

# 2024 Programme Info

**January 26th**

**Colin Brading** brought an illustrated talk titled “**Western Enterprise**”.

Significant investment over recent years radically changed the face of the Great Western, a railway so rich in history that parts have been considered worthy of UNESCO World Heritage status. Setting the scene with a brief look at today's railway, this talk ranged widely across the route, blending aspects of the speaker's fifty-year western connections with musings on the railway's legend through time. Idiosyncratic, controversial, pioneering, often successful but sometimes also accused of building 'castles in the air', the three letters GWR continue to evoke great passion.



**February 23rd**

**The S & D Railway and Shillingstone Station - then and now**

The Somerset & Dorset was the result of 2 fairly small and local railways in rural Wessex, uniting to link the Bristol and English channels. This link, with ferry services provided from Burnham to Cardiff, meant easier transport from Wales to the south coast and vice versa. It soon linked with the Bath to Manchester line and was a successful main line route.

After the war allocation was to Southern, but social change reduced its traffic and the Beeching axe fell in 1966. This was the end of the line, or was it? **Geoff Baker** will reveal all.



**March 22nd**

**Ian Foot** will present ‘**50 years of Continental Steam Photography**’.

Once steam locomotives ceased to be used on British Railways in 1968 the speaker started travelling to European railways on each side of the Iron Curtain and beyond to South Africa and the Middle East.

Ian is a career railwayman from his apprenticeship at Eastleigh Works and finished as Eurostar's British Engineer based in Paris. After retiring he worked as a Railway Engineering Consultant both in the UK and abroad.



**April 19th**

**Charles Clark's** talk is entitled “**A Ffestiniog Railway Miscellany**”

When Charles Clark was the guest speaker at the Club's meeting in February 2022, he took his audience to the top left-hand corner of Wales to talk about the Welsh Highland Railway that runs from Caernarvon to Porthmadog. In April 2024 he is returning to Wales to talk about its companion railway, the Ffestiniog, and to show some vintage films of it from his large collection of railway films. He will later talk about the major project at the two railways' loco works at Boston Lodge, following the receipt of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £3.5 million.



**May 31st**

**"60 years of steam ramblings" by Simon Foote**

I was born in 1947. Whilst growing up it was common for boys my age to enjoy trainspotting. This involved the purchase of books produced by the publisher Ian Allen which contained lists, photographs and technical details of the steam locomotives in service with British railways at the time.

By 1964 it was clear that the "Age of Steam" was drawing to an end and I decided to buy a camera and tape recorder to record this fast declining period. This audio/slide presentation looks back to that time and subsequent railway preservation achievements.

