

# BATH RAILWAY SOCIETY

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## NEWSLETTER

Dear Member,

For our May 10 meeting we welcomed back Brian Ringer who presented 'Strictly Freight Only – Part 2'. Brian gave us another fascinating and informative talk, along with his stories, about the railways freight sectors including train ferries. It was an excellent evening once again and as there is still more to tell, Brian will be back again next year to present Part 3.

Our next meeting will be our Annual General Meeting on Thursday June 7 at 7.30pm, and as usual we will keep this formal part of the evening as short as possible. If you would like to nominate anyone for positions on the committee, or if you want any matters raised during the meeting, please advise accordingly using one of the addresses above. This is your Society so if there are any issues or items you wish to raise, good or bad, please do contact us.

After the AGM there will be a short break followed by a talk on The Ffestiniog Railway by Mark Temple. Set amidst beautiful scenery, the Ffestiniog Railway is truly one of the great little trains of Wales. Mark is from the Ffestiniog Railway Society's Bristol group, and he will give us an update on the recent activities of the FR and the Society.

Due to space constraints at the AGM, there will not be a book stall at this meeting. Thank you for your support over the last season, donating or buying, and we especially thank Mike Ware for organising it. It will return at the September meeting.

We must also say a big thank you to Davina Ware and her team for arranging and serving the refreshments during the season. It is certainly very much appreciated.

There are still spaces available for the private evening visit to the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust at Midsomer Norton station on Friday June 15 with the RCTS Bristol Group starting at 1830hrs. It is hoped that Sentinel 'Joyce' will be in steam and providing rides (subject to availability). Conducted tours will also be taking place. The stations' buffet car and shop will be open and please park at Norton Hill School in Chalton Road which is just a short walk from the station. If you can make it, just turn up and pay Paul Udey for whom we thank for making all the arrangements and organising the visit.

Network Rail have started a consultation on the proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow Airport which runs until 22 June 2018. You can see the proposals and you can have your say on the proposals at [www.networkrail.co.uk/heathrow](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/heathrow). There will also be a series of 18 public consultation events in the area affected by the proposed route into Terminal 5. This proposed new connection would allow passengers to travel to Heathrow from the South Coast, South West, South Wales and West Midlands without going into London Paddington. It would leave the GWR main line between Langley and Iwer descending underneath the main line into a cutting before entering a 5km tunnel. This tunnel would pass under Colnbrook and then merge with existing lines into the airport.

The East Somerset Railway's Cranmore station is to get a second platform. The long disused platform opposite the current operating one is to be re-instated. Another railway planning a second platform is the Bodmin & Wenford which is proposing to build one at Bodmin General Station. Both schemes will increase operational flexibility, particularly at the Bodmin & Wenford Railway where the two lines from Bodmin Parkway and Boscarne Junction join into a single platform station.

On Saturday July 14, the annual 'LarkRail' (a light railway & branch line miscellany) will be taking place at the New Oriel Hall in Larkhall from 10am to 4.30pm. The railway refreshment room will be open and admission is £5 (no concessions). All profits go to Julian House. Further details are available from Simon Castens 01225 462332 or email:- [simon@titfield.co.uk](mailto:simon@titfield.co.uk) Do go along and support this event.

There will be a railway film show at Chipping Sodbury town hall, situated in Broad Street, on Saturday June 2 starting at 2.30pm. Films will be on British Railways and Nationalised Transport presented by Rob Foxon. Further details available on 0116 289 0531.

It was fifty years ago this month that Badminton station in Gloucestershire closed to passenger traffic from June 3. Also in the same county that year and month, the last BR locomotive worked down to Dursley station on June 28. This was Class 22 diesel - D6342 which went down the branch from Coaley Junction to haul away several wagons that remained there just before closure to freight traffic. A section of the branch did remain as a private siding to serve Lister's factory, but this was finally closed in 1970. Passenger traffic had ceased on the branch from September 10, 1962.

If you like looking around stunning gardens with a railway connection then take a visit to the former Venn Cross station on the old GW Taunton to Barnstaple line on the Somerset/Devon boarder. On view is the former goods yard and 4 acres of formal and less formal gardens of interest to gardeners and railway enthusiasts alike. Other attractions in addition to the gardens include sculptures, streams, ponds, a woodland walk, railway relics and historic pictures. The former station is open as part of the National Gardens Scheme on June 16 & 17, July 21 & 22 and August 25 & 26 from 2pm until 5.30pm. Admission £5. For further details just look up Venn Cross Engine House on the internet.

Summer Sunday steam specials will once again be operating from Bristol Temple Meads into the West Country this year. The Railway Touring will operate four "Royal Duchy" trains from Bristol to Par (for Fowey & Charlestown) on Sundays July 22, August 5 and September 2 & 16 (see [www.railwaytouring.net](http://www.railwaytouring.net)). On July 1 Saphos Railtours operate 'The English Riviera Express' (fully booked) down to Kingswear and back while Torbay Express Limited operate the 'Torbay Express' on July 15 (runs via Bath & Westbury) July 29, August 19, September 2 and 16 (the later via Bath). As in previous years, it is likely some of these may be cancelled, so do check before going out to see them!

South Western Railway have launched a new direct train on Saturdays between Basingstoke - Yeovil - and Weymouth to Corfe Castle (Swanage Railway), via Wareham, running 26 May - 8 September 2018. (Also Bank Holiday Mondays). There are special return fares, with no further railcard discounts applicable, from stations on the route - Salisbury - Yeovil Jnc & Pen Mill - Weymouth available to Moreton, Wool, Wareham or Corfe Castle. The train will also run a shuttle service between Wareham & Corfe Castle (not calling at Norden) before forming a return service - Corfe Castle to London Waterloo via Weymouth and Yeovil. See SWR website for full details and times [www.southwesternrailway.com](http://www.southwesternrailway.com) Fares do not include travel on Swanage Railway operated services.

The Severn Tunnel will be closed between Saturday 16 June and Friday 6 July, impacting services between Bristol Parkway and Severn Tunnel Junction and between Filton Abbey Wood and Patchway. There will be diversions with longer journey times, and road transport will be used between Bristol Parkway and Newport. Services between London Paddington and Swansea, will have one train an hour which will not call at Bristol Parkway and will be diverted via Gloucester adding 40 minutes to the usual journey time. No through trains run on Sundays 17 June or 1 July. Services between Portsmouth/Taunton and Cardiff Central, services will start/terminate at Bristol Parkway instead of Cardiff Central; changing at Bristol Parkway for connecting coaches to Newport; trains run from Newport to Cardiff Central, although there will be fewer than usual. GWR has set up a dedicated webpage [www.GWR.com/SouthWales2018](http://www.GWR.com/SouthWales2018) with information of timetable changes for customers. Also the overhead wires are due to be energised imminently between Didcot and Swindon enabling GWR to expand the use of electric traction. They are also hoping to start operating their 802 Class into the South West on service trains from July 16.

A new group called 'The Chilcompton Station Project' has been formed with the aim of rebuilding the former Somerset & Dorset lines Chilcompton station as near as possible to its 1950's period. The group also wants to have a physical connection with Midsomer Norton and it has a long term aim of restoring the former S & D line south to Bineagar. The group can be found on Facebook under Chilcompton Station Project and it is looking for volunteers to help with its aims.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday June 7, for the AGM followed by a talk on The Ffestiniog Railway by Mark Temple. If you are unable to attend, please note this will be our last meeting before the summer break and meetings will resume on Thursday September 6 when Brian Ringer presents 'Railways at Night'.

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