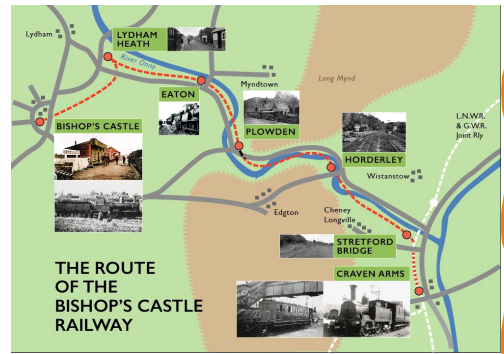


# B.C.R.S. January 2021 No. 49 NEWS

The Monthly Newsletter of The  
Bishop's Castle Railway Society



## Weighbridge Project update

**What an excellent way to start the New Year** – The lights and heating are on and the plaster is drying out nicely.

On Boxing Day the Shropshire Star newspaper printed an article detailing the projects achievements in 2020, plus the photos right and below.



L to R: Roger Dalton, Mike Boyd, Lin Dalton, David O'Neill



David O'Neill at the saw bench



Mike Boyd demonstrating the Steelyard

Here is the link to read the article:-

[Project chugging along to open Bishop's Castle railway heritage centre next year | Shropshire Star](#)

Although the current restrictions have temporarily halted the group work party days, progress continues. Local volunteers will be working on site, on their own, at differing times. In the coming weeks it is hoped the interior painting will be done, the kitchenette installed and various other jobs tackled.

The rainwater soakaway is now going to be completed by a local builder, due to half the team who were working on it, being in lockdown in Wales since before Christmas.

In addition, arrangements are being made for a donated derelict van body to be brought to site from a nearby village hall and some redundant sleepers (complete with GWR chairs) from the SVR.

Open Days are being planned for as soon as restrictions allow. It will be so good to show off the almost completed building, though hopefully not in the snow!



## WEIGHBRIDGE PROJECT FUNDING

In 2021 external funding is going to be essential as there are so many calls on the same small local population for fundraising and this is unlikely to change any time soon. To achieve any chance of receiving funds in the short term, the focus needs to shift from railway to the wider economic recovery such as tourism and post Covid recovery activities, as this is where most of the funding is likely to be.

By applying some creative thinking it should be possible to link the weighbridge to tourism and post Covid recovery activities in some shape or form. One of the main issues we are trying to tackle at this difficult time is how to alleviate loneliness and isolation, particularly in retired men, who may miss the companionship and banter of other male company. There is currently a Government grant available for this particular issue and an idea has been put forward to apply for the funds to erect a substantial marquee in the area to the side of the building. Once restrictions allow small groups to meet outdoors again, this would enable groups such as the newly formed model railway group to meet in a socially distanced environment, with fresh air circulating, yet with some protection from adverse weather. Another use that has been suggested is to have an open afternoon, when anyone can pop in for coffee/cake and a chat. A marquee will also be very useful as an outdoor refreshment area once heritage open days can recommence.



It seems likely that some form of Covid restrictions will be with us for quite a long time, so it is vital that we adapt our fundraising, volunteering and events to do the best we can under the circumstances. A forward plan of activities and publicity for the year is being developed to enable open days to be arranged, or if necessary, cancelled at short notice. Now that the Society has a suitable building, and social media is the ideal advertising tool, this can be achieved with no additional financial losses.



At present we have just one source of funding in the pipeline, The Co-op Local Community Fund, which will run until 23 October 2021. During this time, Co-op members will be able to select us as their chosen cause. The more members who select us, the more funds we'll receive.

To date we have only £25.25 in our pot. This is possibly due to the change in people's shopping habits in recent months. However, if you are not already a Co-op member you can join online at [coop.co.uk/membership](https://coop.co.uk/membership), or by downloading the Co-op app, then select Bishop's Castle Railway Society Weighbridge Project as your charity to support, by signing into your membership account. Money raised through Co-op Membership can be generated anywhere in the UK, as long as a member is buying selected products or services from the Co-op Group.

You can follow the progress of how much you are helping to raise by visiting our profile page <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/45367>

If you have any ideas for fundraising, or how we can connect with others with an interest in railways, railway modelling, or the architectural heritage, or social history of the railway please get in touch with me Lin Dalton: [socialmedia@bcrailway.co.uk](mailto:socialmedia@bcrailway.co.uk)

## Hang On to a Dream

Normally, at this time of year, you'd expect a communiqué such as this to be full of good cheer and optimism about the Railway Society and the Weighbridge Project . Well, writing this on the first day of the latest National Lockdown (a bit of a shock in some ways for us in quiet, out-of-the-way Shropshire) the good cheer is in short supply - but optimism isn't. True, all our activities are curtailed again but we can look back at year that, although presenting challenges, saw real achievement and progress. This has come about by a lot of hard work by a good number of people.

The Society only held two meeting but we've kept communicating with you and membership has remained steady. We seem to be in a solid position financially. The AGM, scheduled for March, will be put back to May when, we have reason to believe, meet at the Weighbridge and celebrate that and the fact that we're still here!

Although activities at the Weighbridge are presently curtailed, planning is not and we have a good idea about what might be achieved this year. I have said before that I think that this year will see it 90% completed; the last 10% might take a bit longer! However, don't make promises .....

So I thank you all for your support and encouragement and wish you all a Prosperous New Year, with the hope that we'll see many of you again soon.

John

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

This archive footage from 1925 shows one of the oddest and largest of railway engine classes, a Gresley Garratt 2-8-8-2T. This one was scrapped in 1956. Running time 1:50

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBRfULXzg94>

This wouldn't be allowed today! Slip coaches, whereby a coach could be detached from a moving train, were common once. Here's the history of them, running for 9:11.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq0aA9RZ1ls>

Now for something to warm you up - a day on the footplate of a 2-6-4T Standard Class 4 Tank engine on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway from 2017. It saw service at both Shrewsbury and Oswestry. Running Time 27:16.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdAC0QAS8XI>

Here's an incredibly detailed model railway layout depicting the beach and railway at St Ives in the 1950s and how it was built. Roll on summer. Running time 8:33

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bye6t9cNdXI>

And finally Just a topical news item about the repairs to the line south of Knighton following recent storm damage

<https://twitter.com/networkrailwal/status/1323216216710926337?s=21>



## FACEBOOK ....Love it or Hate it..... It works for publicity

The BCRS page currently has 442 Followers. An increase of 28 during the recent 12 Days of BCR Christmas, when a different rarely seen photo of the railway was published each day.



The New Years Eve photo (left) showing No 1 at Craven Arms Station reached 4,848 people. Very possibly helped by being shared to Heritage Railway Magazine Face Book page by one of those viewers.

The photo shown on 3rd January of Bishop`s Castle Station after closure (below left) prompted Roy Hatfield to post the same photo (below right) after applying an app to make old photos look modern. He remembers being told different things about the old station by his dad and thinks the colours of the building are very close.



Keith Spencer also commented on the photo "The building was a similar design to Llanymynech on the "Potts". Llanymynech Station (Photo left)

More about Llanymynech Station can be found at [Disused Stations: Llanymynech Station \(disused-stations.org.uk\)](http://Disused Stations: Llanymynech Station (disused-stations.org.uk))

The highest number of people reached in a single post is 5,133. This was a post on 10th December showing the before and after photos on the right and the successful Shropshire Council Building Control Surveyor`s visit to the Weighbridge site.

There were some very gratifying comments on this post such as *"What a fantastic example of conservation work and breathing life back into a building, enabling a perfect future use. A popular project too."*

*"Such a transformation. Well done all involved. Superb."*

Lin Dalton



## Member Mike Wiggins shares his trip of a lifetime to the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad

It all began on a sunny day in June 2017 with a run to Manchester airport to catch a connecting flight to Denver, Colorado, the mile high city. After eight days of enjoying the delights of railroading in south west Colorado it was time for the biggest and best one according to our tour leader.

From Leadville, the highest city in the US and the wonders of Periodic brewery down to Chama in New Mexico to join our three foot gauge train for the sixty three mile trip across the San Juan Mountains to Antonito in Colorado.

Now these guys aren't playing about, our K36 class loco is care worn, no highly polished green and copper of preserved locos as we know it. Black is the preferred livery with white Rio Grande numbers and class identification. A touch of silver on the tender where the rerailling gear is stowed, and that's it. These K36 class were built in 1925 so are coming up to their centenary; I don't think they'll be going anytime soon.



The fireman shifts about six tons of coal every trip over the ten thousand foot summit at Cumbres and down to a mere seven thousand at Antonito where the line used to connect with the main line. This was dual gauge for the virtually level and straight run to Alamosa, the main town in this part of southwest Colorado and the start point of the continuation to La Vita. This is the start point of another preserved railroad, the Rio Grande Scenic RR. This line is still used, albeit infrequently, to transport slurried barley from around Alamosa to the mega Coors brewery in Golden near Denver. The Colorado RR museum is situated across the road from the brewery which is railroad connected for barley in and alleged beer out.

An interesting aspect of the trip on the C&T is the "concession car", this is their version of a modern buffet car. Except you get fresh dogs and burgers, home made or course washed down with San Juan valley brewery beer, excellent too, served by charming locals.

Remember you're on three foot gauge, converted cattle wagon, rocking and rolling its way across the Rockies. The rolling stock reminds you of a clapped out early pacer unit with its bus seats and rough suspension. Lots more character of course with its pot belly stove tucked away in a corner.

No description of this superb line would be complete without mentioning the half way point eaterie at Osier, pronounced Oja. East and westbound trains cross here and there is a purpose designed diner that manages to feed about two hundred in about fifteen minutes. The whole site is preserved sheep loading depot complete with snow shed for the locos, turning wye., loco facilities. This year all trains terminate here due to Covid so New Mexico crews return to Chama and Colorado crews return to Antonito.

To hear your train loco pounding up to the summit with over 36000lbs of tractive effort is a site and sound never forgotten. Not bad for a near centenarian hauling eight cars. The C&T is a laid back outfit compared to the other one that was the continuation of the C&T. The Durango & Silverton is the one you've probably all seen in western movies, yellow coaches etc, most notably in Support your local sheriff's closing scene. However the big diff between the two is very evident if you've been on both. The D&S is rather regimented with strict limits of where and what you can do whereas the C&T is pretty easy going. You can wander around the loco depot but don't climb on the locos otherwise virtually anything goes.

The loco depot in Chama is the main site for loco needs; it has a wheel drop and full overhaul facilities. Antonito mainly does the rolling stock. There was another line from there called the "chilli line" which wended its way down into New Mexico. All in all this was the trip of a lifetime. I could go on but suffice to say the scenery is stunning, the railroad as it was nearly 100 years ago.

## SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY NEWS

The Christmas services were very successful, with virtually all trains fully booked, and with good timekeeping. The new mini-pantomime at Arley proved very popular, so could be repeated again, this year. The Festive Service was a different picture; one day was cancelled due to snow and ice, which was likely to cause undue risks to passengers and staff, the previous one being curtailed. Then the level of COVID-19 restrictions were increased, such that the railway had to close early, before the planned annual shutdown.

### Provisional aspirations for 2021, subject to ongoing government restrictions

- Essential repair and maintenance work only, for the next three months (hospitality staff furloughed)
- The Railway will remain closed until Easter at the earliest (no services at School Half-term Holiday).

Easter Holiday services - to be advised later.

- May until end of September, daily running.
- October - weekend services, then daily for half-term.

then Maintenance period until Christmas season.

### Events

Spring Gala - 15th - 18th April

Spring Diesel Festival -13th - 16th May

Autumn Steam Gala - 16th - 19th September

Autumn Diesel Gala – 30th September - 3rd October

Season Finale Gala – 5th - 7th November

**And finally.....** Thank you to everyone who has already renewed their membership. Anyone who has joined since 1st August 2020 does not have to renew until 2nd January 2022. If you are receiving this newsletter as a friend and would like to join the society, an application form can be found at:- [Join us – Bishop's Castle Railway Society \(bcrailway.co.uk\)](http://www.bcrailway.co.uk)

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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