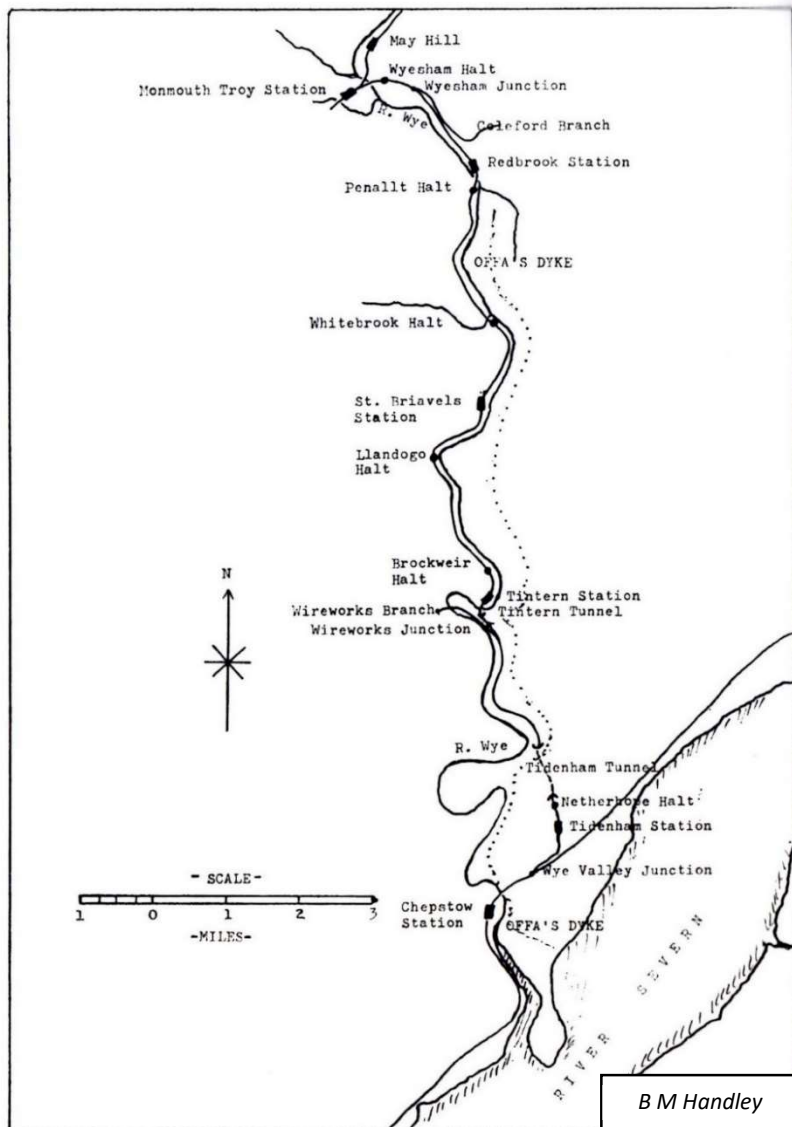


## Stations, Halts and signals



When the line first opened there were six stations on the route: Chepstow, Tidenham, Tintern, Bigsweir (later named St Briavels), Redbrook-on-Wye and Monmouth Troy.

Six halts were added between 1927 and 1932 in the hope of attracting more traffic: Whitebrook, Llandogo, Brockweir, Wyesham, Penallt and Netherhope. A halt was a request stop with limited facilities

When the line closed for passenger traffic in 1959 Tintern and Redbrook remained open for parcels and goods traffic. Both these stations closed in 1964 when the line closed completely except for quarry traffic south of Tintern Quarry.

Three of the stations enjoyed a new life after closure.

Monmouth Troy was dismantled brick by brick by volunteers from the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWSR). The station was rebuilt as Winchcombe station on the GWSR.

Tintern station is now a café. The signal box is a grade II listed building. It is listed because it is an externally unaltered early C20 railway signal box, and for its group value with the other buildings at Tintern station. It is now used as a craft studio.

The platform of Tidenham station platform was rebuilt as a loading bank for the Dayhouse quarry, now the National Diving and Activity Centre.

The following gallery of photographs covers 10 out of the total of 12 stations and halts. The gallery includes recent photographs of the rebuilt Monmouth Troy as well as the station and signal box at Tintern both of which are currently in use.

## Monmouth Troy



Station forecourt (*Lens of Sutton*)



Forecourt rebuilt at Winchcombe (*Hugh Llewelyn CC BA-SA 2.0*)



Station building from the platform (*Great Western Trust*)



Station building at Winchcombe from opposite platform (*Hugh Llewelyn CC BA-Sa 2.0*)

## Redbrook-on-Wye station

Tinplate from the local works was loaded onto open wagons at Redbrook. Raw materials were brought to the yard to be offloaded by crane. The station was well known for its well-kept flower beds tended by the station master.



6439 leaving Redbrook station: 0-6-0 T Collett class built 1932-1936 (*Peter Brabham*)



Penallt viaduct between Redbrook-on-wye station and Penallt Halt (*Phillip Halling CC BY-SA 2.0*)

## Penallt Halt



*Lens of Sutton*

Penallt Halt is just 200 m from Redbrook-on-Wye across the viaduct. The buttness at the entrance to the viaduct can be seen in the background. A milk churn from a local farm stands on the platform ready to be picked up by the next train.

## St. Briavels station



*B M Handley*

St. Briavels station underwent several name changes from its original title of Bigsweir. The first alteration came in 1909 when it was renamed St. Briavels and Llandogo. Llandogo was dropped in 1927 in anticipation of the opening of Llandogo Halt.

## Llandogo Halt



*Lens of Sutton*



Cast Iron CAUTION notice from 1876. In situ near Llandogo (*Alan Jarvis courtesy of Lightmoor Press.*)

## Brockweir Halt



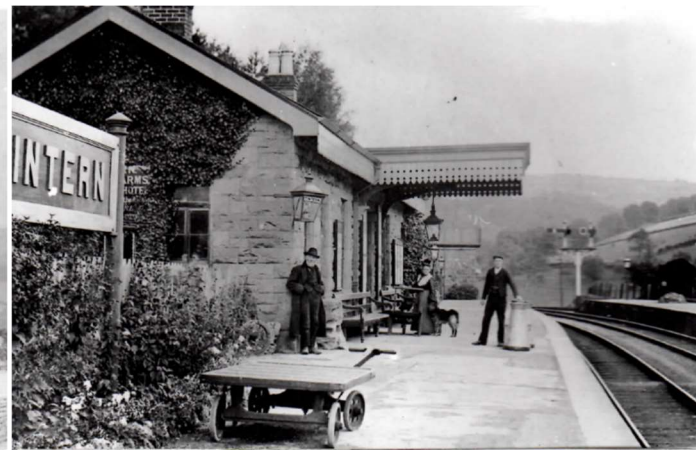
Brockweir Halt was a request stop with a convenient direct interchange with the competing Red and White bus service by means of a bus stop at the top of the approach path. ([booksrus.me.uk](http://booksrus.me.uk))

Brockweir station after the line was closed in 1964 (*Lens of Sutton*)

## Tintern



Main station platform- probably early C20 with milk churns from a local farm (*Lens of Sutton*)



Main station platform- probably early C20 with milk churn for loading on the next train (*Lens of Sutton*)



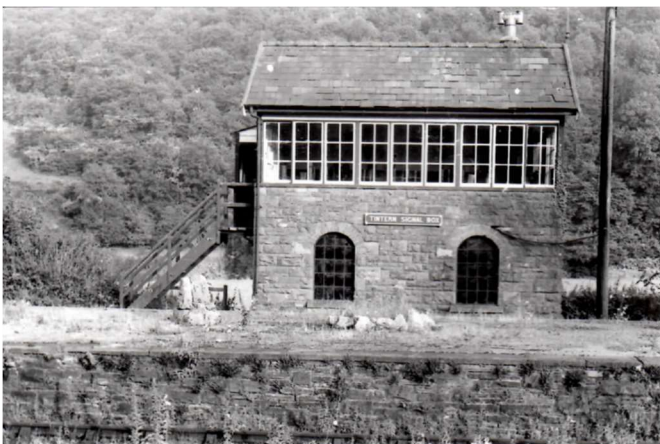
Tintern for Brockweir the name of the station before 1929 (*Great Western Trust*)



North bound auto-train being loaded with boxes and baskets (*Great Western Trust*)



South bound passenger train at the island platform (*Great Western Trust*)



Signal box in working condition before it fell into disuse (*Lens of Sutton*)



Signal box after restoration (*Michaelday\_bath CC BY-NC 2.0*)



Restored main platform station building (*Stringberd CC BY-NC-SA 2.0*)



Restored Tintern Station signals (*Michaelday\_bath CC BY-NC 2.0*)

## Netherhope Halt

The halt was on the eastern side of the line just south of the southern portal of Tidenham tunnel.

It was the last station to open on the Wye Valley Line on 18 July 1932. It closed to passengers on 5 January 1959.

It was a steep climb down steps from the top of the bank to station level.



Netherhope Halt post 1959 after the line was closed to passengers. The name board is missing. *(Lens of Sutton)*



All that is left of Netherhope Halt April 2021:  
Some steps up the bank on the far side of the  
shelter and four posts that supported the  
hand- rails. *(Martin Scott)*





Netherhope Halt from the tunnel end. The bright steel of the rail surface indicates that Tintern quarry was still open. Apart from grass growing through the platform surface the halt looks to be in good condition. This dates the photograph as probably being in the early 1960s (*Lens of Sutton*)

### *Platform surface*

The platform surface is cinder and ash which would have been in plentiful supply from the Pannier tank engines. This surface is similar to that of running tracks before composite surfaces were adopted such as the cinder track at Iffley Road Oxford where Roger Bannister became the first runner to run a mile in under four minutes.

Cinder and ash are classed as hazardous materials today. Adam Williams of Dean Forest Railway (DFR) has advised that where a platform was originally built using these materials the DFR now use chippings compacted  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to dust.

### *Shelter*

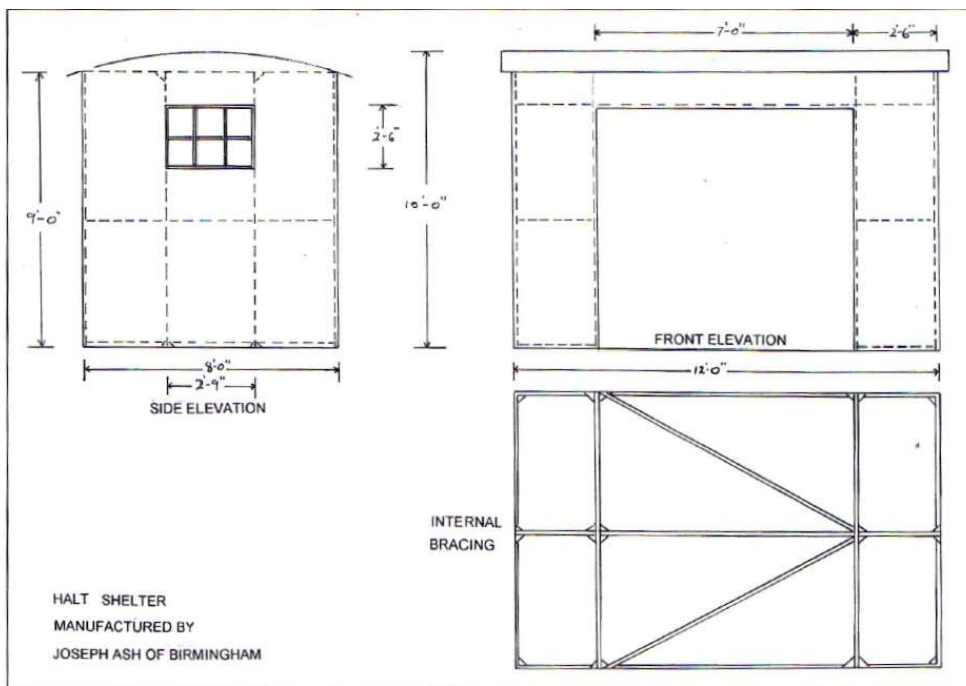
All halts on the Wye Valley Line had simple shelters. The Netherhope shelter was made of galvanised corrugated iron and supplied by Joseph Ash and Son Ltd of Birmingham. They were founded in 1857, known as Joseph Ash Galvanising Ltd and are still trading today.

The Great Western Railway Company extensively used Joseph Ash for many of its track-side requirements such as water towers, lamp sheds and lube tanks.



1929 Advertisement (*Grace's Guide to British Industrial History*)

A lamp is attached to the shelter. This was left in the undergrowth when the halt was demolished and recovered by Martin Scott who volunteers for Greenways and Cyclepaths. Martin kept it at home until his mother decided that it had to go.



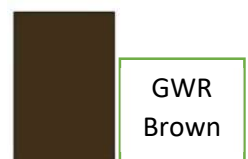
### Paint scheme

Celia Hinton started using the train in 1956 and remembers the shelter being painted:

‘a dingy colour, either dark brown or black. Nothing special or striking. I imagine it hadn’t been painted for some time’

And goes on to say: ‘Maybe an opportunity to liven it up if it’s rebuilt!’

The colour was probably this GWR brown ([stationcolours.com/gwr](http://stationcolours.com/gwr)). A 1958 colour photo of Brockweir Halt supports this assumption. Celia Hinton has confirmed this. The name board, following the Brockweir pattern, would have been framed in white with white lettering and a brown background.



*Netherhope Memories.*

*The end of the line: memories of the Wye Valley Railway by Celia Hinton: Published in Forest Fact and Fantasy 2017*

Usually I got up in time to walk down the lane to the railway bridge by the tunnel, scrambling down the steep steps in the cutting to Netherhope Halt platform. On frosty days in winter when I had to be prised out of bed, Mum would watch anxiously for the tell-tale smoke as the train approached Tidenham station in the distance. Bolting the remains of my breakfast I would grab my satchel and often a violin case as well, tear out of the house and run hell-for-leather down the lane to the Halt. The guards knew the 'usuals' and would hold the train for us if we were late.

Immediately after Netherhope Halt the train entered the blackness of the mile-long Tidenham tunnel, emerging into daylight near the bleak quarry face on the Tintern side. One day, a boy from Monmouth School for Boys was larking about and snatched a girl's beret, throwing it out of the train window into a bramble patch by the quarry. The guard told the driver, who backed up the line and stopped the train. The guard hopped out and retrieved the beret and then off we went through the woods with the glistening Wye on our left-hand side, past the Abbey, through the short tunnel and over the river bridge into Tintern station.

One of my friends remembers the train stopping somewhere in the woods for the driver and guard to get out and pick holly for Christmas. Another time after storms there was a landslide just beyond Redbrook and we were all late for school, sent to the 'San" ' (the school Infirmary) to be checked out for shock!

Some of the guards were young and unruly: I remember one holding onto the luggage racks and attempting a backwards somersault, kicking a roof light and breaking a bulb in the process. The guards would chat to us and sometimes give us sweets – those were more innocent days.

I don't remember the train ever being crowded during the week. A couple of regular passengers stand out – Charles, who taught Maths at the Boys' School and walked over the Chase down to Brockweir Halt, and a lady with two cocker spaniels who travelled regularly. When there were floods on the road in Tintern and the bus was diverted via Devauden, the train was unaffected, missing the low-lying areas as it puffed along through the woods, trailing white smoke. Sometimes the line along the riverbank between Bigsweir and Llandogo would be flooded but I don't recall whether the train was ever cancelled.

In autumn the woods blazed with russets, yellows and oranges and in spring we saw the haze of bluebells in the woods between Whitebrook and Penallt. Crossing the rattling and clanking bridge back onto the English side brought us into Redbrook station, which was usually decorated in summer with pots of flowers, bright pelargoniums set off by blue and white lobelia.

We Monmouth Girls had a lot of freedom on the train with no prefect to boss us about. In winter we had to wear full uniform of heavy maroon gymslips, belted coats and berets, while in summer we wore red checked gingham frocks and hideously uncomfortable boaters which we threw off as soon as we were on the train. In Monmouth we were not allowed to eat in the street and were supposed to walk in an orderly crocodile from Monmouth Troy station up the Hereford Road to school. Discipline was strong and I was terrified of old Miss MacDonald, the Headmistress. To us girls she seemed ancient and rigid with her white hair piled into a bun. Punishment for misdemeanour was to stand in the corridor outside her room in full view of passing disapproving teachers.

Sometimes in summer my friend would meet me off the train from school with Pixie, her Shetland pony. We'd ride bareback up the lane from the Halt, both of us on the poor pony at the same time, the front rider clutching hold of the mane and whoever was behind hanging on to anything she could grab. Mostly Pixie was remarkably tolerant, though occasionally she would rebel against the load, frisking and crabbing sideways. If she were moulting I would be in trouble with Mum for having white horse hairs all over my school uniform.

When British Railways axed the passenger service in 1959, the bus journey to school took much longer via Chepstow. There were more of us travelling to both the Boys' and Girls' Schools. Sitting upstairs on the bus we were often noisy and excitable and one day a boy sitting behind me on the bus chopped off the end of one of my plaits. Everyone else thought it was funny but I was outraged and felt lopsided. It confirmed my mother's suspicions that the boys were hooligans and she was irate. By the time I was doing A levels the whole journey was spent learning French vocabulary or reading, especially if I were on a later bus after school orchestra or drama. Our homework load was heavy with much extra reading for both 'A' and 'S' levels, as the school prized high academic standards.

Many years later, in my twenties, I was walking with some colleagues in the woods at the far end of Tidenham tunnel. It was late afternoon in early autumn and the light was beginning to fail when we arrived by chance at the tunnel mouth. Deciding it would be less hazardous to brave the tunnel than to try to find the track in the dark we went into the tunnel in Indian file, each holding the shoulder of the person in front. In the dim light from the ventilation shaft in the middle we could sense the alcoves in the tunnel wall. It was very rough underfoot, the walls were damp and dripping in places and sounds were deadened. Charles, our self-elected leader, wore pebble-thick glasses – he was almost blind in one eye- and when he stumbled, the tension was palpable although no-one wanted to admit to feeling spooked. Towards the Tidenham end we were very relieved to see the light grow larger and larger as we approached the exit. Very soon after we reached my parents' house, we were horrified to see and hear a goods train going down the line to Chepstow. We had no idea that the quarry trains were still running.

Today, the tunnel mouth is blocked off with rolls of barbed wire on top of the barrier. The rusting rails are just visible under fallen trees and profuse undergrowth between Bishton Bridge and Netherhope. Bishton Bridge is shored up with steel props and there's a growing pile of rubbish on the line there – old rotting mattresses, broken sofas, chairs and washing machines spilling out in an ugly heap.

None the less, I have seen a beautiful red fox running in the adjacent fields and disappearing into the deep cutting. In late summer a glut of blackberries grow on nearby hedges. Since the line closed, bats have colonised the tunnel and are a protected species. Sometimes when we sit out of doors in the dusk they flit and swoop noiselessly across the terrace. Plans by Sustrans to re-open the railway line for cyclists and walkers have come to nothing, but currently there's a new incentive to open the line as far as Tintern. Maybe one day this end of the Wye Valley line will be re-opened and we will be able to cycle through the woods to have lunch in Tintern. Or maybe the derelict line will remain for ever as an overgrown haven for wildlife and a reminder of a very different era.

*Memory from Peter Tyler*

### **Peter Tyler**

I remember walking across the fields from Woodcroft to Netherhope to catch the train to Monmouth. I also remember turning out on a frosty morning to watch the last passenger train go through.

it was GWR 0-6-0PT Pannier Tanks, and GWR Railcars in my time



Ballast train from Tintern quarry 5 May 1971. Beyer Peacock Type 3, later class 35,  
passing Netherhope Halt (*Kidderminster Railway Museum*)

## Tidenham



Pannier Tank engine 6412 at Tidenham station  
(Great Western Trust)



Class 37 passing Tidenham platform piled up with ballast ready to be loaded into the wagons on the way back from Tintern quarry (B M Handley)

Memory from Olive Jeanes

### Olive Jeanes

Sad to see Tidenham station in that state. Was always kept beautifully by the station master. Caught the diesel to Monmouth many times from there and to CALDICOT in late 50s.

2 d Like Reply

1



### Martin Scott

[Olive Jeanes](#) Can we use this Olive on are website please(The wye valley Greenway)and anymore memories always welcome



2 d Like Reply



### Olive Jeanes

Yes please do Martin. Great memories for me. My husband proposed to me there too. Used to ick wild strawberries on the bank going towards Netherhope. I hope I will be able to walk to the tunnel wen finished shielding.

2 d Like Reply

## Tony Rake's memories of working a ballast train at Thomas (Dayhouse) quarry

Worked the morning and afternoon ballast dogfish stone trains as a second man from Severn tunnel on late 70s and early 80s , a class 37 usually with 20 dogfish (a hopper wagon for carrying limestone ballast) on , we use to leave half at Thomas quarry at Tidenham on the loop line by the old station platform which was the loading bay , we then moved on to Tintern, through the tunnel , when we got there we coupled up and pushed the loaded wagons down towards the stop block leaving the empties there for the next day , we then changed ends back towards Tidenham for the ones we left earlier

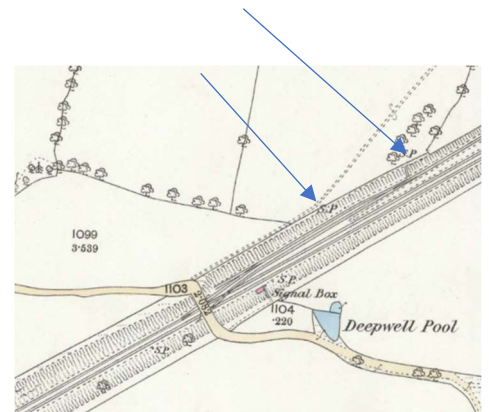
## Wye Valley Junction



Wye Valley Junction showing steep 1:66 gradient towards Tidenham (B M Handley)



Wye Valley junction signal post (STEAM picture library Swindon)



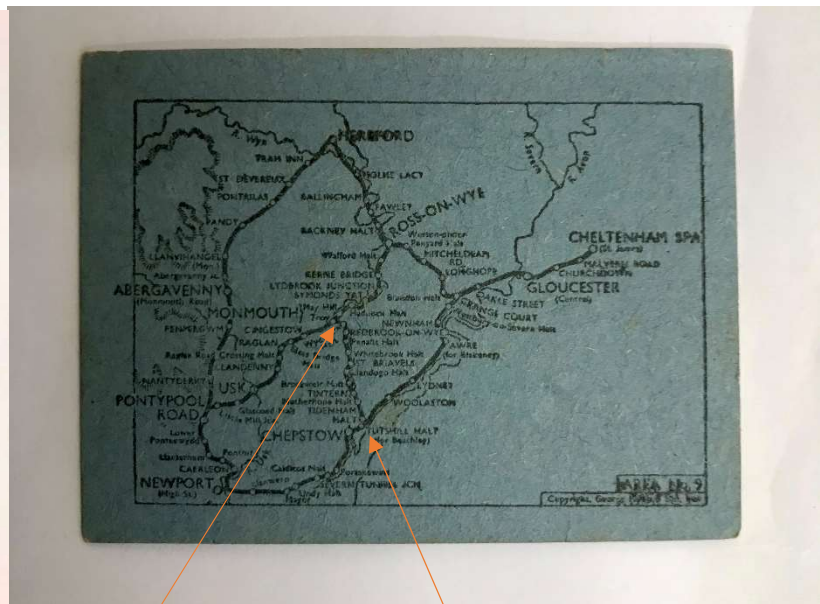
Two of the possible locations of Signal Post (SP) 1878 OS map 1:25000 ([maps.nls.uk/index.html](http://maps.nls.uk/index.html) CC BY-

# Chepstow



Platform 1 Chepstow. 1421 a 0-4-2T locomotive is ready to depart (N Harden)

With this third class holiday roundabout ticket you could visit all the stations on the Wye Valley line – (Ticket by permission of Martin Scott)



Monmouth

Chepstow