

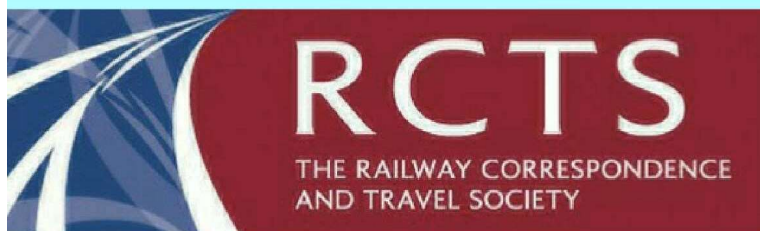
**2026/27
Monthly Meetings
In Chichester**

**Bassil Shippam Centre
Tozer Way Chichester, PO19 7LG**



**Railway Related
Illustrated Talks
Everybody Welcome**

Dates and Times Overleaf



A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered
with the Charities Commission. Registered number 1169995

Wednesday 23rd September 19:15
Southampton's Railway History - Gordon Adams

Wednesday 28th October 19:15
The Life of BR Class 4 Tank 80150
and its restoration - Martin Orford

Wednesday 25th November 19:15
The History of GWR 7903 Foremarke Hall
and its restoration - Jim Clark

Wednesday 16th December 19:15
2026 AGM plus Photo Competition Results

Thursday 21st January 14:00
Tracks in the Mist, a look at the history
of some closed railway lines - Colin Brading
Afternoon Meeting

Wednesday 27th January 19:15
Castleman's Corkscrew (The Old Road
Brockenhurst to Poole) - Philip Benstead
ZOOM Meeting Only - See Below

Thursday 18th February 14:00
Wales in Transition - Jeremy Segrott
Afternoon Meeting

Wednesday 24th February 19:15
Surviving Irish Tramways and Narrow Gauge
Railways in 1953 - Michael Walsh
ZOOM Meeting only - See below

Wednesday 24th March 19:15
Reporting the Narrow Gauge World
Andrew Charman - Magazine Editor

Wednesday 28th April 19:15
LSWR Titanic Boat Train Coaches Project
Ian Giles

Wednesday 26th May 19:15
Four Horns, No Tails and Three Legs.
Railways of the Isle of Man - David Costigan

Zoom meeting tickets at £2 must be purchased in advance at
www.rcts.org.uk/branches/branch-chr-chichester

No advance booking required at Bassil Shippam Centre Meetings
Suggested small donation on the door - Guests £4, Members £3
Interval Refreshments - Meeting duration 2.5 hours approx.

www.facebook.com/chichesterrailrcts
E-mail chichester@rcts.org.uk



CHICHESTER BRANCH

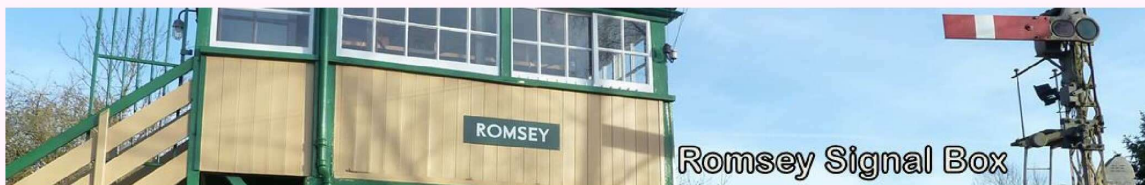
Monday 12 October

Visit to Romsey Signal Box and Abbey

This is an RCTS exclusive hosted visit at both these attractions.

The Romsey Signal Box attraction has agreed to a special two hour opening for our RCTS group at 10:30. We will be shown around this working museum by volunteer members of their group. It promises to be a fun and educational experience.

<https://romseysignalbox.org.uk/>



Following the morning visit, Romsey Abbey have agreed to a special one hour guided tour of the Abbey at 14:00. This will leave plenty of time to look around Romsey where there are numerous places to eat within a few minutes walk of the Abbey.

Each attraction has asked for a £5 per person donation. Numbers are limited, so booking essential. You are welcome to bring a friend with you and don't necessarily have to visit both attractions, either or both is your choice. Participants make their own travel arrangements.

Note this is the rearranged visit from 25 June which was postponed due to the excessive heat and humidity we were suffering at the time.

Further information and bookings please use the email below.

www.rcts.org.uk

email: chichester@rcts.org.uk

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Bassil Shippam Centre

**Tozer Way,
St Pancras,
Chichester,
PO19 7LG**

**Wednesday
28 October
At 19:15**



**Suggested
donation
on the door
£3 Members
£4 Guests**

The Life of BR Class 4 Tank 80150 and Its Restoration Martin Orford

**Unwanted by BR, passed over by
preservationists and narrowly
evading the cutting torch, 80150
is steam's great survivor and is
battling its way back from the
brink with a great story to tell.**

**No Membership or Advance Booking Required
Interval Refreshments - Meeting ends 21:30 approx**

The Monthly Newsletter of RCTS Chichester Branch. Editor: Graham Benzeval Distributor: Roger Sandford Additional Proof Readers: Geoff Adams, Geoff May, Hefin Jones, Ian McKey, John Robbins & John Barrowdale	Front Cover by Roger Sandford © Contributors: John Barrowdale, Geoff May, Roger Sandford, Bob Foster, Alan Wallbank, Richard Rickard, Hefin Jones, Peter Free
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The views expressed by the authors of articles in this and all future Branch Newsletters, are their own, and not those of this RCTS Branch, or the RCTS nationally.

What's on for the Railway Enthusiast in October

Railway Name	Website	Contact Email	Contact Phone
Bluebell Railway	https://www.bluebell-railway.com/	enquiries@bluebell-railway.com	01825 720800
Isle of Wight Railway	https://iwsteamrailway.co.uk/plan-your-visit/	info@iwsteamrailway.co.uk	01983 882204
Kent & East Sussex Railway (K&ESR)	https://kesr.org.uk/	enquiries@kesr.org.uk	01580 765155
Watercress Line	https://watercressline.co.uk/	info@watercressline.co.uk	01962 733810
Amberley Museum	https://www.amberleymuseum.co.uk/	haylinglightrailway@yahoo.com	01798 831370
Hayling Light Railway	https://haylinglightrailway.wixsite.com/ehlr	haylinglightrailway@yahoo.com	07902 446340
Littlehampton Miniature Railway	https://www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com/	littlehamptonminiaturerailway@gmail.com	01903 719876
South Downs Light Railway	https://south-downs-railway.com/	info@south-downs-railway.com	07518 753784
Stansted Park Light Railway	https://sp-lr.co.uk/	help@sp-lr.co.uk	02392 413 324
Chichester Model Engineers	https://cdsme.co.uk/	webmaster@cdsme.co.uk	
Eastleigh Lakeside Miniature Railway	https://www.elmr.co.uk/	info@elmr.co.uk	02380612020
Haslemere Signal Box	https://haslemeresignalbox.co.uk/	info@haslemeresignalbox.co.uk	07860 263055

Railway	Start Date	End Date	Event
Bluebell Railway	09/10/2026 16/10/2026 22/10/2026	09/10/2026 18/10/2026 31/10/2026	Murder Mystery Giants of Steam The Ghost Train Trains running except Monday, see website for Afternoon Teas, Fish and Chip runs, etc
IOW-Steam railway	03/10/2026 10/10/2026 17/10/2026	03/10/2026 11/10/2026 31/10/2026	Race the train Beer and Steam Witches, Wands and Whistles Trains running every day
K&ESR	07/10/2026 10/10/2026 28/10/2026 30/10/2026	07/10/2026 11/10/2026 30/10/2026 31/10/2026	Velocette Owners Club meeting Austin Counties Rally at Tenterden station Halloween Fun Fright Night for Halloween Trains running Wed, Sat & Sun
Watercress Line	02/10/2026 27/Oct/2026 29/Oct/2026 29/Oct/2026	04/10/2026 28/Oct/2026 31/Oct/2026 31/Oct/2026	Autumn Steam Gala Journey behind Wightwick Hall engine Halloween Witches weekend Halloween Horror train (18+) Trains running Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun and all Half term week
Amberley Museum	04/10/2026 10/10/2026 15/10/2026 18/10/2026 31/10/2026	04/10/2026 11/10/2026 15/10/2026 18/10/2026 31/10/2026	Autumn Historic Vehicle Gathering Steampunk at Amberley Discovery Day Autumn Industrial Trains Halloween Evening and Ghost Train normal opening Wednesday to Sunday.
Hayling Light Railway	31/10/2026 01/10/2026	31/10/2026 31/10/2026	Halloween Fun Running Weekend and Wednesday
Littlehampton Light Railway	03/10/2026	31/10/2026	Sat and Sunday running and Half Term Week
South Downs Railway	01/10/2026	31/10/2026	Closed until Xmas specials
Stansted Light Railway	03/10/2026	31/10/2026	Running on Wednesdays and Saturdays
Chichester Model Engineers	01/10/2026	31/10/2026	Not open in October
Eastleigh Lakeside Miniature Railway	24/10/2026 01/10/2026	31/10/2026 31/10/2026	Halloween Fun Running weekends
Haslemere Signal Box			Pre booking essential, see website

Southern Engineering Works - October 2026



**Some Engineering works likely to affect
journeys in our area.**

Start Date	End Date	
01 Oct.	02 Oct.	Amended late night between Brighton and Worthing
03 Oct.	04 Oct.	Buses replace late running/early morning trains between Brighton and Three Bridges
03 Oct.	04 Oct.	Buses replace trains to/from Portsmouth Harbour
10 Oct.	11 Oct.	Buses replace trains between Three Bridges and Brighton
12 Oct.	15 Oct.	Buses replace late night/early morning trains in the Haywards Heath/Brighton areas
17 Oct.	18 Oct.	Reduced service on 17 th and no service on the 18 th to/from London Victoria
19 Oct.	23 Oct.	Buses replace late night/early morning trains via Three Bridges /Haywards Heath
19 Oct.	23 Oct.	Buses replace late night/early morning trains between Littlehampton/Barnham and Chichester
24 Oct.	25 Oct.	Buses replace trains via Southampton Central
25 Oct.	25 Oct.	Buses replace trains between Three Bridges and Horsham
26 Oct.	30 Oct.	Havant signalling work: Buses replace trains between Chichester/Petersfield and Havant/Portsmouth Harbour/Southampton Central
31 Oct.	31 Oct.	Buses replace trains between Eastleigh/Southampton Airport Parkway and Bournemouth

South Western Railway Engineering Works - October 2026



Some Engineering works likely to affect
journeys in our area.

Start Date	End Date	
03 Oct.	04 Oct.	Buses replace trains between Southampton Airport Parkway/Southampton Central and stations via Brockenhurst
10 Oct.	11 Oct.	Buses replace trains to/from/via Guildford. Buses replace trains to/from/via Salisbury affecting Cardiff to Portsmouth Harbour trains
17 Oct.	18 Oct.	Buses replace trains between Warminster/Salisbury/Southampton Central
18 Oct	18 Oct	Buses replace trains to/from/via Guildford
24 Oct	26 Oct	Buses replace trains via Southampton Central area
26 Oct	31 Oct	Buses replace trains between Chichester/Petersfield and Havant/Portsmouth Harbour/Southampton Central

BRANCH NEWS

RCTS Chichester Branch AGM

Please note that The RCTS Chichester Branch AGM will take place on Wednesday 16th December, 19:15 at the Bassil Shippam Centre.

Hayling Billy Line

Peter Free saw this local item which might be of interest to members,

Exhibition – 'Portsmouth Area Railway Pasts'

Emsworth Museum

September 12 - October 18.

Open:

Saturdays 10.30 am – 4.30 pm.

Sundays 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm.

Entry free.

<https://emsworthmuseum.org.uk/event/exhibition-portsmouth-area-railway-pasts/>

The End of Southern Steam 1963-67

An Appeal

Did you or anybody you know keep records of Southern Steam sightings between 1963 & 1967.

Did you perhaps keep complete logs of movements at various locations. Help is needed for an ongoing project to document the movement and location of locomotives during this period. If you think you may be able to help please email chichester@rcts.org.uk

RCTS member, Richard Rickard, who lives in Chichester, thought the information below would be of interest to the members.

I've just discovered the range of discounted Hovertravel fares from Southsea to Ryde - and maybe this is not widely known amongst Chichester members.

This discovery comes from the familiar complications of booking rail/ferry tickets from Chichester to the Island - this time for 26th September we have speed restrictions and cancellations on Southern, courtesy of Network Rail following the Lewes derailment, bus replacements between Havant and Portsmouth, and 'train only' access on Ryde Pier for replacement of electric cables (no car access). So, Plan B - drive to Southsea for hovercraft.

Hovertravel <https://www.hovertravel.co.uk/>

Standard Adult Day Return		£34.00
Advance (48hrs)	Adult Day Return	£30.60
Hoverblue	Adult Day Return	£24.00
Hoverblue Advance	Adult Day Return	£22.20
Standard Senior Day Return		£23.00
Advance (48hrs)	Senior Day Return	£20.70
Hoverblue*	Senior Day Return	£18.00
Hoverblue Advance*	Senior Day Return	£16.70

* Hoverblue Discount Card for Island residents and **ALL** mainland **PO** postcode residents - which, of course, includes as far as Chichester. The card is free, order online and get email confirmation to collect at Southsea/Ryde.





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

Oct 20th - Martyn Davies, Mixed Trains

Nov 17th - Ian Wright, Steam on the Southern 1965-7

Dec 15th - Steve Hayward, Video Film show.

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.

Spotters Oddity Delight - by Roger Sandford

On Thursday 25 September the 12:43 Brighton to Southampton Central Southern service was operated by ex GWR dual voltage Class 387 173.

The leading coach, opposite end to the 1st Class, below the driver's cab, almost at the bottom of the carriage side, a depot allocation plate proudly displaying PZ Penzance. Somebody with a sense of humour!

RCTS member, Bob Foster, from Barnham sent in the following news item.

On my travels on the 21st of July, I had to change trains at Westbury and spotted one of the two new Colas Tamping Machines in pristine condition.

Colas Rail UK have added two new Plasser & Theurer (P&T) 09-4×4/4S Tampers into their fleet.



The addition of DR75016 and DR75017, which use the latest technology, help Colas to maintain the track to the highest quality for Network Rail.

DR75016 and DR75017 were built in P&T's facility in Linz, Austria. The build was started in February 2023 and completed earlier this year. The Tampers were transported to the UK to undergo final commissioning and calibration at P&T UK's base at West Ealing.

They then travelled to the Severn Valley Railway for a rigorous shakedown before starting work with Network Rail.



The photo below shows the heart of the complicated engineering of the tamping machine.



October's Miscellany: by Geoff May ©



Just four years previously, Haymarket Motive Power Depot in Edinburgh was home to seven Class A4 Pacifics, but on 26th February 1966 the “Deltic” era had well and truly dawned with D9016 *Gordon Highlander* posing in front of a class sister. Following its withdrawal from mainline service in 1981, the locomotive has had an eventful history in preservation including a short spell in 2003 on the Watercress Line.

Hayling Billy Trail Walk & Visit to Hayling Light Railway

RCTS Chichester Branch - Wed 09 September -by Roger Sandford

We set off from Havant station shortly after the scheduled 09:45 viewing the site of the Hayling branch platform, now a car park. Crossing New Lane, through replica gates standing where once the originals protected rail and road, it is a comfortable 15-minute walk to the original A259 road bridge crossing the railway, the trail continuing underneath. It is noted how in 60+ years the cutting is now full of mature trees, with the trail being a few feet to the West of the original track formation.



Replica gates at the former New Lane crossing in Havant

Climbing up from the cutting we visit the Spring Centre, where a small museum includes artefacts and many interesting images of the Hayling Branch Railway and the Towns history.



A display cabinet in the museum at the Spring Centre in Havant

Back on the trail we head South towards Langstone. Here we muse at how disruptive a railway was crossing the only road access on and off Hayling Island. There is little sign of where Langston station stood next to the main road, but through maps and photos easy to put everything into place. Interestingly the station name did not include an 'e' as in the area it served.

Onwards on the course of the original track bed, we reach the sea. It is high tide so difficult to plot the exact alignment of the original railway bridge, but with the aid of maps we were able to visualise the Langstone Wharf sidings and Langstone to Brading Train Ferry.

We cross the road bridge on foot and join the dedicated Hayling Billy Trail, which in part shares its name with the King Charles III England Coast Path.

Almost immediately turning North we reach the restored semaphore signal, which once protected the bridge controlled from a signal box mid-way across, where a movable 30' section of track enabled boats to pass through when trains were not in the vicinity.



Group photo at the restored signal on the South side of the railway bridge once connecting Hayling Island to the Mainland

Heading South we pass the oyster beds which continued to be farmed into the 1970s. Soon we reach the site of the remote Hayling North station. Here there is now a small car park and two replica gates similar to those at Havant, but little evidence there was ever a station.



The site of Hayling North station looking North.

Continuing South the next interesting site is that of a World War II Pill Box just to the East of the trail.

A quick look at the structure which would be enhanced by some restoration work we have the Hayling terminus in our sites, although this is a little further than it may at first appear, testing the stamina!



The Pillbox located on the East side of the former line to the South of Hayling North station.

Shortly before arrival at the site of the terminus some original Southern Railway concrete posts are evident and on the approaches to the station sections of track buried upright into the ground, possibly forming the base of a signal or other piece of infrastructure. It is difficult to place the station, as little remains on the site from when the railway was operational, industrial units covering part of the original railway land. However, the goods shed remains, fully restored, and home to a small theatre. Old photographs reveal housing to the West of the station still standing, so within in a few minutes we can see where the original station building and platforms stood.

The plan now was to board the Stagecoach 30 bus for the short journey to Eastoke Corner, home of the Hayling Light Railway. However, without warning we noticed on the Stagecoach app map the bus had been re-routed and missed all

stops in West Town, including ours. So, more walking as we quickly decided to continue on foot to Beachlands for the following bus 30 minutes later, just as well as that also missed serving West Town.

On arrival at the railway, we were soon browsing in the well-stocked shop, leaving with some mementos of the day, smart optional carrier bags in hand, payment accepted by cash or card. We soon found our host Railway Director Cliff Robinson, who immediately offered us coffee.

Refreshment in hand Cliff began to explain the history of the railway from the 1980s when there were plans to reinstate the 'Hayling Billy' line. When this became impossible the East Hayling Light Railway was formed by the late Bob Haddock. Initially this operated within the Mill Rythe Holiday Camp. By 2003 the railway had moved to a base at Beachlands and was renamed The Hayling Seaside Railway. Within three years a mile of track had been laid. The next major milestone was in 2018 when a new base at Eastoke Corner was opened and a further renaming to The Hayling Light Railway.

We were shown around the carriage and loco shed where one of Cliff's colleagues enthusiastically explained his role and much about the current railway operation, rolling stock and track work.

Cliff then escorted us on a round trip on the railway explaining as we went the various features and operational characteristics of the line. This included the current rebuilding of Mengham Road station and passing loop.



Loco Jack at work between Beachlands and Eastoke

'Jack' (in red) was the operational locomotive on the day of our visit, built in 1988 by Alan Keef Engineering of Ross-on Wye. We were able to view Alan B (Blue), Edwin (yellow) and Dave Scales (green) in the shed.

Many thanks go to Cliff and his team for welcoming us and giving their time to show us around the railway and explain the history and operation. The future, well the ultimate achievement will be to extend the railway through to the ferry connecting the island with Eastney (Portsmouth). More immediate is the plan for a heritage centre on the Eastoke site.

It was then all aboard the Stagecoach 31 bus for an uneventful quick run back to Havant.

Both the Hayling Light Railway and the Hayling Billy Trail are well worth a visit. The railway is open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays all the year round and daily during most school holidays. There are many books about the Hayling Billy, highly recommended is the 200-page 2025 edition of 'A History of the Hayling Island Branch Line' available from the Railway.

My days as a fireman – Part four by Alan Wallbank

My time with Ray came to an end as I moved up a link, as even more diesels were taking over steam duties. I was now in the gang of sixteen, where quite a few drivers refused to take us nippers due to our inexperience, so another driver had to be found or a different fireman. My new driver was Ken Arnold, who really knew how to get the best out of an engine. We seemed to get on quite well together, although he changed duties quite a lot as we all did at that time. The work in this link included local trip workings, freight to Salisbury and to semi fast passenger trains to Waterloo. Also, goods trains to Poole via Ringwood and to Chichester.

One particular job, was an early start of around 3.30am. We would work the 4.45am freight from Eastleigh's West End Yard to Basingstoke and it was nearly the same engine every time, that being the unconverted Bulleid 'Lapford'. At that time, she was a terrible steamer, no matter how it was fired, with even hard black coal failing to improve the situation, so I always had my work cut out to keep us on the move. At least we arrived at Basingstoke after which we worked a semi-fast 'rush hour' passenger train to Waterloo, returning with the 9.30am a semi fast back to Eastleigh. We also worked an evening semi-fast from Waterloo to Basingstoke with a 73 Standard, a class of loco I could never get to grips with and particular memory of this train still haunts me. My driver was Cyril Sacree, a really nice driver, who was getting increasingly frustrated by my lack of firemanship. As usual we were losing steam so when we left Farnborough Station, he took a quick look into the firebox, then grabbed the shovel and started firing with just a deft flick here and there and sure enough the steam pressure began to rise. What he saw and I didn't was a mystery to me. Look he said 'just fire to the bright parts' which I did, but the steam pressure dropped back again so Cyril took over a second time and as previously the steam gauge began to rise and after that second intervention, I managed to get us to Basingstoke.

A memory of Waterloo Station was the cavern like canteen, accessed via steps to the underground. In one corner was a one-armed bandit that took the twelve-sided nickel brass 'thrupenny bit' coins'. It was the first time I had ever seen one of these machines, so tried my luck and actually won on a few occasions. On arrival at Waterloo, we would sometimes take the engine to Nine Elms steam shed that lay between Vauxhall and Queens Road stations and is today the site of the Covent Garden Market. An over riding memory occurred one evening after we had arrived there, when the driver suggested we went for a drink at the 'Brook' a public house close to the shed. I must admit being a rather reluctant to go, as I had never set foot inside a pub in my life! Not only that, but I didn't realise how common it was

for footplate crews to visit the local hostelry when on duty. Once inside my driver asked me what I wanted to drink? Well, I had no idea except for an orange juice or lemonade, so he suggested I might prefer a bitter shandy. I have to say that I was rather concerned as I had never drunk alcohol, but I was pretty damn thirsty so any liquid refreshment would be welcome. With the pint glass in my hand, I took a few hesitant sips and must admit that I liked the taste and drank most of it straight away. Between gulps, I surveyed the clientele who seemed to be a 50/50 split between regulars and railwaymen. Not only that, but the shed foreman would phone the pub if he wanted certain crews and there was also a drawer behind the bar with drivers' tickets, a time sheet that had to be filled out relating to the day's work and placed in a wooden box before signing off duty.

My second encounter with beer, was the 'Junction' a pub next to Eastleigh station where several of us firemen met socially in the evening, before heading to the town's Indian restaurant. I must admit that my first taste of beer was not to my liking and two pints seemed to be my limit. Yet the other lads were downing theirs as if their life depended on it!!! Then it was my first Indian meal. I drank a lot that night, but only water as I found the food too spicy and I wasn't the only one! The second time we did the same again and I came to the conclusion that I really didn't like beer at all or Indian food, especially as the lads decided to order a really spicy meal this time, so lots more water rather than food! I still have the very occasional shandy, but prefer a Baileys or Pina Colada. Going back to Nine Elms for a moment, they had a coaling tower where wagons would rise to the top of the structure and then rotate to empty the contents. An engine would stop underneath, where the tower operators would drop measured amounts of coal into the tender using levers. There was always the feeling that they kept the best coal for their own men, while giving everyone else the rubbish that was mainly dust! Several times we would relieve a crew at Waterloo where they would say something like 'She's filled to the door and ready to go' only to find that the firebox showed little sign of life, with a blanket of fine coal virtually sniffing out any sort of combustion!

I was still earning £16 a week with £4 going to mum, so with little chance to save any reasonable amount I had no choice but to buy my next motorcycle on Hire Purchase. Bearing the registration number DTP 749C, it was a new 1965 350cc Triumph T90 that had a chrome headlamp, being acquired from Jenkins & Purser in Copnor, a suburb of Portsmouth. I had planned to buy the 3TA version from 'Northern Motorcycles' in St Christophers Road, Bedhampton, but they were asking too much for a new motorcycle that had sat in the shop for some considerable time.

That reminds me of another occasion when I parted company with my motorcycle, but first there had been another 'off' a few months earlier. During daylight hours, I would ride to Eastleigh via Wickam and Botley and then turn left into Fair Oak Square. Surface gravel here caused the front tyre to lose grip and I was soon greeting terra firma. Thankfully, I was only moving quite slowly, so I just jumped back on as if nothing had happened. The next 'off' was at speed. I was riding home on my T90 through North Boarhunt, when the driver's door of a parked car on my side of the road suddenly swung open and before I could take avoiding action my left handle bar clipped said door and I was soon sliding along the opposite carriageway. Fortunately, no other vehicles were about so I thankfully survived uninjured.

By now my time keeping had got a lot worse and I seemed to be late at least twice a week. I remember approaching Campbell Road bridge and looking to see if the engine I should be on was waiting to leave the shed exit. If it was and not wanting to be seen, I would walk crouched down behind the brick wall that separates the road from the railway.

Once at the shed, I would be dreading another rebuke from the checker about my late arrival. It always seemed to be the same man about sixty years of age, a few strands of hair combed back over his balding pate, while a hand rolled cigarette waited in his left hand that rested against the signing on book. With a pen in his right hand, he would glare at me over his thick framed glasses, while his lofty perch giving him an air authority. Few words were exchanged, but I knew he was exasperated that I had arrived late yet again! He would then more than likely hand me one or more report sheets where I had to write down my reasons for being late on previous occasions. By now I was repeating excuses, such as 'alarm clock failed to go off' or 'I had a puncture on my motorcycle', when all along it was because I never wanted to get up in the first place! If it had been any other job, I would have had the sack well before this time, but I probably kept it because they were short of firemen. I was then at the foreman's requirements. Not long after this time when late again, the same checker said 'I will ask the foreman if he wants you and if not, you will need to go home and phone the next day, to find out they want you the day after'! Well that meant losing at least two days' pay, but thankfully the foreman wanted me and it all happened a second time and I still got away with it! By now I had another problem and that was very painful knees. The aching was dreadful, which could only be relieved by being close to heat such as an open firebox or the fire in the cabin. When it came to going home, I could hardly put one foot in front of the other, such was the discomfort. Many of the young drivers had second jobs, with quite few driving lorries loaded with chalk to

build the Havant Bypass. One day it took me forty-five minutes just to get to Campbell Road bridge, where I saw my driver of that day passing by in his lorry! At some point I fitted a full-length blue fairing to my T90 and this cured my painful knee problems.

It was at this time that an incident occurred that made me think it wasn't the job for me! I was on the dreaded 8.30pm-4.30am P&D turn, where my driver and I had to prepare and dispose of a number of locos. Just doing a couple was enough, but now we had to do so many that I knew I was in trouble before we started, so let me take you through the process. I have already mentioned preparation, but this driver was really hot on sand boxes being filled. He would get on the framing and use the flare lamp to check the levels, so I couldn't get away with not doing them. If he saw me putting the sand in, he would still check that enough had been added and if he still complained, I would make one hod last the four feed shutes.

It was the disposals that did me in. Mercifully, there were few Southern engines now, just S15's the Monty's and the Q class, where the clinker had to be removed with a shovel as opposed to a drop grate of the Standards and the Bulleids.

My first job was to clean the smoke box. This meant looking for a 7/8ths or was it a three-quarter spanner that had an open and closed ends, located in the engines tool box. At the smoke box, we would use the spanner to slacken off several securing lugs around the door's perimeter, quite often having to stand on various parts of the loco to reach the higher fittings. Standards and Bulleids had two central door handles, with one being rotated and the other held in position. Once the door was open, we had to shovel out various amounts of ash into the pit while on the footplate a stiff bristled hand brush was used to finish the job off. The door would then be closed and the lugs or handles tightened, followed by brushing away any ash remnants at the front of the loco. Some of the Standards had self-cleaning smoke boxes denoted by an SC plate on the door.

It was now time to clean the fire such as on a S15. The first job was to locate the 9-foot-long shafted shovel and guide it into the firebox without hitting anything, then move the good fire from one side to the other, so revealing the clinker beneath that was usually broken up with the shovel, pricker or dart if very hard. The art of cleaning the fire is to get the shovel in and out of the firebox asap before the shaft gets too hot to handle, which is easier said than done especially if you are a nine½ stone weakling like me. I could only manage one removal while a more proficient man did three!

Once the clinker is on the shovel, it is withdrawn through a gloved hand and steered between the footplate hand rails and onto the ground below making sure

no one is about to get a face full of hot clinker. This procedure is carried out several times, after which the fire is moved over to the clean side and some coal added to keep the fire going. I then tackle the remaining half of the firebox. By now my hands are getting pretty hot as the shovel shaft has heated up considerably, so I place a rusty in my gloved hand to lessen the heat impact. But it soon begins to smoulder and is close to bursting into flame! Meanwhile the shovel blade starts to buckle and twist under the constant heat, often requiring several hefty sharp blows with the coal pick to encourage it back into shape. Thankfully I have completed my task, but not before I spread the fire evenly all over the fire grate and add a bit more coal. I then make my way to the next engine to prepare, only to find my driver coming back, having completed his work and heading for the next disposal. It then becomes a vicious circle as I get further and further behind. I remember him getting on the footplate of another S15 and really having a go at me about my slow progress, after which he snatched the clinker shovel from my hand and started doing it himself.

As I stood back in a state of exhaustion, I failed to notice the flare lamp licking the back of my jacket. Suddenly the driver shouts out that I am on 'fire' and as he proceeds to pat down the flames while admonishing me for being a 'bloody fool and why didn't I look where I was standing'!!! To say I was at low ebb is a huge understatement. I really could not go on like this and I had the same driver the following night, so I decided to look for another job. The next night was even worse, with my driver asking the foreman for a spare fireman to help me clean the fires. I took so long with one engine, that it was put to one side to allow others to pass and I had to look for another clinker shovel as mine had become too hot to hold. Of course, not all engines were this difficult, as the Standards and Bulleids had drop grates. All we had to do was lift two metal plates just in front of the firebox door that exposed a rocking mechanism. It consisted of two sockets for the rocker bar, one for each side of the fire grate. Each socket had two catches and by releasing the first one it would allow the grate to be slightly rocked to and fro to break up the clinker while releasing the second allowed the bars to swing upwards and by urging the rocker bar back and forth, it allowed the clinker to fall in the pit below. Very occasionally, a piece of hard clinker would jam between the grate bars causing them to jump out of their fixed position, so care had to be taken to make sure the rocking was not too excessive.

To be continued

The Gartell Railway by John Barrowdale

The above railway is in the small village of Yenston, Nr Templecombe in South Somerset. The railway is about 2 miles north of the A30 on the right by the traffic lights as you travel west through Henstridge off on a road called Common Lane which leads to the civil engineering company of Gartell & Son. This 2 foot gauge line opened in 1991 and is owned by John & Christine Gartell. Unfortunately, it closed to the general public this year as the owners are OAPs and want to give up operating trains, however the railway will continue for private groups for a little while longer. I was lucky to join a group of Lynton & Barnstaple Railway volunteers on the 14 August who hired a coach to pick up their Devon and Somerset volunteers, whilst I drove there with our October RCTS Branch speaker from Portsmouth. The line starts behind the Gartell & Son factory at their main station called Common Lane, where their Engine and Carriage sheds are located as well as their ticket office, refreshment & huge dining room and bookshop.



No 9 Jean in Common Lane Station

A sharp set of curves and a hill lead up to the old formation of the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway where the rest of the track bed is laid. You reach Pines Way Jct (note the S & DJR ref) where there is a platform and one of their two large signal boxes.



No 9 by
Common
Lane Signal
box

The line leads south for a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile to Park Lane station where there is a run round loop for the loco to change ends plus a four-lever ground frame. The train returns to Pines Way then passes over the top on an original bridge the line from Common Lane before heading over Common Lane itself then another works road before going north to Tower View where the line stops about a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the LSWR main line to the west. There is another run round loop for the loco to return to the other end of the train plus a four-lever ground frame. The tower from the name Tower View is located some distance away (NE) in the grounds of the NT owned Stourhead Gardens and you can just about see the top because of tree growth. Apparently when the railway opened you could see it clearly. The train returns to Pines way Jct, where a further run round loop is located for the train to return to Common Lane again after the loco does its third run round.



No 1 Amanda running round at Pines Way Jct

Of course, once the train reaches its destination the loco runs round the stock again to do the next full journey. In case your mind envisages a steam loco because of the heat and very dry conditions we had a diesel loco on the front much to my disappointment. However, they did have a loco in steam running around the sidings at Common Lane driven by my friend John Uphill the L & BR chief engineer.



No 6 Mr G and
No 8 Faith
outside the shed

The locos consist of 'Jean', a 0-4-0 tender engine which was in steam and two 0-4-2Ts No 8 'Faith' and No 6, 'Mr. G'. The diesels are No 1 'Amanda' a Perkins built Bo Bo loco based loosely on a Class 33 Crompton, No 2 'Andrew' built by Bagnall Drewry Ex MOD RAF Chilmark and another shunter No 5 'Alison' built by Alan Keef.

The signaling system would be the envy of many much larger standard gauge lines with two signal boxes fully equipped with main line railway equipment and two ground frames. If the line does reach the stage of closing completely it would be a wonderful railway to train heritage railway signalmen. I hope somebody else takes the railway on.

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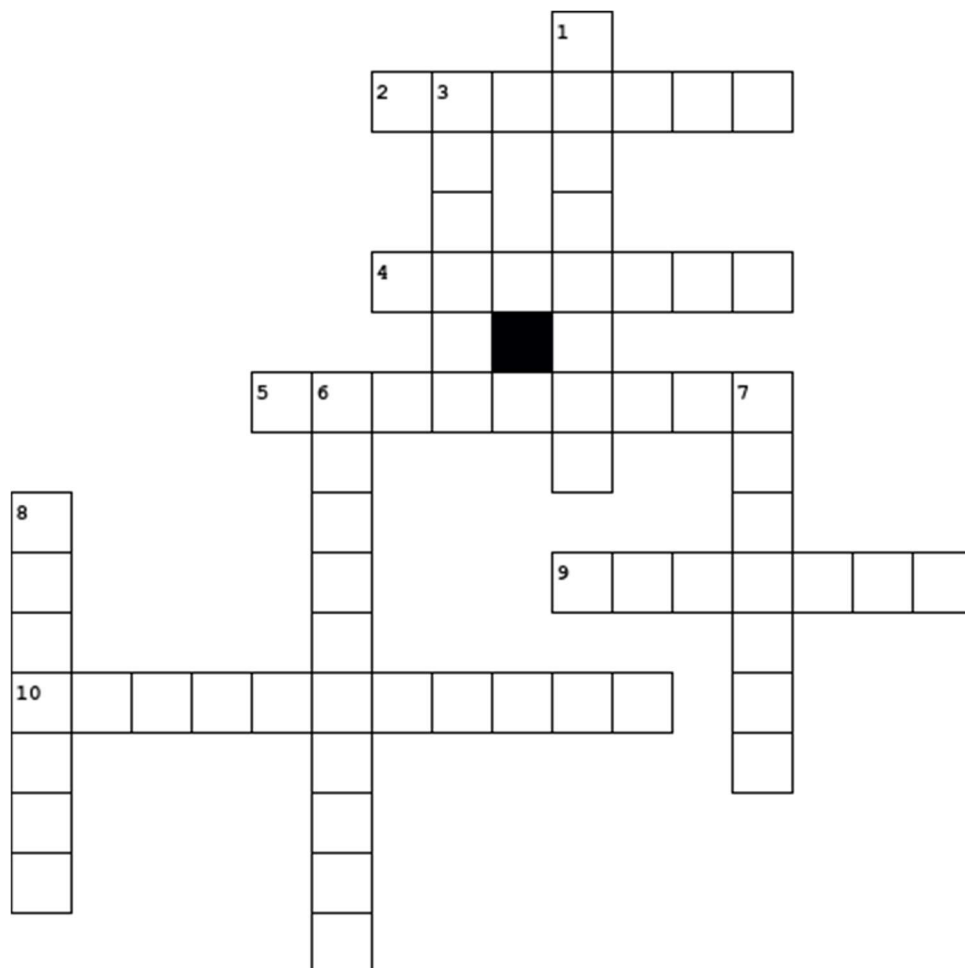
Chichester Branch Meeting Report – Wednesday 23rd September 2026

Southampton's Railway History presented by Gordon Adams

The presentation focussed through many lithographs together with photographs taken by the presenter himself, both on the development of Southampton as a port from the mid 1800's up to the early 1970s, and how the supporting railways grew as a result. Subjects covered included the arrival of the first railway from London, built by the London and Southampton company, followed by the westward extension by the Dorchester and Southampton railway. The unsuccessful attempt by the Great Western Railway to extend the line from Winchester to terminate in their own terminus station was also discussed and included maps of the projected route through the then town into the area occupied by today's docks. The development of the current Southampton Central station from LSWR to BR days was detailed and was complimented by slides covering the smaller stations at St Denys and Swaythling to the north, Millbrook and Redbridge to the west, and Bitterne, Woolston and Netley to the east. Views of the traffic to and from the docks were presented showing both the early freight facilities and those supporting the passenger trans-Atlantic shipping companies, through their heyday to the early 1970's.

Report by Hefin Jones

October Crossword



Across

2. In this newsletter Colas Rail new tamper is a Plasser & ???
4. What was the name of the railway that John B visited in Somerset
5. In John B's article the Black Five was built by Armstrong ???
9. What brick structure did the members encounter going to the Light Railway
10. Which city was featured in the RCTS meeting in September

Down

1. Which pub did Alan W go to next to Eastleigh station
3. Which station is having a new £12.8M footbridge
6. Geoff May's feature shows the Deltic Diesel Gordon ???
7. Which light railway did the members visit on 9th September
8. The railway in Somerset that John B visited was in what village

Answers on page 34

Havant Station – Public Footbridge to be Replaced - by Roger Sandford

Work was due to commence on Monday 28 September on £12.8 million year-long project to demolish the existing structure and build a new bridge across Havant station linking the South and North sides of the Town.

The existing bridge span built in the 1940s will be removed during late October when the railway line is closed for a week as part of the Portsmouth re-signalling upgrade work.

The new bridge will be twice as wide as the current one, providing a modern, safer environment, with gentler slopes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Full details can be found at:

[Havant Footbridge Replacement | Transport and roads | Hampshire County Council](#)

Pictures taken in the week before work starts show the entrance from the South side of the station, with span crossing over the top of the tracks.



A further view taken from inside the station looking towards the bridges northern exit.



Hefin Jones adds - The £12.8million pound total cost is part funded by £2.8million from Havant Borough Council and the rest from the Department of Transport grant funding, part coming from monies reallocated as a result of the scrapping of the northern section of HS2. The project is being managed by Hampshire County Council

John Barrowdale writes –

I was on a private trip in April 1968 to see steam in the Manchester and Liverpool area and took this photo of Black Five 45202 waiting its turn to bank trains up Miles Platting bank at Manchester Victoria.

I recall this was the only picture taken in sunshine that day. Typical NW rain and clouds most of the time.

The Black Five was built by Armstrong Whitworth in 1935 and withdrawn in June 1968



Answers to the crossword

- Theurer: In this newsletter Colas Rail new tamper is a Plasser & ???
- Highlander: Geoff May's feature shows the Deltic Diesel Gordon ???
- Hayling: Which light railway did the members visit on 9th September
- Pillbox: What brick structure did the members encounter going to the Light Railway
- Junction: Which pub did Alan W go to next to Eastleigh station
- Gartell: What was the name of the railway that John B visited in Somerset
- Yenston: The railway in Somerset that John B visited was in what village
- Whitworth: In John B's article the Black Five was built by Armstrong ???
- Havant: Which station is having a new £12.8M footbridge
- Southampton : Which city was featured in the RCTS meeting in September