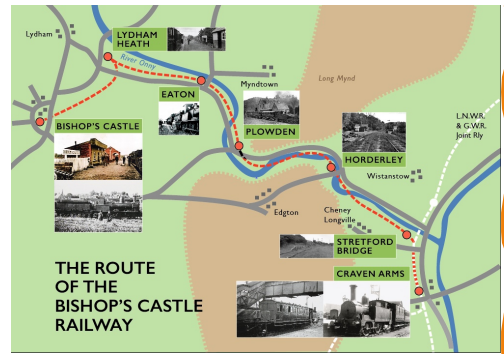


B.C.R.S. NEWS

September
2020
No. 45

The Monthly Newsletter of The
Bishop's Castle Railway Society



The Railway Weighbridge Building
Station Street, Bishop's Castle, SY9 5AQ

Social distancing will be in place with a one way system through the building and a limited number of people in each room

Saturday
19th September 2020
11am – 4pm

View the ongoing restoration work of this original Victorian Railway Weighbridge Office, the last surviving building on the site of the Bishop's Castle Railway Station.

Discover the secrets that have been revealed

Purchase an exclusive Bishop's Castle Railway 2021 Calendar

Reminiscence at Matchbox Models of Yesteryear

Live steam outside weather permitting

**THIS
EVENT
WILL BE
GOING
AHEAD**

**FULLY
COMPLIANT
WITH THE LATEST
GOVERNMENT
GUIDELINES**

Heritage Open Days is England's annual celebration of local history, architecture and culture.

Your last chance to see the bones of the building before the plasterer starts work

Below are links to a few other heritage railway open days around the country

Restoration of the 'NER Sand Wagon' owned by the National Railway Museum - an impostor unmasked
Stainmore Railway Co, Station Yard, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, CA17 4LA

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/event/restoration-of-the-north-eastern-railway-sand-wagon-owned-by-the-national-r>

The restoration of a unique 1902-built North Eastern Railway Bogie Stores Van at Kirkby Stephen East
Stainmore Railway Co, Station Yard, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, CA17 4LA

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/event/the-restoration-of-a-unique-1902-built-north-eastern-railway-bogie-sto>

Open Day - Romsey Signal Box

Romsey Signal Box, Brick Lane, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8LG

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/event/open-day-romsey-signal-box>Tanfield Railway

Tanfield Railway, Marley Hill, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear, NE16 5ET <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/event/tanfield-railway>

Weighbridge Project Update

On the 12th August, that very hot and humid day which was followed by an extreme thunder storm, we had a visit to site from Peter Eggleston from I A Recordings, "Putting Industry on Video - an Archive for the Future".

He spent the afternoon making a video recording of how

the weighbridge actually works.

This involved removing one of the plates to enable him to film in the pit and record the moving parts (photo left) Also, to record the movement on the steelyard when a vehicle is weighed. (photo right).

The finished video will be shown on open days to give the public a better understanding of what is happening in the pit, underneath the plates.

Other videos by I A Recordings can be seen at <https://www.iarecordings.org/snippets/snippets.php>



Less than a week later on 18th August a digger was on site to level the ground at the side of the building to enable the formation of a disabled access into the building.

Despite the atrocious weather David was not deterred, he doggedly carried on and got thoroughly soaked in the process!

The vagaries of a typical British Summer!



Another job tackled during the month was to remove the cover from the base of the steelyard to allow an overhaul of the mechanism hidden within.

(photos right)



Can you smell gas?.....

Mike Boyd explains the latest weighbridge discovery

Work on the weighbridge building continues, despite the difficulties brought about by the coronavirus restrictions. Volunteers have been busy installing the wiring, ready for connection to the power network, and plastering is to start soon.

Ever since the project began, there has been lots of debate about whether or not the building might have had a gas supply. The Bishops Castle Gas Light and Coke Company had been established for some years before the Railway opened in 1865, so a supply was available in the town. Conveniently, the gasworks was only about thirty yards from the weighbridge building!

We are aware that electricity was installed: during the early days of the restoration, wiring (at least for lighting, so presumably power as well) was found in the building. This was fairly modern: the cable was PVC-insulated as opposed to rubber. The insulation was coloured red, black and green, and as the earth colour changed to green and yellow in about 1976, this dates it to 1950's to early 1970's.

There was, however, no sign that gas lighting had ever been fitted, so presumably the only source of illumination would have been oil lamps or candles. During the removal of the plaster from the walls, no trace of gas brackets (lamps) had been seen. If the lamps had been ceiling-mounted, and the pipe work had been in the roof space, there was no trace of this.

On Tuesday, 25th August 2020, volunteers were working outside the building, at the western end. (This is the wall closest to what is now Castle Cars, formerly the Gasworks). Just a few inches below the surface, what appeared to be a length of pipe was found. This was iron, and around 15 to 18mm bore. It was very heavily corroded, so any dimensions are difficult to measure.

Further excavation showed that this pipe was of some length, and appeared to run at a right-angle to the western wall, just to the left of the doorway.

More digging revealed the pipe shown in photo 1 (right). We were able to follow the pipe just over two metres out from the building, and it seemed to enter the building through the wall, below the level of the internal floor.

Inside, one of the floor tiles was found to be broken, just at the point where the pipe would enter. This tile was lifted, and the pipe fitting seen in photo 2 (left) was unearthed. The device seen in the photo is about 70mm in diameter. It has an arrow on the 'inlet' port, suggesting that this is where the gas would enter. This port connects with the opening seen in the centre of the fitting. There is an annular depression surrounding this, which has an opening seen to the right of the centre. This opening connects with the 'outlet' port on the opposite side to the arrow. No further pipe work has been found.....yet. There is also the remains of what appears to be some sort of top cover. This can be seen in the lower left in photo 3 (right). Its shape suggests it was a dome shape, but its function is unclear.

On the inside surface of the wall, above this fitting, there are three small wooden blocks mortared into the brickwork. These are at 370mm, 630mm and 1420mm above the current floor.



From the Chairman..... **The Adventurous Spirit**

I'm re-reading "Railway Adventure" by L.T.C.Rolt, the story of how the Talylllyn Railway was saved and became the first preserved railway in the world. Beautifully written, it must have served as an inspiration to many other schemes.

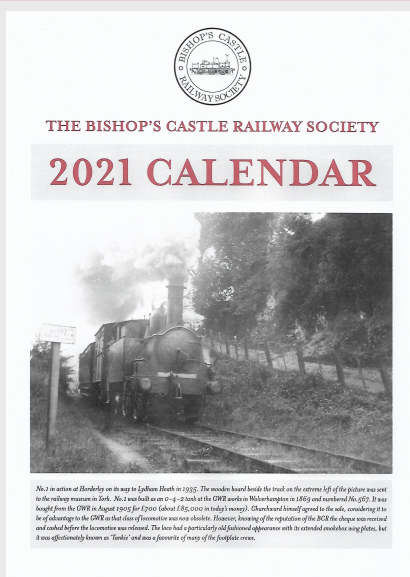
There are one or two parallels between that railway and the Bishop's Castle Railway. Both opened in 1865, partly originating in the unfounded hope of success and prosperity. Both continued through the years, not without problems but quietly, in remote and beautiful parts of the kingdom. By the 1930s both were in a parlous state; the Bishop's Castle Railway, still in the hands of the receiver, and the Talylllyn suffering a decline in the slate trade which it had been built to serve. They shared a declining financial state, worn out equipment and a permanent way that inspired few.

Here their fortunes diverged. Where the B C R disappeared into the pit of postponed debt it had hovered over for so many years the Talylllyn continued, buoyed up by Sir Henry Hayden Jones who had bought the railway and the quarry it served in 1911 and who saw it as his public duty to keep both alive and thus support the local economy. Sir Henry died in 1950 and the movement to preserve railways was born. Perhaps it was this survival into the post war period which enabled this and other preservation schemes to flourish: it is tantalising to think of what might have been had the B C R continued into the late 1940s though it is hard to see British Railways taking it on!

Perhaps the lesson here is that determination, a number of like minded people and a certain amount of local support can overcome what appear overwhelming odds.

We all face an uncertain future: nationally, personally and in organisations like our own. But here, those qualities are present and this, together with the support of so many, enables us to continue positively. So, we may not be able to have our winter meetings but we are taking one tentative step forward by holding an open day. If you can, come and see us; help us return to normality (not the unfortunately named, "new normal" though).

John Rimmer



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To order your copy

Email: socialmedia@bcrailway.co.uk

Or phone: 07553 010 196

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY NEWS

September Services - now that children are finally back at school, some changes have been introduced :-

- (NEW) No trains on Monday or Tuesday.
- Wednesday to Sunday - 11.00 departures from both Kidderminster & Bridgnorth, for the curated day out in a reserved compartment, as in August.
- (NEW) Friday - 9.45 ex Kidderminster, Three round trips to Bridgnorth, with diesel traction for 96 miles!, finishing at 7.30pm. A different loco class each week. (see website, for loco in use)
- Saturday - additional 10.15 ex Kidderminster, for the curated day out. Also, (NEW) a 6.15 trip from Kidderminster, for an evening meal at the Engine House, Highley.
- (NEW) In an open coach, reserved tables for two at £40, (members £32.50), or for one, £20, (£12.50). Face masks obligatory, (as on the main line).
- Pre-booking, recommended, but some tickets may be available on the day.

No trains will stop at either, Arley or Hampton Loade.

October Services Weekends only until School Half-Term Holiday, then daily (details, next month).

October half-term - Ghost and Scream scary trains, from Kidderminster!

Christmas Services -

- As last year, the very popular Train of Lights will run from Bridgnorth to Hampton Loade, but with some extra surprises.
- (NEW) during daytime, six departures from Kidderminster, commencing at 9.30, to a professionally staged Christmas Show in a marquee at Arley. There will be surprise presents for children, and maybe, Santa will be there! Social distancing and face masks, obligatory, except in the reserved compartments.

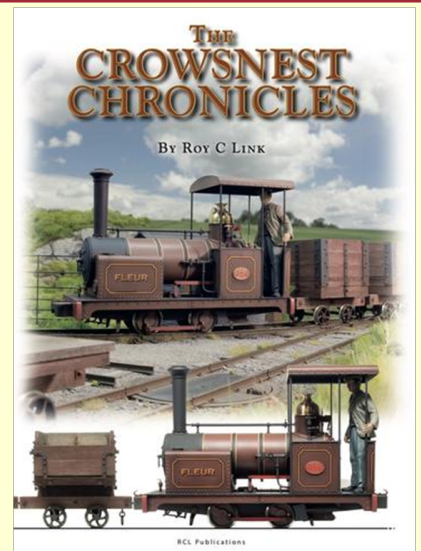
Early pre-booking essential, for both of the above, as tickets are now available, see website for full details. **svr.co.uk** **01562 757900**

NEW Book - Crowsnest Chronicles by Roy C. Link

The author has spent many years devoted to researching and modelling the little known Shropshire lead mining railway known as the Crowsnest Tramway. From its early beginnings as a plate-way, through the coming of steam, closure, reopening and on to final oblivion this railway has weaved its spell. In truth, it is a fiction, though many connections with actuality exist, which may be why it all remains so fascinating.

Most of the book describes in detail, how the modelling of the Crowsnest Tramway has evolved over the years in several scales, culminating in the 16mm scale diorama which is still under development.

A full history of the mining operations and the railway, with references is provided, plus a brief history of the origins of 16mm scale modelling in the UK.



Jim`s monthly selection of videos

This is footage of a mono railway in Ireland from 1931, it says, but the line closed in 1924 and everything was scrapped. Running time 3:31

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

Following on from the above item, volunteers built new track extending to one kilometre in 2003. A replica locomotive runs along it from the railway museum in Listowel, County Kerry. Here's a visit to it and the history. Running time 6:39

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPWgJ6-iHM0>

Next, a LMS training film for firemen. Running time 13:00.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVIr66K_rUA

Many heritage lines are open again although, locally, the Telford Steam Railway won't be opening this year according to its Facebook page. The scenic Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway is operating and here's a link to trains running on the opening day. Running time 6:01

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0oeLXW1_B0

For those missing model railway exhibitions this is a link to one man's favorite ten model railway exhibition layouts in N gauge from 2019. Running time 15:30

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LliI3CQPygU>

STOP PRESS.....

The Railway Weighbridge Project is very pleased to receive £500 from the Shropshire Council Small Market Towns Fund. The aim of the fund is to support innovative projects that will attract visitors and drive confidence and footfall. To fulfil those aims we will be purchasing additional signage and information boards in time for the National Heritage Open Day on 19th September. All the material purchased will be used long term in the building once the site is reopened to the public on a regular basis. Thanks to Councillor Ruth Houghton for making us aware of this grant opportunity.

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Thanks to all who joined in with the quiz on Friday. It was good to see some unfamiliar faces and we had some fun racking our railway brains. It would be nice to put on another event; any ideas, please get in touch with John Rimmer.

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

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

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