



**Please note the change of time for our January meeting only:**

**Start Time 10:00 am Finish Time 3:30 pm.**

**This is a one off to accommodate a request from the Hall Trustees and does not affect the rest of 2019 meetings.**

**Welcome to the January Smokebox**

I hope you all had a very good Christmas and New Year, the committee wishes you all a happy and healthy New Year. Just to remind you we will be holding the Loyalty Prize Draw at 12 noon at our January meeting. There are 33 members eligible for the draw and I am pleased to say that Catherine Hayden, St Marys Church Warden has agreed to make the draw for us.

**Please Note**

We have scheduled the Bedfordshire Area Groups Annual General Meeting for 12 noon on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019; full details and the Agenda will be sent out to all members shortly after our January meeting.

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**Steam in Beds Report**

Firstly I should like to thank everyone for their help and support in making 2018 SIB a great success. Thanks should also go to the Catering Team who once again did a sterling job keeping us and our visitors fed and watered. The show seemed as busy as ever and yet the visitor numbers were slightly down on the previous year. It was disappointing to lose a couple of our regular traders due to ill health; we hope to welcome them back next time. The general feedback from visitors was very good; traders also seemed to be kept busy most of the day. Our younger visitors did enjoy running trains on Papplewick Green, a special thanks to those members who helped supervise them.

You may remember during SIB 2017 there was a problem with the running roster for Ridgmont. There were times when nobody was due to run; the day was saved but only by a few members having double sessions. It was suggested by a couple of members that we should get members to pre-book running slots to ensure we did not have a repeat of 2017. Bob Gamble offered to be Track Marshal and manage the booking process so that we started the day with a full roster. The whole process worked really well with a full roster all day, many thanks to Bob for taking on the task of keeping the trains running.

Once again the local scout group leaders helped to manage the car parking, the early morning rain did dampen their spirits but fortunately it did not last long. I understand from the group leader they raised over £100 for their funds. Thanks should also go to all those members who also helped with the parking, it did seem to be less problematical than previous years.

There will be a full financial statement of Steam in Beds at the A.G.M. in February.

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**Group Meeting Dates – 2019**

6<sup>th</sup> January    3<sup>rd</sup> February    3<sup>rd</sup> March    7<sup>th</sup> April    5<sup>th</sup> May    2<sup>nd</sup> June    7<sup>th</sup> July  
4<sup>th</sup> August    1<sup>st</sup> September    6<sup>th</sup> October    3<sup>rd</sup> November

Steam in Beds will be on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November

All meetings commence at 10:30 am and close at 4:00 pm.

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**Future Events**

**National Garden Railway Show**

As I reported in the November Smokebox we will be presenting Ridgmont at the National Garden Railway Show on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at the Peterborough Arena. I don't at the moment have any more details but I imagine similar rules will apply as last time. We will be collecting Ridgmont from Eaton Bray on the Friday with a view to completing the build at the Arena Friday afternoon. Ted Robinson has once again agreed to hire and drive the van to transport Ridgmont to and from the show. As the following day is our regular April meeting we can just unload Ridgmont straight into the Hall. Those of you involved with Ridgmont's last trip to Peterborough will remember they limit the number of runners per layout. I understand they have now introduced a sliding scale of runners depending on the size of the layout, hopefully that will avoid having to turndown help as we did in 2015.

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**Gauge One Model Railway Association**

We have also been invited to take Ridgmont to the G1MRA Spring Show being held in Shepshed on the 13<sup>th</sup> April. Yes that's right it's the Saturday following our own show at Peterborough. Maybe not ideal timing but it does present us with another opportunity to present Ridgmont and promote the Bedfordshire Group and the Association to a wider audience. I have in the past heard members comment why we don't get more invites to Ridgmont; well this is yet another chance to show off what 16mm NGM's do best. We already have a handful of members committed to help run at the show and Alan has agreed to drive the van. But we do need more help with the loading up at Eaton Bray which will be on the Friday and we need more help on the Saturday with the build up of Ridgmont and running during the day.

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**Ridgmont Maintenance and Up Keep**

Following on from SIB, Ray Butler has pointed out that some refurbishment work is needed on the road bridge, if you are willing to take this on please talk to Ray about what needs doing. The work needs to be completed before we go to Peterborough in April.

We also need a copious supply of bubble wrap to protect the Ridgmont scenery while in storage and transport to shows. If anyone has access to a suitable supply of bubble wraps or similar please let me know.

Those of you who have experience of handling the Viaduct when we transport it to a show will know how awkward it is to handle with the current rope handles. I have purchased 4 large cabinet handles which I will be fitting before it's next outing, which should improve and help with the handling and transporting of the viaduct.

If anyone else has any ideas or view on how we can improve any aspect of Ridgmont please let the committee know.

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