

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LYMINGTON TO BROCKENHURST LINE



No. 61 April 2021

Dear Friends,

A great relief to us all that lockdown is beginning to be eased, at least outside – and that we seem to be having weather to make use of this relative freedom! Most organisers of premises (such as the Community Centre) are still postponing re-opening, so it may be still some time before we have our AGM. But meanwhile our wonderful volunteers (in particular Jon Elles and Steve Jones) have been looking after the planting at the stations. Luckily we took advantage of the temporary freedom back last autumn to plant masses of bulbs, which have come up and look beautiful.



We have also to thank both Network Rail and SWR for the splendid new **ramp** to the door of the ticket office; not only the disabled will enjoy it, but also numerous mums with push-chairs. (Note the lovely colours of brickwork behind the map board.)



Our Committee member Stephen Jones represented the Friends on the Zoom-based AGM of Railfuture (the association of Friends' groups like ours). The practical information below about **current services** has been supplied by him.

Cross Country's trains are still not stopping at Brockenhurst, and only a few trains stop at Winchester, so travellers will have to change at Southampton or Basingstoke in order to pick up their trains. You need to check the timetable before planning your trip. **South Western Railway** is running a through train to **Waterloo only once an hour**; the intermediate service goes only as far as Basingstoke.

The public **Island Line from Ryde to Shanklin** is still closed (with no re-opening date, and replacement buses), to allow for introduction of the new rolling stock, and to upgrade the line. (They have already built a passing loop at Brading.) The preserved **steam line** from Smallbrook Junction to Haven Street seems unaffected, but may have bus replacements. In all of these cases, you need to check timetables.

Stephen also reported **future developments** and needs outlined by participants: **Waterside Rail to Fawley** is to go ahead with a passenger service, and a 1-day Rover covering rail/ferry/bus transport (including the Hythe Ferry).

SWR Three Rivers and the local blue buses are to organise a tie-up at Eastleigh.

A proposed new station at **Wilton** (west of Salisbury) was not welcomed by Salisbury Friends as it would make the service slower. (The line is single track.)

At **Welborne** north-east of Fareham several thousand new homes were being built; there was a real need for a new station.

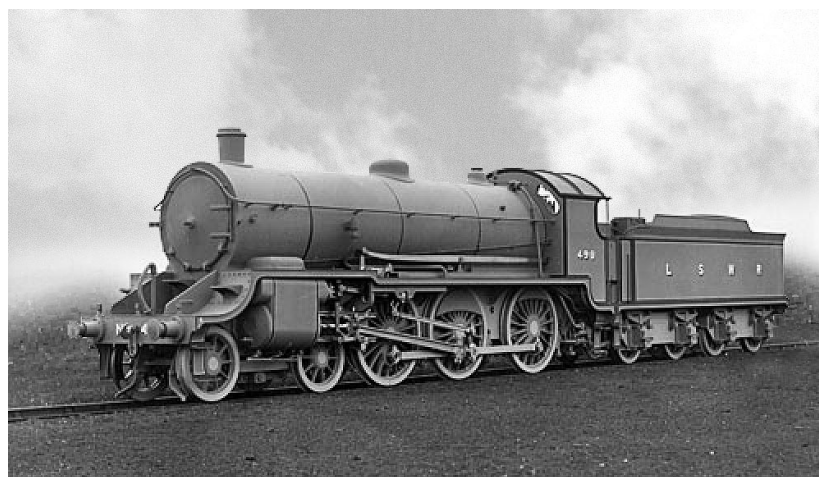
David Brace foresaw delays for cross-country services in future, as massive works at Reading have supplied a fly-over for the new long freight trains, but nothing was planned for the **Basingstoke cross-over**.

SWR's **West of England Line**: improvements planned, with longer passing loops.

Finally, good news from the **RMT**: they have settled their differences with SWR.

A piece of advance news for July which would make a pleasant day out. **The Urie Locomotive Society** is based at Ropley station on the Mid Hants (Watercress) Line, and it plans to hold its **next Open Day on Saturday 3rd July** (obviously Covid-willing). For those unfamiliar with this, Robert Urie was a legendary designer of locos. The Society has managed to restore one of the few remaining, and is starting on another.

For details see <https://uriesociety.co.uk/>, with a video and other photos.



Urie S15 No. 498 at Eastleigh in official photographic grey livery in 1920. (Mr A Major)

For those of you who want to plan some **outings of your own** for the summer, Stephen Jones has supplied the following information about Train Rover tickets, which are extremely good value:

Freedom of Severn & Solent Rover Flexi 3/7 days, or 8/15 Day. Start after 09.00 Monday-Friday, weekends any time. For prices ask at the Ticket Office. Covers routes Weymouth-Portsmouth-Westbury-Great Malvern-Swindon.

A new '**Solent Rover**' is planned, similar to the above. It will cover the area Weymouth-Portsmouth-Romsey-Cardiff-Westbury-Weymouth

Freedom of North West Rover: Routes: Blackpool- Merseyside-Manchester - Carlisle then Settle-Leeds. This also earns a discount on the Ravenglass Railway.

Other Rail Rover Tickets are available; ask at your local station or visit the www.railrover.org website, and there are all-day **Tram** tickets in the North-West which cover huge areas; I will pass on any enquiries to Stephen.

I apologise for the lack of one of David Mead's entertaining pieces on preserved and unusual railways. I have been spending a lot of time compiling notes about **Lymington south of the High Street**, both on interesting architecture and also how things have changed in my lifetime. If any of you have stories to tell about this area, do let me know! I would also welcome old photos (in scanned form or ones that I could photograph myself and return); I take my own to show the contrast today. 'Hard' copies will go to the St Barbe Museum and to the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester.

I would like to thank John Canavan here for emailing out the Newsletter and also for putting together and posting the ones which go by surface mail: wonderful!

The Committee keeps in contact by phone and email, and would like me to pass on their good wishes to you all.

With my own best wishes,

Georgina
(Georgina Craufurd, Hon. Sec. Tel 01590 672406 – any time you want a chat...)