

The Strawberry Line Society



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Summer Newsletter – 2014

Issue 34

Just a short newsletter to let members know of a few dates that I think are of interest.

- 1) Jumble Sale on Saturday 20th of November at Winscombe Community Centre. We need your help and your jumble to cover the costs of Public Liability Insurance on land we own or lease and cover and costs for our many volunteers.
- 2) Winscombe and Sandford Parish Council are having a festival again this year. I shall be manning a stall and display on 28th of June between 10 and 2 in the marquee at Winscombe Memorial Recreation Ground and leading a late evening /nightwalk from the WMRG carpark at 9.30 pm on Saturday 5th of July. I hope to see glow worms but as they seem to be declining in numbers I am not actually mentioning them. If any bat detectors owners could come we could see if bats still use the tunnel now it has its green mesh net. Please bring stout footwear and good torches. At least the tunnel cave spiders have never let me down yet. No dogs and some of the path is rough.
- 3) Finally we do need some new members on the committee especially a minute secretary; we only have 4 meetings and an AGM each year. Do come along to see what the committee does; next meeting at Winscombe Community Centre at 7.30 on Tuesday 15th of July.

New Ramp at the Sharpham Road Entrance to the Track

Cheddar is having nonstop challenges it appears at the moment; the new reservoir and a large Sainsbury's store for example. Axbridge and Cheddar group are still in discussions with Somerset County Highways and Sedgemoor District Council about the changes due to the widening of FiveWays bridge/ Sharpham Road bridge. I understand the Gas board and Electricity Supply board are now getting involved as their pipes and cables also go under the bridge. This will probably cause a further delay in getting the changes completed. This includes new steps (I personally regret the loss of the old steps) and a new ramp which Somerset Highways want to be suitable for vehicles to drive down so they can maintain the bridge. This will necessitate a lockable gate at the top giving access to the new ramp to parents with prams, wheelchairs and maintenance vehicles. This will be very valuable to the group when it needs access to the cutting. Parking spaces for the disabled are planned as part of the scheme. After all this the group can get on with improving the drainage on this part of the track. The £3000 won from Lloyds Bank competition will help and thanks go to all those who voted for the Strawberry Line.

Holwell Drove (Tess's lane to my family!) goes from the New Road and crosses the Strawberry Line and on to the Reservoir. By the way I frequently see people studying the information board there. The fields either side of the Drove often have cattle on them and these fields are a possible site for new housing by Bloor Homes. The Strawberry Line Society would like to negotiate a wider track as it is very narrow there and no longer on the original track (no glow worms ever there!). Bloor Homes representatives are holding meetings with the local SLS group and with Cheddar Parish Council.



Langford Station showing three rock crystal gardens

Sandford Station Railway Heritage Centre

Your Chance to see Inside a Bristol and Exeter Railway Station on the Strawberry Line.

Sandford station Railway Heritage Centre re-opened in April for its fifth season. New for 2014 we have interpretation featuring Sandford Quarry and some interesting artefacts to see. Tea on the platform or in one of our waggons is a real pleasure, visitors love to linger and enjoy the view – our cake is pretty special too and pretty well the best value in the area! A visit is also a family thing as children love all things railway and are happy to spend time playing in the trucks with our toy trains.

We are open 11am – 4pm every weeken d until end of October

Access from Strawberry Line : Admission free : donations welcome

Do come and see us - a number of us are also members of the SLS committee and so you are likely to see a familiar face on duty.

Lois Brenchley on behalf of SSRHC

YACWAG events list which might be of interest:-

Tony Moulin will be leading a butterfly walk on Congresbury Moor at the end of June/early July - the date depends on the weather. Anyone interested should ring Tony to register their interest and he will contact them when he is going. (01934 834282)

On Saturday 12 July, Ellie Higginston will be leading a bee walk on the Strawberry Line meeting at Yatton Station at 1pm.

On Saturday 26 July we are organising a scything training day on one of our fields on Congresbury Moor - all the details are on the YACWAG website www.yacwag.org.uk Those interested in doing scything need to register their interest in advance with Juley Conrad-Howard 0750 014 7774. Those who wish to view the scything can do so between 11am-1pm and 2pm-4pm when there will also be opportunities to visit YACWAG reserves in the area.



*Concrete sleeper at Congresbury
Used due to a wartime shortage
of timber. Spring 1990*

Trevor has provided the following information for you -

With more normal spring weather (is there normal weather nowadays?) our resident birds and early migrants soon got down to nesting duties. Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs were singing in numbers some six weeks earlier than in 2013 and other migrants soon arrived. Numbers of breeding birds had been depressed following the wet summer and cold spring of the preceding two years and hopefully a good season this year will restore populations back to the levels of earlier years.

However, the big news is the return of the cuckoo. An early bird was calling near the Mendip Springs Golf Club as was the case last year, but at the end of May it or another bird was cuckooing in the Yatton area, the first to stay around for several years.

The Kestrels seem to have moved away this year but Tawny Owls nested successfully near to the line at Congresbury and it looks as if the YACWAG Barn Owls are settling down after two blank years.



*Early days of cycleway at Cheddar showing steps
down fro loading platform.*