



B.C.R.S. December
NEWS
2023
No. 84



*A Merry Christmas &
A Happy New Year to
all our members*

**DECEMBER
OPEN DAYS**

Tuesday 12th

Wednesday 27th

**Not Tuesday 26th which is
Boxing Day**

*Christmas at
The
Weighbridge*



*Tuesday 12th December
11am—3pm*

**Bishop`s Castle Railway layout running with Carlisle & Tankie
Second-hand Railway books
Tea, Coffee & Mince pies**



Weighbridge Railway Museum, Station Street, Bishop`s Castle, SY9 5AQ

**Want to escape
the Christmas Mayhem
for an hour or two?**



**The Weighbridge Railway
Museum is open
WEDNESDAY 27th December
11am—3pm**

- Hot Drinks**
- Homemade Cakes**
- 2nd hand Railway Books**



From your Secretary.....

Well, that's another year steaming off into the distance! It seems like only a few weeks since we were planning for the 2023 AGM, and here we are thinking about the 2024 meeting!

I know that many members have been able to get to the Weighbridge over the last 12 months and it really is good to meet people, to chat and to get ideas. We have managed to keep up with our (self-imposed) commitment to open the building for visitors two days per month, but recently this has become a little difficult due to the shortage of volunteers.

This seems to be a problem that is affecting all sorts of organisations at the moment, and many groups are reporting that numbers are down. As well as it being more difficult to find people able and willing to act as 'staff' for a day, there is a shortage of volunteers for various committees and to take on roles as Officers in groups and clubs. We have had to resort to a professional Treasurer for the last financial year, as we were not able to find a volunteer.

Directors felt that this was a matter that needed to be properly controlled and therefore we needed to pay for the service. Thankfully, we do now have a new volunteer for the role, so we are able to reduce the cost of keeping our accounts in order. The Charity Commission are very quick to challenge (quite rightly) any Charity that shows signs of poor financial management.

As for the Weighbridge building itself, most of the 'pick-and-shovel' work has been finished now that the French drain has been installed at the rear and one side. Hopefully, this will reduce the level of wet soil against the walls and make it a little drier inside.

We were hoping to be able to have mains water connected, but our landlords have plans to develop the site between the weighbridge and the road and are reluctant to let us dig pipe work in until they are further forward with their scheme. That has meant that we are restricted in our ability to offer tea, coffee and cakes when we are open, but we manage by bringing plenty of fresh water in with us. This is a useful source of income for the Society.

The Model Group goes from strength to strength and the members have built a superb model of the Bishop's Castle Railway yard circa. 1932. This allows visitors to have a clear picture of how it all looked and the detail is simply remarkable. There's even a station cat!

We were happy to be granted £750 by the Town Council a few months ago. This is to allow us to continue with the work to digitise our records and photographs and be able to make them available for reference via the internet. We have lodged material with the County Archives at Shrewsbury, where it can be stored properly. Material is still coming to light: a local person recently handed us two Invoices from around 1889, for transport charges on the BCR. Stuff is still out there to be found!!

Newsletters are likely to become slightly less frequent in future as there is often a shortage of items to circulate. It began back in the days of frantic building work to save the weighbridge and its building, but now that has been mostly achieved, there is less to report on a regular basis.

Do please call and see us if you can; second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Well, it is at present, but that depends on whether we can get the volunteers...Mike Boyd, Secretary.

Modelling Matters.....

During the last few months, further work has continued so as to ensure that *Bishop's Castle 1932* was ready for the special opening of the Weighbridge on Saturday 2nd December.

The most important news is that we now have on the layout working models of both *Carlisle* and *Number 1 (Tankie)* both of which have been built for us by Andy Jones, a member of the Society from Lewes in Sussex, and who is, by trade, a professional model maker. Those of us responsible for *Bishop's Castle c.1932* owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for all of his hard work. Neither of the kits of the two locomotives were straightforward to put together and would have defeated anyone not possessing Andy's experience, patience, and indefatigability. The accompanying photographs show the excellent job he has done.

The black and white photograph calls for comment. It is a staged recreation on the model of a photograph taken in 1930s with *Carlisle* and *Number 1* posed together presumably for the benefit of a photographer with, behind the locomotives on the loading wharf siding, a coal wagon belonging to Gwilt's who had set up the timber and coal yard on the station site back in the 1870s shortly after the opening of the railway.

Several people have commented on *Number 1* not being in evidence, so a word on this is in order. Whilst we would all have liked to have had *Number 1* operational a very long while ago, a major supplier let us down very badly with the on/off availability, then complete non availability, of the kit of the locomotive concerned and which is still not back in production. However, to make the layout as authentic as possible, along with *Carlisle*, it was imperative that we had a working model of *Number 1* as, along with *Carlisle*, these two locomotives were the only ones working on the Bishop's Castle Railway in the 1920s and 30s. Fortunately, Albyn Austin very kindly donated the necessary parts of an unmade kit and the result is as you see. *Tankie* was said to have ceased working in 1933 but there is documentary and photographic evidence of him very much in use as late as 1934 - before the well known photograph of the engine standing awaiting scrapping at Plowden in 1935.

We are now booked in to attend two model railway exhibitions next year - at Shrewsbury and Stafford - at which time both engines will definitely be running - which will enable us to present the layout (and thus the Society) to a very large audience indeed which is in part why the model was constructed in the first place. Further details of these exhibitions will follow in due course - one in June and the other in September 2024. **Any help with transporting the layout to and from these venues and its exhibition at them will be most gratefully received.** At Shrewsbury we have been allocated a stand for the Society as well - as we were at Ludlow - and once again **help in running this will be needed.**

If you can help please contact – bcrscontact@gmail.com and mark it for the attention of Jonathan Moor.



Modelling Matters continued

Closer to home, Stuart and his merry band of helpers of David Etheridge and David Thornton have been hard at work improving the couplings on the rolling stock. This has involved fitting additional Sprat and Winkle fittings to some of the carriages and wagons so as to aid their coupling and uncoupling - assisted by "invisible" tiny magnets buried between the sleepers of the permanent way. It is a laborious process, but Stuart and co. have all to hand and are now so well versed in doing what is necessary that they could set up making these special couplings as a lucrative sideline! At the same time, I have been checking all the rolling stock to ensure that the wheels run freely in their bearings.

On the scenic front we were missing a defining structure adjoining the Weighbridge building - an old grounded van body which was situated more or less where the Banana Van now sits although in line with the building as opposed to standing at 90 degrees to it. David Hemsley has rectified this and the accompanying photograph shows this now in situ on the layout, thus making Bishop's Castle c.1932 as accurate as possible in the space we have available to us.



I have also been undertaking further work on the first three structures for Lydham Heath - see photograph - necessary for the future extension of the model down the line to the station of the same name. These comprise the station building, goods shed, and yard hut. The paint scheme of the first is as it was recorded, although one suspects that the



stations on the line were repainted in whatever colours the railway company had to hand. At this time paint was mixed by hand so, whatever the intended colour, the shades would have varied. Compared to the Bishop's Castle goods shed, the one at Lydham Heath was very small, while the tiny hut, little more than a sentry box, stood at the opening to the yard at Lydham Heath. Does anyone know the purpose it served? The station toilets, housed in a corrugated iron shed (probably earth closets as I doubt there was a water supply) at the west end of the platform, and a permanent way hut, as well as the haystacks - which were such a feature of the line and situated at the junction leading onto the Bishop's Castle branch - have yet to be started. While none of the buildings at Lydham Heath survive, it was said that the station building went off to Chester/Cheshire for use as a cricket pavilion.

Jonathan Moor

LYDHAM HEATH STATION where *This meant all trains had to stop and, as Lydham Heath was our station, this was all to the good. It consisted of a short platform, a tin shack, and a set of buffers up against the hedge, which bordered the main road. This was the branch line station from which, in time long past, my grandfather's forgotten London guests had had to be retrieved. There was no house in sight; no form of transport; indeed hardly any road traffic. In railway terms there were awkwardnesses; all trains had to include goods and cattle as well as passengers; sometimes it would be the cattle rather than the passengers who finished up opposite the Lydham Heath platform; and in my grandmother's day, Cadwallader had had on occasions to shout in broadest Shropshire to the driver; 'hitch up the train a bit, Harry. Mrs More canna' get in'.*

Extract from the book "A Tale of Two Houses" by Sir Jasper More

Why I Volunteer

An article about the Weighbridge Project appeared in the December issue of Trakside Magazine
<https://traksidemag.co.uk/current-issue>

Thanks to Gary Essex for arranging this article
<https://www.facebook.com/randomrailways/>



Following the report in last month's newsletter about the BCR Ticket on eBay Jim Trenfield shares his thoughts.....

"The ticket that David Hemsley spotted on eBay sold for £26. Which Newport was it though? Both Newport in Shropshire and Newport in Wales had railway stations. The former was on the old Wellington to Stafford Line and the latter is still a stop on the Cardiff to Manchester Piccadilly route calling at Shrewsbury and Craven Arms. I can't see that anyone travelling to Newport in Wales would go via Shrewsbury when they could catch the train at Craven Arms unless they needed to. However, John Craston, the BCR's first manager, had connections to Newport in Wales.

In December of 1888, several newspapers reported on the launch of "The Florida Southern Tobacco, Fruit and Farming Company Ltd". The Managing Director was to be Wm Beddoes. The other directors were named as Mark Mordey, a shipbuilder and owner of **Newport**; John H Carney, a ship owner also of **Newport**; Issac Llewellyn, contractor to the **Newport** Dock Railway and John Craston, General Manager of the Bishop's Castle Railway! Then, I found a link between John and the above Wm Beddoes. The 1891 Census shows that visitors to the Craston household were Elizabeth Annie Beddoes and her two daughters. Elizabeth was the wife of William Beddoes who'd been the Chief Clerk of the L & NW R according to the 1881 Census but he was staying at his mother-in law's house in South Wales at the time of the 1891 Census. Was that unused ticket his? Did something come up to prevent him from coming to Bishop's Castle with his family? Another BCR mystery!"

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

Britain`s oldest operational steam locomotive is No 20 Furness Railway built in 1863 and re-stored by the Furness Railway Trust. It features in this video of August Bank Holiday 2023 events at the Pontypool & Blaenavon Steam Railway. Running time 19:02

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7Giu1Agw2A>

One for those of you into model railway layouts. It`s surprising what you can do with cat litter and some paint! Running time 8:59

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1M51m1-XM-4>

Finally, courtesy of the BFI, here`s a YouTube link to "Snow", an iconic film from 1963, showing trains running despite more snow than we`ve been used to lately. Running time 7:46

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl4pJwcE7JI>



A Black 5 Christmas Special photographed by David Hemsley crossing Sheet Road Bridge in Ludlow on Saturday 25th November.

Membership renewal

For members who joined prior to 2022 membership renewal is due on the 2nd January 2024. Anyone who has joined since 2022 will have joined under the new system of renewal being due annually on the date of joining.

Membership is £20.00 Single or £25.00 Joint

You can renew either by Standing Order (**Please check that you have updated your standing order**) or if you do internet banking a BACS payment can be made to: Bishop`s Castle Railway Society Co Ltd –

Account No: 01229877 Sort Code: 40-12-02 Ref: Name & Membership number

Both of these methods are free to the Society. Cheques and cash are still accepted, but they do incur banking charges when paying into the bank account.

If a cheque is your only option, please post to: - Lin Dalton, 37 Mary Elizabeth Road, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1LP.

Thank you

Lin

<https://bcrailway.co.uk>



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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

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