

# BATH RAILWAY SOCIETY

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## APRIL NEWSLETTER 2019

Dear Member,

We certainly had a 'full house' for our March meeting when Mike Beale presented 'The John Woods S & D Collection'. Some superb slides of the old Somerset & Dorset, many not seen before with a wealth of information provided by Mike who we thank for providing us with this excellent evening.

Our next meeting will be on April 4, when Brian Ringer returns to present Strictly Freight Part 3. Brian's previous two presentations have been very informative and this show should bring us up to date on the modern rail freight business. Doors open at St Mary's church hall at 7pm for 7.30pm start.

For your advanced information, and so you can make a note in your diaries, our meeting on September 5 this year will be a special one as we will be having an evening with our President Pete Waterman OBE DL who has kindly agreed to come to speak to us. Full details will be given nearer the time in the Newsletter, but we are intending to go to a larger venue for this one meeting.

A Local Residents Weekend will be taking place at the Avon Valley Railway on April 6 & 7 when they hold their first regular steam-hauled services of 2019. You can travel for half price if you live in a BS or BA postcode and you just need to take proof of your address (a utility bill or council tax bill) and enjoy the ride! At the Easter Weekend (April 19 - 22) the railway is celebrating the return to steam of the old Fry's locomotive from the Keynsham chocolate factory site returning after a lengthy overhaul. This will be the first time in about sixty years it will be in regular steam. As well as seeing the locomotive in action there will be displays on the history of the engine and a children's chocolate trail around the station. There will also be FREE Fry's chocolate for every child!

The Great Western Society will be launching their new 'Saint Class 2999 at Didcot Railway Centre on April 5 to 7. Access via Didcot Railway station.

Great Western Railway will be holding an Open Day at their Long Rock depot at Penzance on April 13. Electric, diesel and steam traction will be on display at the event, and profits from it will be going to the Penlee Lifeboat and the RNLI. Entrance is £15 and tickets are available in advance online at <https://billetto.co.uk/e/gwr-longrock-tmd-open-day-2019-tickets-331021> Pathfinder Tours are running a special train to Cornwall that day with various options including the Open Day. See their website for full details of this trip. A GWR IEP will be named at the event in memory of Cornishman Rick Rescoria who died in the 9/11 Twin Towers terrorist attack.

Following the discovery of the mineral lithium in the Midford Valley, investigations have found that there may be large reserves of it and this could lead to the re-opening of part of the former Limpley Stoke to Camerton branch line for the removal of spoil and waste. It is being proposed that a cross over and a single lead junction will be installed at Limpley Stoke with the re-laid branch line then having to be diverted around property owned by Monkton Combe School. It then re-joins the original alignment of the branch and would run to point near the site of the old Cam Valley - Midford Halt (Network Rail Code - MDFD) where a run round loop with ground frame will be provided for holding 28 bogie spoil wagons. Several bridges will require complete rebuilding or new ones installed. The company behind the scheme is registered as John Ollisen Kilby Enterprises, and an Act of Parliament is required to re-open this line. The necessary papers should be submitted before the Government on Monday April 1 for their first reading, but

environmentalists are against the mining scheme saying it will destroy the valley and its wildlife and are describing it as a very foolish proposal.

Bristol's Clifton Rocks Railway is holding an Open Day on Sunday April 14 from 10am to 4pm, including an exhibition in the Avon Gorge hotel. There will be a guided tour every ten minutes or so throughout the day covering the history of the site. Visitors can only be shown the top station and do not go down the tunnel itself. There is no charge but donations are welcome. Further details are available from [www.cliftonrocksrailway.org.uk](http://www.cliftonrocksrailway.org.uk)

Fifty years ago this month on April 9, 1969, the now South Devon Railway at Buckfastleigh reopened as a preserved steam railway - 'The Dart Valley Railway'. It was on October 2, 1965 when the first locomotives - 4555 and 3205 made their slow way over overgrown track up to Buckfastleigh, the first to run over the line since September 8, 1962, when the branch was officially closed after a special train organised by the Plymouth Railway Circle had run over it. The line had originally closed to passenger traffic on November 3, 1958 long before the 'Beeching' cuts. Today Buckfastleigh station does have a link with our local area as the old footbridge that once stood at Keynsham station has been re-erected there. For the 50th anniversary, celebrations are being held between April 6 and 14, see the South Devon website for full details.

Forty years ago this month on April 14, there was an interesting working up to Barnstaple when a British Railways 'Merrymaker Excursion' ran up to the North Devon town from Shoeburyness. Its return run back to Shoeburyness departed from Barnstaple behind Class 47 - 47184 at 1900hrs.

£300,000 has been earmarked for a business case study into the re-opening Charfield station in South Gloucestershire as part of the 'MetroWest' scheme. The station originally closed in January 1965.

This month will see some main line steam operation in the local area, On Saturday 6, 'The Devonian' from Birmingham to Plymouth will be taken forward from Bristol T M by 60163 'Tornado' and work back to Bristol. On Tuesday 16, 61306 takes 'The Cathedrals Express' from Slough through to Minehead via Salisbury and Bristol with a stop at Bath Spa. This train returns diesel hauled. 46233 'Duchess of Sutherland' will be in the Bristol area on April 27, 28 & 29 at the head of 'The Great Round Britain X11', passing through Bath on April 28 running via Westbury & Bristol to the West Somerset Railway. It may also run through Bath on April 27 heading for Bristol from London Paddington, but this is not confirmed.

On Saturday April 6, the West Wiltshire Model Railway Circle hold their Annual Spring Model Railway Exhibition at Holt Village Hall, The Street, Holt, near Trowbridge with at least ten layouts on display from 10am until 4pm. There is free parking and refreshments will be available. On Saturday and Sunday 6 (1030am - 5pm) & 7 (10pm - 4pm) the Nailsea & District Model Railway Club hold their 2019 exhibition at Nailsea School, Mizzymead Road, Nailsea with 18 layouts on display and eight trade stands in attendance. Nailsea & Backwell station is 0.8 miles from the venue if you wish to go by train. The Bentley Model Railway group stage Trainwest 2019 on Saturday 13 (10am - 5.30pm) and Sunday 14 (10am - 4.30pm) at the Springfield Community Campus, Beechfield Road, Corsham. This is the largest model railway exhibition in Wiltshire and one of the major model railway shows in the West of England with at least 20 layouts being exhibited and the same number of trade stands in attendance.

The Gartell Railway at Common Lane, Yenson near Templecombe will be operating on Easter Monday, April 22 with trains running from 1030am - 4.30pm. Templecombe station is just over a mile from it.

Unrestored Merchant Navy Class 35011 'General Steam Navigation' will be moving to the Swindon & Cricklade Railway's Blunsdon site for restoration and conversion back to its original 'as built' condition complete with air smooth casing and Bulleids unique chain driven valve gear. This will be a long term project and on arrival at Blunsdon, the boiler will be split from the frames for the first time since its BR days. £9000 is required to move the locomotive to the Wiltshire based railway.

The West Somerset Railway will be completely re-opening to its full length from Good Friday, April 19 between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead. Services until then are only running as far as Watchet from Bishops Lydeard as track repairs have to be completed.

The 'Flying Scotsman' – 60103 – will be on display on the Swanage Railway at Corfe Castle station until April 10. It will be in light steam coupled to Car 14 which it toured the USA with. Members of the public will be able to visit the footplate and walk through the tender connection into Car 14 for a charge of £7.50p. 60103 undertook five days of running during March at the Swanage Railway doing five trips per day and achieved a total 97% sale of all available seats on its seven coach trains.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday May 9 when Michael Bunn presents the 'Railway History of Paris. Please note, this meeting **is not** being held on the first Thursday of the month as is normal, but on the second Thursday of the month. This is due to local council elections.

Please note:- All events and special trains etc are mentioned in good faith and hopefully details are correct at the time of publication of the Newsletter. Please however, do check before travelling or attending events as things can change