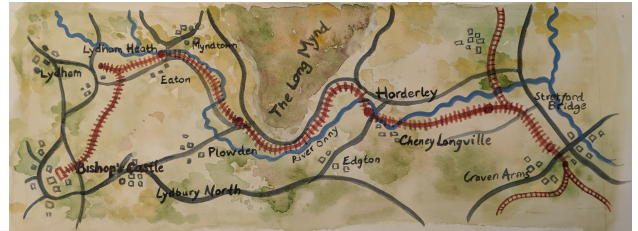


B.C.R.S. September 2023

NEWS

No. 81



The Monthly Newsletter of The Bishop's Castle Railway Society

WEIGHBRIDGE RAILWAY MUSEUM

MICHAELMAS FAIR

Another successful open day last Saturday with lots of visitors. The layouts in the marquee proved popular as did the military vehicles from the Historic Military Vehicle Club.

The refreshments alone raised over £300, with over 100 drinks and a similar amount of cake being served, and Ellie's special delivery of sausage rolls were quickly snapped up. Thanks go to the ladies in the kitchen; Ellie, Hilary, Christine and Sarah.

The museum continues to open on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. The next dates are 26th September and 10th October 11am – 3pm.





**Sir Nigel Gresley
photographed at
Stretford Bridge
going North
on 31st August 2023**
Photograph David Hemsley

However it seems that Sir Nigel failed at Coton Hill sidings, so the twelve coaches were hauled by a diesel for the return journey.

The letter on the right was recently spotted for sale on Ebay for £14.99 + £1.55 postage.

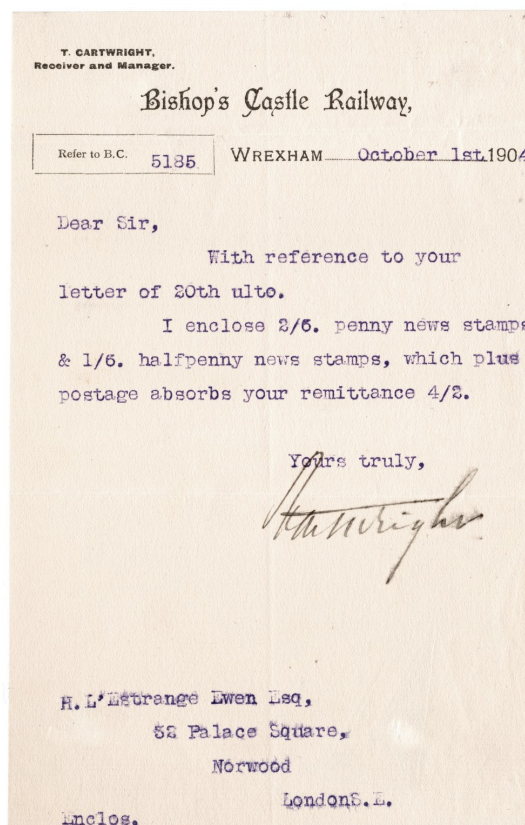
This prompted David Hemsley to do a quick search for H L Estrange Ewen and discovered a fascinating insight into the life of this dealer in postage stamps.

Below are some excerpts, the full story can be found at <https://norwoodstreethistories.org.uk/person/lestrange-ewen-herbert-1876-to-1912/>

On the 1911 Census for 32 Palace Square, he was a Lodger (single aged 34) and a Managing Director of Stamp Importers Limited Company. He was a British Stamp Dealer and Philatelist, originally in Swanage and later in Norwood. He was an authority on railway stamps.

In 1914 the Evening News stated that he was selling German stamps overprinted Belgian and accused him of trading with the enemy. Trading with Germany and its allies had been illegal in Britain since the beginning of World War I under the Trading with the Enemy Act 1914. Ewen replied in EWSN for 30 January 1915, that the stamps had been brought to England by two Belgian soldiers as their only asset and they had obtained them from a German official in Brussels. Official approval for the sale had been obtained from the British Home Office.

In 1949, his collection of railway letter stamps for the period 1891 to 1912 with sheets, proofs, and covers was given to the British Museum by his sister, Mrs Clement Williams and is now in the British Library Philatelic Collections as 'The Ewen Collection'.



Of Gas But No Gaiters

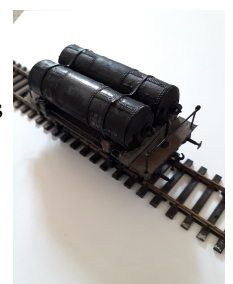
Now, it is well known that the Bishop's Castle Railway (BCR) did not normally run trains at night: the infamous relief train despatched from Craven Arms, loaded with all manner of supplies, destined for the beleaguered citizens of the town, following the severing of the line in the late 1870s in the then ongoing acrimonious legal dispute with Mrs. Beddoes, being one noted exception.

So, the lighting of the BCR's motley collection of decrepit carriages was not something which is likely to have occupied the minds of the General Manager or staff to any great degree, if indeed at all. This said, given the age of the Company's carriages, they would originally all have been lit either by oil lamps or else with gas lighting which was the norm for passenger rolling stock in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was the presence of gas cylinders secured beneath the floors of wooden bodied coaches which played such a deadly part in the Quintinshill Disaster in May 1915 - the worst accident ever to occur on the railway system in the British Isles. In the accident, the carriage gas cylinders ruptured and were set on fire by burning coals from the engines' fireboxes. The ensuing conflagration all but consumed the wreckage of the three passenger trains concerned, in which some 226 people were killed and 246 injured - mainly soldiers from the Royal Scots Regiment on their way to the Dardanelles.

Of course, there was a gas supply close at hand to the station in Bishop's Castle, adjoining the Weighbridge, this in the guise of the buildings of the Bishop's Castle Gas Light & Coke Co. which had been established in 1858, the gasworks both supplied and erected by one George Bower of St. Neots, in Huntingdonshire. The gasworks were later leased by Arthur V. Greenham in 1915 and a Tully complete-gasification plant installed there, it is said, c.1921. The Tully system of producing what we would call town gas had been developed by the delightfully named Cornelius Britiffe Tully, a London born gas engineer, and began commercial operations in 1919. This being so, the equipment installed at Bishop's Castle must have been one of the earliest examples of a Tully plant in the country. It is believed that the only surviving building of the old Bishop's Castle gas works, which still stands adjacent to the gate to the Weighbridge yard, was possibly an early retort house - where coal was heated before being turned into gas. However, just like the BCR, despite its grand sounding name, the Bishop's Castle Gas Light and Coke Company went bankrupt, leaving the town without a gas supply - which may explain why, rather late in its life, the railway station dispensed with its ornate gas lamps (photo right) and installed a couple of electric lights on the station valance. The light from them must have been pretty abysmal but they appear in all the shots of the station building taken in the 1930s.



Yet, a gas supply for carriage lighting was not always so immediately to hand as it had been in Bishop's Castle. So, the Great Western Railway (which loaned coaches to the BCR) came up with a novel way of supplying gas to its own carriages in out-of-the-way places. The photograph on the right shows a "CORDON", a wagon which I have just built for my own model railway - to the same scale (4mm) as Bishop's Castle c.1932. CORDON was the telegraphic code given by the Great Western to its gas tank wagons which came in several diagrams (or types). Inter alia, a whole raft of odd sounding telegraphic names was given by the Great Western to its freight stock - MINKS, BEAVERS, SALMONS and even TOADS! Mounted on old carriage underframes (the BCR could have helped the Great Western out with these and thereby raised some much needed money!) with, in this instance, two longitudinal, circular gas tanks and their associated pipework mounted side by side, the Great Western attached CORDON wagons to passenger trains and sent them off as required to various remote parts of its far flung empire to keep its elderly coaches supplied with gas. While there are no reports of these wagons ever being involved in any accidents, quite what today's Railway Inspectorate would make of the practice, when the carriage of hazardous loads is strictly controlled, is anyone's guess!



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

This one is from 1966 and is about the transition from steam to other forms of motive power and the effect on railway staff and passengers. Running time 21:05

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

This is what a 5 hour journey on a Chinese bullet train is like - if you book the most expensive seat in business class for £150. Running time 9:09

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2SY-xN3sd8>

The Hornby Dublo model railway system was discontinued in 1964 but trains and stock are still lasting well and there are many collectors. Here are some impressive layouts, although some of the engines seem to be running on steroids! Running time 20:57

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVAejs0CuEo>

Bishop`s Castle Weighbridge
Railway Museum

New for 2023



*Christmas
Cards*

**2 designs
£2.50 each
Or 3 for £5**

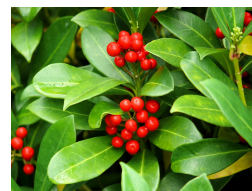
Available from the
Weighbridge on the
2nd and 4th Tuesday
each month
11am – 3pm



*The Weighbridge Railway Museum in the snow
Photograph by David Hemsley*

Or to order by post complete the order form at
<https://bcrailway.co.uk/shop-online/>
Or contact Lin: mail@ludfordpark.plus.com
phone: 07553 010196

£3.00 each or 3 for £6.00 incl.



For a change this year, instead of a calendar we have an exclusive Christmas card prompted by a photograph taken by David Hemsley in March of this year during an unexpected late snow fall. There are two designs to choose from, you can have all the same or a mixture of both.

Beautifully produced and packaged by James Sherratt and his team at Craven Design and Print at a cost price that enables the majority of the sale price to go towards running the museum. Thank you James.

<https://www.cravendesignandprint.co.uk/>

<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 by the 1st of each month

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

Registered Company
No. 05520291
Registered Charity
No. 1111918