

# BATH RAILWAY SOCIETY

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## **MARCH NEWSLETTER 2019**

Dear Member,

I hope you enjoyed our meeting on February 7 when we had two presentations. Firstly up to the interval, Anna Holbrook gave a most informative presentation on the 'The Western Rail Link to Heathrow Airport' which was about the proposals for a new line into the airport from the west. Anna was followed after the break by Brian May who gave a show reviewing some of the excellent slides he had taken in 2018, and we are very grateful to him for putting this presentation together at fairly short notice. This was two completely different subjects in one evening and we thank them both for giving their time to entertain us. We had 18 visitors at this meeting!

Fifty three years ago this month the stations saw no more passengers and the tracks started to rust when the Somerset & Dorset line closed, and many enthusiasts still miss this well-known and loved line. It will however come briefly back to life at our next meeting on Thursday March 7, when Mike Beale presents 'The John Woods S & D Collection'. This will be a popular evening so do come early to get a good seat. Doors open at 7pm for a prompt 7.30pm start.

Still on the subject of the Somerset & Dorset and as mentioned in the covering note to the Newsletter last month, Mike Bass still has a large number of railway books, which include the Somerset & Dorset, plus DVD's which he wants to dispose of. If anyone is interested, please do contact him at [bassmikebass@aol.com](mailto:bassmikebass@aol.com) or on 07960151286. Ideally he would like them to go as a job lot.

You might be interested in some statistics about our website which in the last year had 1,346 visits, and if you break this figure down it is quite fascinating where people lived. Not surprisingly we had the highest number of hits from Bath at 388 followed by Bristol at 247. What is amazing is the fact that the third highest number came from Paris at 242. This was followed by London at 196 and closer to Bath, Trowbridge recorded 80. Of those that visited the site, 22.6% were return visitors. I wonder why we get such a high number from France. Answers on a postcard please, sorry no prizes given!

The Mid- Hants Railway (Watercress Line) are holding a Spring Gala from March 8 – 10 Inclusive. Visiting locomotives will be L92 in London Transport livery – (Pannier Tank 5786) and in Longmoor Military Railway guise, USA Tank 300 'Frank S Ross'. The latter is 30070 from the Kent & East Sussex Railway. Trains operate from 9am to 5pm. Please remember, trains will only be operating between Alresford and Medstead with no trains running to Alton due to the replacement of Butts Bridge at the former Butts Junction site.

A Diesel Gala is taking place at the Somerset and Dorset Railway Heritage Trust at Midsomer Norton station on March 9 & 10. This will feature their Class 08 D4095 and English Electric D1120 on passenger & demonstration goods trains. There will also be double-heading and banking with trains running from 11:00am till 3:30pm both days. The shop will be open and refreshments available.

An Industrial Mixed Traffic Event featuring steam and diesel traction will be taking place for one day only at the Avon Valley Railway on Saturday March 16. Locomotives in use (subject to availability) will be Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST No 1742, Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST WD 132 'Sapper', Andrew Barclay 0-4-0DM WD 70043 'Grumpy', Barclay 0-4-0DM 426 'Kingswood', Ruston Hornsby 0-6-0DH No 429 'River Annan' and BR Class 08 0-6-0DE 08202. A special timetable will be in operation during this event along with slightly enhanced fares.

On Saturday March 23, West Coast Railways with 84G 'Railtours' are running a special from Crewe to Weymouth hauled by a WRC Class 33 with a 47/57 on the rear. The train will run via the Welsh Marches line and via Bath and Yeovil taking in many goods loops and unusual track en-route including the Bathampton loop on the outward run and the Oldfield Park loop on the return. Also on the return trip from Weymouth, Class 33 – 33012 from the Swanage Railway is due to be added for a double headed Class 33 run back to Crewe.

Fifty years ago this month, at 11am on March 7, 1969, the Victoria Line of the London Underground was formally opened, between Warren Street and Victoria, by the Queen. After unveiling a plaque she travelled between Green Park and Victoria and became the first reigning monarch to ever travel on the Underground. The section of line from Walthamstow to Highbury & Islington had opened the previous year, without ceremony on September 1, The Victoria Line now has 16 stations and is 13 miles long.

Locally 50 years ago, the Branch Line Society ran a rail tour visiting branch lines in Gloucestershire many of which are now long gone. Setting out by DMU from Bristol Temple Meads on March 22, the tour ran to Severn Tunnel Junction to then visit lines to Sudbrook, Caerwent and Tintern Quarry. It then travelled to Lydney and down to Parkend on what is today's 'Dean Forest Railway' before heading north for Gloucester and various lines in the City's docks. On its way back to Bristol it traversed the lines to Dursley and Sharpness Docks. The line to Sharpness is currently being taken over by the Vale of Berkley Railway as a heritage railway scheme and they are based at Sharpness docks. Track is still in situ on the Tintern line, but it is due to be recovered by the Dean Forest Railway for future use.

A new Park & Ride station is being proposed as part of the wider South Wales Metro system between Newport and Cardiff at St. Mellons near the M4 Motorway. A planning application is due to be submitted this summer, and if approved, building work will commence next year.

The Cathedrals Express should be running to Bath & Bristol behind steam on Thursday March 7 with 61306 as the booked locomotive. The train originates at London Victoria.

The North Dorset Railway at Shillingstone are due to be taking delivery of Class 08 shunter 08995, which is currently not in working order. To fund the locomotives repairs and overhaul, 'Group 08995' has been formed offering shares in it at £250 each. Details are on the NDRT website.

The Cheltenham Racing festival will be taking place from Tuesday March 12 until Friday 15, and as usual GWR will be running additional trains to/from the event with alterations to services being implemented. All trains running through Cheltenham are likely to be 'very crowded'. The Gloucester & Warwickshire Railway will also be running special steam hauled 'corporate' trains to their Racecourse station, but these are not for general public use.

60103 Flying Scotsman is paying a 20 day visit to the Swanage Railway. It will be in operation for five days from Friday March 22 until Tuesday 26. Access to stations during its running days will be by ticket only. For the remainder of its stay it will be on display at Corfe Castle station. Full details about tickets are online for both travel and static viewing. From Friday March 29 to Sunday 31 the railway is holding a 'Spring Steam Up' using home fleet locomotives + 419, but

the Flying Scotsman is not taking part in this. Former Caledonian Railway 0-4-4 tank loco no 419, from the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway in Scotland is also visiting and is due to be in operation March 16, 17, 27, 28, & 29 – 31.

The manager of the Devon & Cornwall Railway Partnership, Richard Burningham OBE, has been appointed chairman of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships. Richard was once the Travel Centre manager at Bath Spa station and founded the Friends of Oldfield Park station group.

Romsey station is getting additional facilities for bicycle storage and the work is due to be completed next month. The station, on the Salisbury – Southampton/Eastleigh lines is managed by Great Western Railway and has just over half a million passengers a year using it. Although GWR Cardiff/Portsmouth & Brighton services call there, the station sees more Southern Western Railway services stopping there.

The connection to the main line for the former spur to the waste transfer depot at Barrow Hill in Bristol has been removed. The line went off just after Lawrence Hill station and trains serving it had to stop just before Stapleton Road station and reverse back in. The track work to the facility, which was provided by the old Avon County Council, went up onto the former Midland line into Bristol. There are no signs that this spur has had the track lifted, unless anyone can provide further information?

For our next meeting on April 4, Brian Ringer will be returning to present Strictly Freight Part 3. Brian's previous two presentations have proved very informative and entertaining and this show should bring us up to date on the modern rail freight business, but hopefully we will see you first on March 7.

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