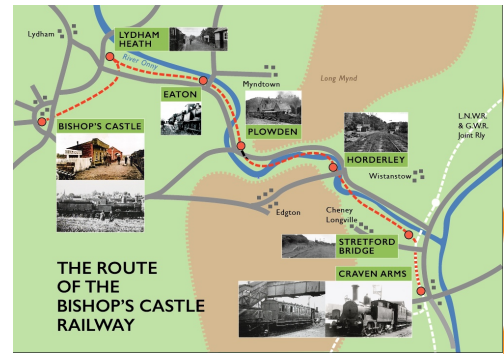


B.C.R.S. NEWS

March 2021

No. 51

The Monthly Newsletter of The
Bishop`s Castle Railway Society



Bishop`s Castle Railway Society AGM

will be held on Friday 9th April 2021 at 7pm.

It will be a Zoom meeting and full details of how to gain access on the night will be included with the AGM Agenda, Directors/Trustees Voting Form, Accounts Report, Annual Reports and any other related documents. All members will receive these documents in the post by 19th March 2021.

This is your chance to have your say on how the Society is run.

Please send any items for the agenda to the Secretary, Mike Boyd by 12th March
email: theseecretary.bcr@gmail.com

The 12th of March is also the date by which all nominations for Directors should also be received by Mike. If you would like to be nominated but can't think who would propose you, talk to Mike (01588 638780) who will be able to advise you.

Weighbridge Project update

Over the last few weeks volunteer Malcolm Reeves, working alone, has been busy lime washing the interior walls and ceiling. The colour used is suitably called "Old Plaster".



Once all the decorating has been completed, it is hoped that lockdown will have been sufficiently lifted to allow small work parties to restart. The first job will be to install the kitchen units.

As we move into early Summer, we hope to arrange some open days and events to allow the public to see the huge change in the building since last September. The transformation is remarkable and a credit to everyone who has worked so hard, sometimes in trying circumstances, to achieve it.



The People of the BCR John Craston

The first manager of the Bishop`s Castle Railway, until 1893 when he was “let go”.

No one quite knows why!An interesting character.

Born in Bolton in 1838, his family had moved to Shrewsbury by 1851, where his father, a hatter, had a shop. By 1861 John was lodging in Leominster where he was working as a railway clerk. Just 4 years later he was manager of the BCR.

The Wrexham Advertiser, in 1868, published a death notice for the wife of John Craston, *the traffic manager of the Wrexham, Mold and Connah’s Quay Railway, in Wrexham*. The Wrexham, Mold and Connah’s Quay Railway opened on January 1st 1866 but was associated with the Buckley Railway, which had opened in 1862, so he may have been working in Wrexham for some time. The BCR officially opened on 1st February 1866 after extensive improvements had been ordered by the Railway Inspectorate. Was John working for the two railways at the same time? A connection between the two lines might lie in the fact that the chairman of the BCR was a George Hammond Whalley MP, of Plas Madoc Hall, Wrexham. Might he have been on the board of the Wrexham, Mold and Connah’s Quay Railway as well?

In March 1869, at Wrexham County Court, John Craston, formerly the manager of the Wrexham and Connah’s Quay Railway, sued the cashier of the company for £20 and won his case. The previous July, he and two others had organised an excursion to Southport by rail and sea but had to pay £20 on the day for the ferry themselves, so claimed it from the company.

The Shrewsbury Chronicle of 25th November 1870 reported that John Norton had successfully sued John Craston for £1/4/6 in respect of goods not paid for. The latter said that he’d not had the bill for the recently delivered goods. It emerged that the case was brought out of spite as the plaintiff had been sued by the BCR earlier.

By 1871 the family were living in Church Street around the corner from the station. John’s younger brother George, an unemployed railway clerk, was staying with them. They had a housekeeper and a servant. He appeared as a Freeman in 1874, 1875 and 1876 on the Shropshire Quarter Session Rolls.

John married his second wife Emily, a music teacher, in 1881 and they had three children. He stood for the Town Council in 1885 and, in 1888, in the South Wales Daily, he was shown as a director of The Florida Tobacco, Fruit & Farming Company!

In 1893 John was “let go”. When interviewed in 1960, Emmanuel Beddoes said that one of his earliest memories – he’d have been aged about 6 - was seeing John Craston looking anxious outside the Laurels in Welsh Street, (photo right), where he’d moved to, as he had been “given permission to go”. The Laurels is a substantial house on 3 floors, so you have to wonder how he could have afforded to live there on BCR wages.



After he lost his job, he moved to an up-market area of London, a substantial house in an attractive terrace, all with porticos, with a basement and 4 floors (think “Upstairs Downstairs”). His father had died in 1889 so he might have been left money in his will.

John passed away in 1919 at the age of 81 at 4 Grosvenor Road, Chiswick, a Victorian semi with ornate bay windows on two floors. His effects were valued at £209 for probate.

A sad note to close on is that the name of his son, John, appears on the Paddington war memorial as he was killed in 1915.

Thanks to Jim Trenfield for his research which has enabled this article.

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



This is a link to a rather sad video about the Swindon Railway Works which closed in 1986 with the loss of expertise built up over generations.

The running time is 7:53

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EINi5fQ2W-A>

The Romney, Hyde & Dymchurch Railway has been going since 1927. It's a one-third scale 15" gauge railway operating in Kent over 13 miles of track in accordance with standard railway procedure. Running time 10:09

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StR9ZVPama0&list=PL88B5320356D95A45&index=29>

A railway needs track to function but it has to be maintained. Here's how that's done on the Mid Hants Heritage Railway. Running time 15:22

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlGdtyJiqN8>

To close, one chap's ten favourite exhibition layouts in O gauge from 2019. You might need to turn the volume up. Running time 15.01

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsM1eVURQyQ>

Recently spotted on Ebay.....

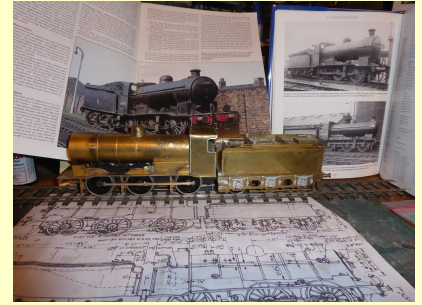
Dapol - Bishop's Castle Railway Gunpowder Van - Limited Edition - OO Gauge Boxed
USED £5.99 (photo right)



Photo left shows the original BCR Van No. 24
You can just see the weighbridge roof on the right of the photo behind the far end wagon.

BCRS Model Group update.....

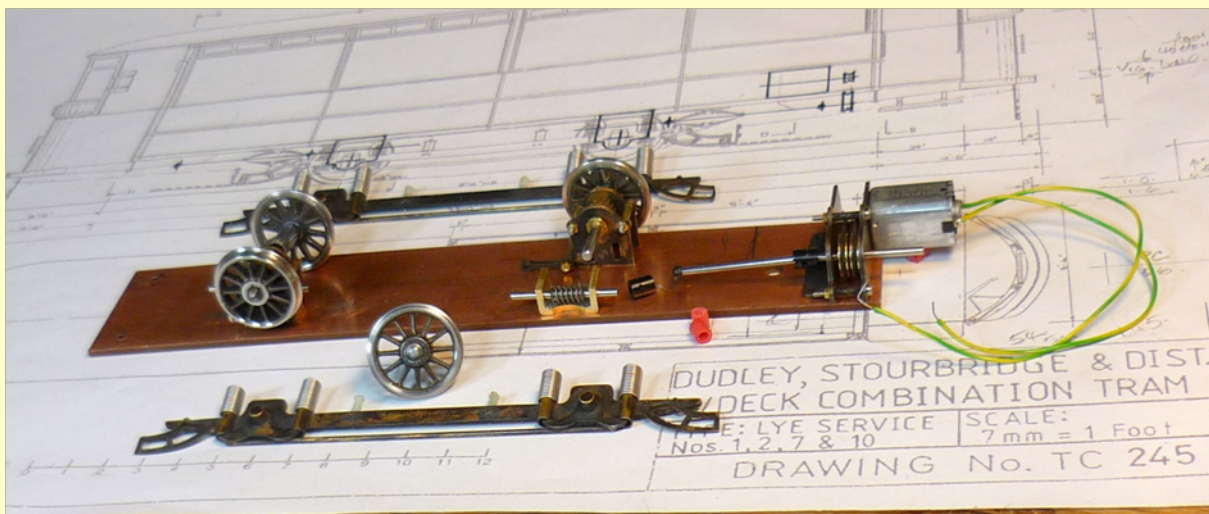
Last month Stuart Taylor suggested that Zoom meetings could be a way for members to further introduce themselves and initiate dialogue, until such times as the group can meet at the Weighbridge.



However, living on the beautiful South Shropshire/mid Wales border has its disadvantages. Broadband connections can be a problem, especially in the more rural areas, so Zoom meetings are not an option. Instead members have decided to circulate their projects to all members of the group via email, that way it will keep the group together. Stuart will then collate project information/photos of work from members for a report in the Newsletter starting in April.

In the meantime, Trevor Hughes has sent in an update on his latest project

"In 7mm scale running on 24.5mm gauge (3ft 6 inch), the chassis components for a 4 wheel tram , Dudley Stourbridge and District Tramways, Class 9. This is development work done for a good friend of mine and uses some commercial items, originally for 4mm scale (Markits spoked wheels, Branchlines 15:1 gearsets , Nigel Lawton belts and pulleys) The brief was to make all of the parts as small as possible so that the entire mechanism could fit below the floor. New axles, turned in two parts with insulation between, this gives electrical pickup through the axles without the need for rubbing contacts on the wheels. The gearboxes and truck side frames have all been made from standard patterns that I have cut for use on a pantograph milling machine. The initial belt drive from the motor gives a 5:1 reduction, but without the noise associated with the use of small gears. The output from this is connected, via ball and socket universal joints, to a 15:1 gearbox mounted on each axle. Each gearbox is fitted with a torque arm to prevent it rotating around the axle when power is applied."



**Anyone wishing to join the group can contact Stuart Taylor
by emailing: satalt17@gmail.com**

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY NEWS via Stuart Dickinson

Following the Government's latest announcement on the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the modified plans are to restart the pre-booked services a week later on 12 April, however The Engine House at Highley cannot re-open until the 17 May, which will affect the itinerary of the services.

12 - 18 April:- Daily pre-booked Services, **then weekends only until early May**

all as detailed in last month's Newsletter.

Spring Steam Up:- 15 - 18 April.

The line up of locos will be; 6960 Raveningham Hall, 2857, 7714 + 813, 34027 Taw Valley, 43106, and the visitor, 2999 Lady of Legend (photo right). Each leg of the three round trips will be hauled by different power. Details of the allocation for each service on the day is on the website.



Spring Diesel Bash:- 13 – 16 May

Three trains per day from Kidderminster, and one from Bridgnorth. Each train will do three round trips with a specific type of power :-

- Train 1, Class 50s - 50007, 50035 and 50049
- Train 2, Hydraulics (power announced soon!)
- Train 3, Sulzers - Class 33 33108 and visiting locomotive
- Train 4, English Electrics - Class 40 40106 Atlantic Conveyor and visiting locomotive
- There is also the opportunity to ride behind new liveried class 17 on a shuttle to Bewdley.



Usual pre-booking arrangements for travel on one train for the 96 miles will apply, details of the train departure times on the website. No intermediate stops.

Takeaway Food & Refreshments will be available at Bridgnorth and Kidderminster

Booking essential for service trains and the events

www.svr.co.uk

Tel: 01562 757900

Details of all the planned services for 2021 are available on a printable leaflet from the website (All subject to the continued easing of restrictions)

GWR "new build" Saint class No.2999 Lady of Legend - The result of a ten year project, incorporating only a few parts from scrapped locos, such as the boiler from Maindy Hall. The first time that it has been away from the home base at Didcot.

GBRf No.69001 - is continuing with trial running until mid-March, when it will leave the SVR for final modifications and painting, joining sister loco 69002.



Following on from the article in the Winter 2020 Journal about the saving of "The Clunbury Coach" here are a few more photographs of the coach's condition when found supplied by Richard Newcombe.



Richard is still painstakingly working on the restoration. It's a time consuming, costly job, but for Richard it is truly a labour of love!

If you have an item for the Newsletter please send to Lin Dalton at socialmedia@bcrailway.co.uk By the 1st of each month

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

www.bcrailway.co.uk

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