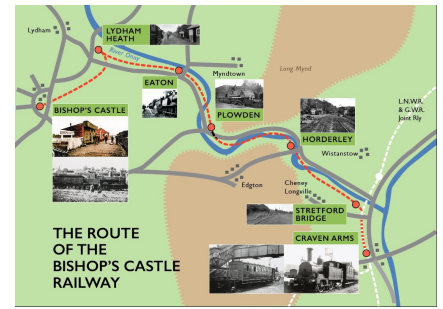


The Monthly Newsletter of  
The Bishop`s Castle Railway Society



## WEIGHBRIDGE RAILWAY MUSEUM

The Bishop`s Castle Alternative Michaelmas Fair day proved to be a huge success.

Crowds turned out to support the event that nearly didn't happen and the Weighbridge received a record number of visitors. By mid afternoon the cake, sugar and disposable cups had run out and there were several trips to buy extra milk.

The photos tell the story.



**Next Drop In  
OPEN DAYS  
Tuesdays  
11th & 25th October  
11am – 3pm**



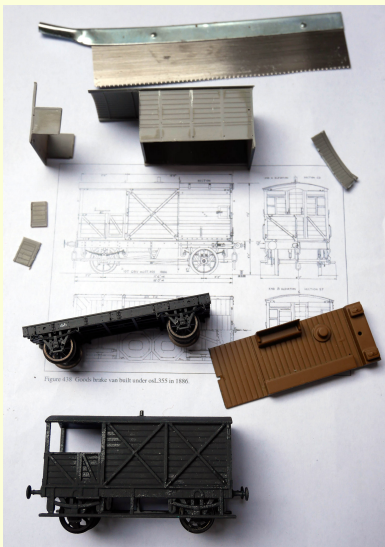
## BCRSMG UPDATE

Following the comprehensive report in September's newsletter, the layout has made further progress. The terraforming department has been snapping at the heels of the tracklaying, wiring and wire-in-tube team. It seems all you have to do is go to put the kettle on and by the time you've come back there's a grassed field full of slightly confused Shropshire sheep wondering what that white stuff is the other side of the hedge (hint: it looks like polystyrene).

The layout saw its first movements over the Michaelmas-not-Michaelmas weekend, and many visitors came away from the end room hopefully a little more enlightened in how the weighbridge fits into the former station site. There were dark mutterings later on, after Carlisle had been carefully packed away, about the unlikely appearance of a Hornby GWR 4-6-0 ... I'm not apologising, it was a (does-it?) work event. (Photo right Not content with the GWR 4-6-0 he's (no name recorded) now running a Standard 5. Disciplinary action to follow.")



Stuart mentioned in the previous newsletter about brake vans. We gratefully received a 3D print of a GWR outside-framed brake van from Albyn Austin. Albyn, who has been supportive of the project with timely advice, spare parts and transfers, also sent me a scale drawing of the type of brake van used by the BCR. The 3D



print is not quite correct for the BCR - it has a timber chassis whilst ours were steel framed - but is otherwise spot on to the drawings. Certainly it looks the part behind Carlisle. While the quest for perfection goes on, this model will gain some brake gear and BCR transfers to allow our trains to run with the obligatory guard.

There is a second brake van in production, from the recent Oxford Rail issue of a GWR Toad. I bought a damaged one for a few pounds and have cut it up (see photo 1), in order to reduce it to the correct length for the BCR brakes.



The more modern GWR vans all had steel angle outside framing, so the model had to be filed and sanded back to bare sides to allow timber framing to be added.

The next task was to scribe the now missing planks and add the timber framing (see photo 2). That's as far as I have got ... It's quite a long-winded process, but as I've never tried doing this before, I thought, might as well have a go.

In the end, I expect it'll work out cheaper to buy a 3D print from Shapeways in Holland. But after the pound has rallied a bit, perhaps?

**David Hemsley**

## ARCHIVES UPDATE.....

Following the closure of the Bishop's Castle Railway, both during and after the demolition of the line, there ensued a wholesale scrapping of locomotives, carriages, and freight wagons, along with the razing of most of the structures at the terminus - that is if by then the latter hadn't already fallen down of their own accord!

So it is hardly surprising that, save for the few artefacts relating to the railway preserved in the Weighbridge, apart from, of course some of the station buildings down the line - those at Plowden and at Horderley being very well maintained - little else has survived the long passage of time which has now elapsed since that fateful day back in April 1935 when the Bishop's Castle Railway finally reached the end of the line.



One of Carlisle's nameplates on show in the Weighbridge. The other survives in private ownership in Bishop's Castle.

It is true that there is a collection of documents now in the Shrewsbury Archives - various plans, invoices, receipts, waybills, and so forth - together with a handful of such items which the Society presently holds and which are to be transferred to Shrewsbury for their long term preservation. However, to be frank, these are but a handful of chance survivors from the mass of such documentation which must have once existed. No doubt the vast majority of this went up in flames on a bonfire lit in the yard at Bishop's Castle following the closure of the line.

The above said, it is gratifying to find that there are several more artefacts relating to the railway which exist in the collection held at the National Railway Museum in York. Of these, is one of the two lattice signal posts from Horderley station which the NRM has, in principle, agreed to loan to the Society long term for re-erection outside at the Weighbridge. It has been in store ever since 1935 and is a very rare survival from off the railway.



The signal in situ at Horderley station

There are also several other BCR items held in store by the York authorities. That their existence has now come to light is owing to a chance conversation which took place at the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway Gala held a few weeks ago between one of the Society's Directors and a gentleman who turned out to be the Library and Archive Assistant at the NRM.

Among these additional items is one of the cab side number plates from off Number 1, a wagon solebar plate lettered "Bishop's Castle Railway Co Owners No 2", and a trespass notice from the railway. There are also some signal spectacles with the glasses still intact set in a cast iron frame which are likely to have come from off the railway and it may well be that they belong to the signal post from Horderley. In addition, there are several carriage handles which may be from the BCR but their provenance seems not to be proven. It has been suggested that the Society might like to consider making representations to the NRM regarding the loan of several of these other items for display in the Weighbridge, as it is understood they are not on show at York (and indeed may never have been seen by the public).

However, what there is not at York is a cache of documents from off the BCR. This assertion would appear to be based either on a misunderstanding or else wishful thinking. Yet, while this has sadly been confirmed to be the case, it is understood that several documents relating to the railway, found in the attics of Plowden station, are still extant. At the present time I am trying to ascertain exactly what these comprise from the individual concerned, and to see if they might be gifted to the Society.

Jonathan Moor  
Honorary Archivist, Bishop Castle Railway Society

An article sent in by Richard Bond from  
the Shropshire Railway Society Newsletter No. 26 - June 1972

SHROPSHIRE RAILWAY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No 26 - JUNE 1972.

ALL STATIONS TO  
BISHOPS CASTLE

by ROGER DAVIES

Highly convenient and wholly inappropriate was the procession of motor cars used to view the remains of the Bishops Castle Railway on what turned out to be a pleasant summer evening on the occasion of the Society's fixture on May 19.

Craven Arms Station, now razed to the ground, did produce a Cardiff-Crewe set and, hard on its heels, the 19.16 to Llanelli which went through its stately 'do-it-yourself' route-setting at the south end of the weed-grown platforms. The party then inspected the old loco shed, almost intact structurally, and then the large locked carriage sheds, where chinks revealed ex GW maroon-painted rolling stock and various explanations were invented for its careful storage.

The first stop on the line to Bishops Castle was Stretford Bridge Junction, of which a good view can be had from the main line overbridge, itself a fine unaltered specimen of early Brymbo ironwork. The junction itself was removed on May 25, 1937 - almost exactly 35 years before our visit - the last train over it being worked by "CARLISLE" in the February of that year. Next stop was Horderley Station (3 miles) now a small printing works. The private entrance to the platform and the recently uncovered burnt off base of the signal post were noted. We did not see the wall, also recently discovered, below the floor of the station building.

At five miles we reached Plowden where the Post Office letter box, (removed and blocked up at Horderley) is still in public use, proclaiming 'Plowden Station.' Plowden was, and is, easily the most imposing building on the line. Bishops Castle Station itself was little more than a shack. The station served Plowden Hall, the home of the Plowden family. The Plowdens were and still are landowners in this part of the world, which probably explains the station's ample facilities and tentative gothic. Plowden station is now two houses.

Eaton Station (6½ miles) is also lived in and, compared with Horderley and Plowden, has been fairly extensively altered. However, in the garden we found BCR box van No 24 still displaying its faded lettering on the side away from the weather. What a solid and distinguished tool shed!

Lydham Heath station's famous layout has been almost completely obliterated by, of all things, a highway depot. However, the footings of the insubstantial buildings could still be discovered by the intrepid, deep in nettles, and the site of the actual divergence of the line to Bishops Castle is still to be seen at the end of the sinister plantation.

A sawmill occupies the site of Bishops Castle station and the passenger station and loco shed have quite vanished. A fine brick goods shed with a timber trussed roof still survives with its little office adjoining, as does the weighbridge and adjoining weigh house. But for a relic of the locomotives of the late, lamented Bishops Castle Railway we had to proceed to the 'Three Tuns' where, with GW whistles and the landlord's licence to brew, there shone, resplendent, one of the name plates of "CARLISLE".

"That's worth a packet," said the Chairman. We all agreed.

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

To begin, a very good biography of Sir William Stanier as related by members of his family with archive footage. He designed the Coronation Class, the Black Fives and many more locomotives. Running time 30:35

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKkTqM5v2c8>

Here`s an explanation of how a steam locomotive works. The one shown is a Standard Class 4 running here on the Watercress Line. Running time 4:40

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PrV8buL87U>

Finding enough space for a model railway layout indoors can be a problem. In this video, an OO gauge layout was built in the garden. Running time 12:22

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLQqI7fOMgA>

Modellers may be interested in this link to where you can download software to design layouts for free on a computer. It has details of just about every track make you can think of including Lego and more. Having selected the track, you can drag pieces onto the screen and join them together to plan a layout

<https://www.anyrail.com/en>

### **`My ancestor worked on the Bishop`s Castle Railway`, a statement often heard when talking to the public.**

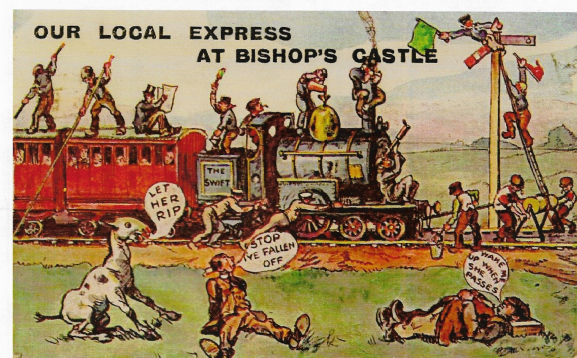
A recent enquiry was from a gentleman, who said he had always been told that an ancestor had worked on the Bishop`s Castle Railway. When asked the name of his relative he said, `Broome`.

Was this the John Broome listed on the 1881 and 1891 Census as being a Railway Guard, living in Church St, Bishop`s Castle? Was this also the same Mr Broome, the guard immortalised in the tale of the `mushroom picking incident`? We will never know for sure, but it`s a good story to tell your family!

For those of you who haven`t heard the tale.....

A commercial traveller who on joining the train asked Mr Broome the guard: `Is this the train that stops for people to pick mushrooms?` Broome drawing himself up to his full height replied `Sir, this is the Bishop`s Castle train`. As the train was leaving Lydham Heath the commercial traveller put his head out of the window and his hat blew off. He called the guard to stop the train for him to retrieve his hat, but the guard showed no sign of hearing him.

When the train reached the end of the line, the commercial traveller complained to the guard `Did you not hear me calling to you to stop the train so that I could retrieve my hat?` `Oh yes sir` said Broome, `But this train only stops for passengers to pick mushrooms`.





# 2023 CALENDAR

"Tucked away in a remote corner of Shropshire, almost on the Welsh border, lie the last remains of what must surely rank as one of the quaintest old railways in England"

- Edward Griffith 1949



*Bishop's Castle Station 1908.*  
Clearly this is a posed photograph of railway staff and others, even the postman, gathered around No 1. There are three members of the Lucas family in the scene - in the background on the right hand side - Thomas Lucas; In front of the engine, second from the left, Thomas (Tom) Lucas and the guard, Will Lucas. Information supplied by Keith Lucas.

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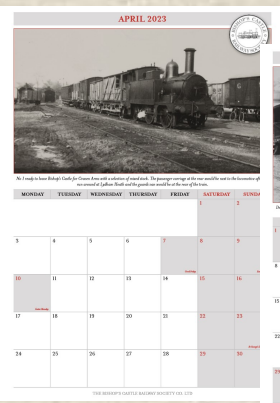
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## BBC Radio Shropshire.

The Society is often asked for someone to be interviewed about the Bishop's Castle Railway. Not everyone's favourite job, it has to be said!

However, member David Etheridge has enthusiastically stepped forward and will be talking to Jim Hawkins on BBC Radio Shropshire on Thursday 13th October at midday.

Make a note of the date and listen in if you can.

www.bcrailway.co.uk

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