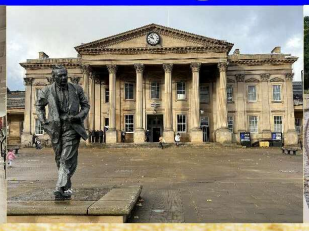
Chichester Newsletter

Next Meeting
Wednesday 25 November
The History of GWR 7903
Foremarke Hall
and its restoration



News + What's On + Nostalgia + Meetings + Attractions + Much More



RCTS
THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE AND TRAVEL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2026

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

2026/27 Monthly Meetings In Chichester

Bassil Shippam Centre
Tozer Way Chichester, PO19 7LG



Railway Related Illustrated Talks Everybody Welcome

Dates and Times Overleaf

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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

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The Monthly Newsletter of RCTS Chichester Branch.

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Front Cover by Roger Sandford ©

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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.

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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/	office@amberleymuseum.co.uk	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

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What's on for the Railway Enthusiast in November

Railway	Start Date	End Date	Event
Bluebell Railway	01/11/2026 21/11/2026 25/11/2026 28/11/2026	01/11/2026 22/11/2026 29/11/2026 29/11/2026	The Ghost Train SteamLights SteamLights Santa Specials Look at website for other services, no normal running of trains
IOW-Steam railway	07/11/2026	08/11/2026	Shunt Fest and Dark Ales Festival Trains running Sundays and Tuesdays
K&ESR	07/11/2026	08/11/2026	Southern through the Ages Trains not running except for the above
Watercress Line	27/11/2026	29/11/2026	Steam Illuminations Trains running only for the above
Amberley Museum	18/11/2026	18/11/2026	Home Educators Day normal opening Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.
Hayling Light Railway	04/11/2026	29/11/2026	Running Weekend and Wednesday
Littlehampton Light Railway	01/11/2026	01/11/2026	This Sunday only in November
South Downs Railway			Closed until Xmas specials
Stansted Light Railway	04/11/2026	28/11/2026	Running on Wednesdays and Saturdays
Chichester Model Engineers	01/11/2026	31/11/2026	Not open in November
Eastleigh Lakeside Miniature Railway	01/11/2026 07/11/2026	01/11/2026 29/11/2026	Halloween Fun Running weekends
Haslemere Signal Box			Pre booking essential, see website

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Southern Engineering Works - November 2026

Some Engineering works likely to affect journeys in our area.

Start Date	End Date	
01 Nov.	01 Nov.	Buses replace trains between Brighton and Lewes
07 Nov.	08 Nov.	Buses replace trains between Brighton and Worthing/Littlehampton
14 Nov.	15 Nov.	Buses replace trains between Arundel/Angmering/Littlehampton and Barnham
16 Nov.	20 Nov.	Buses replace late night/early morning trains between Haywards Heath and Brighton/Worthing/Eastbourne
21 Nov.	22 Nov.	Buses replace trains to/from/via Havant
22 Nov.	22 Nov.	No trains to/from London Victoria

South Western Railway Engineering Works - November 2026

Some Engineering works likely to affect journeys in our area.

Start Date	End Date	
01 Nov.	01 Nov.	Buses replace trains between Southampton Airport Parkway/Southampton Central and Bournemouth
01 Nov.	02 Nov.	Buses replace trains between Guildford/Haslemere and Havant
07 Nov.	09 Nov.	Buses replace trains via Woking
21 Nov.	23 Nov.	Buses replace trains to/from/via Havant
22 Nov.	23 Nov.	Buses replace trains between Southampton Parkway/Central and Bournemouth
28 Nov.	30 Nov.	Buses replace trains to/from Southampton Parkway

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BRANCH NEWS

RCTS Chichester Branch AGM

The RCTS Chichester Branch AGM will take place on Wednesday 16th December, 19:15. Please note that the meeting will be in the Newell Centre which is across the road from the Bassil Shippam Centre.

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

40th Anniversary show of the West Sussex N Gauge from Richard Hance



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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

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.

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Watercress Line Autumn Steam Gala photos

from John Barrowdale



Ivatt Class 2 No 46447 2-6-0 on the 10.05 ex Alton owned by the Isle of Wight Steam Railway but on permanent loan to the East Somerset Railway at Cranmore.

All photos © John Barrowdale



Ivatt Class 2 2-6-2T No 41313 owned by the Isle of Wight Steam Railway double heading with 46447 on the 11.05 ex Alresford.

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GWR Class 4200 2-8-0T No 4247 based on the Dartmouth Steam Railway on the 11.50 ex Alton. This loco will remain on the MHR until next spring.



Urie S15 No 506 and Ivatt Class 2 No 41313 double heading the 14.22 ex Alton

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Hall Class No 6989 Wightwick Hall on the 15.30 ex Alton. Owned by the Buckingham railway centre at Quainton Road and has recently had contracted boiler work done at Ropley. Will be at the MHR until after Halloween. The engine is in red livery as it has been used for Harry Potter purposes as Hogwarts Castle



46447 again on 3/10/26 at Ropley's outer home signal on the 13.48 ex Alton

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November's Miscellany: by Geoff May ©



Maddaford Moor Halt situated between Okehampton and Halwill Junction was one of the more remote outposts of the Southern's 'Withered Arm' west of Exeter. It was opened in 1926 - long after the line through to Bude was opened in 1898 and possibly in anticipation of a health resort being built nearby. Services ceased when the line from Meldon Junction to Bude and Wadebridge closed on 3 October 1966.

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My days as a fireman – Part five by Alan Wallbank

As I was having such a difficult time as a fireman, I was now scouring the 'Portsmouth News' looking for job vacancies and found one that seemed to fit the 'bill'. This was the I.T.S. Rubber Ltd at Petersfield, located adjacent to the old Meon Valley Station platform. I had no idea what they made, but it promised all night work that suited me down to the ground. I phoned and yes, they would be happy to take me on subject to an interview, but I had to learn the trade during the daytime. Well, there was no way I would be on time, so decided that I would have to stay at Eastleigh for the time being. Fortunately, I had a rest day after two days of hell, but it was back to the same job the following night. This time I had one of the younger drivers and to my surprise and utter relief he offered to clean the smoke boxes while I cleaned the fires. So, for the time being, I tried my best to keep going although I knew my performance was still suspect. Then I had the same difficult driver on a goods to Chichester. I did my best and just scraped by getting to our destination. En-route we passed Warblington Secondary Modern School that lies adjacent to the railway line.

This was where I spent my adolescent years, fighting a losing battle with anything educational, much preferring a game of 'pirates' in the gym and trying to catch the engine number on the daily afternoon goods to Chichester. Now I was on that train, so I obviously felt a sense of achievement. As we passed by, I wanted to shout out 'Hey it's me from 4B', but they were all in class and by the time we returned everyone had gone home. No one would have remembered me anyway, even the teachers and even if they did, they were probably glad to see the back of me and all the other unteachables. At this point I would like to thank my dad for getting me a job on the railway as he suggested to the careers officer that I had an interest in trains, although his first suggestion was a gardener's job, that was a huge surprise to me as he wouldn't even let me cut the grass!!!

Going back to the day mentioned earlier, I recall we had a Q class locomotive, the first one I had ever been on. As usual I struggled for steam, but at least we got back to Eastleigh without having to stop for a 'blow up'. I did apologise to the driver, but to my surprise said 'I had done my best and he couldn't have asked for more'. It was a shock response from someone who had berated me so much a few weeks earlier on P&D. We would occasionally work trains to Fratton Yard, then turn our loco via the triangle or the turntable in the shed round house that had up to eight engines stored inside earmarked for potential preservation. Although the shed closed on the 2nd November 1959, it was still fully functional with foremen, fitters, drivers and firemen and a crane for coaling the engines. Up

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to November 1963, it had serviced the Terriers on the Hayling Branch, so was definitely a hive of activity up to that time. The turntable could only be used if the loco had not taken water, otherwise it was almost impossible to push round. We also had to balance the engine in 'just the right place' otherwise the table would not move. I seem to think we used it when it was not possible to turn on the triangle and one day we made the mistake of taking water first. That meant asking the Fratton drivers for a hand, which they refused as they felt it was our own fault and not their problem. We had another go, but it still wouldn't move, so we had to ask the foreman to get the drivers out. We certainly got a lot of stick that day.

We also went over lines now closed. The nearest to Eastleigh via Shawford Junction, was the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway. Although the line closed to through passenger traffic in 1962 and goods in 1964, we still had the occasional goods to Winchester Chesil and I remember going there on several occasions, where the northerly limit was the tunnel entrance at the end of the platform. Sadly, I never went further when the line was open or perhaps it was a blessing due to my firemanship! The other route was the 'old road'. We would quite often work an early morning goods from Eastleigh with a 76 Standard to Brockenhurst where we shunted the yard, before making our way to Lymington Junction and branching to the right via Ringwood, West Moors and Wimborne, through the four track station of Broadstone that I never knew existed until recent years and then round to Poole, so coming back on ourselves. I never passed over the 'old road' in daylight, so all the stations were only seen in darkness. We would leave the train in Poole Goods Yard and then head light engine out of the town on a rising gradient that offers wonderful views of Poole Harbour. The gradient rises more steeply approaching Parkstone Station reaching 1 in 60 through a very deep cutting and snaking curves to Branksome at the top of the bank. From there we would either branch 'right' down into Bournemouth West or straight on and down the hill to Bournemouth Central, which at that time had two central through running lines. Incidentally, Bournemouth West had a single line shed where we took water and cleaned the fire prior to working out of the West Station.

All through the day and night, there would be standby footplate crews booked at set times where we would remain in the cabin until the foreman required our assistance. We could be asked to do anything or go anywhere. On one particular early morning I was on such a turn of duty, when the foreman came in and said I had to go to Lymington Town and work on the branch until relief arrived. At that time regular drivers and firemen worked all the trains on this single line between Brockenhurst and Lymington Pier, a distance of about five miles. It seems one of the firemen had gone sick and I would be his replacement. That meant travelling

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to my destination in the shed's transport, a blood and custard Bedford Dormobile van driven by one of three van drivers. So, there we were passing through the New Forest in complete darkness and heading for a location I had never been before. We eventually arrived and with the van driver pointing where I needed to go and he was off while I was left to find my way about. The engine was inside a small shed, but what was I supposed to do next and what time did the driver arrive, so I did what most people do in this situation and made a cup of tea and sat on the engine. Eventually the driver turned up with the instruction to 'fill the firebox to the brim as it would eventually burn through and you probably won't have to touch the fire again until relief'. Obviously, my reputation had not filtered down to this quiet part of Hampshire, otherwise the driver may have given me different instructions, yet that was the way it was done every day and why should it change just for me. Once completed it was time for another cup of tea, before backing our 80xxx standard tank engine onto two or three coaches for our first trip to Brockenhurst. Even now the blackened mound was still not showing any signs of life, but the driver showed little concern saying 'don't worry, it'll be okay'. Well of course it wasn't so out came the dart for some serious and by now desperate attempts to urge something to happen. At least the flames began to appear and with a bit of help from the driver we eventually managed to arrive at Brockenhurst although a few minutes late. It wasn't until the next return journey that the daylight began to appear and with the fire now well alight, I had more time to enjoy the journey. It was still pretty boring work though, especially at Brockenhurst as we had to wait for the semi-fasts from Waterloo, so I was happier when I got relief and travelled back to Eastleigh on the cushions.

Winchester also had a regular driver. An Eastleigh fireman would travel up there on the night mail train arriving about 2am. His job was to light up the four wheeled B4 engine known as the 'bug' and wait for the driver to arrive around 5am. My friend Nigel said he fell asleep on the 'mail' and didn't wake up until the train arrived at Waterloo! He also mentioned that Winchester was an eerie place in the early hours as trees rustled and owls hooted, a perfect recipe for the mind to play tricks with imaginations.

Another closed line was the route between Fareham and Knowle Junction. Trains would leave Fareham on one of three routes. To the left was and still is the Southampton line, while a single track to the right led along the Meon Valley line passing through the two Fareham tunnels and Knowle Station that only had a single platform. In the middle was the double track to Botley and Eastleigh, known as the deviation, which was reduced to a single line in late 1962 due to a land slip

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that blocked the Up line. I believe this was due to earth works associated with a new housing development.

For a while all trains worked over the remaining line in both directions, but later on the Meon Valley single line was used for down trains, requiring them to negotiate a 15mph crossover at Knowle Junction, while up trains used the remaining deviation line. Even later the deviation was closed altogether with all trains passing over the single Meon Valley tracks operated using single line tokens which I will explain later and rejoining the original track at Knowle Junction. At some point the closed deviation track was used to make an unrecalled film. At this time, diesels were making such inroads on steam duties that fewer footplate crews were required, so hundreds of men being made redundant nationwide. My union ASLEF argued that new drivers should come from existing firemen who had years of experience, so BR agreed to continue our employment under the 1965 manning agreement. At least my job seemed safe for the time being, but we were still a few years away from that final day.

In 1966 my best friend and fellow fireman Christopher Doel decided to emigrate, so he could continue to work on steam at Narrogin, one of the largest railway operation hubs in the southern part of Western Australia. I joined his family as they saw him leave Southampton Docks bound for a new life on the other side of the world. It is difficult to understand what was going through my mind at this time, but with few friends I seemed to think I should emigrate as well. Shortly afterwards I saw an ad in the Portsmouth News asking for those who wanted a new life down under. In this case tram drivers were required for their tram system in Melbourne so I duly attended a seminar, at the Portsmouth Guildhall. I presented myself as a likely candidate, but within minutes my hopes were dashed as they didn't feel that I fitted their criteria, so it was back to reality as I started another 'am' turn of duty.

On weekends we were usually working engineering trains from the PAD to various locations around the area. I often hoped we would be laying track, because at that time the track relaying machine was not self-propelled, so had to be moved to and fro with one of the engines that was nearly always a 76 Standard. The new section of track had been pre-assembled, so it was just a case of shunting the machine to and fro, lifting out old track and replacing with a new panel section. Back and forth hour after hour, lifting, dropping off, picking up and sliding another new section into place. It takes several passes to get into the swing of placing each panel in the correct position, made more enjoyable when the driver and I shared the work. At around 2am we would be expecting relief. They would arrive from Eastleigh in the shed's van mentioned earlier along with other crews, as at

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least three trains would be out that night. They would have a rough idea where we were, but trying to find trains in the middle of nowhere is a difficult task in the dark!

The van would often be travelling down narrow country lanes and farm tracks in the hope that we would be sighted. It not, we had to walk across fields, negotiate barbed wire fences and climb up or slide down embankments, then walk some distance to the train. That's fine in the summer months, but not recommended in mid-winter. We hoped our relief would get lost, because every minute they were late would be overtime for us at time and three quarters!

In the next part I will wrap up my days of steam.

To be continued

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Heritage Railways and preservation centres that failed or were short lived

Part 4

By John Barrowdale

Again, another centre that does not quite fit the description of this series as the railway operation was an add on to the main attraction here. Some members will know that despite me living in Portsmouth for all my life of 74 years, I have family connections with the City of Stoke-On-Trent. My late father & grandfather were both born and raised there and my great grandfather moved there from the north Leicestershire area in the 1860s and married Lucilla Malkin on the 17/11/1867. If anybody is into Pottery the name Malkin will ring bells as she was from a Manufacturing company family of pottery, tiles and earthenware makers based in one of the six towns of Stoke, Burslem (the home of Port Vale FC) to be precise. Great grandfather Barrowdale looks as if he married into money. I will not bore you with any more of my family tree, even though we can trace my surname complete with all the misspellings back to Henry VIII's reign.

The location of the pictures is the Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum, near Chell just north of Burslem which closed to mining on the 25th March 1977. The pictures were taken in the summer school holidays of 1992 when I took my family to show them around the area my dad was from originally. Modern mining started at Chatterley Whitfield in 1863, but coal mining can trace its routes back to the 13th and 14th centuries. The mine eventually had four shafts and was the first to produce over 1 million tons of coal from the UK in a single year of 1937. In 1979 it became the Chatterley Whitfield mining museum but sadly closed with debts on the 9/8/93 and also because of raising flood water, gas leaks and building deterioration. There was a lot to see there, including a trip down a shaft to see underground workings but I was suspicious as to how far we actually went down. The guides were ex miners and it was an interesting experience. After the museum closed it was later taken over by the Chatterley Whitfield Friends Charity. Some of the buildings are listed, but research shows the site is very derelict and overgrown now but the group seen to be thriving and does still run open days for the public. They have a building for displays but much of the site is no longer safe to wander around.

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The loco seen here was a real rarity being the only Robert Heath & Sons Ltd built locomotive remaining. This 0-4-0ST was built at Biddulph Ironworks in Stoke in 1886. It just ran up and down the sidings with a few trucks every hour from memory but did not give public rides.



The N & B C Ltd on the saddle tank stands for Norton & Biddulph Collieries Ltd. The engine went to the Foxfield Railway just south of Longton, Stoke at Blythe Bridge after the museum closed and was used for several years but is now out of service.

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This picture shows on the right the only member left of the North Staffordshire Railway class L 0-6-2Ts built in the NSR works at Stoke in 1923, but one of the last four turned out in LMS ownership in 1923. It was sold into industrial use by the LMS in 1936, hence its long survival. It was part of the National collection and was first sent to Shugborough Hall County Museum in Staffordshire until 1984 then went on display at the NRM at Shildon, Co Durham for a number of years before it was decommissioned by the NRM to the Foxfield Railway in 2016 where it remains out of use.

It was restored and overhauled by the NCB in NSR livery in 1960 to celebrate the City of Stoke-on-Trent in 1960 and put on show at Crewe works staged by British Railways before back to industrial use with sister locomotives. It was last used at Walken Collieries near Manchester in the mid-1960s. Despite much research I cannot identify the locomotive on the left of the picture.

I will end on a bit more of family history saying my maternal Stoke great grandfather Ephriam Hothersall was a blacksmith at Stoke Railway works.

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RCTS Chichester Branch outdoor visit Monday 12 October

Romsey Signal Box Museum and Romsey Abbey

Our visit to Romsey had been re-scheduled from 25 June, when it fell victim to the excessive heat and humidity we were experiencing at the time.

October of course was very different, for much of the day there was annoying light drizzle, but this didn't deter our group consisting of 11 members and four guests (including two member's wives) from enjoying an excellent day in Romsey.

Our first visit was a 10:30 start at the **Romsey Signal Box Museum**, specially opened for our group. We were greeted by Dick Hewitt, the Chairman of the Friends of Romsey Signal Box, who acted as host visit. Dick had gathered together a group of volunteers to assist in the operation of the various exhibits and act as guides.

Dick began by giving us an insight into the history of the project and a broad view of what we were to see and enjoy, including a complimentary hot drink. The signal box dates from 1865, originally situated on the north side of the line, at the junction where the line diverges eastwards towards Chandlers Ford and South to Redbridge and Southampton.



External view of Romsey Signal Box. Photo - Hefin Jones

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We learned that Mrs Audrey Gebbie head teacher of Romsey Infants School had suggested to a demolition gang, needing access to reach the redundant signal box, it would be ideal as an educational resource. Eventually, after much negotiation, the structure was lifted from its site on the North side of the line to a spare piece of land on the South side of the line adjacent to the school.

Notable landmark dates were 17 September 1992 when the signal box became operational and September 2015 when the current museum opened, the school having closed and replaced by a small housing estate.

We were given a demonstration of the working of the miniature lever frame with full size instruments based on the signal box at Cowley Bridge junction, just outside Exeter.



Demonstration of Cowley Bridge Junction mini frame underway. All photos by Roger Sandford

We were free to wander around the site, but now split into two groups. The first group headed for the main attraction where Dick was to demonstrate the working of the box. The second group visiting the Audrey Gebbie Discovery Centre, named after the Romsey infants school head teacher who attended the opening at the age of 94 in 2024.

Here a model above head height around two connected rooms demonstrates the working of more modern colour light signalling, among other exhibits and artefacts.

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The groups then swapped over, so everybody was able to appreciate the entire site. In the signal box Dick expertly explained the operation, including contact between signal boxes, bell codes and a raft of safety measures, particularly fascinating was the interlocking of the levers and a small hand version enabling us to visualise exactly how the interlocking worked. On hands experience of pulling the levers was a treat and perhaps not quite as easy to a novice as you might expect.



Geoff May pulls a lever in the Signal Box under the watchful eye of our host Dick Hewitt

Such was the interest of the group we overran our scheduled visit in excess of half an hour. Dick and his team of volunteers had been excellent hosts and we thank them all for their enthusiasm and knowledgeable input throughout the visit.

As a final surprise we were each given a date stamped Edmondson cardboard train ticket as a memento of our visit.

A highly recommended attraction detail at - romseysignalbox.org.uk

Lunch in Romsey was a little rushed following our extended visit to the Signal Box, but we reassembled, less a couple of people who had decided not to attend the afternoon visit to **Romsey Abbey**.

Rob Gower at the Abbey had arranged two guides to escort us on a tour of the Abbey. Once again, we were split into two groups to enhance the experience and enable everybody to stay close to a guide.

The Abbey Church of St. Mary and St. Ethelfields can trace its origins back to 907 AD, when King Edward the Elder, son of the Saxon King Alfred the Great, first settled some nuns on the site under the charge of

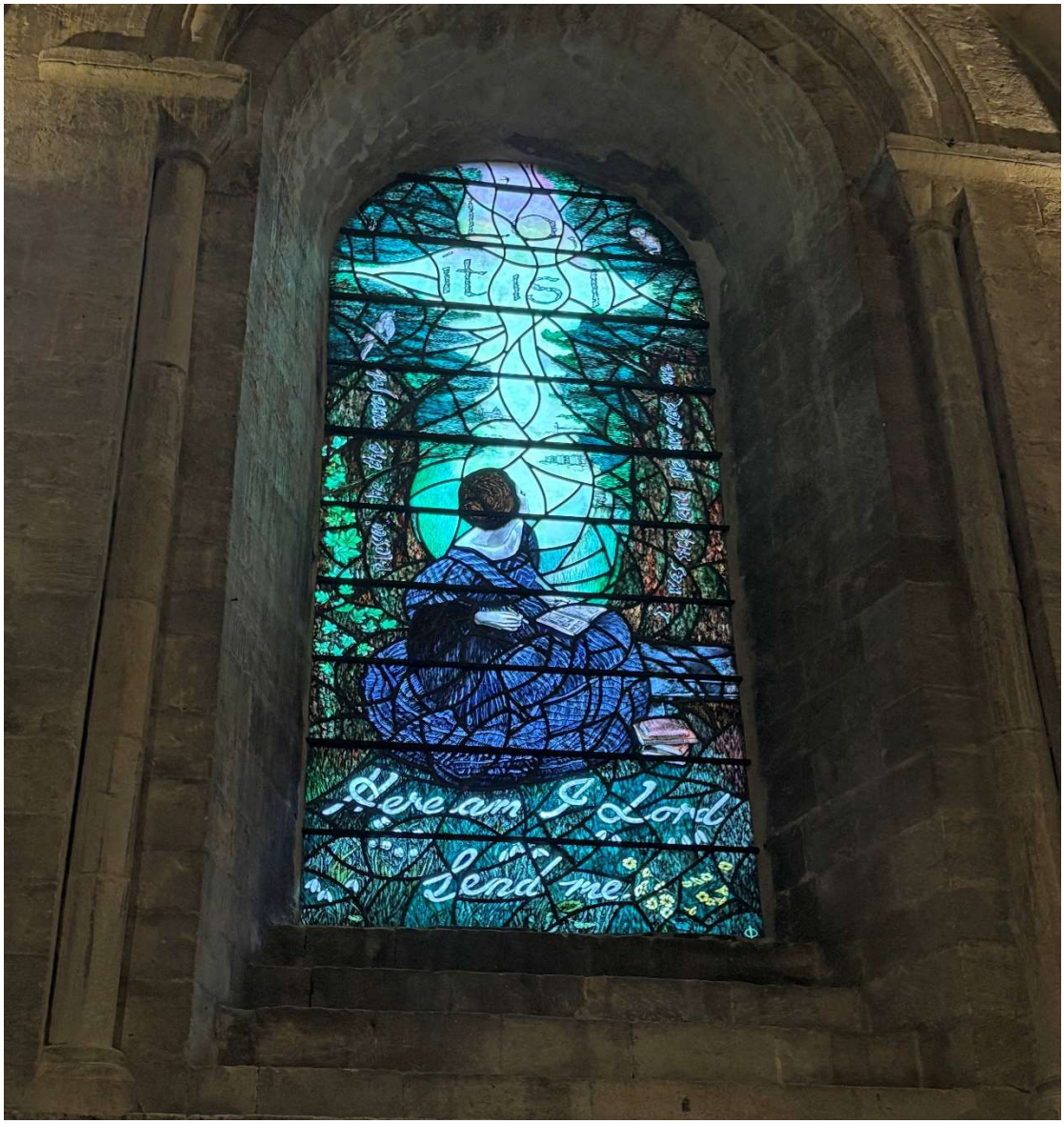
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his daughter Elflaeda. The first stone church and nunnery were built c.1000 AD and work began on the present building c.1120-1140. Followed by extension to the nave 1150-1180, the final three arches at the west end added in 1230-1240.

In 1349 the Black Death decimated the population and by 1549 the Abbey was suppressed. In 1544 the towns people were allowed to purchase the building for £100. Further damage occurred during the English Civil War and a period of neglect followed in the eighteenth century.

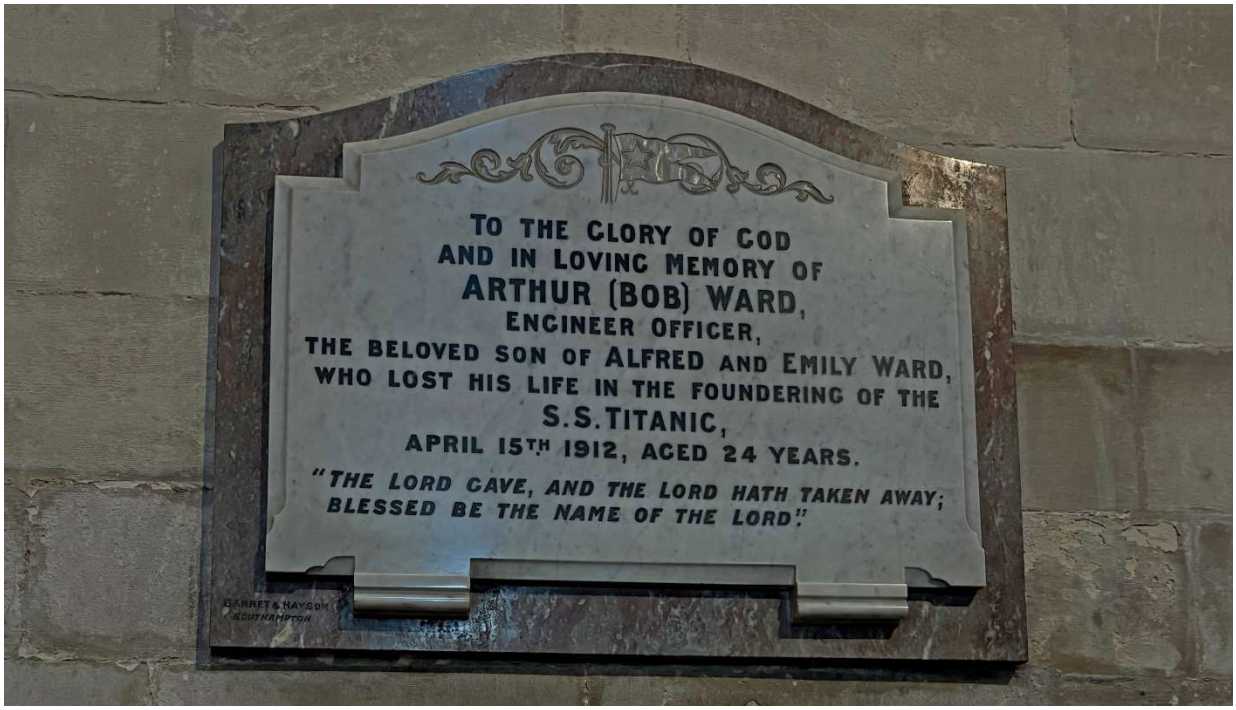
A renaissance of the Abbey began in the 19th century and the Abbey remains the largest parish church in Hampshire.

Our tour guides provided a detailed, interesting and informative commentary as we moved around the Abbey, stopping at various points along the way including viewing many of the 24 stained glass windows, a memorial plaque to Titanic engineer officer and, of course, the tomb of Lord Mountbatten.



One of the 24 stain glass windows, this one depicting Florence Nightingale

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Memorial to Arthur (Bob) Ward Engineer Officer on S.S. Titanic



The tombstone of Lord Mountbatten aligned North-South, rather than the conventional East- West, facing the direction where his wife, Lady Edwina Mountbatten, was buried at sea

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A memorial from the 17th century dedicated to John and Grissell St. Barbe.

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A fascinating afternoon, for which we are very grateful to everybody at the Abbey for their hospitality. More details about the Abbey can be found at www.romseyabbey.org.uk



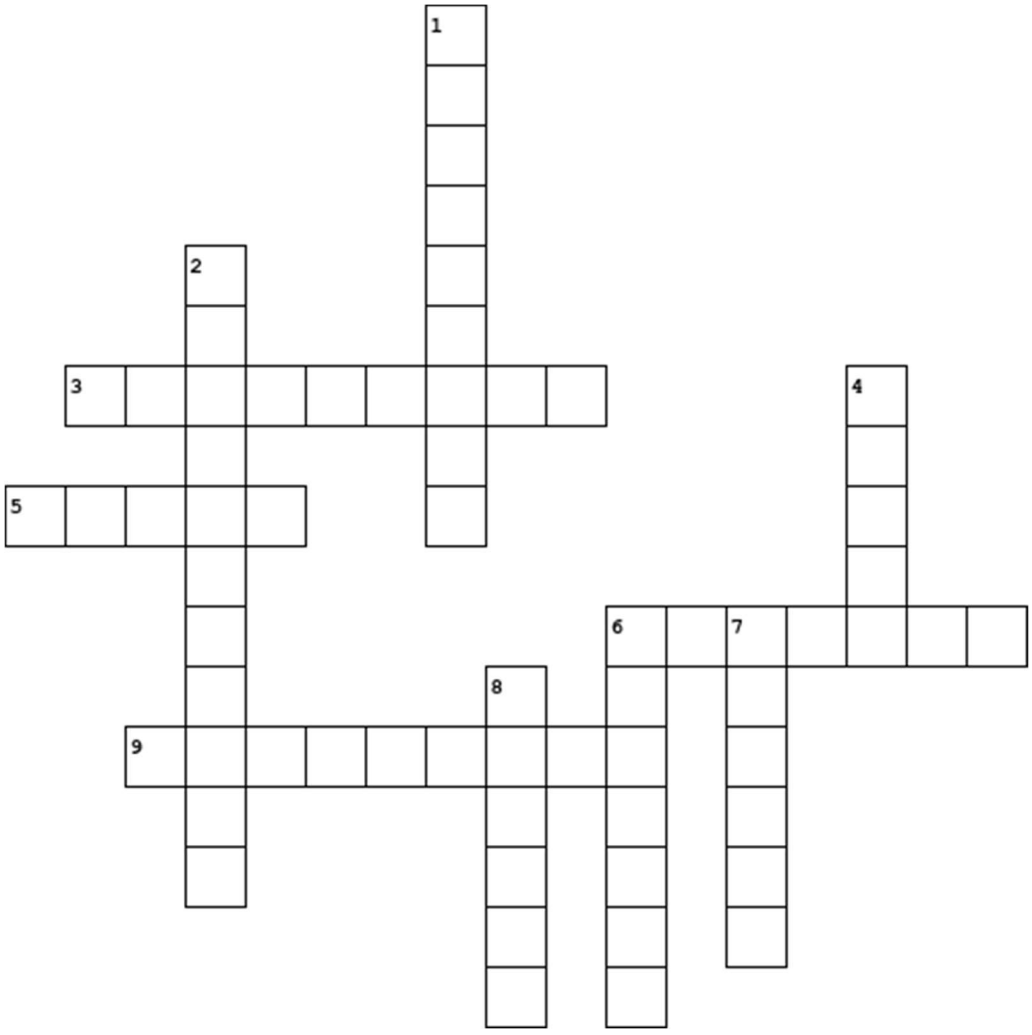
RCTS members waiting for the late running GWR train home at Romsey station

An excellent day, which for those travelling by rail had a sting in tail with a delay of 40 minutes due to a signal failure in the Romsey area, how ironic was that!!

Roger Sandford
October 2026

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November Crossword



Across

3. Which 'Hall' was at the Mid Hants Gala

5. The rare loco in John B item was built by Robert ??

6. Which of the six Stoke towns was mentioned in John B item

9. In Geoff May's photo which Moor Halt is featured

Down

1. What is the name of the green used for BR livery

2. Florence who ? was featured in the Stain Glass Window

4. Where was the mining museum in John B item

6. What make of Dormobile was used to transport Alan Wallbank

7. Which Abbey did the RCTS members visit

8. Which Bridge Junction was demo in the signal box museum

Answers on page 33

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Rail Head Treatment Trains (RHTT) from Roger Sandford

Autumn underway and Network Rail begin the work of keeping the tracks clear of leaves and other debris. In our area we are used to seeing the Multipurpose vehicles (MPV), Wessex area based at Totton out and about equipped with high pressure pumps which can apply adhesion modifier to each running rail. These vehicles can be modified in winter to act as de-icing machines.

On a bright sunny autumn Saturday 17 October in a scene more in keeping with the railway further North the picture below is unmistakably Brighton on the South Coast. Class 69 012, displaying an 82A shed code below the fleet number, on the blocks at platform 3, waits to depart with the 09:51 for London Victoria on a Rail Head Treatment Train. 69 009, out of shot, will lead on a service which started out at Tonbridge at 05:44 and will not return until 16:41, having visited Redhill, Newhaven Marine, Brighton, London Victoria, Uckfield, East Grinstead before finally reaching home.



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Roger Sandford was at the RCTS weekend in Bury Lancashire and sent this photo



Bury Bolton Street, East Lancashire Railway visit by RCTS, part of the Members' weekend events - Saturday 24 October

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This month's archive photo from John Barrowdale



This is Standard class 5 No 73092 taken at Bournemouth Loco shed on Saturday 1st July 1967. It is in BR Brunswick green livery but apart from the cab you would be hard pressed to realise this! Steam on the southern region finished eight days later.

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RCTS Chichester Branch October meeting report from John Barrowdale

We welcomed Martin Orford at our Oct meeting with his talk on the Life & Times of BR Class 4 Tank 80150. Martin is the volunteer team leader of the group who are restoring this locomotive for the Watercress Line Heritage Railway Trust (WLHRT).

The talk started detailing this loco's history from when it was built in 1956 as one of the final batch of 5 of this 155 strong class to its withdrawal in 1965, when it was sent to Barry to become eventually one of the final 10 locomotives to leave there.

Its first shed was at Brighton until 1963 when it was transferred to Eastleigh until withdrawal. It was used at the latter on goods trains mainly, including watercress pickups at Alresford making it an appropriate engine for Mid Hants Railway (MHR) purposes.

Glamorgan Council purchased it for a proposed museum in Cardiff which did not get off the ground and was swapped for an unrestored turntable at Ropley where it was stored at Alresford before work started on it.

Conserving it, sourcing original parts and making new parts has been the main focus with a small team of volunteers many of whom help raise funds with the sales stall at galas.

Martin made an excellent case to push this loco up the queue showing how economical it would be compared to steaming a Bulleid Pacific.

It is one of only two class members out of the 15 preserved which have not run in preservation.

Excellent talk showing how one mundane MT 2-6-4T locomotive can dominate an evening's viewing.



Here is 80150 when still in steam with BR.

©Geoff May

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Answers to the crossword

Wightwick Which 'Hall' was at the Mid Hants Gala

Maddaford In Geoff May's photo which Moor Halt is featured

Brunswick What is the name of the green used for BR livery

Bedford What make of Dormobile was used to transport Alan Wallbank

Burslem Which of the six Stoke towns was mentioned in John B item

Chell Where was the mining museum in John B item

Heath The rare loco in John B item was built by Robert ??

Romsey Which Abbey did the RCTS members visit

Cowley Which Bridge Junction was demo in the signal box museum

Nightingale Florence who?? was featured in the Stain Glass Window

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