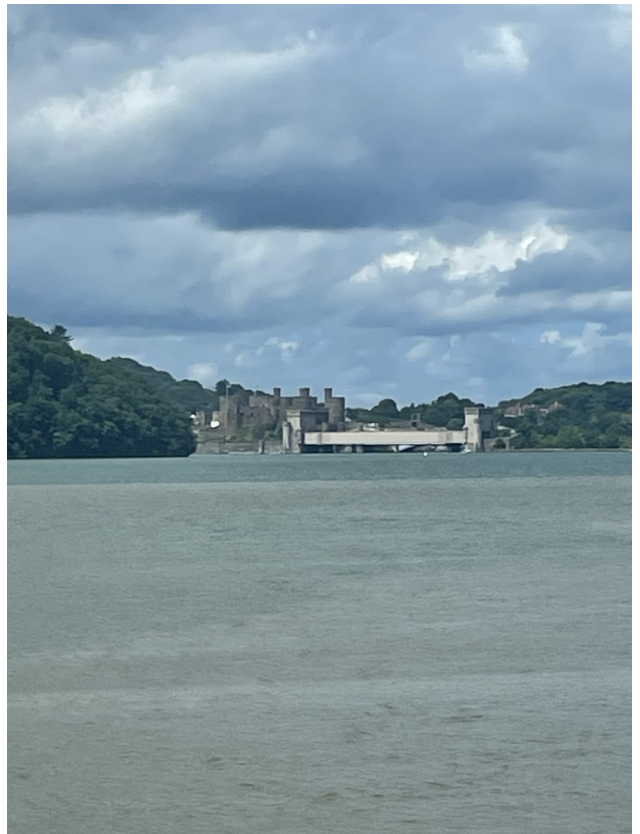


I rode this line as part of the circular ride several years before Covid. When the kids were small we had a couple of holidays at Glan Conwy, the first stop out of Llandudno Junction at the other end of the line - so we knew it quite well. It is rather lovely, and was well used. A huge amount of money has gone in to keep it open, the river floods too often. Still the 'box at Llanrwst and the ground frame at Tal-y-Cafn.



We had a nice wander round Llandudno. The public loo is 50p a time - thank goodness for a Radar key. A couple of bookshops were closed on a Monday. We found a café for an excellent pie and chips - and we brought the average ago down. Wander along the Prom, saying "hello" to the Mad Hatter. Add in a few shops, and





Madam was happy. Then back up the line, though I assume in the Down direction, with a mum and her four boys. I managed to photo the T-y-C gates. A lovely drive back over the mountains on the B4391 - Wales is a gorgeous country. An excellent day out - £9.80 for J with no railcard and £6.45 for me. If only all train travel was this easy! Having had a big lunch, we finished the leftovers when we got home.

