

**The Bassil Shippam Centre**  
**Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester, PO19 7LG**

## **AFTERNOON MEETING**

**Thursday 08 February**  
**At 14:00**

# **108 Years of Southern Electric**



**Image above a preserved  
4 Cor motor coach at the  
Bluebell Railway in 2001**

**Our Guest Speaker  
Stuart Hicks**

The illustrated talk describes the development of the Southern Electric system from the earliest days when the LSWR electrified the line from Waterloo to Wimbledon via East Putney, their Riverside Electric route, using the dc third rail system in 1915; through the LBSCR overhead electrification almost right up to the modern day. Included is the electrification of the inner and outer suburban area, and then the first main line electrification to Brighton and Worthing by the Southern Railway in 1933, continuing with the route through Chichester as part of Portsmouth phase 2 in 1938. The presentation continues through the Kent Coast electrification and on to the Bournemouth line electrification of 1967, the Isle of Wight with its successive second hand rolling stock and concludes with more recent developments including Hastings, East Grinstead and Weymouth, whilst not forgetting the HS1 route to the Channel tunnel.

**"Suggested donation (to defray costs) £3 Members, £4 Guests"**  
**Collected on arrival at the door**

**Come and join us Bring a friend Everybody welcome**



**The Monthly Newsletter of RCTS Chichester Branch.**
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& John Barrowdale**
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Roger Sandford.**
**What's on for the Railway Enthusiast in February**

Railway Name	Website	Contact Email	Contact Phone
Bluebell Railway	<a href="http://www.bluebell-railway.com">The Bluebell Railway in Sussex - A heritage steam railway (bluebell-railway.com)</a>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@bluebell-railway.com">enquiries@bluebell-railway.com</a>	01825 720800
Isle of Wight Railway	<a href="http://www.iwsteamrailway.co.uk">Isle of Wight Steam Railway – The 10 Mile Museum (iwsteamrailway.co.uk)</a>	<a href="mailto:info@iwsteamrailway.co.uk">info@iwsteamrailway.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@iwsteamrailway.co.uk">info@iwsteamrailway.co.uk</a>	01983 882204
Kent & East Sussex Railway	<a href="http://www.kesr.org.uk">Kent &amp; East Sussex Railway – Tenterden – Northiam – Bodiam (kesr.org.uk)</a>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@kesr.org.uk">enquiries@kesr.org.uk</a>	01580 765155
Watercress Railway	<a href="http://www.watercressline.co.uk">Watercress Line - Heritage Steam Railway</a>	<a href="mailto:info@watercressline.co.uk">info@watercressline.co.uk</a>	01962 733810
Amberley Museum	<a href="http://www.amberleymuseum.co.uk">Amberley Museum</a>	<a href="mailto:office@amberleymuseum.co.uk">office@amberleymuseum.co.uk</a>	01798 831370
Hayling Light Railway Trust	<a href="http://www.haylinglightrailway.com">The Hayling Light Railway Trust</a>	<a href="mailto:haylinglightrailway@yahoo.com">haylinglightrailway@yahoo.com</a>	07902 446340
Littlehampton Miniature Railway	<a href="http://www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com">Home (littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com)</a>		01903 719876
South Downs Light Railway	<a href="http://www.south-downs-railway.com">South Downs Light Railway</a>	<a href="mailto:info@south-downs-railway.com">info@south-downs-railway.com</a>	07518 753784
Stansted Park Light Railway	<a href="http://www.sp-lr.co.uk">Stansted Park Light Railway</a>	<a href="mailto:help@sp-lr.co.uk">help@sp-lr.co.uk</a>	02392 413 324


**Industrial Action on Southern Rail**

If you are considering using Southern Rail trains for travel in February, please note that ASLEF have called for their drivers to strike, or work to rule during the period 1st - 6th February. For details of the expected industrial action and its effect on Southern Rail's trains, please go to the following web page.

<https://www.southernrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey/industrial-action>



**What's on for the Railway Enthusiast in February**

RailwayName	StartDate	EndDate	EventText
Amberley Museum	24/01/2024	07/02/2024	Open on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays
Amberley Museum	10/02/2024	03/11/2024	Open Wednesday to Sunday & Bank Holidays
Bluebell Railway	10/02/2024	18/02/2024	Ice Skating at the Bluebell
Bluebell Railway	12/02/2024	16/02/2024	Kids for a Quid - School Holidays
Bluebell Railway	16/02/2024		Tiger on the train: Meet, greet and story time with the Author
Bluebell Railway	24/02/2024		Trainmaster at Sheffield Park
Kent & East Sussex Railway	10/02/2024	18/02/2024	Kids for a Quid - Be a Nature Detective
Watercress Railway	10/02/2024	18/02/2024	Magic of Locomotion
Watercress Railway	14/02/2024		Valentines Day Special - Dining Train
Hayling Light Railway Trust	03/02/2024	28/02/2024	Open Wednesdays, weekends and Hampshire School Holidays


**Planned engineering work for February affecting the Coastway West area**
**5th - 9th February 2024**

The 22:40 Portsmouth Harbour to Brighton train will depart Littlehampton earlier at 23:33, then only call at Worthing, Shoreham-by-Sea, Hove and Brighton. A replacement bus will run from Littlehampton, departing at 23:42, to Brighton calling at intermediate stations.

**11th February**

Buses replace trains between Three Bridges and Horsham. You can use Southern replacement buses to complete your journey.

**12th - 16th February**

Buses replace trains between Southampton Central and Havant.

Buses replace trains between Portsmouth & Southsea and Portsmouth Harbour.

**26th - 29th February**

Engineering work is taking place between Horsham and Barnham, closing all lines overnight. From 22:25 until the end of service each night, trains that normally run via Horsham will be diverted to run via Hove. Replacement buses will run between Horsham and Barnham.

**Note: This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change! For the latest information go to:**  
[The Southern Rail Engineering Work website](#)



## May's Miscellany: by Geoff May ©



### 'West Country' Class No. 34006 'Bude'

This engine was chosen to take part in the 1948 exchange trials working between Bristol & Plymouth and Marylebone & Manchester. The deflector plates were lengthened at this time which the loco then carried for the rest of its working life. On the Great Central it recorded 2010 edhp, the highest figure attained by any locomotive during the trials. 34006 achieved the highest mileage of any SR Light Pacific with 1,099,338 miles and spent the last three years of its life allocated to Salisbury where its external appearance benefitted from the attentions of the enthusiastic shed-master. The picture shows it accelerating away from Andover Junction with the 6.35 Salisbury - Waterloo on 20th April 1966.



In addition to the Afternoon meeting on the 8th February, Chichester Branch will be hosting an evening ZOOM meeting on the usual meeting date of 28th February 2024

### That was the year that was 1962

A look into the railway archive of 1962 with Geoff Plumb  
As this is a ZOOM meeting tickets should be purchased via the following link to the RCTS website

[\*\*RCTS Chichester Branch Meeting - 28th Feb\*\*](#)



## **Zoom - A reminder on how to join Chichester Branch Zoom Meetings**

Since our winter ZOOM meetings 2023 some changes have been made to Chichester Branch ZOOM hosted meetings. The principle changes are :-


- The need to purchase a “ticket” to gain access to the meeting
- Payment of £3 to purchase the ticket.
- A new web based procurement process has been developed by the RCTS to facilitate purchase of the ZOOM ticket.

### **How to purchase your ZOOM ticket.**

The monthly Newsletter will contain a hyperlink which will take you to the purchasing webpage. The hyperlink will be found on Page 4 of this Newsletter (The reminder notice for the meeting). After opening the hyperlink, start the purchase of your ticket by clicking the [Add to basket] button.

The system will then guide you through the rest of the process. On completion of the purchase you will be sent an e-mail to confirm your purchase and will contain a hyperlink that will enable you to join the ZOOM meeting on the night!

### **Sample Confirmation E-Mail**



**Thank you for your order**

Hi Ian,

Just to let you know — we've received your order #19470, and it is now being processed.

**[Order #19470] (2023-12-13)**

Product	Quantity	Price
Zoom ticket CHR Steam in the British Isles 24-01-24	1	£3.00

Chichester Meeting date 24th January 2024 @ 1915  
 Your Zoom link is: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88227206136?pwd=MnJlQWw5MzZPdRnRnbExTNIiGRytUUT09>

<b>Subtotal:</b>	£3.00
<b>Payment method:</b>	Credit/Debit Cards
<b>Total:</b>	£3.00



## **The Rail Links to Portsmouth Dockyard** By Roger Sandford

There were two direct rail links between the main line network and Portsmouth Dockyard. This article concentrates on the principal link leaving the main line at Portsmouth & Southsea station (formerly Portsmouth Town). However a short spur was also built between Portsmouth Harbour station and South Railway Jetty allowing direct access to a shipping berth principally for Royalty, VIP and troop movements.

Much has been written about neighbouring Southampton Docks and its extensive rail network serving both the needs of passenger shipping and cargo vessels. It may be surprising to learn that there was around 25 miles of railway in Portsmouth Dockyard supporting in excess of 40 locomotives during its existence. Initially steam ruled, conversion to diesel beginning in the 1950s. Following the railways arrival in Portsmouth in 1847 a street level link was built between Portsmouth Town station and the Unicorn Gate entrance to the Dockyard. As part of the extension of the main line to Portsmouth Harbour a realignment of the Dockyard extension, radiating from midway along the new elevated up platform at Portsmouth Town, was completed in 1876. Responsibility for the link became that of the Admiralty from the Northern side of the Edinburgh Road crossing. The link enabled the transport of goods directly by rail into the Dockyard and the occasional troop trains, a platform being built between the Edinburgh Road crossing and Unicorn Gate.

The line remained in use until the 1970s by which time rail freight traffic had reduced significantly, mirroring that of the National Network.

The following images and captions give something of a insight into this short branch line of less than a mile in length and how the area looks today.



The unusual wintry scene is set by an early 1980s view of Portsmouth & Southsea station prior to the remodeling and reduction of street level platforms from five to two. A Portsmouth to Brighton service is moving away from the up high level platform 6. Trains destined for the Dockyard would cross from the down to the up line at the foot of gradient, at the position the 4 Vep has reached, before entering the platform. Effectively wrong line working as this section was not signaled for bi-directional working in that era.

Moving to the entrance to Portsmouth & Southsea station, looking South in more recent times, the Guildhall in the background. A South Western Railway Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo service is at the up platform and a Southern Brighton service, unusually formed of 8 carriages, heading for Portsmouth Harbour. The Dockyard line curved away at a steep decline to street level from a position close to the rear doors of the Class 450.



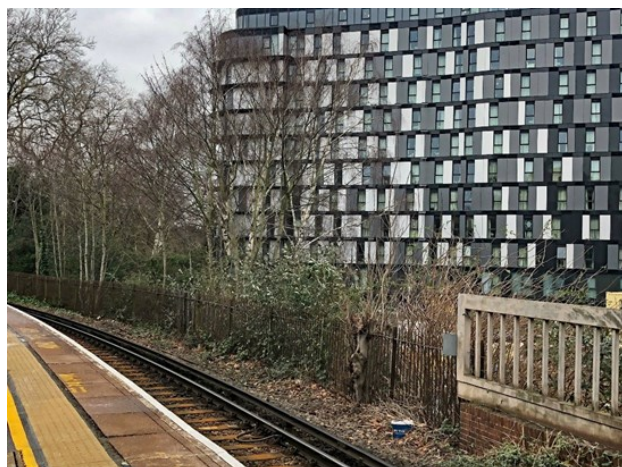


## The Rail Links to Portsmouth Dockyard Continued ...



From the high-level platform at Portsmouth & Southsea a 1950s view of a mid-day Dockyard to Fratton Yard transfer freight climbing the gradient from street level. The signal box controlled access to the branch. The signaller can be seen about to collect the token from the loco driver. The station name board to the left read 'Portsmouth & Southsea Next Station for the Isle of Wight' Many holiday makers still alighting looking for the ferry!

A 2020s view taken from the same spot as the preceding picture confirms all features of the south end of the branch, skirting Victoria Park to the left and Stanhope Road to the right, have disappeared. The adjacent building, Catherine House, home to many students attending Portsmouth University, partially built across the original railway track bed. A street level footpath now exists to access Victoria Park at almost immediately below the position of the loco in the previous picture.



At the north end of Victoria Park and now at street level the railway reached the Edinburgh Road crossing. Another 1950s view of an early afternoon transfer freight heading towards the Dockyard from Fratton Yard. The distinctive 'Agnes Weston's Royal Sailors Rest' building in the background.

Moving forward 70 years 'the building' refurbished and extended upwards is still in situ, but under new ownership. A normally busy junction captured during a traffic free moment. The crossing has gone, but a closer look reveals some original features remain. The two white posts to the right of the bus shelter and an original crossing gate adjacent to the lamp standard on the extreme right of the picture.





## The Rail Links to Portsmouth Dockyard Continued ...



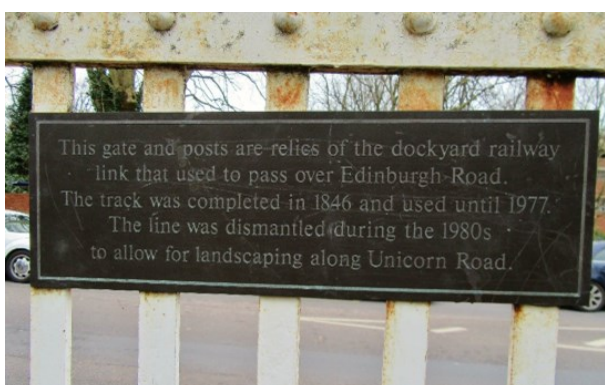
A closer look at the Edinburgh Road crossing, the point at which responsibility for the line moved from the Railway Company to the Admiralty.

**Top left:** is the view half a century ago looking North towards the Dockyard. The unusual signal protecting the road crossing for trains leaving the Dockyard.

**Top right:** is the current view taken from much the same position on what would have been the track bed on the South side of the crossing. Note the original gate posts still in position.



**Middle left:** we have crossed the road and now face South. A large multi-storey Travelodge dominates, encroaching on the original track bed. The distant building just to the right of the Travelodge is Catherine House, observed in a previous image taken from Portsmouth & Southsea High Level platform. One of the original gates is clearly visible in the position it would have rested when the crossing was open to road traffic.



**Bottom left:** The City Council placed a plaque on the gate marking the history of the line and is still in place today.

To View the Hayling Farewell Tour in November 1963, including the Portsmouth Dockyard branch click the hyperlink below:-

[The Railtour Files \(sixbellsjunction.co.uk\)](http://sixbellsjunction.co.uk)

Further Reading:

The Hidden Railways of Portsmouth & Gosport - Dave Marden ISBN 978-18905505-22-7



## The Rail Links to Portsmouth Dockyard Continued ...



**Top left:** Moving towards the Dockyard from the crossing the City Council built a cycle / footpath connecting the Edinburgh road junction to the Unicorn Gate entrance, following the original track bed. In the interim a new road network was built in the area, so the path descended into a short tunnel before exiting on the Dockyard side of the route.

**Top right:** The current view of the path North of the road network terminating at a brick wall, built when the Unicorn Gate entrance was moved out a small distance towards the new traffic junction. On the left of this picture a platform was erected, used by service personnel to board and alight from the occasional troop trains running directly to and from the branch. It has been known to be given the name Portsmouth Barracks, but would not have appeared on the public National rail network maps or timetables.

**Upper middle right:** A close-up of the wall reveals one of the original branch crossing gates placed where the line would have passed.

**Lower middle right:** Over a century ago Dockyard workers seen leaving through the original Unicorn Gate. To the left of the main gate the wooden structure would be opened to allow trains to arrive and depart. In later years the bicycle was king, hundreds leaving the Dockyard simultaneously at out-muster.

**Lower right:** A current view looking towards Unicorn gate, the original structure, identified by the red arrow, hidden behind the wooden gates installed when the area was updated. The railway track bed to the left next to the wall, shown closer up in previous pictures

