

BODMIN AND WENFORD RAILWAY

Don Bishop

Most of our heritage railways today try to recreate the past in their local area to some degree. It is possibly easier for some than others, depending on what survives. But the Bodmin and Wenford Railway has managed to recreate the railway history of its locality to a much greater extent than most others and has indeed been labelled as the "National Railway Museum of Cornwall". The line has a superb collection of locomotives that once worked in Cornwall, including one of the famous Beattie Well tanks, a T9 and a 55xx Prairie tank from the steam era and Class 37 & 50 diesels from more recent times. This book shows how the steam era has been recreated by the unstinting efforts of the volunteers and staff at Bodmin over the past twenty or so years.

The railways around Bodmin have a long and interesting history. Indeed Bodmin had a railway before London – in 1834. In this book Don Bishop sets out to explain that history and how it fits in so well with today's heritage Bodmin and Wenford Railway. Through the use of a small number of archive photos, text, maps and images of the heritage line he explains how both the former London & South Western and Great Western Railways competed for traffic from what was once the county town of Cornwall. Many of the lines in the area closed as result of the infamous Beeching Report, but the former GWR route between Bodmin Road, Bodmin General and Boscarne Junction defied final closure more than once to survive as today's heritage line.

Don Bishop shows the line in action today through mainly "trains in the landscape" type images which also show how the line blends very well into the Cornish scenery. Through magnificent photography Don portrays the Bodmin and Wenford Railway at its best – a striking reminder for those who know the line, and an enticement to those who have yet to visit to do so and contribute towards its ongoing success.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

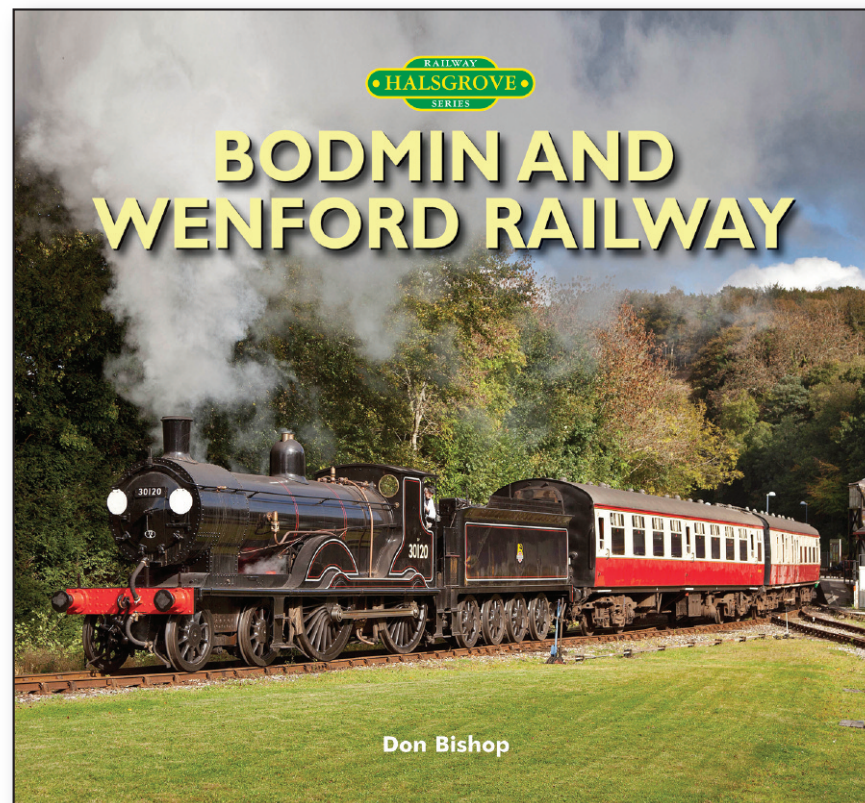
Don Bishop has been a keen railway photographer for many years and travels widely around the UK looking for that often seemingly elusive "master shot". Nowadays working professionally as a freelance photographer, concentrating on his steam and UK landscape shots, Don has an extensive collection of images of the UK steam scene and regularly has work published in magazines including several special features on his work. He also runs workshop days for people to learn about his techniques in getting quality landscape and steam railway photographs. Through his Steam Recreations brand he has organised many private photographic charter events at steam railways around the UK, including the Bodmin line, in an attempt to recreate scenes long past, with a particular emphasis on the 1950/60s. He is the author of *The West Somerset Railway*, *The West Somerset Railway Revisited*, *The South Devon Railway*, and the *Swanage Railway* also in the Halsgrove Railway Series.

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Fax: 01823 216796
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HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



Format: Hardback, 144 pages, 214x230mm
profusely illustrated in colour throughout.

Price: £14.99

ISBN: 978 1 84114 921 9

Imprint: Halsgrove

Published: July 2011



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Above: Auto Pannier No.6435 and the line's newly restored autococh No.W232 passing Charlies Gate on the morning of 10 May 2011.

Top left: No. 30587 is shunting a goods charter at Bodmin Road on 16 October 2009.

Left: The flat top tanks of No. 4561 show up well in this back-lit glint shot of the engine climbing to Bodmin General near Colesloggett on 5 September 1996.

Above: If you venture up the hill from the lineside at Charlies Gate you are offered far-reaching views along the Glynn Valley towards Liskeard, which is followed by the mainline, with the Bodmin branch passing by in the lower foreground.

Below: A morning train from Bodmin Parkway makes a spectacular sight behind Prairie No. 5552.

Below: Example of a double-page spread.



BR ran a final firewell train to the Wadebridge line for enthusiasts on 30 September 1978 behind Class 25 No. 25003. The train is seen here passing the derelict wooden exchange platform at Boscome Junction complex with a firewell wreath. Note that the tall double-sided lattice post signal has been replaced by a more rudimentary stop and await instructions "signal". *Bernard Mills*

3. EARLY PRESERVATION



The first signs of preservation at Bodmin were when the South West Group of the Great Western Society rented the former engine shed at Bodmin General from BR after passenger services had ceased. They held occasional open days in the sidings at Bodmin General, and on one such occasion GWR 0-6-0ST No. 136 is seen together with preserved Hawksworth coach No. 7372. *Bernard Mills*

