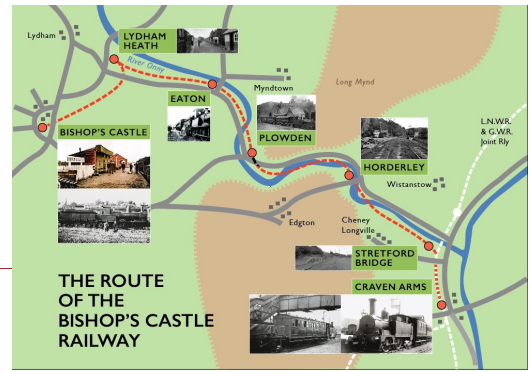


# B.C.R.S. April 2020 NEWS No 40

Monthly Newsletter of  
The Bishop's Castle Railway Society



## From the Chairman.....

“The artist's job is not to succumb to despair but to find an antidote for the emptiness of existence.”

Woody Allen always seems to have a quote for every situation! These are strange times and I wish you all well and that some kind of normalcy exerts itself before too long. I'm sure none of us will succumb to despair but we all need something for, if not the emptiness of existence, then the inertia of spending all our time at home. The Newsletter will try to tell you about things that might amuse of interest and, as always, keep you up to date on BCR matters.

The two last members' meetings have had to be cancelled, of course, but the speakers have agreed to visit us next season so we won't miss anything. In fact we're halfway to having next year's programme arranged already and the rest will soon follow, I hope.

Over the next month or so, we'll also plan what work will be done on the Weighbridge when restrictions are lifted.

So, positivity is the theme and we'd very much like to hear from you with ideas and suggestions about any of the activities of the Society.

John Rimmer

Throughout this edition there are many links to various websites and You Tube videos that illustrate the diverse subjects that fall within the title “Railway Enthusiast”. Hopefully there will be something to interest everyone at this time when we are all stuck at home.

This link sent in by Andrew Wood is of an unusual concept in recreating the Nidd Valley Light Railway and well worth watching. Photo shown right: the real Pateley Bridge Station on the Nidd Valley Light Railway.



It would be great to have something similar of the Bishop's Castle to Craven Arms line if there was anyone with the knowledge to do it.

<https://www.facebook.com/andy.tillison/videos/10157834194325519/>

These links sent in by Jim Trenfield are to the first three instalments of a model railway shunting layout on a piece of MDF about three and a half feet by nine inches by a chap who is self-isolating at the moment.

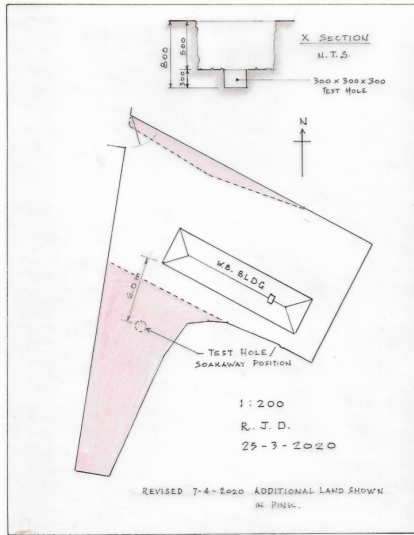
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deO7fKkszwI> running time is 6:23.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1T68jXZpqs> running for 8:06.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljq1hS3ytG4> running for 8:06.

## Weighbridge update

Work party days every second Tuesday have been suspended during the current situation.



Ransfords have kindly allowed us to include the land marked pink on the plan shown on the left allowing us two benefits. Firstly, to increase the gated entrance width in the north west corner from 2m to 3m, thus permitting vehicular access into the site. Secondly, the use of the parcel of land to the south will not only enhance the overall appearance of the site, but can be utilised for rainwater drainage purposes.

It has been possible for a hard working volunteer member to conduct a percolation test which has revealed the land is suitable for a rain water soakaway. This will enable me to work from home and provide a design and supporting calculations for submission to the local Building Control Dept. for approval.

If approved, this area will be a more suitable siting than the one originally considered at the front of the building, not least because it will be easier digging for the volunteers.

Photograph left shows a view of the additional land to the south.



The six new windows are now on site, ready glazed, primed and complete with appropriate window furniture, ready for fitting when site work resumes.

Our thanks go to local joiner Anthony Jones for recreating the original window pattern, also the sponsors whose generous donations enabled them to be made and member Malcolm Reeves for his patience in painting the frames.

**Roger Dalton, Volunteer Project Manager.**



Photo above: Four of the new windows displayed with the original rescued window

## British Railways in the Second World War

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V.E. Day is approaching and, in the present circumstances, unlikely to be commemorated in any meaningful way. So it's perhaps a useful exercise to remind ourselves of the role of the railways in Britain during the war.

At the end of the Great War the railways were in a very poor condition. They had been under Government control, had suffered from a lack of maintenance and renewals and had also seen a reduction in revenue. The Grouping of 1923 had allowed "The Big Four" to stabilise things and make a recovery; by 1939 they were in a generally good condition but were also facing competition from the internal combustion engine. And this, to some extent, shaped their role in the new war. The British Army was highly mechanised by 1939 but the German army still relied on horses for much of their more general transport. So the railways transported troops and equipment within the British Isles; after the invasion of Europe in 1944 the French railways were largely destroyed by sabotage and bombing. The allied armies relied heavily on motorised transport.



After the declaration of war, the Railways were put under government control again.

Even before war broke out the evacuation of civilians started.

From August 31<sup>st</sup> over a million children, pregnant women and other vulnerable people such as the disabled, evacuated to safer countryside locations in just two days. Much of this was by rail and planning for this had already been done by the railway companies. The anticipated heavy bombing did not take place and people drifted back to the towns and cities only for a second wave of evacuations when heavy bombing raids started in the autumn of 1940 - the Blitz - and then again later, in 1944, when Germany attacked Britain with V1 Flying Bombs and V2 rockets. The same planning enabled the British Expeditionary Force,



some 150,000 strong to be mobilised and taken to France; later the railways, particularly the Southern, helped complete the evacuation of 340,000 from Dunkirk in May 1940

One immediate effect of the war was that there were far fewer trains and journeys were much slower and unpleasant. Long distance trains mostly carried troops; civilian travel was discouraged ("Is your journey really necessary?"). Early on, trains tended to stop during air raids but later it was considered safer to continue. Bombing, of course, caused extensive damage to the infrastructure but the Germans never managed to systematically target the railways and the system was never paralysed as the French railways had become. There were, of course accidents, notably at Norton Fitzwarren in November 1940 and at Soham in 1944.



The railways suffered from labour shortages. Despite being placed in a "reserved occupation", many railwaymen joined the forces; 100,000 women filled the gaps.

The overall burden on the railways was even greater than in the earlier war but the greatest increase in traffic was in Norfolk where there were, at various times, over 150 airfields.

The invasion of Europe in 1944 involved all the railways, both in the build-up and the aftermath and was, of course, vital to the success of Operation Overlord.

By the end of the war the railways were, again, in a very poor state. There had been very little investment and they had become increasingly run-down with a huge maintenance backlog. This, and the advent of a Labour government, inevitably led to nationalisation in 1948.

John Rimmer

## The Old BCR Goods Shed

notes sent in by Jim Trenfield

Further to the item about Albyn Austin's layout, here are some details about the goods shed at Bishop's Castle which I noted many years ago and have now found.

Pupils from what is now the Community College made a cine film about the BCR in 1969 and it's on YouTube.

Here's a fresh link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fr9-uA2nw3Q&t=151s>

There's footage of the old goods shed which was demolished a few years later. As can be seen, this was a substantial structure of brick under a slate roof with roof lights. The brickwork was 27" thick in places with the piers and reached a height of about 20' to the eaves. It was a through type with 11' wide arched openings for the trains. There were double doors in the middle of the wall on the town side for access. Internally, the dimensions were some 31' by 47'. There was an office on the station side of the building about 9'6" by 11' internally with access from the goods shed. The structure was in complete contrast to that of the station itself. As the reason for bringing a railway to the town was for trade, the goods shed may have been built first. By the time they got round to putting up a station building for the passengers, might the money have run out resulting in it having to be built as cheaply as possible?



### Severn Valley Railway & Covid-19

In accordance with Government restrictions, affecting non essential activities; the whole railway has been mothballed, with all services and events cancelled until at least the end of May. All facilities including the Engine House are closed, and most staff have been furloughed; volunteers and visitors are excluded from the line.

The civil works on Falling Sands Viaduct were almost complete, together with much of the track relaying by SVR permanent way staff, before the shutdown was announced.

To bring in a little vital revenue, a few staff are safe-working in Bridgnorth boiler works on an existing contract for replacement boilers for three Isle of Man Railway locos (Manx Government funding).

Otherwise the SVR has no income at a crucial time, just after the annual close-down. So an urgent appeal has been launched to try and raise £250,000 to keep the railway ticking over for the next three months. Donations can be made in various ways, including on-line, details are on the web-site; [www.svr.co.uk](http://www.svr.co.uk)

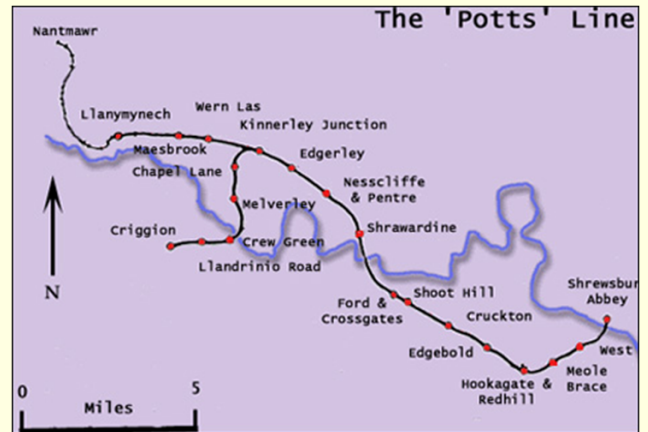
Stuart Dickinson

# The Potts Line

with links sent in by Jim Trenfield

An all too short clip of the Nantmawr branch of the Shrewsbury & Montgomeryshire Light Railway (the Potts) and the Tanat Valley Light Railway track as well as Llanfyllin station. There's a link, though, to where you can buy the full video. Running time 2:09.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzdyQ6girN0>



Here's a link to a short, silent film featuring the last train on the Potts line from the BFI. Health & Safety? It's followed, without explanation, by a train in Derbyshire and locomotives at a scrap yard. It runs for just 2:37. <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-camwell-personal-film-no-129-shropshire-and-montgomeryshire-railway-1962-online>

For more information on The Potts line visit  
<http://www.tanatvalleyrailway.co.uk/test/potts>  
<https://shrewsburyrailwayheritage.com/>

**GRAVEN ARMS & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CIRCLE**



## MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

AT  
LUDLOW RACECOURSE  
BROMFIELD  
SY8 2BT

ON SATURDAY 2nd MAY 2020  
FROM 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

MANY LAYOUTS AND DISPLAYS TOGETHER WITH  
VARIOUS TRADE STANDS.

FREE PARKING & DISABLED ACCESS.  
Refreshments are also available from  
our show **Café**.

### Admission Fees:

Adults £5-00  
Children under 16 **FREE** if  
accompanied by an adult,  
otherwise £3-00.

## And finally.....

If you are really stuck for something to do, you might like to ponder the Railway Studies Examination 2020 paper recently posted on our Facebook page.

*"Compare and contrast The Bishop's Castle Railway with HS2, paying particular attention to the merits of each scheme and the likelihood of returning a profit"*

If any of you would like to take up the challenge it would make a very interesting article for next month's newsletter.

[www.bcrailway.co.uk](http://www.bcrailway.co.uk)

Follow us on Facebook <http://bit.ly/2vCUOt8>

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