

SALISBURY TO EXETER RAIL USERS GROUP (SERUG)

Issue Number 3.

March 2017

Supporting the stations of: Pinhoe, Cranbrook, Whimble, Feniton, Honiton, Axminster, Crewkerne, Yeovil Junction, Sherborne, Templecombe, Gillingham, Tisbury.

Includes news from the Blackmore Vale Line Community Rail Partnership, and East Devon Rail CRP.



Class 159 passes the closed Dinton station with a Waterloo train, the unused double track clearly showing on the right (credit: Paul Blowfield)

Welcome to our third newsletter!

We're delighted to announce that we have expanded our remit and now cover all the SWT intermediate stations between Salisbury and Exeter.

SERUG works with local authorities, local station communities and the two local Community Rail Partnerships to lobby Government, Network Rail and railway operators for service improvements to the line.

SERUG now has a new web site www.serug.co.uk - have a look !!!
Our Facebook page will also be available shortly.

Our short term aims are:

- ✓ **Yeovil Junction to Waterloo – 2 trains per hour throughout the day.** To do this the track requires doubling between Tisbury and Wilton Junction (just outside Salisbury). The signalling also needs to be upgraded.
- ✓ **Trains should be able to split and join at Yeovil Junction** This is called “permissive working” and will enable a wider range of journey opportunities.
- ✓ **New, faster and longer trains to replace the 25 year old class 158 and 159's.**
- ✓ **Later evening trains from Waterloo to Yeovil Junction, and more car parking at the stations.**
- ✓ **Double track between Yeovil Junction to Crewkerne and a long (known as “dynamic”) loop at Whimble** This will allow increased capacity to Exeter, more resilient working, and development of Devon Metro services.

Rail usage is still growing...The number of passengers using the UK rail network has grown by over 69% since 2003. Over 1.6 billion

passenger journeys are now made every year. SWT alone operates 1689 train services each day and now carries over 230m passengers a year.

Over the past 10 years the average growth for stations along our line is 25%. Our trains are now fuller than ever, with standing commonplace on many services. We urgently need longer trains especially between Yeovil and Exeter, as well as Salisbury to Waterloo.

There are now 7m journeys each year on the line (including numbers at Salisbury and Exeter Central stations). Much of the route now carries commuters in addition to the long-standing leisure traffic.

So far, the industry focus in the South has been on the commuter lines around London. We must ensure Government understands that better services on our busy line are also critical, especially with the planned new housing and economic development.

Changes at Waterloo... A huge amount of development work will take place at Waterloo this year. This is likely to mean changes to your journeys, especially in August – so do look out for announcements on the South West Trains website.

A review of the planned developments can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctr38Rwpobk>

South West Trains (SWT) franchise ends...

Our current operator, SWT, is bidding to retain the franchise – the new term starts in August 2017. There is only one other bidder - Great Western Railway (First Group + MTR). We await developments and the award with interest and will keep you updated in our newsletters, and trust the Dft will do a good job.

Network Rail (NR)...

NR look after the track, signalling and infrastructure investment on the line. They have many pressures for investment from around the UK, and we need to lobby and ensure they deliver improvements to our line. The priority is to put double track back from Tisbury to Wilton Junction, which will provide capacity increase for two trains an hour and time saving at Tisbury (we all complain about the regular wait in the loop for trains to pass!). More double track is also needed between Yeovil Junction and Cgrewkerne and a "dynamic loop" near Whimple.

Tisbury station needs its second platform back as well, and hopefully the developers (St Modwen) will be able to help NR achieve that goal.

News from the Community Rail Partnerships...

1. Blackmore Vale Line CRP...

At the latest Community Rail Conference, members from South West Trains Community Rail Partnerships up and down the West of England line received a warm welcome from members of Friends of Templecombe Station and Friends of Gillingham Station. The first stop was Templecombe, where Richard Kempton, Community Rail Liaison Manager for South West Trains welcomed all the team. Back on the train, the next stop was Gillingham. Delegates received another huge 'Blackmore Vale' style welcome from members of Friends of Gillingham station. Gillingham is north Dorset's only station and a gateway station to the Blackmore Vale,

If you share the CRP vision and would like to get involved, please email: blackmorevalecrp@gmail.com or phone contact **Caroline Rowland**, Partnership Officer for Blackmore Vale Line Community Rail Partnership on 07933 212 117.

To follow the CRP on Twitter at Blackmore Vale CRP @crpVale
Web site: <http://www.blackmorevaletrains.com/>

2. East Devon Rail Partnership...

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO THE East Devon Rail Partnership covering the stations of Axminster, Honiton, Feniton, Whimple, Cranbrook, and Pinhoe. All are within the East Devon District Council with Councillor Jenny Brown leading. Contacts for each of these stations will be allocated/known in the near future.

SERUG will work with this group to target capacity improvements and to develop tourism - hence our announcement above of a wider scope of SERUG objectives. The www.serug.co.uk web site gives more information including passenger journey statistics.

In the meantime, do contact us through the Chair or secretary (as below) or through the contact@serug.co.uk on the website.

This newsletter and SERUG is supported by Railfuture - an independent voluntary national group campaigning for a better future for rail transport See www.railfuture.org.uk

SERUG NOTES... (also see www.serug.co.uk)

SERUG's aim is to lobby the Government, NR, SWT and others to improve services and passenger experience on this line. Do let us know your experiences. Our Chair, Bruce Duncan and Secretary, Nick Hurrell will be pleased to hear from you.

Just send us an email at: contact@serug.co.uk

We welcome new members - subscription £6 per year – to receive regular updates, meeting dates, and reduced admission to events, etc. See our web site and complete the form online with payment via Paypal or cheque.

Alternatively, complete the form below ...

The formal SERUG Launch is on THURSDAY 6th April 2017 at YEOVIL RAILWAY CENTRE, YEOVIL JUNCTION STATION.

Our event will include discussion on the future of this line together and talks from two well-known railway personalities...Nigel Harris, Editor of Rail magazine, and Chris Austin, author of "Disconnected" who will jointly present their thoughts on the future of our railways.

We start at 16.30 (finish approx. 18.30)

See web site for full details.

Tickets available via email: contact@serug.co.uk or by completing the form below.

If you plan to pay on the door, please drop us an email in advance, to give us an idea of numbers attending.

Admission: £6. (£4 SERUG members) or £10 to include a full year's SERUG membership

Name:	
Address:	
Post Code:	Tel no:
E mail:	
No of tickets required:	
Payment enclosed of £	
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