



**The Monthly Newsletter of The Bishop's Castle Railway Society**

**WEIGHBRIDGE RAILWAY  
MUSEUM UPDATE**

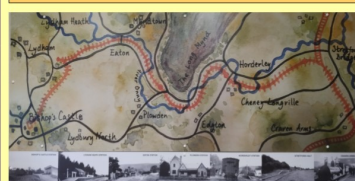
The first special event open day of the year was very successful. The weather was kind to us, it was cold, but no rain, which brought locals and visitors out and about to enjoy the array of crafts being demonstrated throughout the town.



**Weighbridge Railway Museum**  
Station Street, Bishop's Castle, SY9 5AQ.  
**Next Open Days**  
**Tuesdays 14th & 28th March**  
**11am – 3pm**



**All Railway Books in the Banana van,  
£2 each or "fill a bag" for £10.**  
Offer applies to a standard size shopping bag or equivalent



**Bob & Malcolm deep in discussion**

Member Malcolm Reeves's sign writing demonstrations were as popular as ever. One elderly gentleman (Bob) came with the intention of learning a new skill and didn't leave until he had spent an hour or so watching Malcolm at work and then insisted on having a go himself. Photo left.

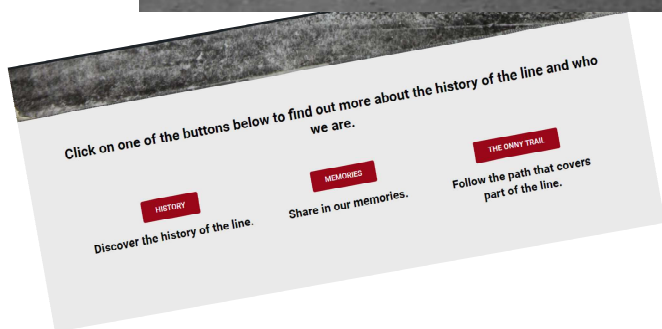
With Ransfords second attempt at gaining planning permission for a retail unit on the land adjacent to our site being sometime in the future, it has been decided that we need to make the site entrance more appealing for the time being. The existing entrance gate will be painted and some large prints of BCR locos and rolling stock attached to the temporary security fencing panels between our site and Ransfords.

The photograph on the right was taken by member David Hemsley during the recent snowy weather. It has been suggested that it would make a lovely Christmas card for 2023. Who knows..... Santa may appear on the Banana Van steps or even in his sleigh on the weighbridge!



**Weighbridge in the Snow**

# THE NEW WEBSITE IS FINALLY FINISHED



The new website has a slightly different web address with an `s` added to the URL, so it is now a secure site showing the padlock symbol. If you have previously visited the site, you may find that you are not automatically taken to the new site, in which case you will need to clear your browsing history and put in the new address.

There is lots of information about the history of the Bishop`s Castle Railway, plus all you need to know about the Society as it is today and what it aims to achieve in the future.

The online shop has a wider selection of merchandise, with an easily printable order form by clicking on the symbol at the top or bottom of the page.



## YOU CAN SUPPORT US IN SEVERAL WAYS

**BECOME A MEMBER.** By joining the Society your annual membership fee helps us to ensure we can meet the running costs of the Weighbridge Railway Museum, the general expenses of running a charitable Society and planning for the future. All details of how to join can be found here <http://bcrailway.co.uk/join/>

**BECOME A VOLUNTEER.** Without volunteers there would not be a Bishop's Castle Railway Society. Our small friendly team welcomes new people regardless of skills or experience. It's not just for railway enthusiasts, our areas of interest also cover industrial archaeology, engineering and social history. You can make new friends, learn new skills and enjoy being part of a team. To find out more contact Mike Boyd [theseccretary.bcr@gmail.com](mailto:theseccretary.bcr@gmail.com)

**DONATE.** We are a volunteer run Society who open the museum twice a month, and hold free events throughout the year for anyone wishing to learn more about the Bishop's Castle Railway and how it changed the lives of a small rural community. To help us keep these memories alive for the next generation, you can make a secure donation by clicking our logo on the right.

Click below to donate



A Pay Pal button on the Home page allows secure donations to be made with a single click taking you directly to Pay Pal.

## BCRSMG UPDATE

The 4mm model of the terminus at Bishop's Castle has continued to make significant progress as the photographs included in this article show. Various tasks remain to complete the layout in time for its first outing - to the Ludlow Model Railway Show on Saturday 3rd June.

David Hemsley has made up a further rake of superb freight stock, all appropriately and correctly lettered, enabling us to have sufficient cattle wagons to run a cattle special. While virtually all the trains on the Bishop's Castle Railway (BCR) ran mixed,

cattle specials were quite a feature of the line and were run in conjunction with the town fairs. The livestock on board usually comprised cattle and sheep. It's assumed most would have been going for slaughter - something which we don't tell our younger visitors (and indeed some adults). Nonetheless, a good number of the animals would have been sold for onward movement to new owners/farms. At Christmastide (and presumably at other times too if the demand was there) the cattle wagons also carried geese. Thanks to David's sterling endeavours we also now have the two brake vans which were likewise such a feature of the railway. Presently he is setting his sights slightly lower by making up the decrepit van body which stood alongside the weighbridge in a position at right angles to where the restored Banana Van now stands.



The huts on the loading dock



Watching the geese go by

Stuart Taylor has been beavering away with the electrical side of things, ensuring that all of the points switch properly and that each of the various sidings are fully operational. There is nothing worse than taking a layout to an exhibition only to find that, because of insufficient attention to the electrics, there is a short circuit, a siding is found to be unaccountably "dead", or locomotives stall repeatedly because the track is dirty or derail because it is misaligned. Roger Dalton is continuing preparing the two trestles on which the model will sit - at a slightly higher level than it does at present. Prior to this, Roger excelled himself with the production of a finely crafted traverser where the various items of rolling stock will be "marshalled" off scene. Away from the weighbridge, Malcolm Reeves is producing a sign to go above the layout so that it will be easily visible when out on tour at various shows.

Meanwhile, I've continued with detailing the landscape where the line runs out into the open countryside towards the Love Lane bridge. As the photographs show, this has included adding in all manner of vegetation, in particular, swathes of cow parsley which, since it is in flower May-June, sets the time of the layout.

Additionally, apart from the cattle and sheep, various wild animals have now appeared in plausible positions on the layout - most of which are to be found on this section of the model. While they are aimed at younger visitors to the Weighbridge and exhibitions, we have already had adults trying to spot the fox, let alone the station cat, a sparrow hawk, a hedgehog, badgers, rabbits, stoats, and a solitary hare. Given the fact that the layout is 4mm in scale, you will appreciate that some of these animals are very small indeed.



Jonathan at work near Love Lane Bridge

Jonathan Moor

## Anarchy in the Banana Van

At the last open day, the two Davids (Etheridge and Hemsley) set about reorganising and tidying the anarchy of the Banana van bookshelves. They knew no fear (except when it looked like the GWR shelf would need extending into LMS territory), and very soon had been able to tame and corral even the wildest OS Nock volumes, which had infiltrated every shelf and corner of the van.



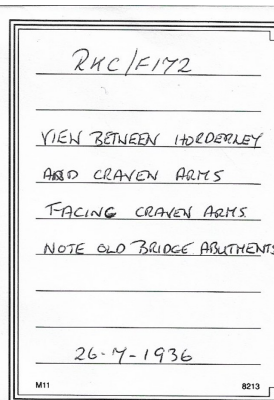
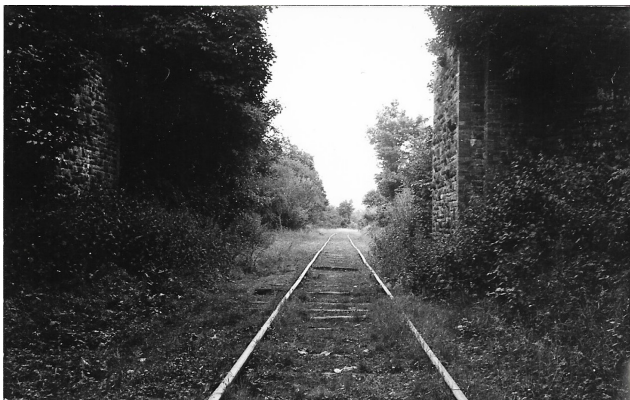
Anyone want a copy of  
**British Locomotives of the 20th Century?**  
We've got spares ...



Fill a bag for £10  
Offer applies to a standard size carrier bag  
or similar

## Can anyone help to answer this question from Jim Trenfield.....

The Board of Trade's Inspector in 1865 noted that there were four bridges over the BCR line. These were built of stone with brick arches. The only one to have survived is Glenburrell Bridge. Another might have been where the A489 crossed the line near Lydham Heath. The Love Lane one was a girder bridge from the photos I've seen. I've studied the maps of the line in John Scott Morgan's book but can't work out where the other two bridges might have been. Any thoughts?



This photograph of an unnamed bridge is taken from an album of photographs donated by member Richard Newcombe and destined for the Shropshire Archives once a quality facsimile has been acquired to retain in the Weighbridge for future reference.



## At the Weighbridge

- Greeting visitors as they enter the site
- Showing visitors around the building
- Demonstrating the steelyard
- Operating the model layout
- Supervising Banana Van book sales
- Helping with the refreshments

Some of you are already aware that Ransfords have said they will not enter into any discussions concerning the connection of a mains water pipe being installed across their land from the main road onto the Weighbridge site until such time as their planning application reaches its conclusion. With a mains water connection being a considerable time away, an enquiry to Shropshire Council eventually revealed that without mains water, we cannot sell refreshments on a regular basis, which will greatly reduce our income. However, we can sell drinks and cakes during five `one off` events per year.

Therefore, it is vital that we maximise revenue at every opportunity especially during `one off` events. It has been proven that by engaging with visitors they are far more likely to make a donation.

Back in 2017, when the idea of restoring the old weighbridge building and making it the Society HQ and a BCR Museum was first discussed, 20 members put their names forward to steward on open days. In 2023 we are all six years older and 8 of those 20 members are now either unable to help for health reasons or drifted away. On the positive side we have gained many new members, some have expressed a concern that they are too new to become involved and worry about treading on older members toes. The truth is there are very few toes to tread on— Please come forward, you will be welcomed with open arms.

Additional cover on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month 11am – 3pm would be very welcome to allow for holidays, illness etc. More volunteers on event open days would allow us to have 4 hour am or pm shifts.

The next opportunity for an event open day is Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 10.30 to 3.30 when the annual Bishop`s Castle Yard Sale takes place. Another potential date would be Michaelmas Fair on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September.

## Roles that can be fulfilled wherever you live

- **Become an administrator for Facebook or the Website**
- **Help to catalogue our photograph collection**
- **Assist the Archivist to catalogue the entire BCR Collection stored in all locations**

Please let Lin know if you are able to help: [mail@ludfordpark.plus.com](mailto:mail@ludfordpark.plus.com) or call 07553 010196  
With sufficient volunteers coming forward; we can start to plan the future with confidence.

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

Here are memories of the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway which ran from Bath to Bournemouth with a branch to Burnham-on-Sea. It closed in 1966, another victim of Dr Beeching`s axe. Running time 21:16

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhrS\\_jR3U3o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhrS_jR3U3o)

This a look around the Railway Museum at York before a major redevelopment began. Running time 10:29. Read more here <https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/2025>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjVSJ3heiZo>

A huge amount of work has gone into the building of this OO gauge layout in someone`s spare room. It`s set in the 1960s on the Southern Region. Running time 10:35

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

## There`s nothing new about inflation..... as Jim found out

The seizure of part of the line by the bailiffs in 1877 led to price rises in Bishop`s Castle. Coal alone rose by 10/- per ton. It was reported on 25 April that nearly all the coal brought up from Craven Arms on the night the "law representatives" were caught napping had been sold. Mr. George Young from Minsterley used a traction engine to haul coal to the town. He couldn`t unload it at the station though as someone had secured the gates to the coal wharf. He had to find somewhere else to sell it much to the chagrin of the local coal merchants no doubt!

## Bishop`s Castle Railway Society Annual General Meeting 2023

Friday 14th April 2023 @ 7pm

at Enterprise House, Station Street, Bishop`s Castle, SY9 5AQ

All members are cordially invited to the first A.G.M. in person since 2020 which will be held at this new venue for the Society. It has plenty of parking space and a light, comfortable, warm room. The entrance in an evening is at the right hand side of the building, with a lift for those who cannot manage the stairs.

Refreshments will be served after the AGM.

Followed by a talk from Peter George about Daniels Mill, a working water mill used for milling flour, located near Bridgnorth. The mill has the largest cast iron waterwheel in England, spanning a 38 feet diameter.



<https://bcrailway.co.uk>



[Bishop's Castle Railway Society | Facebook](#)

If you have an item for the Newsletter please send to Lin Dalton at [mail@ludfordpark.plus.com](mailto:mail@ludfordpark.plus.com) by the 1st of each month

You can opt out of receiving this newsletter at any time by emailing:- [mail@ludfordpark.plus.com](mailto:mail@ludfordpark.plus.com)

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