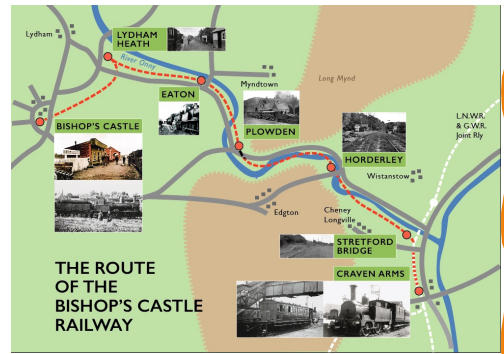


B.C.R.S. NEWS

December
2020
No. 48

The Monthly Newsletter of The
Bishop`s Castle Railway Society



*A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year
to all our Members and Friends*

Weighbridge Project update

The last month has seen a big leap forward for the project. The 2nd fix electrics have been completed, the lights are on, albeit attached to a generator until the meter is installed at 8am on 24th December (yes, Christmas Eve, the earliest date we could get and only because nobody else wanted them!).



Work has started on the rainwater soakaway trench in readiness for the system to be installed in the coming weeks, weather permitting. (Photos left and below).



The units for the small kitchenette have arrived and will be a good indoor project for the winter months. Next year we are hoping to be able to serve light refreshments during open days and, of course, fresh hot drinks will be readily available for the volunteers.



All 120 BCRS Calendars were sold out by early November, apologies to those of you who were disappointed. As it was a new venture we were cautious about the quantity printed and will have a larger print run next year.

Despite the restrictions that this year has brought, 2020 has been a very successful year in the progress of the weighbridge project. None of this would have been possible without a dedicated group of volunteers and the support and generosity of the local community.

Lin Dalton

Don't Stop Me Now

So the ever-changing drama moves on to another stage with the long-hoped-for relief on the horizon. What a difficult year it has been for so many!

Here in Bishop's Castle it's been very busy where, despite lockdown, activity has continued almost unabated. And support from so many of you has enabled this to happen so our thanks go out for that. As we approach what might be the final push (dangerous to say!) we can reflect on the incredible commitment from a relatively small group of people who have got things done, raised money, raised awareness and engaged with the public at large, the community in Bishop's Castle and the membership of the Railway Society.

Having gone through the Why? and the How? we face the What? What will the restored building be? Now, it would be wrong to think that no one has thought of this before so we have a ideas; but in many ways, achieving this is as much of a challenge as all the forgoing events.

Another restoration project I follow talks about "another two years" when asked when it will be finished. That's probably the right response; we might be 90% done this time next year but that final 10% will be hard to complete. So there's to be no let up in the fundraising, the hard work and the engagement with the public. Your support is crucial and is much appreciated.

As for Society matters generally, We won't be completing the winter programme of meeting but will hope to start again when we're vaccinated up to our ears and able to socialise. And we'll push back the AGM to May for better weather and the (possible) avoidance of Zoom!

To you all, I wish a successful and happy Christmas, and a normal 2021.

John Rimmer

Lydham Heath is in the January 2021 issue of British Railway Modelling: out now!

Some of you may remember that "Lydham Heath" originally built by Barry Norman and subsequently bought by BCRS was sold to Simon Dunkley a couple of years ago when the old museum was closed and it could no longer be displayed. Simon has made such a good job of rejuvenating it that it is featured in the January issue of British Railway Modelling.

Well done Simon and thank you for letting us know!



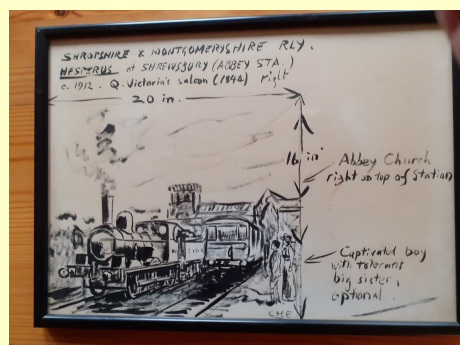
HESPERUS at ABBEY STATION

David Dilks writes.....Many fellow-members of the BCRS will know of C.H.E.'s reputation as an authority on railways, preferably old and picturesque, many of them in far-flung places. He wrote copiously all his life and illustrated many of the books in a distinctive style, with a microscopic knowledge of the liveries adopted by railway companies not only for their locomotives but also for their rolling stock; and described his style as lying somewhere between early French Impressionist and Victorian-Representational.



In the summer of 1970, 24 of Ellis's railway paintings were exhibited at the Portal Gallery in London. 15 of them showed scenes on British railways; the GWR in the 1890's; the Caledonian Railway, 1921; an A4 in the shape of 'Kingfisher'; even the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Railway, of the remaining 9, one came from North Queensland; one from Holland; two from Germany; one from France; two from the USA; one from Spain; and one, an exercise of imagination, from Czarist Russia, c. 1900, showing a first-class carriage (blue), a second-class carriage (yellow), a magnificent Class Ad engine and a monastery church charmingly described by the painter as representing 'an echo of Pasternak'.

I bought his depiction of a 'Royal Scot' locomotive of the LMS, no. 6125, then named 'Lancashire Witch', and asked C.H.E. whether he would be interested in painting a scene at the Abbey station in Shrewsbury. He replied that he would be glad to portray what he termed, characteristically, 'the indigent but heroic Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway'. I asked C.H.E. whether he could insert my wife's mother, who had lived the whole of her life in Monkmoor Road, and her younger brother Leslie into the scene; which he duly did; eventually he decided that the canvas should represent a scene of about 1912. My wife's grandfather, George Dickin, had once put a modest sum into the railway. (Needless to say, this investment did not prosper.)



In Hamilton Ellis's initial sketch; he had originally intended a different composition, but altered it so that the Abbey should be prominent. 'The engine', he wrote after research at home, 'will be bottle-green, banded in black with pea-green lining-out and a vermilion buffer-beam', which he took care to point out 'was a real, wooden, beam.' The ancient (1844) Royal saloon, originally of the L.S.W.R., might be painted blue, its later colour, or chocolate, its original livery and, according to his investigations, more likely in 1912. Although the work on the engine and carriage was largely undertaken at Ellis's studio in Petersfield, Hampshire, he and Mrs. Ellis

motored to Shrewsbury for two days; there he painted not only the church but also, not quite in the correct place, the ancient pulpit and a GWR engine rounding the curve on the viaduct which crosses Abbey Foregate.

By way of illustration to an article which he had written about the railways of Colonel Stephens for 'The Railway Magazine' in 1975, Hamilton Ellis asked permission to reproduce 'Hesperus' as the centre-spread of that month's issue. The image attracted much interest, not least because the Vicar at the Abbey, Father Ralph Lumley, an enthusiast for railways, displayed it prominently in the church. Mr. S.R. Garrett, Assistant Archivist at the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, wrote to the magazine to say (issue of Feb., 1976) that the Royal saloon seemed to have been the personal property of Col Stephens, for it was not mentioned in the stock returns of the S. and M. until 1947. He did concede that it had probably been seen on the line from 1911, while objecting that the brown livery shown in the picture was 'not supported by such records as survive, which all report it as blue.' Ellis, however, was able to show that he had good reason to believe the brown correct.

In the same issue, Mr. R.S. McNaught - whose grandfather of the same name had in 1911 been the stationmaster at Shrewsbury, then jointly owned by the GWR and LNWR - described the painting as 'very fine' and stated that he could confirm that it was accurate to the last detail. It appeared that, clad in topper and frock coat, Mr McNaught senior had represented his two employers at the re-opening of the S. and M. in that year but was allegedly brought back to his home at Shrewsbury in an open, horse-drawn milk float late at night, 'Hesperus' having expired somewhere in the wilds of Wales and being the only engine in steam on the line. 'Any mention of the S&MR in his hearing', wrote Mr. McNaught junior, 'was tactfully avoided for years afterwards.'

Old van in its third ownership.....Peter Featherstone

Following on from the 're-owning' of an iron van to the BCR (B.C.R.S. News No 43) I spotted a Midland Rly 8T van that I built over 50years ago. It was constructed, in the manner of the time, of plywood with Obechi framing and card for strapping. The solebars were cut from some genuine Great Eastern Teak recovered from a local farmer whose chicken house was being demolished - it had once been a classic Victorian 4-wheeler. The van was painted in Midland grey with large MR on the door using a mapping pen and small brush in white Indian Ink.

At a later date it was modernised with another coat of grey paint and LMS transfers from Slaters, who were then producing a kit of this type.

It transpired that Colonel Stephens acquired some of these vans for his Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramways and added a coat of paint and the lettering HMST; No. 24 was one of these. As the model was getting a little tired, I thought we would reflect history and so the LMS transfers were scraped off and the rest of the paint rubbed down. The old Indian ink proved more resilient and remained even showing MR through a new layer of grey paint. There being no transfers to hand for HMST, the pen and Indian ink trick was again employed to recreate the Colonel's acquisition. Curiously, two styles of lettering appear in photographs, a large HMST between the framing on the side and a smaller H.M.S.T. just on the door (note the full stops - rather unusual I think). So, one side has the large letters and the other the small - I look forward to someone proving that this is not prototypical! In their final days on the HMST they seemed to have little paint left and much of the lettering had peeled off with it!



Look carefully and the MR is still just visible after 55 years!

BCRS MG! an update

I have had a good response from railway modellers who have expressed an interest in forming a modelling group at the weighbridge building.

Including myself, this amounts to six individuals which, I think, would be a comfortable number to meet in the weighbridge building.

Once Covid restrictions have eased and we are able to safely gather as a group, I will contact the interested parties and set up an initial meeting to discuss the way forward to formalising a Bishops Castle Railway Society Modelling Group (BCRSMG!).

Stuart Taylor

Jim`s monthly selection of videos.....

Another LMS film to start. This one was made in 1935 at the Crewe works complete with a stentorian commentary and loads of cloth caps. It shows the design and building of a Princess Royal class locomotive. This was scrapped in 1962 having travelled 1.5 million miles.

Running time 39:43 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O0hwBjyw58>

Should there be a lack of snow this Christmas, then there`s loads in this video about a trip to the highest railway station in Europe, the Jungfrau. Sub-titles. Running time 10:26

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCiCO8YNUAw>

So, what could possibly be the link between the narrow gauge Talylyn Railway in West Wales and the standard gauge Mid-Hants Railway in Hampshire? Running time 13:49 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWvPpE_U2R0

Do you ever wonder why there are so many different model railway gauges and scales around? What`s the difference between G,N S,TT and Z to name but a few? This is a link to an article which might explain things or leave you even more confused! <https://www.world-of-railways.co.uk/techniques/model-railway-scales-and-gauges-explained/>

Another one for model railway fans to close. Here`s a project for a shunting layout on a board about 9" by under 48". The point is made in the video that many country branch lines were built for goods traffic rather than passenger services which were added later. Is this the reason why the goods shed at Bishop`s Castle was such a substantial structure whilst the station building wasn`t? It`s also said that many railway buildings were let out to local firms so that would tie in with half of the weighbridge building being rented by a coal merchant whilst the other half was used by the railway manager. Was the goods shed rented out to local businesses as well? Running time 6:52. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkitjV6meHo>

All the very best for what looks like being a very different Christmas this year
Jim

This certificate dated 1st May 1962 presented to Charles Ransford and Son, Coal Merchants for having fulfilled the conditions of the Approved Coal Merchants Scheme, has recently been donated to the Weighbridge Project by Jane Rowson of Bishop`s Castle.

Jane also donated the original desk items used by her Aunt, who worked in Ransfords coal office for many years. They provide an interesting insight into office equipment before the computer, yet not so long ago that it`s still in living memory for many.

They will be on display in the Weighbridge office, hopefully sometime next year.



SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY NEWS

The line is located in a Tier 2 area under the COVID-19 restrictions, so it has been able to continue steaming bringing some seasonal cheer in these gloomy times. The first weekend of the sold out Train in Lights and Santa Specials services have been run successfully, albeit a week later after the English lockdown ended.

There are Festive Services departing both Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, from 26 December until 3 January, seats to be pre-booked as per the "new norm":

- The Flyer, steam train, 10.15am-4.25pm - Kidderminster to The Engine House & Bridgnorth. Available everyday.
- The Explorer, steam train, 11.00am-5.15pm - Kidderminster to Bridgnorth, with an optional excursion to The Engine House or Bewdley. Available December 27th-30th and January 1st-2nd.
- The Adventurer, steam train, 11.00am-5.05pm - Bridgnorth to Bewdley or Kidderminster & The Engine House. Available everyday.

The Pioneer, diesel train, 9.45am-6.15pm - Kidderminster to Bridgnorth return, three times. Available on December 26th (Class 40), 31st (Class 40 and Class 42/Class 52) and January 3rd (Class 40 and Class 50s). Locomotives are subject to availability.

Tel. 01562 757900 SVR.CO.UK

In early November, the SVR hosted locos 46100 Royal Scot and 34046 Braunton, for a contract testing job, unfortunately the Welsh lockdown prevented me from being about to take a photo for you.



Stuart Dickinson

And finally..... Membership renewal is due on the 2nd January 2021.

Anyone who has joined since 1st August 2020 does not have to renew until 2nd January 2022. I know from comments received that some of you appreciate a reminder when membership renewal is due. However, please check whether you have a standing order or direct debit already set up before sending a payment. This year a few of you paid twice and although we really don't mind you paying twice, it did create a bit of extra work for the membership secretary having to contact those generous members.

Membership is £15.00 Single or £22.50 Joint

There are several ways to pay

Direct payments can be made either by Direct Debit or Standing Order

Alternatively if you do internet banking a BACS payment to:-

Bishop`s Castle Railway Society Co Ltd Account No: 01229877

Sort Code:- 40-12-02 Ref: membership renewal

Cheques should be posted to :-

Mr N Downes, 53 Pledwick Crescent, Sandal, Wakefield, WF2 6DG.

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