

2025 Programme Info

January 31st

Mike Walshaw presents "The Swanage Railway's Wareham Project".

In 1885 the LSWR opened a branch from Wareham at the top of Poole Harbour to Swanage. British Railways closed the line in 1972. In 2008 an opportunity arose to re-connect the line to the National



February 28th

Railways of Scotland in the 70s, 80s and 90s by **Stephen Bigley**

Looking at a period of transition from the "steam-age-railway-without-the-steam" (diesel trains on the West Highland line controlled by semaphore signalling, single line working and freight lines) through to Sprinters and class 66s during the short lived revival of coal traffic in the 1990s. Geographically the spread will be from the Borders to the Far North. 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** revealed all.



March 28th

Chris Jackson will present 'Colonel Stephens and the Economical Railway'

Victorian entrepreneur Lt-Colonel Holman Fred Stephens (1868-1931), was a great believer in low-cost railways, involved in around 50 projects. As opportunities for promoting new lines declined, his focus moved to running those that had been completed, managing a dozen or more standard and narrow gauge railways. Stephens was always looking for ways to build and operate railways more economically,



May 2nd (April talk postponed)

Phillip Benstead presented "Railway Heroes"

The role of railways during the two World Wars. The impact of railways on WWI. During WW2 the Americans demonstrated their organisational skills and expertise to rebuild the railway system across northern Europe in record breaking time.

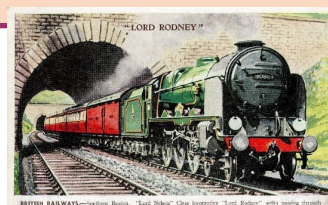


May 2nd (intended presentation)

John Hollands presents "Picture postcards, from big 4 to bullet train"

An A-Z arrangement is used, covering British companies, various foreign countries, and one or two other topics such as humour and World War 1. Along with period postcards, or modern reproductions, some images from postcards depicting period posters are included.

(Technical problems intervened, but a recording will be made available. "Railway Heroes" was given instead.)



May 30th

"The Devon Belle – Part 3 Exeter to Ilfracombe / Plymouth" by **Ken Mumford**

After WW2 the Southern Railway was anxious to resume as soon as possible. Operation of this all Pullman luxury train began on June 20th 1947 from London Waterloo to Ilfracombe and Plymouth; unusual in that all seats had to be reserved and with an observation car at the end for Ilfracombe passengers. Despite initial popularity, the train was not such a success as hoped and the Plymouth portion was dropped in September 1949. Services were further reduced in 1952 and withdrawn entirely at the end of the 1954 summer season.

