

MONMOUTHSHIRE RAILWAY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022

Information Desk

Programme of Meetings and Visit - 2022/23

Thurs.	16 th June	MRS/Ray Viney	The Eastern Valley
Sun.	11 th Sept.	Day trip to Statfold Barn Rly., Tamworth (see page 4)	
Thurs.	15 th Sept.	AGM followed by films	
Thurs.	13 th Oct.	Peter Jennings	Steam Railmotor no. 93
Thurs.	17 th Nov.	Julian Worth	The Wolsztyn Experience
Thurs.	8 th Dec.	Paul Chancellor	Colour Rail Evening
2023			
Thurs.	12 th Jan.	Roger Binding	Recent Wanderings for British Steam
Thurs.	16 th Feb.	MRS	Video evening

MEETINGS AT LYSAGHT INSTITUTE, ORB DRIVE, CORPORATION ROAD, NEWPORT NP19 ORA

All meetings up to and including November are confirmed as being held in the main ground floor room at Lysaght Institute, Orb Drive, Newport. While it is out of town, there is FREE parking for 50 cars within the grounds (with spaces set aside for disabled use) and overflow parking spaces arranged by Lysaghts in the adjacent Morrisons Supermarket car park. The 60-seat room is just a few steps from the foyer with level access, as are the toilets and coffee machine. If possible, please have the correct entrance fee of £3 (members) or £4 non-members, to reduce over-handling of coins. Doors open at 18.45 for a prompt 19.00 start. We aim to vacate the building no later than 21.15.

If anyone will find it difficult in terms of transport, to attend meetings at Lysaght Institute, please contact the Committee's liaison, Phillip Stallard, thus affording the Committee an opportunity to resolve travel difficulties. His contact details are:- mobile 07854 078032, email- philip.stallard1@outlook.com

Thursday June 16th 2022 Lysaght Institute 7.00pm start

The Monmouthshire Eastern Valley & Branches

Ray Viney

After presenting coverage of railway routes in and around Newport, our Journal Editor **Ray Viney** returns in **June** with a further selection of photographs from the Society's photograph collection. On this occasion he will be covering the long-closed Monmouthshire Eastern Valley line and branches that served the communities and industrial sites in the valley. Starting from the terminus at Blaenavon Low Level station, we also take in the towns former LNWR high level station, then following the route through the upper reaches of the valley down to Cwmbran, terminating our journey at the lines zero-mile marker at Dock St, Newport.

Similar presentations by Ray in the past have proved to be one of the most popular in our programme and this latest talk promises to be another interesting evening.

MEETINGS SUMMARY

We are determined to hold our first proper **AGM** since 2019, in **September**. As previous AGM's, we'll have a film show after the business concludes (format to be confirmed).

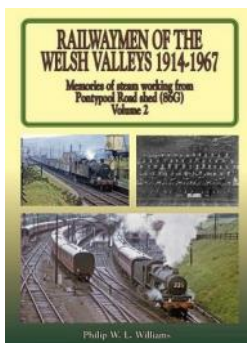
The GWS launched the steam railmotor no.93 project in 1998, the first step being the construction of a new power bogie and boiler. The assembly ran under its own steam in Nov/10 while the carriage became a rolling chassis in Oct/08. With a £768k boost of lottery funding behind it, award-winning 93 was officially launched in May 2011. Much travelled with the addition of coach 92 since then, **Peter Jennings** will be telling us in **October** of how the story unfolded on this unique vehicle.

When Howard Jones set about trying to save steam workings at the Polish shed of Wolsztyn in 1997, little was it realised the footplate experience courses would still be running 25 years later. **Julian Worth** enjoyed it so much a few years ago, he has created a talk of his travels. In **November** we'll hear first hand what it's like to be on the footplate of the last daily standard gauge steam-hauled service in Europe.

Paul Chancellor returns in **December** with the very latest additions to the renowned Colour Rail catalogue.

Further details of dates and speakers will appear on our website and in the Journal, due for publishing in September.

NEW PUBLICATION



Railwaymen of the Welsh Valleys vol2

PWL Williams, Silver Link

Hardback, 272 pages, ISBN: 9781857945904

Pub. 9/06/22 RRP £35

This was originally due to be published in February: - *Publishers notes (edited):* More recollections and some 400 rare photographs in this second volume. The first chapter deals with the Eastern Valleys line to Newport, with personal memories from the drivers and firemen as well as from enthusiasts. Personal memories were painstakingly recorded, covering freight, main-line passenger services, pilot duties, dealing with snow, banking trains on gradients, servicing the myriad sidings, collieries and depots and more. A sombre note is struck by the encroachment of the new diesels, which were to spell the end for a whole way of life for the valleys' railwaymen. Working from Aberdare loco shed is also covered, and a chapter is devoted to former Pontypool Road driver Phil Williams (no relation), affectionately known as 'Full-load Phil', who inspired his namesake's interest in railways. Finally, the last days of steam are described, bringing to an close this extraordinary record of life during the Steam Age in the valleys.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Renewal of M.R.S. membership is due on 1st September. The subscription fee remains at £12.50, unchanged for many a long year. Renewals this season, plus a number of new members, has pushed our membership to near 150 for what we believe is the first time in our 65 years.

Membership Secretary, 27 Cwm Lane, High Cross, Newport.
NP10 9AF

[Please remember to enclose an SAE and notify us of ANY changes to your contact details INC. EMAIL ADDRESS]

As an alternative to handing over/sending a cheque**/cash, consider the more efficient method of Standing Order. A number of Members have been switching to this over the last few years, and can be easily set up in various ways; writing to your bank, filling out a proforma (which they can usually supply), on-line banking or your banking app..

The essential destination bank details are:-
Monmouthshire Railway Society, sort code 40-34-27
a/c no. 31535900, £12.50 annually on 1ST Sept.

Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary will see your renewal on bank statements, but please notify us of ANY changes to your contact details.

**** Our Treasurer requests, If paying by cheque, please write the full name of the Society as payee, not 'MRS'.**

GLOUCS. - SEVERN TUNNEL JCN. LINE BLOCKADE

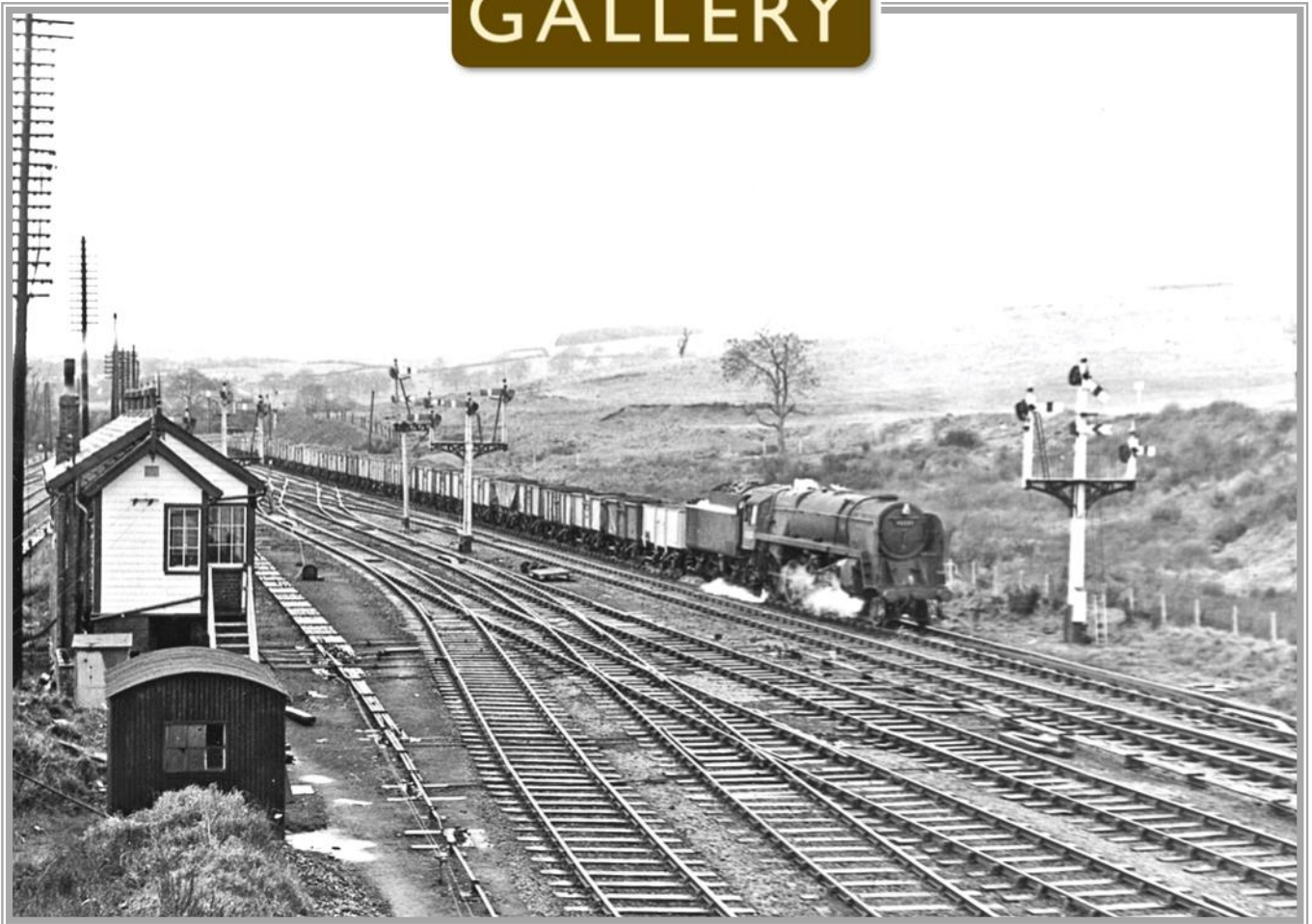
Network Rail have a planned closure of the route between Lydney and Gloucester from Monday 18th July to Saturday 3rd September when a start will be made on the £25m upgrade which will include the removal of approximately 30,000 tonnes of material from the cliff face along a three-mile stretch of railway near Lydney. A state-of-the-art mesh and bolt system will then be installed to protect the railway from falling debris. Climate change and more frequent extreme weather events have led to five major landslips in the last two years alone, triggering extended closures of the railway and speed restrictions.

From Monday 18th July to Saturday 30th July, the closure will extend to Severn Tunnel Junction to allow track renewal over Chepstow viaduct. A bus replacement service will operate over the seven-week period.

Tfw T/T CHANGES MAY 2022

From Sun. 15th May, a new timetable came into affect across the Wales and Borders network. This included the return of a number of services removed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Highlights include reintroduction of direct services between Coryton and Radyr via the City Line, five services per hour between Cardiff Queen Street and Cardiff Bay (subject to the completion of works to the Adam Street bridge, actually reopened by 1/6/22) and four services between South Wales and Gloucester extended to Cheltenham Spa. The Newport – Crosskeys service (suspended in January) resumed before the T/T changes, possibly by 23/4/22.

GALLERY



9F No.92225 is about to enter the loop at Park Junction with a down Class H freight on 11 March 1959. The loco was withdrawn off Newport Ebbw Junction Shed in July, 1965.

Sid Rickard / J&J Collection



Class 25 D7624 at Parkend ready to depart Marsh Sidings with a train load of stone on 17 August 1971. D7624 was allocated to Newport Ebbw Junction MPD from 1970 to 1972 and broken up at Swindon in 1985 after a life of 20 years. *S.V. Blencowe*

For those who receive emails from the MRS on matters such as meetings reminders and the Newsletter PDF attachment, some of the email service providers out there (eg. hotmail, btinternet and gmail) have intermittently been treating such emails as spam. It has been something of a moving target and efforts have been made on our part to try to reduce or eliminate these emails going into your spam folders, or even disappearing completely. Usually, rejection messages are received back to the Secretary's originating email account (info@mrsoc.co.uk) but efforts have proved quite frustrating at times to overcome the minority, spam interpretation.

One of our recent tactics employed is to use 'mailmerge' from a Word document, but this does not support attachments, and work-arounds have been problematic to implement. For the Newsletter, we are now trying the concept of mounting it on the website (public page) for a short duration for those members to view and/or download it, should they fail to receive the email carrying the PDF attachment. A second email will direct you to the website, but clearly, if you can see the attachment on email #1 then ignore the second email.

One action members can do to potentially reduce the spam effect on our emails to you is to add info@mrsoc.co.uk to your address book. If you believe you've not received a Newsletter, do email the Secretary on that 'info' address to request one and it can be sent as a reply email.

Postponed from summer 2020 due to the pandemic, we are pleased to announce the coach trip has been rescheduled for Statfold Barn's "Road, Rail and Ale" event. Their largest event of the year promises to be one of the most spectacular in their calendar. As well as the railway being open all weekend, there'll be a host of things Road and Rail. From vintage trucks, tractors and cars to steam traction engines and visiting exhibitors. This year, Statfold Barn are celebrating 100 years of Scammell lorries.

The booking form with details on how to pay is set out below. You will need to print the page to use the form (if viewing this online) or write the same details into a covering note with your payment.

With a maximum of 30 seats, we recommend you don't delay booking. In the event of over-subscription, we will be creating a standby list which you can opt in to.

JOURNAL 'COPY DATE'

The next issue of the Journal is due for release before the AGM in September. As always, the Editor will be delighted to receive contributions towards its content, so forward your photographs, notes, observations and comments by email or post, to :-

Ray Viney, 5 Rectory Drive, St.Athan, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 4PD. Tel. 01446 750471 email: rayviney5@gmail.com

The Journal **copy date** is Saturday 31st July, although it always helps if material is received earlier than the cut-off.



STATFOLD BARN 'ROAD-RAIL ALE'-DAY SUN 11TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Coach & Statfold Barn Entry - £40 per person

The M.R.S. has secured 30 places for the above event at Statfold Barn, Tamworth in Staffordshire, home to one of the largest collections of narrow-gauge historic steam, diesel and electric locomotives from the UK and overseas..

Tickets will be offered on a first come, first served basis. Members are encouraged to book early to avoid any disappointment.

- Coach departs 08:00 from the bus bay in Queensway, outside Newport railway station. We will depart Statfold Barn approx. 16:00 to return to Newport.
- All available locomotives will be in steam which could be as many as 19 of various gauges.
- The roundhouse will be open for viewing, which is not normally open to the public.
- Food and refreshments will be available on site but are not included in the entry fee.
- Visit www.statfoldbarnrailway.co.uk for more information on this fascinating line.

The preferred method of payment is by cheque, in full, at the time of booking (payable to "Monmouthshire Railway Society"), along with the name and address (and contact telephone no. if available) for each person travelling. Alternatively, use BACS (sort code 40-34-27, ac no. 31535900), but this must also contain the contact details and sent to the booking co-ordinator, or the booking will be rejected. Please use the booking slip below or provide the same details in a covering letter. Send your booking to the MRS booking co-ordinator:

Mr. C. Hopcroft, 27 Cwm Lane, High Cross, Newport, NP10 9AF Tel. 01633 664311

Note: Due to the nature of the event, Statfold Barn requires a list of names and addresses for all participants, which will be supplied to the event organisers at Statfold Barn before the tickets are released to the M.R.S.. By booking on this visit, you agree to the name(s) and address(es) being passed to Statfold Barn as part of their booking procedure. Tel. nos. will be for MRS use only.

STATFOLD BARN 'ROAD-RAIL-ALE' DAY

Name

Address

Tel.

[Delete As appropriate]

If booking more than one seat, please write additional name(s), address(es) and phone nos. on the reverse of this slip.