

Branch News – a Summer Outing

We bring you news of a RCTS Chichester Branch visit to Romsey on Thursday 25 June, to which you are very welcome to join, **members and non-members**.

In the morning at 10:30, The Friends of Romsey Signal Box have agreed to open their site especially for our group from RCTS. This will be a hosted two hour guided tour of the various items on display including of course the working signal box that once stood on the junction to the east of Romsey station. Further details about this attraction can be found at: <https://romseysignalbox.org.uk>

Ample time will be available for lunch and a leisurely look around Romsey, there are numerous eating establishments in the Town Centre. In the afternoon The Abbey has agreed to a guided one-hour tour at 14:30 for our RCTS group. Further details about the Abbey can be found at: <https://romseyabbey.org.uk>

Both these attractions request a £5 donation for the tours they are offering, exclusive to RCTS on this occasion. A free hot drink will be included at the Signal Box.

You may bring a friend and booking in advance essential. You can pay by bank transfer to:

Roger Sandford Sort Code: 30-93-04 Account 00459640

Please put your surname and Romsey, as the reference if paying by bank transfer.

Please email chichester@rcts.org.uk to advise once you have transferred payment. For any further information please use the same email address.

All transactions will be acknowledged as quickly as possible.

Note parking is widely available in Romsey, but very limited at the Romsey Signal Box attraction, which is barely 5 minutes walk from the station. The Town centre can be reached comfortably in a 15 minute walk from the Signal Box and the Abbey is literally a couple of minutes from the main shopping and food outlets.

Participants make their own travel arrangements.

To all members

Please note there are no meetings in June, July and August

Next Meeting will be

Wednesday 23 September

when Gordon Adams presents

The History of Southampton and its Railways

The photo below is part of Southampton history

Information for this meeting will be in the August
Newsletter



Signalling at the west end of Southampton Central

Picture Alan Workman, courtesy of Lynton & Barnstaple railway, John Barrowdale collection

<p>The Monthly Newsletter of RCTS Chichester Branch</p> <p>Editor: Graham Benzeval</p> <p>Distributor: Roger Sandford</p> <p>Additional Proof Readers: Geoff Adams, Geoff May, Hefin Jones, Ian McKey, John Robbins & John Barrowdale</p>	<p>Front Cover by Roger Sandford ©</p> <p>Contributors: John Barrowdale, Geoff May, Bob Foster, Nigel Tregoning, Alan Workman</p>
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What's on for the Railway Enthusiast in June

Railway Name	Website	Contact Email	Contact Phone
Bluebell Railway	Bluebell Railway Web Site	Bluebell Email contact	01825 720800
Isle of Wight Railway	IOW-SR Website	IOW Steam Railway Email	01983 882204
Kent & East Sussex Railway (K&ESR)	K&ESR Website	K&ESR Email	01580 765155
Watercress Line	Watercress Line Website	Watercress line Email	01962 733810
Amberley Museum	Amberley Museum Website	Amberley Museum Email	01798 831370
Hayling Light Railway	Hayling Island Railway Website	Hayling Island Railway Email	07902 446340
Littlehampton Miniature Railway (LMR)	LMR Website	LMR Email	01903 719876
South Downs Light Railway	South Downs Light Railway Website	South Downs Railway Light Email	07518 753784
Stansted Park Light Railway	Stansted Park Light Railway Website	Stansted Park Light Railway Email	02392 413 324
Chichester Model Engineers	Chichester Model Engineers	Chichester Model Engineers	

Railway	Start Date	End Date	Event
Bluebell Railway	2/06/2026	30/06/2026	Trains running on most days, see website for Afternoon Teas, Fish and Chip runs, etc
IOW-Steam railway	13/06/2026	14/06/2026	Gin and Spirits at the Railway Trains running on Sat, Sun, Tues, Thurs
K&ESR	05/06/2026 13/06/2026 20/06/2026 26/06/2026 27/06/2026	06/06/2026 14/06/2026	Real Ale and Cider Festival Traction Engine Display Cocktail special on the 1540 departure Murder Mystery Night Photography Course Trains do not run on Mon, Thurs and Fri, see website
Watercress Line	07/06/2026 13/06/2026 06/06/2026	07/06/2026 14/06/2026 25/06/2026	Vintage buses, Retro Wheels and Rails Trains running Wed, Thurs and Weekends.
Amberley Museum	13/06/2026 17/06/2026 18/06/2026 21/06/2026 28/06/2026	15/06/2026 17/06/2026 18/06/2026 21/06/2026 28/06/2026	Emergency Services Weekend Home Educators Day James Bond Father's Day SADCASE Car Show outside of these dates normal opening Wednesday to Sunday.
Hayling Light Railway	03/06/2026	28/06/2026	Running Wednesday, weekends and daily during school holidays
Littlehampton Light Railway	06/06/2026	28/06/2026	Weekends and school holidays
South Downs Railway	06/06/2026	28/06/2026	Weekends and Mon and Wed on school holidays
Stansted Light Railway	03/06/2026	27/06/2026	Running on Wednesdays and Saturdays
Chichester Model Engineers	14/06/2026 27/06/2026	14/06/2026 27/06/2026	Public afternoon 1pm to 5pm Chichester Gala at Priory Park

Southern Engineering Works - June 2026



Some Engineering works likely to affect journeys in our area.

Start Date	End Date	
01 June	04 June	Amended late service via Three Bridges
07 June	07 June	Buses replace trains between Brighton and Lewes
13 June	14 June	Buses replace late night/early morning trains between Brighton and Worthing/Chichester
15 June	18 June	Buses replace late night trains between Horsham and Pulborough/Barnham/Chichester
21 June	21 June	Amended 21:35 and 22:35 London Victoria to Bognor Regis
22 June	26 June	Amended late night/early morning Southern service via Chichester

South Western Railway Engineering Works - June 2026



Some Engineering works likely to affect journeys in our area.

Start Date	End Date	
01 June	30 June	No planned engineering works in our area



BRANCH NEWS

RCTS Chichester have announced a Photographic Competition

This competition is only for members of the Chichester Branch

As a member you will have received an email telling you about the competition with entry form attached.

Entries can be made many times up to the closing date of 31st August

Here is another Railway interest group with monthly meetings



Watercress Line Heritage Railway Trust, Portsmouth Regional Group

Where

Cosham Community Centre, Wootton Street, Cosham, Portsmouth, PO6 3AP

When

On the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm (Apart from July and August). Admission is by a donation of £4.00. Group funds are used to support the Watercress Line.

Programme 2026

16 June: AGM/East Southsea Railway and other images of local interest such as trams and the Southsea Miniature Railway with Steve Hayward

Further Information

Meetings start at 7:30pm. They will be held in the small function room which has a separate entrance on the south side of the building. There is a car park at the centre and on street parking as well.

The **Spring** in Havant have an exhibition until the 6th of June
The South Coast's Forgotten Railway Workers
On display in our Foyer Gallery to Saturday 6th June 2026

Who kept our area's railways running in the past? What was working life like for them?

Come and find out in this engaging exhibition, focused on our region's railway workers, part of 'Railway 200'. Discover Walter Bridger, a signalman at Fishbourne who overcame adversity; Joseph Pannell, a goods worker at Portsmouth in the 1880s who was 'held in the highest regard by his fellow employees'; and more. Ordinary people often have quite extraordinary stories! The exhibition was produced by the Havant Local History Group and the University of Portsmouth's History team. It was funded by the University of Portsmouth Centre for Excellence in Heritage Innovation.

You can also read more about the exhibition in this article by the University of Portsmouth: [Local exhibition brings railway workers' stories to life.](#)

30 Years of working as part of the Watercress Belle Team - Part 4

By John Barrowdale

I have already touched on the service of food during the evening but there was a bit more to it. One of our early volunteers who was a fireman in the loco dept as well, also worked for British Airways in his day job and managed to obtain redundant air cabin trolleys you see air hostesses pulling along to serve their tray meals and later sell you duty free goods. We used them for returning dirty crockery and cutlery to the pantry for washing up after a course needed clearing away. We loaded them in our preparation area after removing the dirty items from all the tables by hand, rather than directly into the trolleys as that would have given the wrong impression as our customers were not travelling in an aircraft! These trolleys were extremely heavy when loaded and took a bit of skill and effort to go over the lips in the carriage vestibules. They were delivered to the pantry area and two just fitted under the lift up flap where staff entered the pantry area. The empty ones once unloaded for washing up in the automatic dishwashers were returned to the coaches and left by the middle carriage door areas out of the way before being needed again.

The first course was soup which we delivered from the kitchen where it had been prepared in huge urns which meant careful handling. The soup was ladled into the soup bowls each standing on their own plate by the coach manager in the coach preparation area and delivered two at a time by the waiters to the tables, serving the two seat tables first before the opposite tables for four. We were famous for our watercress soup, which was delicious, but other flavours were available if requested on the evening. Unfortunately, our suppliers in the 20 teens were unable to supply it anymore much to the disappointment of regular customers so alternative flavours were used. The second course was taken out of the kitchen car fridges when needed and carried by the waiters down to the dining carriages in loads of usually twelve at a time, but I have been known to carry 18 at a time which needed steady handling. From the preparation area these were delivered to the tables

either two at the time or if both waiters could manage 3 at a time this would of course speed up the service. The main course would be worked as follows. First the coach manager would collect the 6 plates from the kitchen using cloths as the plates were heated up and extremely hot for each section and deliver these to the tables quickly saying to the customers don't touch the plates to avoid them burning their skin. Sometimes the waiters did this and many a time I had rim marks around the front of my chest where the heat had gone through my tunic. (It was not only footplate work that was hot!). The coach manager would then return to the kitchen to collect the meat course with six portions on a silver salver, with gravy moving around it and a sprig of watercress on top of each portion. Two waiters would follow quickly behind the coach manager to collect two aluminium vegetable covered containers one holding potatoes of some sort and the other two sources of vegetables while the other collected the hot sauce. One waiter would follow the manager whilst he served the meat and once he had finished the other second waiter follow the potato waiter with the other vegetable server. The third waiter would then serve the sauce unless there was a spare wine waiter free to do this especially on nights where we were a waiter short. Whilst the customers were eating the main course, the train manager would go along each dining coach to check everyone was enjoying their evening and deal with any complaints not that we had much of the latter. Gradually as customers finished their main course the coach manager would go to each table to obtain their dessert orders where there was a choice of three. Obviously, we did not prepare 36 of each choice for each coach, so about 15 of each were prepared and fingers were crossed that we would not run out of one before everybody had chosen their choice. Often this worked perfectly but, on some nights, there was demand for one particular item. Sometimes we could solve this by going to the other coach to see if they had any spares, otherwise it was a case of the customer choosing their second choice.

Once we collected the dirty dessert dishes, it was the cheese course. One waiter would go along with a big basket of Jacobs cream crackers,

and another would take a big bowl of celery along for the customers to take what they wanted. Incidentally just before this, small plates would be delivered for them to place the crackers and celery on. The coach manager would follow with a wooden server with three varieties of cheese where the customer would point to which sort of cheese(s) they wanted.

Lastly once the previous course had been cleared the tables were laid for coffee or tea with the cups and saucers laid on the corridor edge of the tables for safe pouring. At the same time a silver dish would have a jug of cream, sugar and chocolate mints added to the table. Usually, two waiters went along to serve coffee or tea and topped cups up during the rest of the evening. The drink bills would be distributed and payment collected about 10 minutes later and finally any change and the bill returned to the customer would be our last action. Once back at Alresford we would wait for people to leave the train safely then clear all the tables of remaining cups, saucers, glasses, bottles etc and return them to the pantry.

Passengers got to Alton twice during the evening so there were two complete round trips, but sometimes the train was stopped at M & FMs on the second trip with the engine running round there if it meant that the RAT (Real Ale Train) would end up getting to Alton late for passengers returning northwards on Network Rail to stations towards Waterloo.

We judged that the soup course would be served and cleared by the time we got to M & FMs, then the second course would be served between the latter and Alton and cleared by the time the train was ready to return to Alresford. We would serve the main course then and hoped this would all be cleared by the time we got back to Alresford and whilst the engine ran round there, we would start serving the desserts. On reaching M & FMs we should have cleared the dirty plates, so that we could do the Cheese/Biscuit course on the way down to Alton. Once the engine had run round there, tea and coffee would be served on the way back to Alresford for the second time. Sometimes we were slightly

ahead on time and other times slightly delayed but on average we kept close to the above.

⋮

John Barrowdale has sent me this correction to his talk from two months ago

I've been meaning to correct something I said during my talk on 'Chasing steam in Western Europe from 1970 to 1974'. Early in the talk I showed pictures of the SNCF 140C class 2-8-0s working at Verdun in 1971 and said eight of the class had been preserved all French built except for one which was North British of Glasgow built. In fact, 7 were NB built and the remaining one was built in England by Vulcan Foundry at Newton Le Willows in Lancashire, so no French built ones were saved. The class consisted of 340 locomotives of which only 70 were constructed in France due to the outbreak of World War 1. 215 were built by North British Locomotive company, 20 by Nasmyth Wilson & Co of Manchester and 35 by Vulcan Foundry. Three different French builders were involved on the remaining 70, SACM of Belfont (20), Schneider of Cie (25) and Fives of Lille (25)



From left to right are 140C No 151 NB built 1916, 140C No175 Fives of Lille built 1913 and 140C No 7 NB Built 1916.

June's Miscellany: by Geoff May ©



The signalman at Sutton Bridge Junction soaks up the atmosphere as Class 4MT 4-6-0 75024 makes a spirited departure from Shrewsbury with the 11.10 (SO) Paddington-Pwllheli on 23rd July 1966.

Bob Foster a member who lives in Barnham sent these photos of recent events in our area



Photo of the new Chichester platform canopy above the buildings. The glazing panels seems to have a greenhouse style opening mechanism presumably for hot days but are also fitted with a normal window handle. Is this part of an ingenious manual operating system?



The wooden canopy at Barnham on the island platform has been removed and the steelwork cleaned up, it will be interesting to see what replaces it (if any)



Finally, the track inspection DMU operated by Colas has visited the area several times during April and is seen leaving Barnham Up sidings bound for Bognor Regis via a reversal at the East end of Barnham station on the 7th April.

Mid Hant's Spring Gala – photos by John Barrowdale

26th April 2026



Visiting Furness Railway, No 20 from the Ribble Valley Railway, Preston on the 10.00 Alresford - Ropley



No 20 on the 10.50 Ropley - Alresford with owner Tim Owen in the top hat and Ben Zehetmayr driving



41312 and
68067 on the
11.45 ex Alton



Our own Urie
S15 No 30506
on the 10.20
Alresford -
Alton

Some views of the Isle of Wight railway – by Nigel Tregoning

The Isle of Wight is home to one of the most interesting parts of the British Railway network. From a once extensive system serving all parts of the island, it was steadily reduced through the 1950s/1960s to just over eight miles of track between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin. Steam finally ended in 1966 and the electric service was introduced in March 1967, using ex London Transport ‘Standard’ tube stock. Here are selection of pictures from the summer of 1986.



Taken from Ryde Pier Head station, we see 485041 departing for Shanklin. It's interesting to think that this stock dates from 1923 -1931, so was around fifty to sixty years old when photographed on Monday 8-9-1986.



485041, this time working the 09:40 Shanklin – Ryde Pier Head service, seen arriving at Sandown on Tuesday 9-9-1986.



Ryde Esplanade station with 485041 departing for Shanklin. On the right can be seen class 486-unit, No.042, these were used on the Pier shuttle service. On the left can be seen the extensive bus interchange, at this time the main operator was NBC-Southern Vectis.

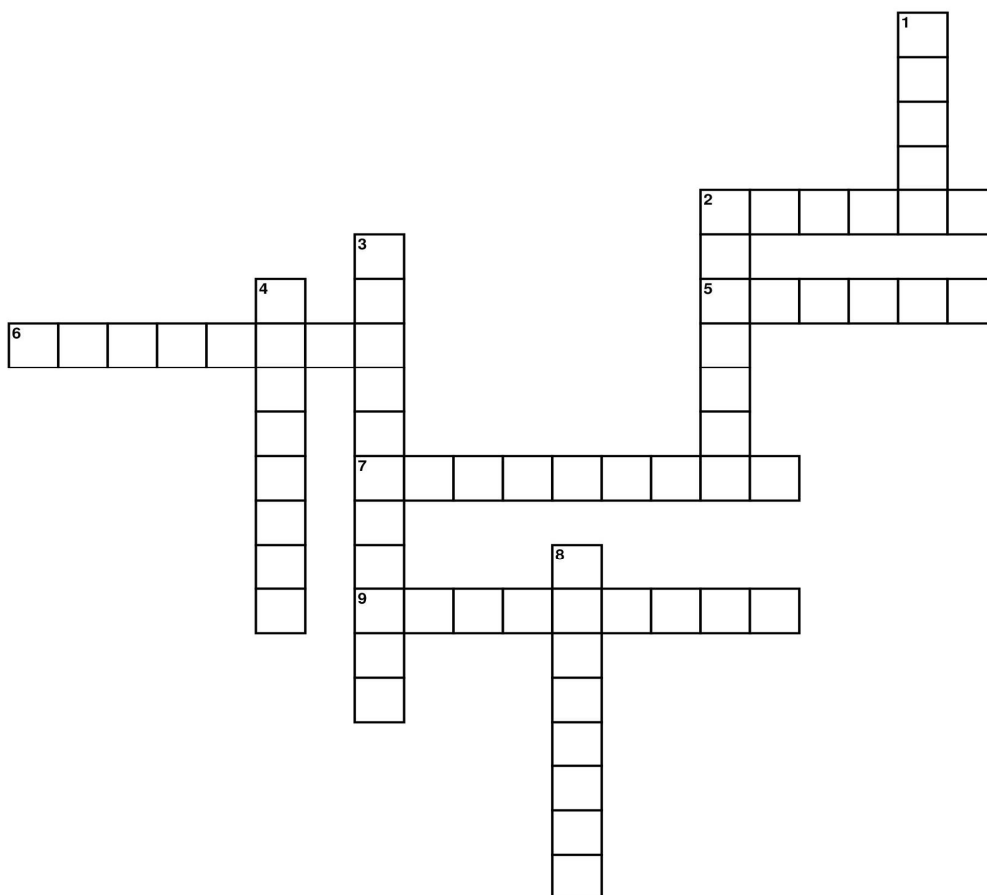


A Ryde Pier Head to Shanklin service worked by what seemed to be my regular unit. 485041 arrives at Sandown is bathed in evening sun. To the left of the signal can be seen the track bed of the closed line to Newport via Merstone. Tuesday 9-9-1986.



03079 was used for working engineering trains on the island and is seen in the former branch platform at Sandown with an eclectic rake of PW wagons on Thursday 11-9-1986.

June Crossword



Across

- [2] Southern and South West Trains join at which station
- [5] Where is the branch going for the June excursion
- [6] Bill Gage gave a talk on "Rails to" where?
- [7] Name of old type of signal using arms
- [9] Name of the large railway workshop near Southampton

Down

- [1] SWT branch from Guildford terminates here with Mid Hants Railway
- [2] Last word of the terminus station in Portsmouth
- [3] Station after Havant on SW trains line that includes a boy's name
- [4] Where is the Volk's Electric Railway
- [8] Name of the famous heritage railway in Sussex

Answers on the last page

Branch Meeting Report from 22nd April 2026

Bill Gage presented the talk 'Rails to Midhurst' to a very large audience of over 60 attendees.

In his inimitable style Bill outlined all aspects of these lines from construction to closing, driven originally by rivalry between the different companies whose territories adjoined each other, complicated by the opposition of the very wealthy landowners whose estates needed to be crossed. This was eventually solved by routing the lines to pass out of view of the great houses which of course didn't prevent them benefitting from the railway once built!

Amusing incidents, especially the runaway locomotive from Petworth, just after the line opened, livened proceedings. The talk was pitched at a level to suit both railway enthusiasts and those with an interest in local history, as proved by the number of Chichester Local Historical Society members present as visitors, most of whom I suspect had no idea the amount of heavy engineering involved in the construction and upkeep, especially of the Chichester Branch.

Our reviewer has a special interest, as he grew up in Duncton near Petworth station and can remember his mother talking about going to school via Midhurst in the 1930s and his father, an early commuter to London via the Petworth Flyer until the line closed to passengers in 1955. A very amusing, entertaining and informative evening all round.

Answers to the crossword

Solution

