

# BATH RAILWAY SOCIETY

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## **OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2018**

Dear Member,

I hope you enjoyed our first meeting of the new season in September when Stephen Bigley presented 'Railways at Night'. Stephen took us on a journey around the country showing photographs of all aspects of railways taken between dusk and dawn as well as buses and a few aircraft and boats. We thank him for making the journey up from his Eastleigh home to entertain us.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday October 4 when Gordon Adams presents the 'History of the Railways of Southampton'. This should be a very informative presentation as Southampton has a wealth of railway history which is not just based on its Central and former Terminus stations, but covers a much wider area including its large docks complexes. Doors open at 7pm for a prompt 7.30pm start.

Just a reminder if you've not yet renewed, membership fees are now due. You can either send a cheque for £18 to the Hon Treasurer, Jon Hughes (made payable to Bath Railway Society) at 65 Solsbury Way, Lansdown, Bath BA1 6JA or pay at our October meeting.

The bookstall returns at our October meeting if you have any unwanted publications you wish to dispose of. Just put a reasonable price on them and put on the table. If they don't sell, please can you take them back home with you. Money from the bookstall goes to Society funds.

With the continuing electrification works and the four tracking of Filton bank, no trains will call at, or run through, Bristol Parkway station during the period Oct 13- 14. The lines from Bristol Temple Meads to Parkway will also be closed as will the Severn Beach line on these dates and also during the period October 27 to November 19. Trains using these routes will be diverted and other trains will be replaced by buses. Check train times before travelling.

Another route affected by engineering works is the line between Salisbury and Exeter. Work started in September near Crewkerne to install a culvert under the tracks, and this work is due to take place until November 10 with some changes taking place to services on this route.

On Tuesday October 2nd at 7:30pm at The Somer Centre, Midsomer Norton there will be a talk on the Kilmersdon gravity Incline and Colliery, by Norman Andrew. It will be an illustrated PowerPoint presentation about the operation of the coal wagon incline and the basic workings of the pit taken in the context of the Somerset coalfields. Admission is £4.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) using data from a 'Visit England' tourism survey has estimated that tourists visiting Bath by rail is worth £7.6m to the local economy.

Great Western Railway has indicated that it may be able to extend its Cardiff to Taunton services onto the West Somerset Railway to Bishops Lydeard station next year once it has sufficient rolling stock.

The Vale of Berkley Railway has been in talks with Network Rail and operator DRS about taking a lease on the 4 ½ mile line, plus sidings, from Sharpness to Berkley Road. They will have to raise £250,000 for the lease and will need further finance for infrastructure works and new buildings.

The Swindon & Cricklade Railway have been donated a large quantity of redundant track and fittings, including points, from the former Didcot A power station site which is being redeveloped. This track, which was originally used by coal trains serving the power station, will help them with their plans to extend their line towards Cricklade. It is in addition to other track donated by BMW Swindon and also Network Rail and Amey Rail following the upgrade of Swindon's Cocklebury and the Exchange Sidings.

The Ashton Court Miniature Railway in Bristol is likely to be closing at the end of the year as the City Council intends to terminate the lease and use the space for other attractions. Two new entrances and 14 ticket gates are currently being installed and Bristol Temple Meads station to ease congestion during busy periods. They should be in operation later this year.

Fifty years ago this month on 14 October 1968 HM the Queen opened the rebuilt Euston Station in London. Six days later the signal box at Churston on the Kingswear branch was permanently closed and also on that date, October 20, the L.C.G.B. ran the Dart Valley Rail Tour which started at London Waterloo and ran via Salisbury. The outward train was hauled by D812 and the return to London Paddington via Taunton & Westbury was worked by D1037. Steam locomotive 4555 took the train from Totnes to Ashburton on the Dart Valley Railway. 6412 hauled the train back down to Totnes.

Down in Devon, the old station building at Topsham station, served by GWR on the Exmouth branch, is currently available for commercial rent. It was sold by auction earlier this year for £404,000. The former signal box at Topsham also still survives (now Grade 11 listed) but is now empty having been used more recently as offices. It was built c1870 and remained in railway use until 1988, its final duties being to control a level crossing which is now operated remotely by Exmouth Junction box.

If it goes ahead, South Western Railway could once again be facing disruption on October 5 & 6 when members of the RMT hold another 48hr strike. Services are likely to be reduced on these dates and it is unlikely the SWR's Bristol to Waterloo or services via Frome & Yeovil Penn Mill will operate. At the time of posting the newsletter the strike was still on, so do check before travelling in the SWR area.

The Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway will be holding a diesel running weekend on October 6 & 7 using their own diesel fleet with a special timetable in operation. Normal ticket prices will apply and further details will be posted on their website. [www.gwsr.com](http://www.gwsr.com)

The Swanage Railway hold their Autumn Steam Gala on October 12 – 14 with the main guest locomotives being LMS Princess Coronation Class No. 6233 'Duchess of Sutherland' and Black 5 - 44871. These will be joined by 80078 which was once based on the line. Also due to take part will be home fleet locomotives 30120, 31806, 80104 and 34072 '257 Squadron', the latter making a much awaited return to service. An intensive timetable will be in operation and full details can be found at [www.swanagerailway.co.uk](http://www.swanagerailway.co.uk) On Friday October 12, the Ealing comedy 'The Titfield Thunderbolt' is being shown in Harmans Cross Village Hall (by the Swanage Railway station) at 7.30pm, admission £6 on the door. This is to raise funds for the overhaul of 30075 which is based at Shillingstone.

Mentioning Shillingstone, on October 21 the North Dorset Railway Trust will be holding a Signal box celebration to mark 140 years to the day of the opening of the original signal box

and down loop. The replica signal box at Shillingstone will be open for the day and the progress on relaying of the new down loop can be viewed as well as other work at the station. Refreshments should be available.

Further up the former S & D on Saturday 27th October 2018 the Somerset & Dorset Heritage Railway Trust at Midsomer Norton will be running steam hauled Real Ale Trains in two sessions. Full details on how to book etc. are available at [www.sdjr.co.uk](http://www.sdjr.co.uk)

The Somerset Railway Modellers Club will stage 'Rail Ex Taunton' at Taunton School, Staplegrove Road with approximately 25-30 layouts supported by at least 23 trade stands on October 27 & 28. Also on these dates, the Swindon & Cricklade Railway will be running a 'Halloween Ghost Train' between 6pm and 8.45pm with further details available on their website.

The Avon Valley Railway is looking for help this Christmas as they require more volunteers to help on their Santa Special trains. They want people to help welcome passengers, help distribute presents on the train and serve mince pies or festive biscuits to guests. You don't need any previous experience, just a warm, friendly approach. Further information can be obtained by contacting Sue Sedley, the volunteer co-ordinator, on [volunteers@avonvalleyrailway.org](mailto:volunteers@avonvalleyrailway.org) or by calling 0117 932 5538.

In the 2018 National Rail Awards, Kemble station in Gloucestershire, which has 367,000 passengers per year, was Highly Commended in the medium station category while in the small station section, Somerset's Templecombe station was also Highly Commended. With growing passenger numbers of 126,000 a year, the 'friends' group plus local staff work hard to make improvements to this station.

We look forward to seeing you all on Thursday October 4 for the talk on the 'History of the Railways of Southampton' by Gordon Adams.

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