

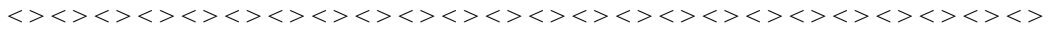
ESTABLISHED 1900

WELLS RAILWAY FRATERNITY

Newsletter No.186 - July 2016

www.railwells.com

Thank you to those who have contributed to this newsletter.
Your contributions for future editions are welcome;
please contact the editor, Steve Page
Tel: 01761 433418, or email page564@btinternet.com



Cheddar S&DJR - a “might have been” branch modelled in P4 scale by Simon Challis and on display at **Railwells** this year.

2016 - 2017 PROGRAMME

All meetings are on Tuesday evenings, commencing at 7.30, in Wells Town Hall.

13 September	34092 The CITY OF WELLS Story	John Sagar
11 October	40 Years of HSTs on the GW Main Line	Roy Kethro
8 November	With High-viz and a Bowler Hat	David Maidment
13 December	AGM <i>followed by</i> Quiz – set by last year's winner	Jim Allwood
10 January	The Strawberry Line – Past, Present and Future <i>followed by</i> Steam and Diesel	Lois Brenchley Paul Burdett
14 February	Bristol Buses	Mike Walker
14 March	The Class 59s and Mendip Stone	John Barlow & Robin Jacobs
11 April	1960s BR Steam Miscellany	Michael Clemens
9 May	Swindon Works part III	Brian Arman

RAIL RESURGENCE IN THE SOUTH WEST

by Nigel Bray

12 April

On the 12th April 2016 our speaker was Nigel Bray, Secretary of the Severnside Branch of Rail Future (formerly the Railway Development Society) and his subject was 'Rail Resurgence in the South West'.

Nigel, who lives in Gloucester, stated that Rail Future campaigned for the development and renewal of railways both for passenger and freight use. He began his illustrated presentation by pointing out that railways were undergoing a significant revival nationally and gave as an example the fact that ticket sales at the ten stations in Somerset had grown from just under 1.4 million in the financial year 1997/98 to 2.8 million in 2011/12. During that period the annual number of journeys originating at Castle Cary had grown from 124,000 to 275,000 - at even at the small Bruton station from 14,500 to 27,000.

Nigel then took us on a digital survey throughout the region describing developments and improvements, both major and minor, which had been achieved since the 1980s, often as a result of campaigning. This included the restoration of double track (e.g. from Swindon to Kemble), the reopening and modernisation of old stations and the opening of new ones, and the reinstatement of platforms. The recent opening of a new station at Newcourt on the Exmouth Branch, the first in the region for 18 years, meant that there were now nine stations in the Exeter area. Recent campaigning had been concerned with the need for a station to meet the needs of the Langport and Somerton area.

In the Bristol area, with its present total of twelve stations, there was currently great activity, much in association with the electrification works, including the reinstatement of the quadruple track between Lawrence Hill and Parkway. Also, the incorporation of the City's rail network into a new Metro system was progressing.

A vote of thanks was moved by John Uncles who felt that members now had a much better understanding of recent developments on our local railways and the efforts being made to continue with the improvements in future.

ST PHILIPS MARSH OPEN DAY

report by Roy Kethro

2 May

On Monday 2nd May a number of Fraternity members were among the estimated 5,000 visitors who attended the open day at Bristol St Philips Marsh depot. The event was organised by Great Western Railway to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the iconic High Speed Train with around £20,000 being raised for the children's charity Springboard Opportunity Group.

We were treated to a fine display of present day and heritage traction including an impressive line up of HST power cars in a range of colourful liveries supplied courtesy of various Train Operating Companies. Heritage diesel locos were represented by classes which mainly worked around the Bristol area replacing steam as it was displaced in the early 1960's. Regrettably, only one steam loco was in attendance as three others in the programme were unavailable at short notice due to 'operational reasons'. The one which did attend was no. 46100 *Royal Scot* in rebuilt form and in BR green livery. While not a regular type in the Bristol area, they did occasionally venture south from Birmingham.

The highlight of the event was the unveiling of the first production HST power car no. 43002 in its original Inter-City 125 blue and yellow livery. As a tribute to the designer who was responsible for its distinctive exterior styling, it was named *Sir Kenneth Grange* by the gentleman himself.

GWR displayed a range of the company's current day rolling stock in the recently introduced green livery. Included was one of the relatively modern class 166 'Thames Turbo' units which are planned to be cascaded to the Bristol area for local services in a few years time as electrification progresses westwards from the London area.

Unfortunately, the weather was a bit mixed on the day and turned very wet in the afternoon but there was a good selection of railway related stalls under cover in the old Marsh Junction shed to keep visitors entertained in the dry. As well as information stands manned by representatives of several heritage railways, it was possible to buy all manner of railway memorabilia and model railway equipment including HST power cars. The vast selections of second hand books for sale put our own Fraternity bookstall to shame.

What many visitors may not have appreciated is that the area allocated for the open day represented less than a half of this extensive site. The Marsh is very much a working depot even on a bank holiday and it was very impressive to see how many current and former depot staff gave up their time to make the event such a great success.

SWINDON WORKS – PART II

by Brian Arman

10 May

As is now traditional, we welcomed Canon Brian Arman as the speaker at our final meeting of the season. This year Brian presented the second part of his story of Swindon Works, covering the years 1880 – 1924.

Brian began by giving some background information regarding this period. The population, about 3,000 at the time of the arrival of the GWR in the 1840s, had grown to 40,000 by 1880 and 60,000 by 1900, when the town was granted borough status. The number of employees at the railway works grew from an initial 145 to some 10,000 by 1900 and an all-time high of 16,500 in the years following the First World War.

SWINDON WORKS - continued

The works eventually extended to some 198 acres with the addition of the Carriage Works in 1868, new erecting and boiler shops in 1874 and an extensive expansion and modernisation programme in the last years of the century during the regime of William Dean. Electricity was installed from 1897 and amongst the last additions was the Locomotive Test Shop in 1904.

Turning to social matters, Brian informed us that the working week featured a 9-hour day and a working week from Monday until noon on Saturday and this applied right up until Grouping in 1922. In the 1880s average wages ranged from 18 shillings (90p) a week for a labourer, 30 shillings (£1.50) for a skilled workman and £3 for a foreman.

The GWR was in the forefront in such matters as the provision of educational and cultural facilities whilst a medical fund was introduced for all employees as early as 1844; a hospital was built in 1874 and this remained in use until the 1950s. The GWR Scheme is widely regarded as the model for the postwar National Health Service. Women were employed in various departments from the 1880s.

Swindon Works were heavily involved with the production of armaments during the First World War and many employees served in the Wiltshire Yeomanry in that war and in the preceding Boer War.

Brian referred to the so-called 'Trip Week' - when the Works closed for the annual holiday - and free excursions were provided for all employees and their families. This tradition originated as early as the 1840s and became a highlight of the year in Swindon. The presentation concluded with photographs of the visit to the Works by King George V and Queen Mary in 1924.

A vote of thanks was given to Brian by Ken Smith for yet another fascinating evening and members joined him in looking forward to hearing the third part of the story next year.

RAILWELLS

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August

Railwells, our annual model railway exhibition, will once again be held in Wells Town Hall, from 10.30 to 5.30 on Saturday, and 10.30 to 5.00 on Sunday. This year we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the closure of the Somerset & Dorset Railway, and 40 years of the Scalefour Society.

Members are reminded that they can come in FREE on production of their membership card. Better still, why not offer your assistance as a steward, or in some other capacity. As well as during the show, help is also required on the Friday afternoon and evening, to assist with unloading vehicles and carrying exhibits into the hall. Those who regularly assist should by now have received their instructions, but if you haven't yet, or would like to volunteer, please contact the organiser, Chris Challis, on 01749 938362, or email cgchallis@yahoo.co.uk

Layouts confirmed to attend Railwells 2016 (as of June 4th 2016)

- P4 Flintcombe East Dorset Gang of Four
A fictional branch from Sturminster Newton, showing the S&D in the 1930's
- P4 Cheddar S&DJR Simon Challis
A might have been S&D branch from Shapwick set in the 1920's
- P4 New Mere Chris Longley
Fictional S&D branch from Wincanton to Warminster set in the 1950's
- P4 Burnham on Sea Scalefour Soc Avon & Somerset Area Group
Seaside terminus of the S&D depicted in the 1950's
- P4 Radstock Yard S&DJR Roger Sanders & Angie
The exhibit shows the complex track work leading to the Loco Shed and coaling siding.
- EM Chewton Mendip Tim Tincknell
Station on the S&D fictional branch to Priddy, set in the blue period
- EM M Shed John England
Now home to Bristol Museum industrial collection, running trains past and present
- EM Angelbank Chris Hewitt
The bottom of the incline on the Clee Hill granite tramway
- 3mm Aldgate Hill & Norton Folgate David Wheelton & Jim Barry
1969 to 1975 blue period of BR Eastern Region
- 7mm Edington Junction East Kent 0 Gauge group
Somerset & Dorset branch line station in the 1920's
- 2mmFS Burnham on Sea. Built by the late Denys Brownlee, exhibited by John Perrett
Seaside terminus of the S&D depicted in the 1920/30's
- 2mmFS Bath Queen Square station display Jerry Clifford
Models, maps and plans of this iconic Midland station
- 00 BR blue era layout in a small space Phil Smith
- 00 Drewry Lane Stu Davis
1960's Dorset located freight only line, SR & WR locos

There is a time line at Scalefour Southwest this year, to mark 40 years of the Scalefour Society.

There are 6 layouts /displays that chart the progress from the birth of Proto4 to the present day.

Iain Rice will be in attendance with a demo and display of P4 modelling history, to support the Scalefour Society's 40th anniversary.

Burnham on Sea was commenced in 1978, by the former Avon & Somerset Area Group. It's construction, height from the floor and materials used, shows it's age. This year it is exhibited in its most complete state.

Flintcome built by the East Dorset Gang of Four started life in 1986, and was finally finished for Scalefour Southwest in 1995. The base boards are mainly engineered in ply. One of the gang of Four, Dickie Paget, at 95 years old is probably the oldest layout exhibitor in the world, unless you know different.

1883 challenge entrant and runner up of the 2005 event , Cheddar S&DJR by Simon Challis, shows the Iain Rice influence of a balanced scene with a presidium arch.

New Mere by Chris Longley first appeared at the Scalefour Southwest P4 Layout Building Challenge. With Exactoscale track shows more progress along the way.

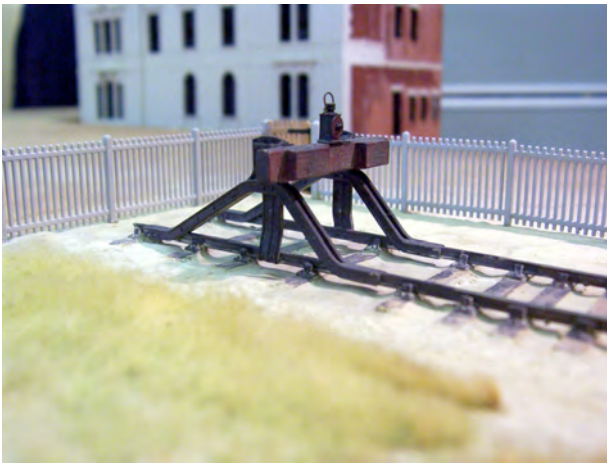
Radstock Yard S&DJR by Angie and Roger Sanders. Construction of this layout is far from conventional, this to enable easier construction and maintenance. Only the complex trackwork of the loco shed is being exhibited.

Six exhibits to take you through the years, five of them associated with the S&D for the 50th anniversary of the closure of this line on March 6th 1966.

The Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust will be in attendance with their full display to commemorate 50 years since the closure of the line.

More information about Traders, Demonstrations and Displays can be found at www.railwells.com

AND FINALLY :



The end..... of the line at Burnham-on-Sea, as it was in latter days, modelled in P4 Scale, and appearing at Railwells this year.

A full - size buffer stop has recently been placed at this spot in Burnham-on-Sea to commemorate the Somerset & Dorset Railway.